

Scripture Truth

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“Thy Word is Truth.”

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SCRIPTURE TRUTH

“Grace be unto you and Peace.”

THAT the Book that unveils the declension, the sins, and the apostasy of the profession of Christ on earth, and the rising up of evil to its climax and destruction, should open with such a salutation is most encouraging to all who desire to be true servants of Jesus Christ.

GRACE will keep us lowly, will preserve us from that pride of heart, self-satisfaction, and independence of God, the awful results of which are disclosed for us in the solemn pages of this Revelation; for grace teaches us to know ourselves in our weakness and worthlessness, and to know God in His power and the fullness of His resources for us, no matter howsoever great the difficulties may be. And PEACE we need in times of increasing evil and disturbance; the two go together, peace of heart and mind is the result of grace being ministered to us, and these come

“From Him which is, and which was, and which is to come.”

Not here from the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, He ever remains that, but He is presented to our faith here as THE ONE WHICH IS—in spite of all the evil that has risen up in rebellion against Him, and supreme above it all; *and which was*—before any evil invaded His fair universe; and *which is to come*—who will abide in all the power and blessedness of His own eternal Being when every phase of evil has been consigned to its proper place in the lake of fire. He is the self-existent and eternal God, against whom no evil can prevail, and the fact that grace and peace comes from Him to us should surely encourage and strengthen us.

“And from the seven Spirits which are before His Throne.”

The throne of God abides while kingdoms built up by the pride and force of men totter and fall. His throne is maintained in eternal justice and power; wisdom and justice are its perfect attributes. Nothing has happened, is happening, or shall yet happen that is not under the control of God's mighty and all-wise Spirit, who is presented to us here in this way. Disturbances in this world have no need to disturb us, they will all be made to contribute to the final glory of God, and meanwhile, while they are revolving, but in apparent confusion, to the great climax, the Spirit, sevenfold in wisdom and power, who controls all, and works all according to God's will, ministers grace and peace to us.

“And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth.”

There is a Man in the glory of God, who has met and triumphed over every phase of evil in this world, He was the faithful witness and knows what every sort of opposition to the will of God is. Because of it, and in faithful witness to God, He went into death, but that was not the terminus of His path of light; He is the first-begotten of the dead, and is to come forth from heaven with many crowns upon His brow, the king of Kings and lord of Lords; for universal supremacy is His, and will be His in divine and undisputed right. From Him also—the faithful, victorious and glorious Man, who sits in the very throne of God—comes down to us in the midst of our days of conflict and trial, grace and peace. Surely we may face the future with confidence and good hope. (Revelation 1. 4, 5.)

The All-Sufficient One.

“Thou remainest” (Ps. 102. 26, and Heb. 1. 11).

TWO wonderful words indeed, and worthy of the deepest appreciation. They refer to One who is placed in connection with creation in its widest extent, the heavens and the earth, but which, while transitory and perishable, leaves Him unaffected by their removal. He “continues still,” and this is the signification of the word “remainest.” It is not exactly His essential and eternal existence, but it is that, while associated with that which passes away, He abides. The truth is that while His hands had made these things, that He was their Creator, and, by and by, He will “fold them up and they shall be changed,” He is “the same.” His years fail not.

But he is no distant Deity, no disinterested spectator of anything His hands have made. He regulates as truly as He created. If, for some good reason He sees fit to dissolve His handiwork, He has most certainly the perfect right, as well as the power, to do so. Yet He Himself remains! And, if so, shall not His continuance be the guarantee of something greater and better—of a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness? That He remains is the hope of that creation of God of which He is “the beginning” (Rev. 3. 14).

Hence His all-sufficiency. He can both build and destroy and then build again. He can occupy every moral sphere and fill every spiritual vacuum. In Him all fullness dwells. He who was in the form of God and thought it no robbery to be equal with God, assumed, in wondrous grace, the form of a servant and the fashion of a man. Such was the extent of His incarnation. He was an actual man, like ourselves in all things except sin, leading a true and perfect human life—a man amongst

men, in order to present God to us as He, the Son eternal, only could, and win our confidence toward God if such a thing could be done, but going down to death, so as to annul its power, remove its sting and gain a glorious victory over it—“death, even the death of the cross!”

Mark the stages in His condescension. From Godhead to manhood, thence to servitude, thence to death, and that (oh grace inconceivable!) the death of the cross—the most ignominious, agonizing, shameful death of all! Well may we sing:—

*“We love Thee for the glorious worth
Which in Thyself we see,
We love Thee for that shameful cross
Endured so patiently.”*

But He is risen from the dead and highly exalted. We can sing: “Thou remainest.” He “remaineth” in view of a ruined creation, and He remaineth in view of a disintegrated church. He is the hope of both and “the bright and morning star” of His assembly. He is her all-sufficiency—her resource, her centre to-day, as at all times. He is “the same” in days Laodicean as He was in those of Ephesus. He is God’s “Amen” to-day, maintaining, in undiminished power, all the counsel and purpose of God, spite of the fearful drop from the bright apostolic period to the present nauseous condition of the church’s faithless testimony. He is on the wrong side of the door of the profession of His name; so that He urges the purchasing of gold and clothing and eye salve, to expel its dross, and cover its nakedness, and enlighten its blindness. Outside He knocks, and seeks admission to the willing heart; for spite of the church’s palpable degradation, He “remaineth” as “the Same.”

Conditions may possibly change outwardly, and "difficult times" characterize these closing days, but He changeth not. And hence the Second Epistle to Timothy, foretelling as it does these very days, presents to us, not so much the House of God as a well-ordered system, but Christ Himself as the foundation which stands steady, be the collapse of Christendom what it is. "Remember," it tells us, "Jesus Christ . . . raised from the dead." He remains as the HEAD; let us hold it fast; as LORD, let us obey His word; as the only CENTRE of gathering, let us gather to His all-sufficient name; as the still REJECTED CHRIST, let us humbly cleave to Him and His cross; as the soon-coming BRIDEGROOM, let our hearts, in all the glowing affections of a faithful bride cry: "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

He "remaineth" as THE HOPE OF ISRAEL—the nation of His choice and favour—but long driven out of its land, scattered, peeled, persecuted because of its sins, but never forgotten of Him, but rather "beloved for the fathers' sakes," to whom the promise of earthly blessing was made. The Deliverer will yet "come out of Zion and turn away ungodliness from Jacob," and reinstate the nation in the Land promised it of old. For "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (see Rom. II.).

Then, finally, if we descend to the necessities and cares of the individual Christian, can we not say that when all

else is gone, the hopes dashed, the chair vacant, the poor feeble heart crushed, the eye dimmed with tears, and the soul desolated by waves of sorrow, He remaineth the Comforter, the resource, the peace-giver, the abiding Friend, who Himself proved, in deep and true experience, all the sorrows of our pilgrim path, so that He is able to succour and sympathize with us.

That He remaineth "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever," may not be the highest of His many glories, but it is not the smallest of those great dignities which make His sacred name precious to His saints in all generations—as their dwelling place, their hope, their refuge, their power and their victory.

As such, how worthy He is of all our gratitude, thanksgiving and praise. That pen is made of gold which writes of Him; the ministry which has the all-sufficiency of the Lord Jesus Christ, whether as Saviour, Lord, or Head of His body, for its primary theme is assuredly the ministry of the Spirit of God. His own closing command was: "Believe also in Me"—given just ere He went to the Father, suggesting, as it does, all that is contained in the fact that He remaineth.

If that be true no change of passing conditions need agitate the spirit of His people, or affect the steady labour of His servants. His grace will not fail.

J. WALSON SMITH.

Perfection.

OH Man! God's Man! Thou peerless man!

Jesus my Lord! God's Son!
Perfection's perfect in its height
But found in Thee alone.

Of Abba's love—of God's great claims
Thou com'st not short at all,
Perfect in everything art Thou
Alone, since Adam's fall.

Oh, matchless peerless Man! shall we,
Begrudge to Thee this praise?
Perfect alone, Thou camest in love,
To glory us to raise.

Peerlessly spotless Man! 'twas Thou
The wrath didst bear for me.
Peerlessly righteous Man! I'm made
God's righteousness in Thee.

G. V. W.

Editorial.

The Need of Revival.

HARD are the hearts and blind are the eyes that do not feel and see the need of a spiritual awakening in the church of God. It has been the great need for years, but we have neither felt it nor seen it as we ought to have done, and so we have not sought it with that importunity and constancy that the state of things demands. But surely the time has fully come when all who have a care for the Lord's glory, who desire the edification of His body, the one assembly, and long for the salvation of men, to cast off all lethargy and, regardless of matters that do not count, seek the presence of God edifyingly and specially in this regard. Our appeal is to all such, whoever they may be.

We need not enlarge upon the dearth and deadness that prevail in all things spiritual, only the insensitive, or the smugly self-satisfied, can be indifferent to it. The formality and chill of it is everywhere. It is felt in the meetings for prayer, mostly there; and in the gospel services; alas, that it should be so evident there, for it is in the gospel that we stand forth before men on God's behalf, and His name as well as we ourselves are dishonoured when the gospel preaching is formal and flat and fruitless.

But the very prevalence of this condition of things may well prove a door of awakening, for it can only turn the honest and the true to God. If we were not so cold and powerless we might still cherish the conceit that we were sufficient for these things, that nothing more was needed than a general brightening up, that we might bring about by a little more energy, or better organization, or improved methods. But being such as we are, and the state of things such as it is, we have no help or hope except in God.

If we draw near to Him will He refuse to hear us? If He were a man as we are, we should say, "Yes, He will refuse us, for we have been so unfaithful to Him." But since He is God, and changeth not, He will hear us—He wants to hear our cries of need, our supplications, prayers, and intercessions, and is infinitely more willing to give than we are to ask.

We cannot charge Him with faithlessness. How arresting is His challenge to His ancient people. "HAVE I BEEN A WILDERNESS UNTO ISRAEL? A LAND OF DARKNESS? WHEREFORE SAY MY PEOPLE . . . WE WILL COME NO MORE UNTO THEE?"

No, He has never disappointed us. If the *once-so-fair church*, set as a witness for its absent Saviour on earth, has become a barren place and its light all but turned to darkness, it is not because God has failed it, or that His eternal fullness is diminished, but because it has turned away from Him, and because it seeks Him no more. And if there is to be a revival of freshness and fruitfulness of soul, and testimony to the world, it will come in and through those who seek Him with their whole hearts, and who find their resources and their light only in Him.

"Wake up, thou that Sleepest."

How quickly faith revives when we turn to God. As Abraham ceased to consider the deadness of his own body and the deadness of Sarah's womb when he got near to the God who quickens the dead, and was strong in faith, believing that God was able to fulfil His word, so we, if we draw near to Him, will not be hopeless as to the spiritual deadness of which we have spoken. We shall not consider it to be any obstacle in God's way, for He is

the same wonder-working God as of old, and the very condition of things which is beyond the help of man will be the opportunity of His delivering power.

We must make it clear that no true child of God is dead, though multitudes of them are asleep, and, so, insensible to the power of God and the richness of His grace, and in that condition are like the dead world in which they seek to take their ease. So we read, "WHEREFORE HE SAYS, WAKE UP, THOU THAT SLEEPEST, AND ARISE FROM AMONG THE DEAD, AND THE CHRIST SHALL SHINE UPON THEE" (Eph. 14, N.T.).

The call is to the Christian who is walking in the flesh and not in the Spirit; who has closed his eyes to the magnificence of the glory of the unsearchable riches of Christ, and has fallen under the deadening influences of the world. Whether it be of its politics, pleasures, selfish pursuits, or its religious formalism. The call is to us all who have declined in any measure; the word of the Holy Spirit is "WAKE UP" and "RISE UP." This is our side of the spiritual awakening; it is the response within us to the Spirit's call, and to obey is to be blest. Let us not be like a man who, partly aroused, turns over and falls into profounder slumber; but, knowing the time, that it is now high time to awake out of sleep.

If we respond at this time to God's arousal, and set ourselves to seek Him, we shall be blessedly compensated. The citation in Ephesians 5. 14 is from Isaiah 60.—a stirring chapter. Let us turn the pages of our Bibles and read it now, and as our hearts are moved and enlarged by its glowing promises, let us remember that while it refers to Israel's glory yet to be, and will be fulfilled to the letter in regard to them, yet the way to revival and blessing that it reveals is there for us. If we arise from among the dead, and the Christ shines upon us, what will the result be

for ourselves and others? Who will dare to fix a limit to it? Who will dare to limit the Holy One of Israel? It is His work, not ours, to send the refreshing; He is the Source of all blessing, not we. We may be His polished tools, vessels, sanctified and meet for His use, and this is all He asks of us—but how immense the favour! He will do the rest.

But will He revive the whole church? He will revive the reader of this appeal and the writer, if we answer His awakening call. He is able; He is willing.

The Spirit of Grace and Supplication.

The presence of the Lord, and the shining of His glory upon us, convicts us of our own nothingness and the corruption of our flesh. There never was a God-given revival apart from this, for God cannot bless the self-sufficient and self-congratulatory. No flesh shall glory in His presence; our pride must be abased, we must discover our failure and sin, this is the *sine qua non* of any awakening which shall abide for God's praise.

The pages of Old and New Testament bear eloquent witness of this. JOB was one of God's servants, the most eminent and perfect of his day, but when his eye saw the Lord he cried in his anguish, "*I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes.*" No man in ISAIAH 5 times surpassed him in his zeal for God, but when He saw the Lord, sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, He could not endure his own condition and that of his associates. "*Woe is me!*" he exclaimed, "*for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.*"

DANIEL, also, beheld the glory of the Lord and confessed, "*There remained no strength in me; for my comeliness*

was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength."

And PETER, honest, zealous, devoted Peter, who had answered the Lord's call with an immediate and blessed obedience, fell down before Him, as He saw himself in the light of His presence, and groaned, "*I am a sinful man, O Lord.*"

To this judgment of ourselves we must be brought, or we shall glory in the flesh instead of the Lord.

Such a conviction of our own worthlessness must be ours or we shall remain in a dead, cold state, boasting perhaps, in the past, satisfying our consciences by the plea that we are orthodox in doctrine, or some other equally miserable subterfuge—for subterfuge it is, and of Satan, whatever it be that prevents us from waking up and arising from among the dead that the Christ may shine upon us.

The spirit of *grace* and *supplication* will be poured out upon Jerusalem when the inhabitants of it come to the end of their own schemes and discover that they have no hope except in God, and this same spirit will God give to us if we ask Him. The spirit of grace brings conviction to us of our weakness and sin, but in the presence of God's power and abounding grace. It shows us afresh our Lord pierced for our sins,

and fills us with contrition that we should ever have slighted Him. But the spirit of grace and supplication poured out upon that humbled and repentant city does not describe the end to which God will bring it, it is a means to an end, the road on which they will be made to travel to their God-appointed destiny. That destiny is described in the closing verses of Zechariah. There we read: "In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; and the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts: and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and seethe therein: and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts" (Zech. 14. 20, 21).

The whole city and everything within it will be devoted to the Lord; the double mind and the faithless heart will give place to one full and blessed knowledge of God. This is the point to which a true divine awakening will bring us, and nothing short of this will satisfy the fully awakened soul. To this point of blessing and complete devotion to our Lord may we all be brought. And may the very God of peace sanctify us wholly, and may our whole spirit, soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

"Just Chilled Down."

HOW many Christians and companies of Christians could be justly described in the language of an old negro who was deploring the low spiritual state of the community with which he was associated.

"Oh," said he, "it's jest all chilled down."

"But what is the cause of its being chilled down?"

"Dere ain't no cause. It jest nacherly chilled down."

And when things have got into this state, what is the remedy? How shall spiritual fevour and glow be restored? That's the question. If all who feel the "chilled down" state would go to their knees about it, they would find the answer.

"Thou art Lukewarm."

THE Lord uses a plain, homely metaphor in His address to the Laodicean church. As tepid water makes a man's stomach heave, so a lukewarm profession is nauseous to Him; the man who is lukewarm towards the Lord moves Him to the deepest loathing. He vomits him forth from His mouth. Let us read the message over, and with heart scoundings on our knees inquire if this lukewarmness describes our condition. For mark it well, because this was the condition of the Laodicean church, the Lord said to it, "I will spue thee out of My mouth." The name of the lukewarm shall be dismissed from the lips of the Lord with an abhorrence the most sickening that fancy can paint.

This is an utterance so strong that no sentence of the most impassioned and vehement orator would rival it. There is such depths of solemn disgust in this warning against lukewarmness that no figure in the compass of imagination, and of no language in the entire vocabulary of words which could convey the Lord's meaning so fully, or with so much terrible force.

To be lukewarm towards the Lord is to insult Him. It is to say, "I believe what Thou sayest, but it is of such small importance to me that I cannot put my heart into it." But did our Lord think our eternal salvation of small importance when He came from heaven to earth to work it out? What think you of the love that made Him tread that thorny way to Calvary? Was that nothing? His love had a most vehement flame, the waters of death could not quench it, the floods of judgment could not drown it.

"It passeth knowledge, that dear love of
Thine,
O Jesus, Saviour."

But what return will you make to Him

for it all? A silver coin once a week! Nay, if thou gavest all the substance of thy house it would utterly be condemned.

"Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands thy soul, thy life, thy all."

It is thyself the Saviour seeks; nothing else will satisfy that love which is strong as death, and to admit a rival moves that love to jealousy; and to the lukewarm He says, "I will spue thee out of My mouth." If I act towards Him in an indifferent and lukewarm way do not I insinuate that He had no need to have been so concerned about me as to die for me? Do not I by my very attitude censure my Lord and Saviour for the burning zeal of His love, and tell Him that the things He thought to be of so great value are not worthy of my esteem, and so insult Him to His face?

O Lord, lest we grieve Thee, dishonour Thee, insult Thee, lest we be enemies of Thy cross,

"Kindle within us a holy desire
Like that which was found in Thy people
of old,
Who tasted Thy love, and whose souls were
on fire
As they waited in patience Thy face to
behold."

When a lukewarm professor goeth forth, men say, "This man professes to be a child of God, and to be going to heaven, but he travels there at a snail's pace; he professes to believe that there is a hell, but he never warns men of it with tear-filled eyes; he professes to deal with eternal realities, but he is only half awake. The lukewarmness of professors is a greater curse than all the jests of scoffing atheists. Well may the Lord say, 'I will spue thee out of My mouth.'"

“He Looked”—“We Look.”

“He looked for a city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God”
(Heb. 11. 10).

“We look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus” (Phil. 3. 20).

TO the natural man Abraham's action must have appeared foolish indeed. From what may have been a prosperous and comfortable life in Ur of the Chaldees, “he went out, not knowing whither he went.” To prefer a nomadic to a settled life; to exchange certainty for apparent uncertainty; to give up all title to citizenship in this world would probably seem altogether inexplicable.

Abraham, however, was in “the secret of the Lord which is with them that fear him” (Ps. 25. 14). He had been called by “the God of Glory” (Acts 7. 2). He had been promised something that was stable and enduring. The secret of his strange step, his simple life, his sincere faith, and his steadfast devotion, was, as our text indicates, that “he looked for a city.” The city of God was the goal of his soul, and the prospect of reaching that, governed and controlled every detail of his life. He resolutely refused to have anything here. If he must needs have a burying-place for his dead he paid for it; if it was a case of receiving favour from the world he declined it.

SEPARATION from all that was inimical to the new path characterized him; and even when this involved the separation of Lot from him, he did not deviate from the course upon which he had entered.

It might mean privation, pain of heart, and perplexity as to the next step, but with the city of God in view he went steadily forward. Well content was he to be a stranger and a pilgrim here, to sit loose to everything in this ever-changing world; because “he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God.”

Now *we* look, *not* for a place, but for *the* Person. “WE LOOK FOR THE SAVIOUR” (Phil. 3. 20). Called out as was Abraham; called with an “heavenly calling” (Heb. 3. 1); having to pass through this world to which we no longer belong; with no portion, no place, and no prospect here, “we look for the Saviour.” *He* is our Treasure, and where *He* is, our affections, our interests, our hopes, and our desires are all centred. Not only have we not *got* any place here, but we do *not desire* any place here because *He* is not here. Hence the significance of our last text—“our conversation,” or “citizenship,” or “commonwealth”—“is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour.” Our realisation of this will at once secure our separation from the world.

SEPARATION follows our apprehension of our heavenly calling just as surely as day follows night. Observe! It is separation from the world, religiously, socially, politically, and in every shape and form. With such an object before us, with such a goal to which to reach forward, with such a glorious Person for Whom to look, we tread our pilgrim path, well content to be reckoned strangers, esteeming it an honour to suffer reproach; knowing that the end will more than compensate for all the vicissitudes of the journey.

“We look for the Saviour.” How this cheers the spirit, warms the heart, and quickens the step. We rise in the morning to plough the fresh furrow of a new day, and we know not what the day may have in store for us, but “we look for the Saviour.” We lay ourselves down to rest at night, and ruminating on the experiences of the day we may

be sad or glad, but whichever it be, gazing forward, "we look for the Saviour," and our hearts rejoice. We have met some dear Christians who are looking for the undertaker; some are looking for good times here; some are looking for a rejuvenated world to follow the death agonies of war—vain hope—"we look for the Saviour."

May we reproduce this exquisite passage from a very excellent and trustworthy translation?

"For *our* commonwealth has its existence in [the] Heavens, from which also we await the Lord Jesus Christ [as] Saviour, Who shall transform our body of humiliation into conformity to His body of glory, according to the working of [the] power which He has even to subdue all things to Himself" (Phil. 3. 20). A new body—like His own. No more pain, dear suffering saint—beyond the reach, the power, and the fear of death; no more death, bereaved fellow-believer; no more unlovely ways, for we shall be in all respects like *Him*. We shall have "a new name," we

shall sing "a new song," and we will understand in a very real way the meaning of His announcement, "Behold, I make all things new" (Rev. 21. 5).

Are we wearied? discouraged? feeling the way long, and the road rough? Are we tempted at times to let the hands hang down, and the knees become feeble? "Let our eyes look right on, and let our eyelids look straight before us" (Prov. 4. 25). "We look for the Saviour"—perhaps to-day. Let us wake in the morning with the glad exclamation on our lips; let us go through the day with this as sweet music in our hearts; let us retire to rest at night with this to smooth our pillow, "WE LOOK FOR THE SAVIOUR."

"We 'look' for Thee—Thou wilt arise
Whilst hope her watch is keeping,
Forgotten then, in glad surprise,
Shall be our years of weeping.
Our hearts beat high, the dawn is nigh
That ends our pilgrim story
In Thine eternal glory."

W. BRAMWELL DICK.

God's Faithfulness.

IN CALLING US—"Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it" (1 Thess. 5. 24.). "God is faithful, by whom ye were called into the fellowship of His Son" (1 Cor. 1. 9).

IN GUARDING AND ESTABLISHING US—"The Lord is faithful, Who shall stablish you, and guard you from evil" (2 Thess. 3. 3; Phil. 1. 16; 1 Pet. 4. 19).

IN SAVING FROM TEMPTATION—"God is faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way of escape. . . ." (1 Cor. 10. 13).

IN FORGIVENESS—"If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1. 9).

IN AFFLICTING US—"Thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me" (Ps. 119. 75; Heb. 12. 1-11; Lam. 3. 22, 23).

IN ANSWERING PRAYER—"In faithfulness answer me" (Ps. 143. 1).

IN HIS PROMISES—"He is faithful that promised" (Heb. 10. 23). "Faithful who promised" (Heb. 11. 11). "For all the promises of God in Him are Yea, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God by us" (2 Cor. 1. 20).

IN ALL HIS WORK—"All His work is done in faithfulness" (Ps. 23. 4; Job 33. 28; 37. 14, etc.). When He undertakes, He completes His task.

The Revival of Prayer.

God alone can revive His Saints, thence the necessity for turning wholly and earnestly to Him. The knowledge of our need and of His fullness and power will bring us to our knees.

Enter thy Closet.

THE Lord's first lesson in the school of prayer is, *Enter into thy Closet* (Matt. 6. 6). The closet is the closed place, where we are shut in with God alone, where the human spirit waits upon the unseen Presence, cultivates His acquaintance, fellowship, and friendship.

Within that holy of holies the disciple is left alone—all others shut out, that the suppliant may be shut in—WITH GOD. The SILENCE is in order to the hearing of the still, small voice that does not reach the ear in worldly clamour. The SECRECY is in order to a meeting with Him who seeth in secret and is best seen in secret. The SOLITUDE is for the purpose of being alone with One who can fully impress with His presence only when there is no other presence to divert thought. It is in SECLUSION with God that we learn that He is, and is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.

The closet is not only the oratory, it is the observatory, not for prayer only, but for prospect—the wide-reading, clear-seeing, outlook upon time and eternity.

The decline of prayer is the decay of piety; and for prayer to cease altogether would be spiritual death, for it is to every child of God the breath of life.

There is an outcry for new methods, but it is renewed men that are needed, not men of greater talents or more extensive learning, but men of God, men of faith, men of prayer. The man who would preach with power and so affect those that hear him must have to do with God. The preaching man

must be a praying man. Prayer is the preacher's mightiest weapon. The real sermon is made in the closet, the man who makes it—God's man—is made in the closet also. How often, too, power and blessing goe with the preached word as a result of the fervent labours of some unseen and unnoticed intercessor.

We cannot make up for *lack of praying* by excess of working. In fact, working without praying is a sort of practical atheism, for it leaves God out. It is prayer that prepares for work, that arms us for warfare, that furnishes for activity.

Neglect of Prayer.

"Ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain; ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not" (James 4. 2). Here is the most strenuous activity put forth to obtain things: "Ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain; ye fight and war" and yet are getting nothing. "Ye have not because ye ask not." The reason why we don't have the things that we most earnestly desire is because we don't ask, we don't pray for them. That is the secret of our spiritual lack—neglect of prayer. That is the secret of the poverty and powerlessness of the average Christian. Why haven't you more victory in your life, more victory over sin? Neglect of prayer. There is only one reason. "Ye have not because ye ask not."

Why is it that the Sunday-school teacher has not more power in teaching the Word to the class? Neglect of prayer. Why do we see so few revivals? You say conditions are changed. No! Believers are changed. We don't pray

as we used to. Praying in a great many circles has come to be a forgotten art. "Ye have not because ye ask not."

Brethren, if you are leading a defeated life, nobody is to blame but yourself, and the whole secret of it is, you do not draw near to God. If you are worried, burdened, irritable; if instead of bringing comfort and relief and light into those circles in which you move, you bring depression and discontent, it is because you have ceased to have to do with God, your soul is at a distance from Him. All could be remedied if you prayed.

If you are a failure as a father or mother, if your children are growing up out of Christ, you are to blame; it is the believer's privilege to have converted children.

You say, "Conditions are so changed"; but God isn't changed. Oh, if we believers to-day would really believe what the Bible teaches about prayer, and get down to business, the business of praying, we would see something worth while accomplished. Let us go to God now in prayer.

Prayerlessness is Sinful.

Prayerlessness on the part of God's servants and children is sinful. It is a reproach to God. He in His most infinite grace has invited us to come to Him, to hold converse with Him, to ask Him for such things as we need, and to experience what a blessing there is in fellowship with Him. He has redeemed us by His own Son and created us anew in Him, so that in converse with Him we might find our highest glory.

What use do we make of this heavenly unspeakable privilege? How many there are who take only five minutes for prayer! They say they have no time, and that the heart's desire for prayer is lacking; they do not know how to spend half an hour with God.

It is not that they do not pray; they pray every day—but they have no joy in prayer, no communion with God, which shows that God is not everything to them.

If a friend comes to visit them they have time, they make time, even at the cost of sacrifice, for the sake of enjoying converse with him. Yes, they have time for everything that really interests them, but no time to practise fellowship with God and delight themselves in Him! They find time for a creature who can be of service to them; but day after day, month after month passes, and there is NO TIME TO SPEND ONE HOUR WITH GOD.

Do not our hearts acknowledge what a dishonour this is to God, that I have to say I cannot find time for fellowship with Him? If this sin begins to appear plain to us shall we not with deep shame cry out, "O God, be merciful to me, and forgive this awful sin of prayerlessness."

The Cause of Prayerlessness.

A life lived according to the flesh, and not according to the Spirit, is the origin of the prayerlessness of which we complain. As we came out of a meeting a brother said to me, "That is the whole difficulty; we wish to pray in the Spirit, and at the same time walk after the flesh, and it is impossible."

Scripture teaches us that there are but two conditions possible for the Christian. One is a walk according to the Spirit, the other a walk according to the flesh." These two powers are in irreconcilable conflict with each other. Do we realize the deep, immeasurable sinfulness of the flesh, in its enmity against God? (Rom. 8. 7). How many Christians there are who while they thank God for the Spirit yet walk in the flesh.

Here is the deep root of the evil. The flesh can say prayers well enough, calling itself religious for so doing, and

thus satisfying conscience. But the flesh has no desire or strength for the prayer that strives after an intimate knowledge of God; that rejoices in fellowship with Him, and that continues to lay hold of His strength. So finally, it comes to this, "the flesh" must be denied and crucified.

The Christian who is carnal has neither disposition nor strength to follow after God. He rests satisfied with the prayer of habit or custom; but the glory, the blessedness of secret prayer is a hidden thing from him, till some day his eyes are opened, and he begins to see that "the flesh" in its disposition to turn away from God is the arch-enemy which makes true prayer impossible for him.

Encouragement in Prayer.

Let us remember that the living and true God is omnipotent and we shall ask large things. Let us remember that He is very tender and full of compassion, then we shall ask little things and be minute in our supplication. Let us remember the greatness of His grace, then we shall come boldly. Let us remember, also, that His faithfulness is like the great mountains, and that His promises are sure to all His seed, then shall we ask very confidently, for we shall be persuaded that He will do as He has said. Let us fill our souls to repletion with the greatness of His majesty, then we shall be struck with awe; with the equal greatness of His love, then we shall be filled with delight.

Then let us behold the blood-sprinkled mercy-seat where we are privileged to

meet Him, and where He can meet with us. Let us stand in holy vision at the foot of Calvary and see the body of the Saviour rent, that the veil that parted our souls from all access to God might be rent too, that we might come close to God, who is now our Father. If we thought more about the way of access in prayer we should be encouraged to be more constant in it, with the heart taken captive by the exceeding grace of God in it all we should cease to restrain prayer.

The Scope of our Prayers.

When we pray we are to look not every man on his own things, however exalted the level of self-interest, but also on the things of others. Only the greatest good for the greatest number can satisfy the divine heart of love, and this alone should limit our yearnings. "I will *bless thee*, and thou *shalt be a blessing*; and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed"—that first great covenant promise to the father of the faithful (Genesis 12. 2-3) hints the world-wide scope of the believer's hopes and prayers. And God will have *all men* to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Whatever we *get* we are to *give*. And what we pass on to others enriches them, while by a strange law of the spiritual realm, it leaves the giver none the poorer but rather the richer; for God decrees that all the highest blessings shall grow by imparting. The stream that bears His wealth to others deposits gold in its bed as it flows, and the more abundant the stream the richer the deposit.

"Enoch walked with God" (Gen. 5. 22).

SO mayest thou walk! from hour to hour
Of every passing year;
Keeping so very near
To Him whose power is love, whose love is power.

The Cross of Christ.

THE cross of Christ will make you forgive the man you hate. You may stand like an impracticable and obstinate zealot and say that you know that you are right and he is wrong, but if you play the fool like that, all who understand will know that you have turned your back upon the cross, and have filled your vision with your selfish self. "But who is to make the explanation?" You. "But he wronged me." That is the reason why you should go to him and overcome evil with good.

But the mere reading of this exhortation won't make you do that. What you need is one touch of the pierced hand, one look at that face that was more marred than any man's, one true sight of the cross of Christ, and you will not sleep to-night until you have found out your brother, and said to him, "God pity and pardon me, and pity and pardon you, and make us one again."

Oh, come to the cross, and as you

stand in the wondrous shining of pardoning grace that beams upon you there, ask your soul the question, "How much owest thou unto my lord?" and you will never again take your fellow-servant by the throat and say, "*Pay me what thou owest.*" "Grieve not the holy Spirit of God. . . . Let all bitterness be put away from you. . . . And be kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, **EVEN AS GOD FOR CHRIST'S SAKE HATH FORGIVEN YOU**" (Eph. 4. 30-32).

How often the work of God is hindered, and things are cold and slow because of bitterness and wrath and evil feeling between brethren. God is dishonoured, His children are robbed of their portion of joy and blessing, and sinners are not affected by the gospel because of this state of things. What is the remedy? "That He might *reconcile both unto God* **IN ONE BODY BY THE CROSS**, having slain the enmity thereby" (Eph. 2. 16). To live in such a verse as that would work a mighty change, and that's the remedy.

"When the Hour was Come."

WHO runs to the gospel service, the meeting for worship, or to gathering for prayer? I have never seen men much more active than when these services have closed. How a congregation has disappeared in an incredibly short space of time has often been to me a very great wonder. But to run to the spot where the Lord gives His presence to those who value and seek it, to be eager to be where the redeemed of the Lord gather to uplift the note of praise to Him, that would be a true and genuine indication of a real, vital, spiritual, revival!

To run for the train, to work, or to secure a bargain, eager to keep an appointment with a friend, or to be

on the spot when the dinner bell rings, but to be careless, reluctant, and unready when "**THE HOUR**" has come, this surely indicates a backslidden and lukewarm condition of soul. There are, of course, those for whom excuses must be made. The Lord knows such, He reads the heart, and He is very pitiful and full of tenderness.

It is when self-interest, ease, or indifference has thrust the Lord's interests from the paramount place in the life that is rightly theirs, and when there is little heart for gathering in His Name, that we need to confess our sinfulness before Him, and pray that He in His infinite mercy would revive us again.

"I Come Quickly: Hold Fast"

Revelation 3. 11.

THE Lord is coming again, and Scripture shows plainly what will mark those who are prepared for that momentous event. Enoch was ready to go when God took him, and Elijah also, in his day, and they were both translated.

Those who are in practical readiness for Christ's coming have Himself—His Name, and His return immediately before their hearts; they abide true to His word, and assemble together. We have the highest authority for saying this—the Scriptures of Truth.

The coming of the Lord must be near; and just as Scripture foretells, Laodicean lukewarmness as to our Lord Jesus Christ marks the large mass of those who belong to the church by profession. Neither His personal glory nor His love have any true value for them. Great amalgamations are also in swift progress which will lead to greater self-sufficiency and boasting and independence of God and the exclusion of Christ Himself. They will make for the unified confusion and corruption, which will be state-established, which is Babylon, as Revelation 17. shows, before its final fall and doom. The prime movers think mainly of *world-serving*, and not of serving our Lord who is still *world-rejected*. It is a fatal snare. Obedience to the revealed mind of God in Scripture is not considered, for its authority has long been undermined for them; therefore the Lord Himself and His own Word are set small store by.

Many, too, whose slackness is so culpable, will be caught in the gathering floods which hasten thitherward. To Lot, as he "pitched his tent *toward* Sodom," it looked like the garden of the Lord. Let us take warning and turn away into the secure path, and consider the sure road, divinely marked

out for our feet in the last days, the highway for all the saints to tread, so shall we be preserved from gradually drifting towards delusive but doomed Babylon.

The Lord Himself will be before the hearts of all who are loyal to Him. This is the hall-mark of the true assembly. He loved it, and gave Himself for it, and will come again to present it to Himself (Eph. 5. 25-27). He is all to it, but He was crucified and is still rejected by the world. The Object of the heart of the true bride has been refused here. Babylon, which is the false and unfaithful woman, says, "*I sit a queen, and I am not a widow.*" She is full of self-importance, and has no sense of Christ's rejection. It is nothing to her. The real have, so His name is everything to them, and they cleave to Himself. His interests are paramount in their thoughts, and they are cheered by His word, "I come quickly, hold fast what thou hast, that no one takes thy crown." This stimulates them to faithfulness and steadfastness; and they are preserved from losing what they have, and from being deceived by "up-to-date" doctrines and schemes, which can only lead away from Him.

His return is expected by them at any moment. It is immediately before their hearts. Christ is precious to them; for His love, which was shown out at Calvary for them, is no false dream to them. They deeply desire to see His face. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come" (Rev. 22. 17). Ecclesiastical and political failure, confusion in the church and the world, only intensifies their longing for His return, knowing that He alone can put things right. They have "a little strength," but they do not use this in attempts to rectify

that which Christ alone can adjust. They cleave to Him. His Name avails for them as they await His coming. The word of His patience is treasured by them. Long has He been refused His rights. Patiently has He waited the Father's time when all shall own Him as Lord. This they know and value. Before the hour of the great tribulation strikes, the Lord Jesus will take them to Himself at His coming; and He will show to all that He has loved them. This is true of the whole assembly, of course; but we are speaking of those who are practically prepared for the Lord's return. Till that moment, those described in Revelation 3. 8-11 will be here.

Meanwhile they have His own Word, and this they keep. The Scriptures are esteemed as divinely inspired by them; and, through faith in Christ Jesus, they get divine encouragement, comfort, and edification through them. The Spirit teaches them; and it is also through the Scriptures they learn the Word of Christ, which they delight in, and cleave to, even as they do to His Name. This preserves them safe in Christ Jesus amidst the general departure from the truth. His word affords abundant food as well as direction for them, and it is the exhaustless theme of their converse. They become formed by it. Doubtless, some more than others, but all in some degree. Like those spoken of at the close of the Old Testament days, they speak often one to another, as they think upon His Name, upon what He is. They assemble together, and He is the Centre and Object of their gatherings.

It is not a question of coming to hear a preacher or teacher. They have a common interest, a common bond, a common theme and object—Christ Himself; and they edify and encourage one another in Him.

Love of the brethren also characterizes them. That is the meaning of "Philadelphia." "We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren." The Lord Jesus loves them, and this shall be made known (Rev. 3. 9). "*I have loved thee,*" He says; and till He returns He sets before them "an open door, which no one can shut." This remains. If some complain and murmur and do not avail themselves of it, there is no reason why others should swell their complainings. Let us avail ourselves of the great grace of our Lord, and enter into the positive and abiding things that are ours until He comes, taking full advantage of His unfailing favour.

Granted that this description of those who are in practical readiness for the Lord's return is scriptural, it remains for us to examine ourselves in God's presence, to see if we bear these marks; and, if not, it is high time to bestir ourselves, for His coming draweth nigh. There is grace abounding for us to draw upon. We have but to feel our need of its supplies, and receive from Him who "giveth more grace," so that we may be in a state that is well pleasing to Him. May we indeed be like unto men that wait for their Lord, and give a glad as well as ready response to His call when He comes.

H. J. VINE.

Himself.

TEXTS of Scripture for our solace are good, but there is something more and better. The Scripture tells us of Christ. We want to see Him, for it is *Himself* who meets our need, the Word explains what He is. The person of Christ always supersedes myself. If I am taken with *things*, even the best

things, I can connect them with myself. I am not displaced; but the moment a *Person* fills my heart and mind, that *Person* preoccupies me and self is in abeyance. Then I have joy in serving Christ—not merely in His relieving or serving me.

The Old Gospel and the New Conditions.

A CELEBRATED professor once gave orders that all works older than ten years found on the shelves of a medical library should be consigned to the cellar. The march of knowledge in the medical world had rendered them out of date and useless.

Should such an order be given in connection with the old gospel, hoary and reverend with its wellnigh two thousand years? Aye, it is older than that, it is as old as the Fall of man. For no sooner did man sin than God made the promise of salvation through the Seed of the woman, and the sinless victims were slain, their blood shed, and their skins provided a covering for the nakedness of our first parents—all typical of the atoning death of Christ, of the old gospel.

New conditions of a startling and vital nature have arisen within the last few years, the great war developing and bringing these new conditions up to date in an arresting and remarkable way.

In view of the new conditions must the old gospel be modified or is something else needed to meet the case?

In answer we turn to the "law and the prophets"—to Holy Scripture. We have no other appeal. Those with whom the Scriptures have lost their authority are as rudderless ships driven by the remorseless tide upon the devouring rocks.

But thank God there are tens of thousands to whom the Bible is indeed the authoritative Word of God, inerrant and inspired, and it is from its pages we shall get the true answer to our question. And these we appeal to are the excellent of the earth.

Such can take their place beside the Apostle Paul when he triumphantly asserts:

"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto

salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."
(ROM. i. 16).

In his own experience he had felt this mighty power—greater than the might that called worlds into existence, for it was a *moral* power that bent the will of the ardent zealot into an instrument for the glory of God. It was, in short, a new creation. Great as the miracle was in the case of the Apostle Paul it is as great in the case of "every one that believeth." Converted thieves and Pharisees, saved drunkards and moralists, can all alike testify to the power of the old gospel. It comes in upon men in varied conditions, and is the only and real remedy for sinful men.

We remember hearing a lady, who had for many years laboured among inebriate women, state that they had tried will-power, the signing of the pledge, the change of environment and influence, the use of drugs and medicines but, she added, after long years of experience we have found there is only one effective cure for the power of drink, and that is—CHRIST.

The New Conditions Foretold.

These are briefly yet amply and graphically delineated for us in Holy Writ.

"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come."

"For men shall be lovers of their own selves, [is this not true, whether it be autocracy or democracy?], covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers [does this not delineate in a striking way the aims and spirit of Germany in this late war?] disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

"Without natural affection, truce-breakers [as witness "the scrap of paper"], false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,

"Traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God;

"Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."

(2 Tim. 3. 1-5)

Surely if the Scripture can foretell so accurately the new conditions, it is reasonable to believe that it likewise supplies the remedy. Does it propose an altered gospel? Once when Judaizing teachers sought to alter it the Apostle denounced the attempt as tampering with the very foundations of Christianity.

"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, *let him be ACCURSED.*" (GAL. I. 8)

No; not one solitary line of Holy Scripture can be construed to suggest an adjustment or reconstruction of the old gospel. Wherever received it proves itself to be all that is claimed for it.

But there must be failure somewhere. Less and less is heard of gracious revivals. Conversions are becoming rare. The gospel does not attract as it once did. This is the testimony of all true Christian workers.

Doubtless the universal indifference and widespread infidelity that characterize the moment affect the Christian generally. Lethargy and depression alas! mark many. Should this be so? Surely not. God is the same—His love, His wisdom, His power unaltered. Our resources are unimpaired.

Where then is the failure, where the fatal leak, where the dry-rot that has set in? Emphatically not in the old gospel, but rather in the giving of it up so largely, in relying upon adventitious aids instead of on the Holy Ghost, in the adoption of the Higher Criticism, of New Theology, of the doctrine of Conditional Immortality and the like. What then is the remedy?

We propose to answer this question under four heads:

- (1) The Message.
- (2) The Man.
- (3) The Manner.
- (4) The Preparation for the Message.

Evidently if the Message is right and there is failure it must be with the Man.

The Message.

First, it concerns a Person, "Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God." He only is a Christian who confesses thus a Person, who is "over all, God blessed for ever" (Rom. 9. 5), yet "the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2. 5). Scripture presents Him in the unity of His Holy Person. This is blessedly revealed to us in Scripture, yet the understanding of this inscrutable mystery is wisely and rightly withheld from the creature in the words, "No man knoweth the Son but the Father" (Matt. 11. 27).

Second, it concerns a work. An ardent evangelist was about to cross the Atlantic to preach the glorious gospel, when an aged servant of Christ said to him, "H——, preach *facts.*" Wise advice. So we read, "I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that 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. 3-4). It is a testimony to the atoning value of the death of Christ.

Third, it concerns the Resurrection. "With great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 4. 33). Resurrection is the great testimony to the efficacy of the finished work of Christ, and should have a very distinctive place in the message. It is supernatural and upon it hangs the whole scheme of the gospel.

Fourth, it brings the offer of personal salvation—salvation from the penalty of sin, and deliverance from the power of sin, and from the power of the world. "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).

Fifth, it gives us the promise of the redemption of the body. This will take place at the second coming of our Lord

Jesus Christ. Even the young Thessalonian believers were "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come" (1 Thess. 1. 9, 10).

Sixth, it testifies to the everlasting punishment of the unrepentant sinner. "These shall go into everlasting punishment" (Matt. 25. 46).

The Man.

"How shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent?" are the divine queries. What is wanted for the new conditions to-day are heaven-sent preachers. Alas! so many preachers do not know the gospel themselves, for they have not come under its power. If the message had come in power to themselves then they could preach the message in power.

Look at the great pattern preacher, coming under the power of the message, the message was powerful as he proclaimed it. He says, "Necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel" (1 Cor. 9. 16). Again, "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20. 27). There must be no hiding the truth, however unpalatable it may be. The testimony not only as to the grace of God but also to His government must be rendered; not only to His Redeemership with all its winsome story of grace, but also to His Creatorship with its claims upon the creature must be clearly put forth. Mr. Gladstone, commenting on the denial of an eternal hell, said, "What is this but to emasculate all the sanctions of religion, and to give to wickedness already under too feeble a restraint a new range of licence?" How true is this testimony.

The heaven-sent preacher must have a powerful impression of the message

if he is to give a powerful expression of it. He must be unworldly, self-denying, ready to put his own ease and pleasure aside in order to win souls.

For the glory of God, will be his motto. If the blessing of man be the predominant thought his message will lose in power and dignity; it must be for the glory of God.

The end, too, God has in view must command his soul. Sinners are saved to be worshippers; they are saved in this present time to form part of the church—the bride of Christ. They make up the *ecclesia*, the called-out ones from among the nations.

The Manner.

Naturally if the message is of God, and the man is first himself impressed by it, his manner in giving it out will have a dignity, a sobriety, an earnestness.

The Apostle Paul could write, "Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you in all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears" (Acts 20. 18, 19). He tells us in verse 21 his testimony to both Jews and Greeks was "repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ," so we see how the message, the man, and the manner all went together.

The Preparation of the Message.

This is summed up in two words, the knowledge of the message and the dependent state of mind in connection with it.

A preacher once got up and gave an impromptu address of great power and thought. Someone said how extraordinary that he could give such an address without any preparation. "On the contrary," said he, "I have been pre-

paring that address for thirty years." Preachers must know their Bibles, not only its outward form but its inner meaning.

Then as to the dependent state of mind that is expressed in the words of our Lord, "This kind cometh forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting."

Prayer is bringing God in; fasting is shutting mere nature and human resources out.

We do not look for the conversion of the world. The apostasy is fast ripening. But we do look for God's gracious work of saving souls till the end, and it may be, nay it will be, deepened exercise and prayerfulness on the part of those who

preach the old gospel will result in increased blessing.

It is something if the preacher stands up profoundly convinced that the old gospel is the only message for the new conditions, and gives it out in all its dignity and impressiveness, relying upon God the Holy Ghost, to carry its truth and message in all its converting and sanctifying power to souls.

May God deepen this exercise in the souls of all those who preach the old gospel, and stir up many of our younger brethren to seek to proclaim it as "God's power unto salvation to every one that believeth."

A. J. POLLOCK.

Praise.

LORD, by faith we now behold Thee,
Seated on Thy Father's throne,
Thou art His delight and glory,
Thou art His beloved Son.
We adore Thee, crown'd with glory,
Dwelling in unsullied light,
Centre of God's wide creation,
And the Father's full delight.

God's divine affections circle
Round the Treasure of His heart,
And *that* love, supreme, eternal,
Blessed Saviour, is Thy part.
We rejoice Thou art exalted
Far beyond all human ken;
Blessing, honour, power, glory
Be to Thee : Amen, Amen.

R. WILLOUGHBY.

The Spirit's Work.

OUR present enjoyment of divine things depends upon the measure in which we keep from things and ways which would grieve the heavenly Seal, the *Holy Spirit*. He is sensitive to all that offends holiness, in conduct, speech, or disposition of heart as detailed from Eph. 4. 20 and onwards. He will never withdraw Himself from the one sealed; that would be to falsify the whole truth of redemption. But He does, when grieved, withdraw joy and power from the Christian's life until the fault is confessed, and the frame of mind which allowed the old man to act again is judged. The reason that a Christian out of communion is inwardly wretched (even if he be outwardly placid) is not

that the Spirit has abandoned him, but that He will not abandon him; necessarily depriving him of happiness until he has returned to his Lord in broken confession.

The Holy Spirit who indwells the Christian secures him for God, on the one hand, on the ground of the blood of Christ in which he has trusted, and by which he has consciously been redeemed; and gives him, on the other hand, the continuous enjoyment of the fact that he belongs to God, that enjoyment being only interrupted when some working of the flesh has grieved the One by whom he is sealed.

W. H. W.

The Song of Songs. Canticle III.

The Communion of Love—continued.

The Bridegroom.

- Ch. 4. 1. Behold, thou art fair, my love ;
behold, thou art fair,
Thine eyes are doves behind thy veil ;
Thy hair is as a flock of goats,
On the slopes of Mount Gilead.
2. Thy teeth are like a flock of shorn
sheep,
Which go up from the washing ;
Which have all borne twins,
And none is barren among them.
3. Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet,
And thy speech is comely ;
As a piece of pomegranate are thy
temples
Behind thy veil.
4. Thy neck is like the tower of David,
Built for an armoury ;
A thousand bucklers hang thereon,
All shields of mighty men.
5. Thy two breasts are like two fawns,
twins of a gazelle,
Which feed among the lilies.

If the others are occupied with the glories of the King, he on his part delights to dwell upon the beauties and perfections of his Bride. The Bride delights to speak to others of the glories of the King, but it is his joy to unfold to the Bride his thoughts about herself. It is blessed to witness to others of the glories of Christ, but for the establishment of our hearts in solid peace and joy, it is necessary to hear from the lips of Christ His own thoughts about His people. It is this that gives the prayer of John 17. such exceeding preciousness,

for there we are permitted to hear His thoughts about His own.

The King repeats twice over, "Behold thou art fair," but is not content with a general expression of his appreciation of his Bride, he dwells upon her several features. For us, doubtless, these different features set forth the moral graces that Christ sees in His people.

(1) The eyes are the windows of the soul expressing its character and moral condition. Likened to doves would set forth gentleness, purity, and devoted affection, but combined with modesty, for the eyes are seen behind the veil.

(2) The hair is likened to the black glossy hair of the goats seen in all the profusion that a flock would present on the slopes of Mount Gilead. Hair is used in Scripture as the symbol of "subjection" (1 Cor. 11.), separation from the world, and consecration to God.

(3) The teeth likened to sheep coming up from the washing would indicate purity; the twins, uniformity, and none barren, completeness, nothing lacking, all qualities that Christ delights to see in His people.

(4) The lips like a thread of scarlet proclaim the healthy condition of the body, just as wholesome speech, of which the lips are a symbol, set forth the condition of the heart, for "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." The Lord Jesus was full of grace and truth, and hence we read of Him "Grace is poured into Thy lips"; and of the Bride the King can say, "Thy speech is comely." If the love of Christ is in our hearts, the praise of Christ will be upon our lips, and the grace that was poured into His lips will be expressed by our lips.

(5) The temples. The forehead is used in Scripture to express either

modesty or boldness. The prophet had to say of Israel, "Thou art obstinate . . . and thy brow brass" (Isa. 48. 4). Jehovah asks, "Where they ashamed when they had committed abomination?" And the answer is given, "They were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush" (Jer. 6. 15; 8. 12). In contrast, the Bride is marked by modesty. She can blush, so that her forehead becomes red "like a piece of pomegranate," but it is "within thy locks," or as it may read "behind thy veil." Under the outward symbol of subjection there was genuine modesty. Not outward subjection, and inward rebellion. Modesty found with subjection is a precious quality in the sight of Christ.

(6) The neck. The King viewing the neck of the Bride adorned with precious jewels likens it to the tower of David adorned with a thousand shields that spoke of David's victories. So too Christ is going to be glorified in His saints and admired in all them that believe.

(7) The breasts set forth the affections. The figure of the roe is used in the same connection in Proverbs 5. 19, to indicate that which is pleasant. The "young" roe sets forth that which is fresh. In the eyes of Christ His people are marked by love that is truly pleasant and that will never grow old.

6. Until the day break, and the shadows
flee away,
I will get me to the mountains of
myrrh,
And to the hill of frankincense.

Night is coming and the King must leave his Bride until the marriage morn. However blessed the communications of love by the way, yet the day of the gladness of the Bridegroom's heart is still future. The Bride is in the wilderness; the marriage day is yet to come. Until that day dawns the Bridegroom will go to his own country, reminding us, in mystic language, that during our

wilderness journey it is the night of the absence of Christ. He may commune with us by the way; He may give us very blessed realisations of His presence with us in a spiritual sense, but personally He has gone to the mountains of myrrh and the hill of frankincense, until the day break and the shadows flee away.

7. Thou art all fair, my love;
There is no spot in thee.

If, for a time, the Bride is left behind, it is not because of any lack in herself. In the eyes of the King she is all fair and without spot. And in like manner the Lord's people, viewed in the light of the Lord's purpose, are "holy and without blame before Him in love."

8. Come with me, from Lebanon, my
spouse,
With me from Lebanon—
Come, look from the top of Amanah,
From the top of Shenir and Hermon,
From the lions' dens,
From the mountains of the leopards.

If for a time the Bride is left in the wilderness, and the Bridegroom departs to the mountains of myrrh, he would at least carry with him the affections of the Bride. "Come with me," he says, "look from the top of Amanah." In like manner we are called to "seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God." Earth has no fairer scenes than Lebanon and Amanah, Shenir and Hermon; but hidden dangers lurk beneath earth's brightest prospects. The lion has his den, and the leopards roam, in the excellent places of the earth. The well watered plain of Jordan may appear fair as the garden of the Lord, but Sodom and Gomorrah are there. Let us beware of *looking back*, like Lot's wife, but rather may we "look from," and beyond, all "created excellencies," setting our affections on things above, and not on things of earth.

A Letter from one young Christian to another.

HAVING gone through deep exercise of soul as to the broken state of things in the assemblies of God on earth, I can sincerely sympathize with you in your perplexity. In *my* distress I was compelled to cry to God, and He heard me and answered me, and I desire to pass on to you as He enables me that special Word from Himself which brought relief to me. When one is *in* the trouble, the dread is that one may be overcome and fall. To the godly soul this is agony, but God graciously shows us that, although we certainly must fall if left to ourselves, yet He has laid help upon One that is mighty—not powerless, as we are, but *Mighty*. He invites us to listen to the gracious words of this wonderful Person, and our true wisdom is to “hearken, consider, and incline our ear.”

Thinking of this spiritual conflict as a great war, the word came to me with very deep meaning—

“GOD GIVETH US THE VICTORY
THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS
CHRIST.”

I cannot fully express to you the power there is in these words; they seemed to me like a great shout of *peace* sounding out in a world of spiritual conflict. A similar cry had just rung out over the whole of the *habitable* world. The great storm was over: hostilities had actually ceased, and men had awakened, for the moment, to the blessing of peace after war. We know very well that this is only a surface peace and not lasting, because only the *peace of man*, but it does help us to realize in some measure how wonderful is the peace that is ours—even the *peace of God*. Man's peace is built upon the sand—ours upon a Rock. To meditate upon the cross of Christ, where our peace was secured and settled, should be the believer's constant and most blessed occupation. God has been showing me that the cross is the centre of all His dealings with man, and how from it His wondrous love radiates through the breadth and length, the depth and height. I long to study it more deeply and prayerfully. But to the two scriptures which the Lord brought before me in connection with the assembly.

The one is Matthew 16. 16, where the Lord Jesus, while still upon the *earth*, speaks of His assembly, before it was actually formed. The other is Acts 9. 4, where Christ Jesus, the same blessed Person, but now in *heaven*, speaks of His assembly, now formed, and its unity with Himself, the risen and exalted Head. All is concentrated in that one word *Me*: “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me.” Only a single word, yet how many of Paul's Epistles are required to unfold this mystery—another theme for our deepest study! But the one point common to both these scriptures is, that the foundation upon which the one and indivisible assembly is built is *The Person of Christ*, the glory of His Person—Man in whom the fullness of the God-head dwells. The eye that has been looking with terror upon troubled waters is invited to turn its full gaze upon a divine Object—“Jesus fills our wondering eyes.” What rest and peace and joy! Such a sense of safety too, for He says to us, “But with *Me* shalt thou be in safeguard.” He tells us too that all we have to do is just to abide in Him, delight ourselves in Him, for it hath pleased God that in *Him* (not in us) should all the fullness dwell. We can lean upon His bosom as John did, and seek to get ever closer and closer to the beatings of His heart, and He will tell us all His thoughts as to His assembly, for it is the very dearest object of His loving heart—“*Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it.*”

You may think these expressions mere pious sentiment, and they would be if they stopped at desire only—for “the slothful soul desireth and hath nothing.” But I say that true occupation with Christ Jesus means very great diligence, constant and continuous application in the earnest prayerful study of the written Word of God. As you find in the Word a real, living Person, your own loving Saviour, you will become a real blessing, and a help in drawing the members of the one body to their living Head in heaven; and as each one owns His Lordship and His Headship, divine order will be established quite naturally in His assembly.

E. A. P.

Questions on Prophetic Subjects.

"A Great Wonder in Heaven."

REVELATION 12. 1 reads: "*And there appeared a great sign in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.*" Explain these symbols.

THE WOMAN is Israel, for she brings forth the man Child—Christ, who is to rule the nations with a rod of iron.

THE SIGN IN HEAVEN indicates that the place of distinction and the glory in government which is to be hers is of and from God. See a contrast in chapter 13. The two hearts that are to claim world-wide rule before God sets Israel in her destined place come up out of the sand of the sea and the earth. Before they appear God indicates His purpose for Israel.

CLOTHED WITH THE SUN. It is important that this be rightly understood, lest the glory of the Lord becomes obscured. There is a tendency to make everything of the church now, and of Israel in the coming age. The woman is weak in herself, yet she is *clothed* with supreme authority on earth, of which the sun is the symbol. It is the glory and majesty of Christ. Any authority or glory that is put upon her is His, and it will not make her the object of admiration

or adoration, but will glorify Him. Isaiah 60. 1-20 gives the key to open up the true meaning. Israel is there called to rise up to her exalted place according to the mind of God—"Arise, shine: for thy light is come . . . thy sun shall no more go down." Ephesians 5. 14 shows that the light is Christ, "Arise . . . Christ shall shine upon thee" (N.T.). He is the Sun of Righteousness, Israel's everlasting light, her Messiah, her Lord and her God, and her glory, and she is here seen shining in the promised splendour of her Great King. It is when we see Him aright that other things fall into their true position.

THE MOON derives her light from the sun. It originates no light of its own. It is seen under Israel's feet. This signifies that all derived authority, in the day when Israel is right with the Lord, will be placed under that nation.

THE STARS are twelve. This number signifies perfection of administration in the hands of man. The stars form the woman's crown, speaking of glory in government, and, being stars, which are not equal in light to the sun or moon, they are symbolic of subordinate authority, all of which is subject to the administration connected with Israel.

H. J. VINE.

The Shout of the Lord, the Voice of the Archangel, and the Trump of God.

EXPLAIN why the voice of the archangel and the trump of God are connected with the shout of the Lord at His coming. The passage in question reads, "*For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord*" (1 Thess. 4. 16, 17).

The descent of the Lord to raise the dead in Christ and to change the living

in Christ and to catch them up together to Himself will have far reaching consequences; they will extend in fact to the whole of mankind; for it will be the initial movement of that power by which He will subdue all things unto Himself.

Mankind is divided in the New Testament into three circles, namely, the Church, Israel, and the Gentile nations; in connection with each the Lord is to have a special glory. We would suggest that each of these is comprehended in this passage.

The *shout of the Lord* has to do specially with His Church, and those who died in Old Testament days, who will share in some measure in her heavenly part. All these will answer instantly to His assembling shout, and in the twinkling of an eye will appear, radiant and glorious, in the presence of the Lord.

The *voice of the archangel* would have reference to Israel, for Michael, the archangel, has his place specially in regard to that nation (see Daniel 10. 13, 21; 12. 1; Jude 9.). We do not mean, of course, that Israel will be immediately gathered into blessing, for she will have to be brought through sore tribulation and repentance before she is ready to receive the Lord, while the church is already "made meet to be partakers

of the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col. 1. 12); but the wheels of events to that end will be immediately set in motion at that time.

The *trump of God* would have in view all mankind, for He will judge men and the world (Acts 17. 31; Rom. 2. 16; 3. 6). Here again, the nations of living men will not instantly appear before Him for judgment, but events will be set in motion that will infallibly bring them there on the appointed day.

The whole of God's purposes in regard to the earth are held in abeyance until the church is taken out of it, but when that event takes place all things will move swiftly to their fulfilment.

EDITOR.

Answers to Correspondents.

The Hope of His Calling (Eph. 1. 18).

H. H. H.—The hope of His calling (says J.N.D.) is connected with verses 3-5 of this chapter. Though we are the called ones, it is not said to be *our* calling but *His*, "in order that we may understand it according to its excellency. All the blessedness and character of this calling are according to the fullness of His grace—are worthy of Himself." We have but to prayerfully consider these wonderful statements to see how unbounded is the hope connected with them.

The Riches of the glory of His inheritance in the Saints.

This connects itself with verse 11. It does not mean that the saints are His inheritance, for they are the heirs, being joint heirs with Christ. The whole universe when it shall be filled with His glory is God's inheritance, He will redeem, inherit all things in Christ, who will be established as the risen Man, Heir over all things; but the church is the body of Christ, united to Him in the enjoyment of the inheritance. God will take possession of His inheritance, by putting

the church into the possession of it as joint-heirs with Christ.

"Them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him" (1 Thess. 4. 14).

PORT GLASGOW.—It is the Coming of the Lord for His kingdom and glory which is here in question, according to chapter 1. 10. Those that sleep through Jesus will not be left out at this moment of triumph; but how they are first to be with Him in glorified bodies like His own in order to come with Him is told us in verses 16 and 17 of chapter 4.

"Them that know not God and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. 1. 8).

H. J.—It is probable that two distinct classes are in view in this verse. Romans 1. 19-25 shows clearly that even the heathen are responsible to know God, for His power and Deity are made manifest in His creation, and they are without excuse. The second class are those who have heard the gospel and refused it; their guilt is greater, and their judgment will be more severe.

Editorial.

The Present Need.

GREAT problems, bewildering in their multiplicity, complexity, and insistence, have been forced to the front of the stage by the upheavals of these tremendous days, and the outlook in regard to them is not encouraging except to the perennial optimists. Men who are foremost in every sphere of thought and labour are setting to work to grapple with the changed conditions, and it is not surprising that some of the leaders in the religious world are arousing themselves to discuss the questions that affect their particular interests. An authoritative announcement was made some time ago by a bishop of the Anglican Church, which ran as follows: "*When the war is over we are going to have a simple religion, a religion without frills.*" Very good, if it is true and practical it will be simple, but if not, no matter how simple it is, it will neither glorify God nor benefit men.

But this question is the most serious one of all, no other can compare with it. Other questions will take time and thought, they cannot possibly be settled at once, for none can rightly forecast their development; but the question of the soul's relation to God, with all that it involves in a man's duty to his fellows, need not, indeed, cannot wait. This is the ever-present question, to answer it rightly now is to have it rightly answered for to-morrow, and for ever. It is independent of all changes; it rises above all other questions, and yet it lies behind them all. It is the heart of the situation, and were it faced and settled *by every man in every land* every other problem would thereby be solved, and every sphere of man's activity would yield its quota of help to the race, as simply and naturally as the garden yields its fragrance under the influence of the sun.

The discussion as to what changes

"the church" should make in doctrine and method in order to meet the changed conditions, emphasizes that which was evident before, to all who were wise enough to gauge things by the Word of God, that things in this sphere have been very far wrong. And it is not God who has been at fault, He has not failed, or His gospel concerning His Son Jesus Christ. But there has been much of sham and little of reality in those who have professed to represent Him before men. There has been an abundance of "frills" and pretty trimmings with which to clothe the corpse of a dead profession, and very little balm to heal the sickness of the soul, or bread to satisfy the hunger of the hearts of men. We speak of organized religion, of that which has a name to live but is dead (Rev. 3. 1), and not of the individual lives and activities of those who in spite of the general deadness around them have held on to the Word and not denied the name of the Lord; the witness and labours of such have not been in vain in the Lord. Yet the state of the Christian profession is the shame of all who own the Lord, and the one who does not feel it, and thinks that it is not his concern at all, is sadly void of conscience and feeling both towards God and man. }

But what is it that has to be faced, supposing the Lord does not immediately rapture His church from this world below to His home above, which event is *the true* and proper hope of every ransomed heart? First—there is the returning soldier. Thousands of young men who in ordinary days might have trifled through life with no higher thought than to get out of it as much ease or pleasure as possible, allowing others to do the serious thinking for them, have fronted the most terrible

facts and seen strange things. They have seen the veneer striped off, and the gnarled and rotten wood of humanity laid bare. They have seen what we should not care to describe in these pages, and they are coming back, broken, many of them, in both body and spirit, disillusioned all of them. They are coming back, having passed through the keenest agonies of life, the agony of parting from loved ones, with no certainty of beholding them again, and anxiety for the well-being of these when they were unable to shield them from harm.

They have suffered themselves, and faced the possibility of death; many of them have looked beyond the physical and the visible, and considered that gravest of all moments in the history of the soul which is described in those solemn words: "*So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.*" Not all have gone so far as this, but many have, and those who have will not again be satisfied with the gewgaws and frills and artificialities of a religion which is in form only and does not put the soul into vital contact with God. If they have not been hardened by their experience they will want the truth, and if they have been hardened by it nothing can save them but the *truth*.

Yes, they need the truth even if they do not want it. Surely nothing but the truth can meet their needs. The truth of a once crucified but triumphant Redeemer, who can save them from the curse and corruption of sin, and make their lives, that in the mercy of God have been spared to them, useful, holy, and God-glorifying lives.

There are also those who will wave no flags when the men come back, for their beloved dead lie, perhaps, in some nameless grave out there, or fathoms deep in the great waters. Their brightest hopes on earth have dissolved as a dream, their bright expectations have ended in tears, the world is a cold, strange place to them now, and their

broken hearts cry out for something that it cannot give. They need the truth, whether they know it or not. The truth of a Saviour who has broken the power of death and who lives to bind up the broken-hearted, and dry the tears of those who weep and give them hopes beyond the reach of death.

But who shall tell the sorrows of mankind, every individual heart knows its own bitterness. But thank God His gospel can bless each and every one and turn their marah into sweetness and joy.

It is the gospel that all need, the gospel of God concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Necessity is laid upon us who know it to keep on making it known. Wake up, believing men and women! Your responsibility and your privilege is to publish Christ.

"O speak of Jesus, of His love
Passing all bounds of human thought."

He it is that men need now and ever. Conditions are changed, but men are not, and sin is not, and Satan is not, and hearts still break, and men still die, and after this the judgment. Thank God, His grace is the same, and His Son is still the almighty Saviour, and the blood of Jesus Christ still cleanses from all sin. And men are still made, by this same gospel, to "rejoice in the Lord alway."

"Speak love's message soft and tender,
'Twas for sinners Jesus died."

All kinds of new theories and falsehoods are being started and men run after what is new. There are plenty to kindle false fires that give neither light nor heat to seeking souls, and only disappoint and damn those who are deceived by them. Let the glorious light of the grace of God that shines in the face of Jesus expose these false fires.

"Hide not the precious light,
But keep it burning bright,
Until we hear His word, 'Well done.'"

"Unto whom much is given, of him shall be much required; and to whom men have committed much, of him

they will ask the more." Who can tell the greatness of the responsibility, then, that lies upon us to whom the gospel has been committed. "Woe is me," cried the great apostle, "if I preach not the gospel." And we might well take up his language, as we think of the needs of men's lives, the value of their souls, of time and eternity; of the yearnings of God's heart for the blessing of men, and the tireless activities of the devil to destroy them.

Let us lift up our voices with renewed earnestness and faith, and urge men to Christ, as did the Holy Ghost-filled disciples of the past who went everywhere preaching the gospel. How matchless is the story; how suited to the needs of men; how fruitful to the glory of God!

"O the glory of the grace
Shining in the Saviour's face,
Telling sinners from above,
God is light and God is love."

Service for All.

Lessons that Christians May Learn from the War.

THERE have been few idle people during the Great War. Prior to that fateful August day it was manifest to all who had eyes to see that England was becoming effete, indolent, and intoxicated with lust and pleasure-seeking. There were, of course, many bright exceptions—through God's mercy—but the Nation as a whole was losing most of the qualities that had given her the leading place amongst the countries of the world. So evident was this that the Central Powers were persuaded that they need not reckon England seriously—she had a "contemptible army," and so effeminate a nation would never consent to share in the hardships and ghastly sorrows of an European War.

It was therefore a great surprise—not only to our enemies but to ourselves—when it was seen that the heart of the Nation was still sound in this respect, and almost everybody volunteered for service in one form or another. Rich and poor—old and young—vied with each other in "doing their bit," and the land became a great hive of industry. *Work* became the order of the day, and this is the lesson we Christians may surely take to heart. Our Lord and Master compared Himself to a man "taking a far journey" and giving during his absence "to every man his work." Yet the obvious and sorrowful fact remains that there are many "standing idle in the market-place"—still unemployed.

Is it that there is naught to do? Is there no need, no suffering, no sin, no "holy war"? Have these idlers been overlooked by the Holy Spirit in His recruiting service?

Some we see discussing varied readings of obscure passages in Holy Scripture; others laying down rules and regulations as to how the Lord's work should be carried on, and in some cases interfering with earnest and zealous servants, of whose methods they do not approve. Some again will affect to groan over the hardness of men's hearts, the ruin of the church, the fleshly activity of others, while they themselves are conspicuous examples of fleshly ease and slothfulness.

To such—and indeed to all—it would be a healthy exercise to note how unceasing were the labours of the Master of us all; how busy—morning, noon and night was the apostle, who was our example, "in labours more abundant than they all." There is no place for the lazy man in the ranks of the redeemed. Loud sounds the trumpet-call, the great "Reveille."

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15. 58).

Seven Words for the Last Days.

THESE things are of all-importance for all true believers in our Lord Jesus Christ, in view of the world-wide apostasy from the faith, which in spite of fair appearances is close at hand.

1. Divine Confidence.

"Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3).

Hold fast, let not go the truth concerning Christ; His person, His work, His present place at God's right hand. This is the faith we are called upon to contend for, for it is this which Christendom will presently abandon. Apart from this confidence of faith there is no salvation, no present priesthood, no supreme headship for the church which is His body.

2. Divine Communication.

"Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples. . . . To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah 8. 16, 20).

The written word of God is the sure defence against the delusive errors which will increasingly mark the close of the day of grace, and at the same time is the means by which the believer may build himself up upon his most holy faith.

3. Divine Character.

"The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. . . . Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof" (Romans 13. 14).

A definite refusal of moral darkness and all that appertains to it on the one hand, an unqualified acceptance of Divine light as a protection on the other. Being thus formed in the Divine nature, which is love, the character of Christ will be manifest in contrast to the flesh and its lusts.

4. Divine Company.

"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me" (Revelation 3. 20).

Without the conscious presence of Christ, which the church of the Laodiceans had lost, Christianity is only a beautiful theory, a grand ideal

lacking all vital energy towards God or man. "Without Me ye can do nothing." It is in all that is conveyed by "walking with Him" that the truth becomes living and communion real. It was His presence that made all the difference to the two disciples at Emmaus, to the assembly of the disciples at Jerusalem, and gave strength to His servant Paul to bear witness for Him at Rome. Let us covet earnestly the full knowledge of John 14. 21.

5. Divine Coming.

"To wait for God's Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, our deliverer from the coming wrath" (1 Thessalonians 1. 10, N.T.).

It is for the Son of God we wait. This is the purifying hope which lightens the darkest day, comforts the mourning heart, and delivers the Christian from men's schemes and projects, leagues and amalgamations. This hope produces true separation from the spirit of this present age, and lifts the burden of earth and its cares; for each day holds within its bosom the possibility that ere the morrow we shall see Him as He is.

6. Divine Commendation.

"Wherefore also we are zealous, whether present or absent, to be agreeable to Him. For we must all be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ, that each may receive the things done in the body, according to those he has done whether it be good or evil" (2 Corinthians 5. 9, 10, N.T.).

Then when with Him, will come His review of all the path His own have trodden. What desire should be produced by the knowledge of this, to walk worthy of Him who has called us to His kingdom and glory. Love, not fear, will be the motive for this, enabling us to estimate our ways, thoughts and doings in the light of His judgment-seat, studying to show ourselves approved unto God to give Him pleasure.

7. Divine Comfort.

"Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (Jude 21).

Here is the home of our souls. The night deepens; sorrows increase; change and dissolution proceed apace. The world says peace and safety; a professing church with Christ outside boasts that it is rich and has need of nothing. Amidst such things the rest for the saint is upon the bosom of the Saviour. His mercy will soon take us from earth's struggle to the Father's house, but the love that fills that home is ours to abide in now.

These are the resources that abide in the power of the Holy Ghost until the end. Christ is no more in the world's peace than He was in the world's war; but to this man does He look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at His word (Isaiah 66. 2).

“Be Filled with the Spirit.”

THERE can be no manner of doubt that the great want of the present day is Spirit-filled Christians; and the fact that we are exhorted to “be filled with the Spirit” at once provides us with divine warrant for praying that this may be true of us. Let us note at the outset that to “be filled with the Spirit” is *normal Christianity*. It has been suggested that it is an occasional blessing for the carrying out of a certain definite work; or that it is a special endowment for missionaries, evangelists, or other more or less prominent servants of Christ. The setting of our text, however, shows that it is essential to the discharge of the most minute details of everyday life in a way that will be acceptable unto the Lord.

It has to be observed also that the injunction is addressed to the saints at Ephesus, and is embodied in the epistle which presents Christian blessing at its highest point. This shows us that it is not sufficient merely to have spiritual intelligence, an apprehension of the truth as to the heavenly calling, or a clear outline before our mind as to divine teaching with regard to the One Body; we need to be “filled with the Spirit.” Shall we trace the subject a little in the New Testament? We begin, of course, with Him who in all things is our one great Example. In Luke 4. we read:

“And Jesus being *full of the Holy Ghost* returned from Jordan, and was *led by the Spirit* into the wilderness” (ver. 1).

While in verse 14 of the same chapter we read:

“And Jesus returned *in the power of the Holy Ghost* into Galilee: and there went out a fame of Him through all the region round about.”

The wonderful pathway and service of our blessed Lord is well summarized in the comprehensive words of Acts 10. 38:

“God *anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power*: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil: *for God was with Him.*”

Passing on now to the Acts of the Apostles we find in chapter 1 that the disciples were gathered around the risen Christ, and that His last words before He ascended to heaven were:

“Ye shall receive power, after that the *Holy Ghost* is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem and in all Judæa, and in Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (ver. 8).

They received their divine commission, but they had to wait for the promised power (Luke 24. 49). Without that they dare not, must not, could not move. What exactly is this power? It is the dynamic of God; an irresistible, God-glorifying, Christ-exalting, devil-defeating, conscience-convicting, soul-saving power, and it is to-day at the service of every Spirit-filled believer in our Lord Jesus Christ. In chapter 2 we have the account of the Holy Spirit’s advent; and we learn that the one hundred and twenty disciples waiting in that upper room were—

“all filled with the *Holy Ghost*, and began to speak” (ver. 4).

The result of this first display of the Spirit’s power through them was that—

“there was added unto them about three thousand souls” (ver. 41).

Such was the outcome of the Spirit-given testimony through [Spirit-filled

vessels. The fact that in chapter 4. 31 we again read that—

“they were all filled with the Holy Ghost”

makes us inquire whether they had lost the sense of that. Could it be that there was a tendency to rest on their oars? Three thousand were converted in one day, that number was increased to five thousand; a sensation was caused by the healing of the lame man, etc. Were they inclined to minimize the need of a constant supply of power? In any case the first whiff of persecution is recorded in this chapter; this led to prayer, and that was immediately followed by their being *“all filled with the Holy Ghost.”* May it not be that in this there is a hint that we must keep in constant touch with the Source of supply? Thank God, the supply is unlimited. In chapters 6., 7. we have the story of Stephen’s magnificent testimony. Remark! His face shone (6. 15) and he was the only man in the company who did not know it. The secret was that—

“he looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus”;

and the cause of that was that he was *“full of the Holy Ghost”* (7. 55).

Thus the first martyr of the church died as he had lived; *“his (spiritual) eye was not dim, nor his (spiritual) force abated.”* In chapter 9. Saul of Tarsus’ conversion is recorded, and the announcement of Ananias was that he had been sent—

“that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost” (ver. 17).

Then in chapter 13. 9 we have the significant statement: *“Then Saul (who is also called Paul), filled with the Holy Ghost,”* etc. This suggests that the Holy Spirit had claimed ownership of this *“chosen vessel,”* and had filled

him that He might use him in the signal way to which the remainder of the book bears testimony. It may be said that the foregoing refers to exceptional and outstanding circumstances then. True. When, however, we come to Ephesians 5. we find that Spirit-filled Christians are wanted for the proper discharge of the necessary duties of everyday life. The admonition of verse 14 is followed by exhortations to wives, husbands, children, parents, servants, masters. This shows that—

THE SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE MUST BE LIVED AT HOME

if the Spirit’s power is to be manifested elsewhere.

This goes to the root of the whole matter. We cannot be exemplary saints in the world, nor can we be efficient servants in the church, unless we are exponents of Christ in the home-circle. For this we must have the power of the Holy Spirit. We can understand some reader saying: *“I am not a Stephen, nor a Paul, and I do not know that I can place myself in any of the spheres of Ephesians 5. 6. Where do I come in?”* The answer is, in chapter 5, verse 21: *“Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.”* There is room for all here. We admit it is contrary to human nature, but it is *the* mark of the divine nature; it is *“the mind of Christ.”* Now let us see the further results of being *“filled with the Spirit.”* Joy and thanksgiving (5. 19, 20), divine strength, power to stand, prayer for God’s saints, God’s servants, and the furtherance of the gospel. All this may be as true of a bed-ridden saint as of an active servant; and if these things were true of all who read *“Scripture Truth,”* the world would know about it, so would Heaven, and so would Hell. Shall we pray for it here and now? The converse to being filled with the Spirit is that we

“MAKE ROOM FOR THE DEVIL.”

Thus a rendering of Ephesians 4. 27 is: "Neither make room for the devil." Experience has shown us that the devil is always seeking to find room in our heart, and when he succeeds the fear-some things against which we are warned in verses 29, 30, 31 manifest themselves, and our power for God is rendered null and void.

The Holy Spirit indwells every believer and always will do so, but in order that He may fill us, we must surrender to Him the key to the entire citadel of our being, *every chamber of it*, allow Him to have unreserved and undisputed possession; and then He will work in us and through us.

Why are we not filled? Is it because there is something to which we cling because we like it?—smoking, novel-reading, concerts, or other things which we know He does not sanction? Is it that we harbour unkind thoughts toward some fellow-Christian? That we conduct ourselves in an un-Christ-

like manner in the home or at business? Or that we insist upon having our own way in the company of God's people? We each know just what it is. The question is: Shall we continue thus? "The time is short." "The coming of the Lord draweth nigh." The need for revival is apparent, but it must begin right here with us. God is working to produce Spirit-filled men and women; the devil is working to prevent it. Who shall triumph? The answer to that question rests with us. Shall we yield ourselves completely to the Holy Spirit, or shall we make room for the devil? Surely to ask the question is to answer it. Let us then kneel down, and, realizing all that it involves, ask God to take us in hand, to empty us, then to fill us, and afterwards to use us just when, and where, and as He will, for the honour of His own great name, and for His glory "who hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us."

W. BRAMWELL DICK.

A Spirit of Prayer.

A THING of infinite importance to all who would serve the Lord is a spirit of prayer. Without this you are as weak as weakness itself, with it you are irresistible. This would be thought a strange remark by some, and to savour strongly of fanaticism; but, if we are to see any soul-stirring, God-glorifying move in the gospel field we must turn over a new leaf in this matter and take a new lesson on the subject of prayer. You may read your books and study your theology until you become very wise and very dry, and go about your work without unction and life and spirituality. **BEWARE!** Lay down your books and pray! Frequent seasons of secret prayer are wholly

indispensable to the keeping up an intercourse with God.

If you lose the spirit of prayer you will do nothing, or next to nothing, though you had the intellectual endowments of an angel. If you lose your spirituality, you had better stop and break off in the midst of your preparations, and repent and turn to God, or go about some other employment, for no object on earth can be more distressing, more abominable, than an earthly-minded, unspiritual minister of the gospel. The blessed Lord deliver His church from the guidance and influence of men who know not what it is to pray.

Things to Come.

OH what will be the day when won at last
 The last long weary battle, we shall come
 To those eternal gates the King has passed,
 Returning from our exile to our Home;
 When earth's last dust is washed from off our feet;
 The last sweat from our brows is wiped away;
 The hopes that made our pilgrim journey sweet
 All met around us, realized that day!

Oh what will be the day when with our prayer
 Eternal singing shall be woven in—
 Deep sound of golden harps far echoing there
 To praise the Lamb who took away our sin;
 When far and wide the radiant streets resound
 With Hallelujah songs the ransomed sing,
 And clouds of sweetest incense rise around
 The Throne where sits in light the Saviour King!

Oh what will be the day when we shall hear
 "Come, oh ye blessed!" when we take our place
 Before His throne in radiance sweet and clear,
 Behold His glorious, His beloved Face—
 Behold the Eyes whence bitter tears have flowed
 For all our grief, our hardness, and our sin—
 Behold the wounds whence streamed the precious Blood
 Which ransomed us, and washed us pure and clear!

Oh what will be the day when every thought
 Of that dark valley we have left below,
 And all remembrance of the fight we fought,
 Our pilgrim journey, long, and sad, and slow,
 Shall only make the Glory brighter far,
 Shall make the peace but deeper, sweeter yet?
 O'er that dark sea was Christ our Guiding Star,
 Our love were fainter love could we forget.

Oh what will be the day? No eye can see,
 No ear can hear, no heart has yet conceived,
 What God shall give us, and what we shall be
 When we inherit what we have believed.*
 O Land of Promise! rough may be the road,
 And long the race may be—but sweet the end;
 The dead with Christ, the risen sons of God,
 With Him we journey, and with Him ascend.

* "But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit" (1 Cor. 2. 10).

The Gospel Testimony has its place in all true Revival

IT is true that outward activity may abound where love to Christ has waned and there is little true devotion, as was the case with Ephesus (Rev. 2.). Yet the gospel testimony is an integral part of our witness to men, where it is lacking there has been serious decline. Where it is not there is wanting the character and spirit that belongs to the true remnant, as the "epistle of Christ." The character or spirit of Christ as seen in the church at the beginning was that of divine love, and as love characterized the original, so must it be descriptive of the true remnant at the end.

But if divine love is thus necessary, the activities of love must, as a consequence, mark those whom this love animates, for though there may be activity without love, there cannot be love without the activities of love coming into play. Hence, if the activities of love are not manifest, it is a sign that the love itself is wanting. When this is the case, the true remnant character is absent, and though there may still be the knowledge which "puffs up," the charity (love) which "builds up" will have disappeared, and the company as such becomes untrue in principle to the original, and must eventually be unfaithful in practice.

What, then, are the activities of divine love? They must answer to the activities of the heart of God, and this means the gospel, for the gospel is just the setting forth of the heart of God.

In corroboration of this, let us take the very first letter of the Apostle Paul. He says:—

"Ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia, for from you sounded out the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to Godward is spread abroad; so that we have no need to speak anything" (1 Thess. 1. 7, 8).

Ah, yes, but that was at the beginning, and we are in days of decline.

Very well, then look at the last writing of the same apostle, written specially for a day of ruin like this: "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God. . . . Who hath abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Tim. 1. 8-10).

"Do the work of an evangelist" (2 Tim. 4. 5).

When we look even later and see the writings of the Apostle John, writing for the last hour, the hour of antichrists (1 John 2. 18), what do we see but an intense evangelical spirit? Mark the "Whosoever will" of John 3. 16, and of Revelation 22. 17, and in the Epistle, "We have seen and do *testify* that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world."

Unless we are very evangelical, we have not the fellowship of these apostles.

If, however, we come down to our own day, we have the testimony of one deservedly held in very high repute. The late J. N. Darby wrote,

"I believe that in all times blessing within is in the measure of evangelization. The reason is very simple. It is the presence of God which blesses, and God is love, and it is love that makes one seek souls. God loves souls, and if we do not seek them, He will set His testimony elsewhere. He loves us, may He give us only to be faithful to Him, and He will certainly bless us."

It is a primary truth that all light from God is given for use, and to share with others, and not simply for enjoyment. The parables of the talents and the pounds illustrate this most clearly. Thus it undoubtedly follows that those who would desire to be a true remnant, and who know the truth of God, are

more than any others responsible for, and entrusted with, the testimony of the gospel.

"Freely ye have received, freely give."

We cannot give what we have not received; we *must* give what we have received, or we shall lose its value. "Unto whomsoever much is given of him shall much be required, and to whom men have committed much of him will they ask the more."

What is the scope of the gospel?

It is world-wide; to be less would be derogatory to the value of Christ. Let us not forget the following and many similar scriptures:—

"Repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in His name among *all nations*" (Luke 24. 47).

"God . . . will have *all* men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2. 3, 4).

"Not willing that *any* should perish, but that *all* should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3. 9).

"Whosoever will" (John 3. 16).

"Now commandeth *all* men *everywhere* to repent" (Acts 17. 30).

"Paul . . . separated unto the gospel of God . . . we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among *all nations*" (Rom. 1. 1-5).

"The revelation of the mystery . . .

made known to *all nations* for the obedience of faith" (Rom. 16. 25, 26).

Note how this last passage is connected with the gospel, and that both the gospel and the mystery are to be presented to *all nations*. Who are we to limit the scope of the gospel? If we do this we misrepresent God as to His attitude towards the world in general. The Jews did this. They claimed a monopoly of truth and blessing, forbidding to speak to the Gentiles, and wrath came on them to the uttermost.

It is a day of weakness and we are called to humiliation. Wherever we go we shall be met with the marks of failure, and there is no hope that matters will improve; on the contrary, they will grow worse and worse until Christ comes. Being true to the original does not mean that we can revive the circumstances of the Pentecostal days, but that we should have the same large-heartedness, the same devotion which characterized the saints then, and which looked for blessing everywhere without exception, the spirit of the one who called himself debtor both to the Jew and to the Greek.

Is it not possible that our barrenness in this land, the centre of extraordinary light and privilege, is due to our wanting a monopoly of blessing, and feeding on our own enjoyment and thus withering, for "there is that scattereth and yet increaseth, and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, and it tendeth to poverty"?

S. L. JACOB.

Preaching.

I FEAR that our fault, of late years, has been in an effort to present the gospel with the utmost lucidity possible; and, no doubt, we have succeeded in this; but clearness of statement, apart from that power which is only to be got in prayer, is of no saving value. We count upon our heads rather than upon God, and there sult is just what

we should expect. God "blew the seed away" (Hag.).

A stripling, dependent on God, is, like David, a far better instrument than an armoured King Saul. We know the great secret; will we honestly use it? Matthew 6. 6 presents a condition, a command and a compensation. The condition is highly important,

J. WILSON SMITH.

A Door of Hope.

THERE are not many doors that lead into salvation. There is but one. Jesus said, "I am the door; by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved" (John. x. 9).

Neither are there many doors leading from a feeble or backslidden spiritual condition to one of power and nearness to God. Again, there is but one, and by that door we must enter if to-day we would pass from our weakness and declension into a renewed measure of devotedness and faithfulness to our Lord.

Since Israel's history was written for our admonition, the things that happened to them being ensamples, or types, for us (1 Cor. 10. 11), to that history we will turn for an illustration of this matter.

First, then, it is striking to notice that their history as a nation began with the afflictions of Egypt. To Abram it was said, "Thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years" (Gen. 15. 13), and it was in connection with that prophecy that Abram had the vision of the smoking furnace and the burning lamps passing between the pieces of his sacrifice. Into Egypt's smoking furnace of affliction Abram's seed passed. It was an unpromising beginning, for Jacob and his sons were far beneath Abram's spiritual level. They came down as a small tribe of quarrelsome and suspicious nomads into Goshen, apparently ignorant of what awaited them.

God, however, took them in hand and permitted them to feel the scorching heat of Egypt's furnace. "But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew" (Ex. 1. 12). In that furnace of affliction they were welded together as a nation. They

entered Egypt a feeble and disunited family: they left it a compact and powerful nation.

Their subsequent history, with all its sad declension and sin is known to all of us. Nothing could surpass the blackness of their unfaithfulness and ruin save the brightness of that faithful mercy of God which plainly predicts and holds out before them the hope and way of recovery.

Now, their sin had taken two great forms: first their forsaking the true God for idols, and second the rejection and murder of the beloved Son of God, their Messiah, when he appeared. Israel is to be richly blessed upon earth, and richly a blessing to the nations in the millennial age, but before ever this can be they must pass through this one and only door to recovery of which we speak.

Hosea the prophet exercised his ministry in the years preceding the utter ruin of the kingdom of the ten tribes and capture of Samaria; and his book is occupied with scathing denunciations of the atrocious idolatry that was about to bring down these sore judgments. Mingled with these denunciations are predictions of ultimate recovery, and it is in his second chapter that the expression "a door of hope" occurs.

"Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak to her heart [margin]. And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing these, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt" (vers. 14, 15).

How amazing the grace that shines in these promises! To think that there shall yet be a moment at the end of Israel's disastrous history when she

shall sing the praises of Jehovah with the sweetness of her youth and with the vigour of that moment when on the further bank of the Red Sea she saw all her foes dead upon the shore!

“She shall sing THERE.” Where? In the valley of Achor. Not literally and physically of course, but morally and spiritually she will be there.

The seventh chapter of Joshua enlightens us as to the significance of this reference to the valley of Achor. It owed its name to the terrible judgment that fell on Achan within it.

When Israel entered the land of promise under Joshua, they were strictly commanded to touch nothing, but make a clean sweep of the nations in possession and all their works. These instructions were sanitary precautions of a spiritual kind. Idolatry is terribly infectious as well as corrupting, and a policy of thorough isolation was the only safe one.

Achan was the first who broke through the sanitary cordon that had been established. He coveted and took a little of their silver and gold and also “a Babylonish garment.” Now Babylon was the seat and stronghold of idolatry in the ancient world. This garment was *Babylonish*, i.e. one to be used in connection with some heathen and idolatrous practice.

Upon Achan summary judgment fell. He and all his surroundings, as well as the offending garment, perished beneath a judgment of stones and fire. Thus the infection was stayed—for the time at all events. It was judged and put away.

Idolatry will yet be revived in Israel’s midst in connection with the Beast and False Prophet of Revelation 13, and their final clearance will only be when nationally they enter afresh the valley of Achor, or, in other words, they are brought to whole-hearted self-judgment, and an utter and radical forsaking and destruction of the accursed thing.

Amongst the latter prophets, long after Hosea, Zechariah appeared. In his days a remnant had returned from Babylon, idolatry had been dropped and the first appearing of Christ was the approaching event. Hence he has hardly a word to say on the subject of idolatry, but much as to the religious formalism and hypocrisy that was developing and also as to the Messiah whose coming drew nigh. He predicts His first coming in grace, and His rejection.

The rejection and death of Jesus at the hands of His wayward people was the crowning infamy of all their sins. One may well wonder if any door of hope can possibly be opened to a people guilty of such an act as this.

But, such is the goodness of God, Zechariah was commissioned to predict the opening of just such a door. Verses 9 to 14 in his twelfth chapter present it to us.

It is a door of *PROFOUND Repentance*. The remnant of David’s house and Jerusalem’s inhabitants, who at that time will have come through the awful furnace of the great tribulation, a furnace far worse than that of ancient Egypt, will under the hand of God be smitten with an agonizing conviction of sin that will utterly prostrate them.

Notice a few points :—

It will be a change, not merely of thought or attitude, but of *spirit*. An “unclean spirit” had been in the land (chap. 13. 2), now a “spirit of grace” is poured upon them.

It will not be mere regret for wrongdoing, nor sorrow for the consequent chastisement, but rather a profound sense of the enormity of their offence against Christ. It says, “They shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him as one that is in bitterness for his first-born.” We

read "there was a great cry in Egypt" when the first-born fell on the passover night. But this will evidently exceed that in intensity.

Further, the conviction and feeling will be so keen that not only will families be isolated in their sorrow but even men and their wives will find it impossible to mourn together. Each and all will instinctively seek that solitude that shuts up the soul to God alone.

We are familiar with the fact that Israel is to be the great channel of earthly blessing in the millennial age, but have we sufficiently considered this great work which is the moral foundation upon which their subsequent greatness rests? Objectively their glory in the age to come rests upon the finished work of Christ's atonement;

subjectively it rests upon this great work of the Spirit in their hearts.

We stand in the last days of the church's sojourn upon earth. Its shameful failure and declension is patent to all beholders. To sit in the critic's chair and expose the wrong is an easy matter, and fruitless too, if there we stop. We need to go forward each for himself and herself, really repenting of the evil, in keeping with the spirit of Zechariah 12., and really putting away the evil in keeping with the action of Joshua in the valley of Achor.

For those who do so there is the assurance of recovery and blessing.

The matter may be crystallized into few words: *All recovery is based upon repentance.*

F. B. HOLE.

Life in Five Layers.

IF David had to speak of himself and his fellow-Israelites as mere sojourners, and confess that "*our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding,*"¹ much more reason has the Christian to use such language. He is a citizen of heaven; a stranger and a pilgrim on earth.

When the Good Samaritan found the wounded and dying victim of the highwaymen's attack, he took him, after binding up his wounds, not to a home but to an inn, a temporary place of sojourn. Any one acquainted with Eastern caravanserais, dirty, wretched, and utterly destitute of comfort, will understand what an apt picture of this world, the place of the Christian's temporary stay, they are.

The world to us is but an inn, a caravanserai. But we shall not be here long. Even if our Lord should tarry we shall soon be gone. "Fast to

its close ebbs out life's little day." Our life is "*even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.*"²

A vapour! As we pass a factory, a puff of steam escapes from some pipe. It lingers like a diminutive cloud for a second or two, and then it disappears. A mere puff, a momentary vapour! Even such is our life.

But the tiniest thing can be subdivided and analysed. A manufacturer of coverings for airships told the writer that the fabric, thin and flimsy as it is, consists of at least five distinct layers, whose fibres cross in different directions. Let us use this gossamer-like substance as an illustration of our lives. We shall see, by careful analysis, that they consist of five definite periods, five *layers*, if one may so express it. Scripture speaks of these various layers.

1. Time Past.

The part of our lives previous to our conversion is thus described: "*In time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the Spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience, among whom also we all had our conversation in times past, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind.*"³

What marked us "in time past," in our unconverted days, was our sins. We were covered with them, smothered up, dead in them. A powerful spirit wrought in us a response to the allurements of the world, and we walked according to its course.

Now the course of this world has been a well-defined one, marked by stages that are as manifest as the milestones along the road from London to York. The chief stages are these³—

First, there was disobedience to God. This took place in Eden.

Second, independence of God, men trying to establish themselves in the world and secure happiness without their Creator.

Third, apostasy from God, men worshipping idols, the work of their own hands, and in reality serving demons.⁴

Fourth, persistent opposition to the plans of God, and pursuit of the schemes of Satan formed in antagonism to the divine counsels.

Fifth, crucifixion of the Son of God.

Sixth, the rejection of the gospel of God, the testimony rendered by His Holy Spirit.

Seventh, the claim of man to be God, demanding that divine honours should be paid them.⁵

Along this terrible course we walked, swept on by a superhuman power,

gratifying our lusts, whether fleshly or mental, and identified in every way with the world to which we belonged.

But delivering mercy met us. "God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us" intervened, and the second layer, the second phase, of our life was reached.

2. The First Day (Phil. 1. 5).

The first day of our Christian life! The day of our reception of the gospel and adoption into the family of God. A memorable and red-letter day indeed!

What marked it? The forgiveness of all our sins. Freely, frankly, and most graciously, not for any worthiness of our own, but altogether for Christ's sake, and on the ground of His accomplished work of redemption, God forgave us. He justified us from all things and made us His dear children. Our links with the world were snapt; we were delivered out of the hand of Satan, and now, instead of an evil spirit working in us, God Himself does so. He works in us both the willing and the doing of His good pleasure.⁶ The flesh remains in us, with its lusts unchanged. But the Spirit of God dwells in us, and opposes the actings of the flesh, so that by walking in the Spirit its lusts are no longer fulfilled.⁷ Praise be to God for this great deliverance!

Now we come to the third layer of life.

3. The Rest of our Time.

The rest of our time in the flesh, i.e. in the body—the remainder of our time here on earth (1 Peter 4. 2).

What is to mark it? One thing: *the doing of the will of God*. "The time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles,"⁸ but now our one undivided pursuit is to be

the holy will of the God who has saved us and whose we are.

In this we have Christ Himself as our great Exemplar. He found His very meat in the doing of His Father's will.⁹ He ever sought to do that will, and not His own.¹⁰ It was the express purpose for which He came down from heaven.¹¹

We too have been "sent into the world" for the same purpose. No longer do we belong to the world. We "belong to Christ,"¹² and are left here for a season to walk as He walked.

Into the doing of God's will we should throw all our energies, and thus be "doing the will of God from the heart."¹³ In this way that will becomes to us the law of liberty, the fulfilling of that which our hearts desire above all else, and in which grace teaches us to delight.

The will of God, in so far as it is to be performed by us, is spoken of in the New Testament in three different ways.

First, there is the clearly expressed, unchanging will of God as to certain definite things. For instance, we are told that "*this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication.*"¹⁴ Again, "*In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*"¹⁵ Here are statements of a positive kind that leave no room for inquiry as to what God's will in the matter is. There is no need to pray for guidance. The command is absolute. We have but to obey.

Second, there are matters about which the will of God varies. His will for one may not be identical with His will for another. In this connection we have to use an "if." For example, we read, "*It is better, IF the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well-doing rather than for evil.*"¹⁶ Some are called to suffer more than others. It may be God's will that one of His children should drink a cup of exceeding bitter sorrow, while His will for another may be that life

should be full of pleasant places. We do not know, we cannot say, what His will, in this sense, may be.

In this case also our attitude is to be one not so much of inquiry as of submission. Whatever God's will for us may be, we may rest assured that it is for our highest good, and all that lies in the pathway of that will, whether pleasing or painful, we may take as from a Father's hand, and like our Lord Jesus in the garden, say, "Not My will, but Thine be done."¹⁷

Third, there are things as to which *inquiry* becomes us. In connection with these things we have prayerfully to ascertain the will of God, that we may do it. They are things, for the most part, that involve no great principle, and as to which Scripture does not speak. If I seek to serve the Lord, I have no direction in His Word as to exactly where to go, and when. And yet there is the will of God in connection with these things, and with a hundred comparatively trivial circumstances of everyday life.

Therefore we are told, "*Ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this or that.*"¹⁸ Our doings, our comings and goings, are all to be subject to the will of God.

It is remarkable that this passage follows hard on the heels of the one already referred to, which compares our life to a vapour. It is because of this, because our opportunities for loyal obedience and faithful service will soon be passed, that submission to God's will is enjoined even in connection with the ordinary activities of life.

The will of God is the only thing worth living for. Whether it involves a journey across the seas to live and labour in China or Africa, or whether it means a life spent in suffering and quiet submission at home, our truest wisdom is to seek daily grace that we may carry out God's will. May He guide us, and help us so to do.

Next we have

4. The Time of Old Age (Ps 71. 9).

Some of us, of course, are not permitted to reach this stage. But it is a privilege to be allowed to "finish our course" here. Though, if slain for Christ's sake, or taken home by the wise and gracious will of God, it is "far better," in that it is to be "with Christ."¹⁹

David prays that his God will not cast him off in the time of his old age. Again he says, "Now, also, when I am old and grey-headed, O God, forsake me not."²⁰ We may be sure that God will never forsake His aged and way-worn saints. Has He not said, "Even to your old age I am He; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you"?²¹ David's own long experience would have taught him this. "I have been young," he says, "and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken."²²

Was "Paul the aged"²³ forsaken indeed in his old age? Nay, forsaken indeed he was by many whom he loved, and who owed much to him, nevertheless, "the Lord stood by me," he says, "and strengthened me."²⁴

Even so can David say, in his old age psalm already referred to (the seventy-first), "I am as a wonder unto many; but Thou art my strong Refuge" (ver. 7); "Thou shalt . . . comfort me on every side" (ver. 21).

No, no; God does not leave His aged pilgrims in the days of their failing strength. They may have seen the friends of their youth one by one removed. The hopes of early life may have long ago faded away; long cherished desires have proved to be unattainable; life, perhaps, seems to have been largely a failure. Yet He who at Cana kept the best wine till the last still knows how to do so. He can make the declining years of His saints the brightest

and best of all, bright with His own faithful love, and with the increasing nearness of *home*.

Nor need the aged ones feel themselves to be useless. Their strength is spent, but there remains the promise: "They shall still bring forth fruit in old age."²⁵

Fruit for God, even in old age! The one condition is that we be "planted in the house of the Lord," dwelling much with Him, finding in His presence the constant abiding-place of the soul.

Then, after an old age, bright with the comforts and joys of the Lord, comes

5. The End (Ps. 39. 4).

Whichever way the end be reached, whether by the coming of the Lord, or by our "falling asleep," it will be to be "with Him." If we pass through the valley of the shadow of death, He, according to His Word is with us. When the breath leaves our poor worn-out body, we are immediately "with Christ." If we are left here to be among those that remain and alive at His coming, it will be all the same. "So shall we ever be with the Lord."²⁶ Blessed, glorious end!

But, of course, the end is only that of our earthly pilgrimage. There is really no "end" for the Christian. No "finis" will ever be written to his story; no last chapter will ever be reached in the record of his life. For it is eternal. Time will pass. The golden years of the kingdom will roll by. Heaven and earth shall be no more, but in the scene of God's new creation we shall dwell for ever, as sons with Him who as the Beloved Son of the Father has brought us thus to the Source and Spring of all love and blessing.

We shall dwell *with God*. The Father's love will be our known and enjoyed portion. All that Christ inherits will be

ours, with Him. We shall see His face. His name will be in our foreheads. All His deepest joys He will share with us! Oh, wonder of wonders! Oh, rapture too deep for words!

"Oh, home of love, of life, of light divine!
Oh, radiant sphere of bliss! Oh for a tongue
To tell the love of God, of Christ; the love
Of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost! Above
All creature thought! Above what hath
been sung!
The Father's house! Lord Jesus, Thine
and mine!"

¹ 1 Chron. 29. 15.
² James 4. 14.
³ Eph. 2. 2.
⁴ 1 Cor. 10. 20.
⁵ 2 Thess. 2. 4.
⁶ Phil. 2. 13.
⁷ Gal. 5. 16, 17.
⁸ 1 Peter 4. 3.
⁹ John 4. 34.
¹⁰ John 5. 30.
¹¹ John 6. 38.
¹² Mark 9. 41.
¹³ Eph. 6. 6.

¹⁴ 1 Thess. 4. 3.
¹⁵ 1 Thess. 5. 18.
¹⁶ 1 Peter 3. 17.
¹⁷ Luke 22. 42.
¹⁸ James 4. 15.
¹⁹ Phil. 1. 25.
²⁰ Ps. 71. 18.
²¹ Is. 46. 4.
²² Ps. 37. 25.
²³ Philemon 9.
²⁴ 2 Tim. 4. 17.
²⁵ Ps. 92. 14.
²⁶ 1 Thess. 4. 17.

H. P. BARKER.

"He faileth not" (Zeph. 3. 5; Isa. 42. 3).

"He changeth not" (Mal. 3. 6; Ps. 102. 27; Heb. 1. 12; 13. 8; James 1. 17).

"His word is faithful" (Psa. 119. 86 m.; 138 m.; 1 Tim. 1. 15; 2. 11; 4. 9; Titus 1. 9; 3. 8; Rev. 22. 6; 21. 5; Isa. 25. 1).

"This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

Questions on Prophetic Subjects.

The Parable of the Marriage of the King's Son (Matt. 22.).

DOES the city which is burned up refer to the world? And if so why is the invitation sent out afterwards to others?

This whole parable when spoken by the Lord was prophetic of the gospel period. The gospel is really an invitation from God to men to come and share in His delight in His Son. This invitation was sent first to Jerusalem; for the disciples had to begin there (Luke 24. 47); and it is to the Jew first (Rom. 1. 16). But they did not want God's pardoning and enriching grace, and in the city which had been guilty of the blood of God's Son, in whom He delighted, Stephen and others were martyred. Consequently, God in His wrath allowed the Roman armies to come up in A.D. 70 to execute His word against JERUSALEM. God calls them His armies, for they carried out His judgment, and the murderers were destroyed and their city burned up. Jerusalem is the city in question: "They which were bidden were not worthy" (ver. 8), and Paul

takes up this very word in Acts 13. 46 as he turns from the Jews to the Gentiles.

After that the gospel went out into the highways, *i.e.* amongst the Gentile nations; and the Christian profession has been formed; the wedding has been furnished with guests. They have been brought in by the *servants*, and many have been brought in who are only there in profession, and who have neither felt nor owned their need of a righteousness which is not their own; they trust in themselves. But the King, who will make no mistakes such as His servants have made, is coming to view the guests. Then there will be discrimination and division, only those who have discarded their own merits and have Christ for their righteousness will abide at the marriage. The rest will be cast out into outer darkness. This coincides with the Lord's solemn word to Laodicea: "I will spue thee out of my mouth," and it will take place at the close of the day of grace.

EDITOR.

People's Rights—Laodicea (Rev. 3. 15).

Written over twenty-three years ago.

THERE is a feature of the last days which Scripture puts prominently forward—the self-assertion which indeed on man's part has never been lacking, but which now pervades, in a manner not before seen, the masses of the population.

"Laodicea" as "people's right," has become morally, spiritually, and politically also, the watchword of the times. On the one hand, there is an immense march of civilization, a predicted running to and fro, and increase of knowledge; on the other, an uprise of what threatens civilization, and is ominous of an approaching end of the whole state.

"People's right!" The rights of the masses! and which the masses themselves mean to define and pronounce upon. Here is that condition of things which Hobbes, more than two centuries since, declared to be the natural condition, and which he rightly said meant universal war. For who is to judge as to these conflicting interests? and who is to enforce the judgment? Class will disagree with class—nay, individual with individual; every man's hand will be against his brother; might will make right upon a scale the world has never seen, until out of this surging sea a power rises strong enough to command once more (Rev. 13). Then they that will be lords shall have a lord, and they that will not receive Christ shall have Antichrist; so the Word of God declares. For this ominous watchword, "people's rights," in the end of centuries of divine long-suffering, is a terrible claim in the ears of a God, strong, if yet so patient, and who is provoked every day.

It is a claim which denies the Fall and the sentence confirmed by countless individual sins—the claim of a world which has refused and crucified the Son of God, come into it in simplest loving mercy; which would take the earth out of its Maker's hand, and enrich itself at His cost and to His dishonour. What wonder if they should quarrel over the spoils of victory, and the nations be quaking, as they are, over the success of their policy of liberty and equal

rights? When democracy meant only the curbing of the despotic power of rulers, when it meant still respect for wealth and rank, and law and order, they could rejoice over it, and cite it as the evidence of morally improved times. Arbitrary power only was to be restrained; there was to be equal justice and quietness and assurance as the effect of righteousness. Certainly the abuse of power had been great enough to provoke reprisals, and make the downfall of absolutism an apparent real advancement. But man was and is the same; and the mistake has been ever to suppose that alterations of this kind could really heal or touch a moral state which was the essence of the trouble.

Who can say where the movement for men's rights shall stop? If they be rights, must it not be unrighteousness to stop anywhere? Who can say to the restless, resistless, surge of the sea, Come no farther: here shall thy waves be stayed? There were, there are, more real and gigantic evils—tyrannies which no form of government yet devised has taken into account, or probably can take. What does every man's right to his own imply? What is "his own"? How can you take from wealth the power which wealth implies? or allow power without allowing the abuse of it? Settle all inequalities, make one general plain of all the mountains upon earth, you have stopped the fertilizing rivers also which the mountains roll over the plains and in the valleys which you deprecate, but for whose benefit, spite of all, they rise. Rights! what scale have you of rights? Listen to the voices from a lower level than you desire, which will interpret for you, and enforce their interpretation—socialism, communism, nihilism—dread names, not merely for the monarch, but for the man of property also, and for the law-abiding citizen. People's rights are already in terrible conflict with one another, and in their name how many wrongs may be inflicted yet! This Laodicea of politics is destined to be the rock upon which all governmental reform will end in anarchy and chaos (Luke 21. 25, 26).

F. W. GRANT

God Making Himself Known.

Rom. 3. 24-26; 5. 5-8.

IT is impossible for man to divest himself entirely of the idea of a supreme Being, One all-wise, almighty, and omniscient. On account of the darkness in which he is by nature, and on account of the wretched conceit of his foolish heart, he may change the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man, and to birds, and quadrupeds, and creeping things, but he will clothe these images with divine attributes, and pay to them divine honours, as the whole world has done at one time or another (Rom. 1. 22, 23). A god of some sort he must have.

But while the creature is thus worshipped and served, in the deep subconsciousness of the degraded devotee is the conviction that outside the circle in which his activities are displayed the living and the true God has His habitation. Hence on the entry into Athens of the herald of the gospel, he finds an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD (Acts 17. 23). "Him," says the apostle, "declare I unto you." There, in that learned city, was found the public confession that not by idolatry had they reached the knowledge of the One to whom they owed their existence as His offspring.

But why should the creature be found in this unhappy ignorance of his Creator? Why should this world exist at all, with its self-love, its pride, its covetousness, its violence, its cruelty, its corruption? It forces itself upon the thoughtful mind that God, who is all-wise, almighty, omniscient, must have had some marvellous purpose in view when He allowed such a flood-tide of evil to enter His creation, and to sweep over this world of men in the way in which it has done. A benevolent Being—and everywhere do we

find traces of His benevolence—would not have allowed His weak creature to be subjected to such a terrible condition of things, without having some wonderful purpose of blessing in view, and which in no other way could have been effectuated.

That man is under judgment and afraid of his Maker requires no proving. The fact is evinced by his subjection to mortality, his terror at the prospect of dissolution and of what may come after, and his manifest confusion when in the presence of others he is confronted with the question of his relations with God. He may profess to be able to look death calmly in the face, and he may protest that his relations with God is his own private affair, with which no third person has anything to do, but he is not generally believed, for the sinking of a passenger ship at sea, and on the field of battle the order to be ready to go "over the top" in half an hour, will send the vast majority of even the most thoughtless to their knees. No worshipper of a false god will blush to be found at his devotions, for his conscience is undisturbed by his conception of his deity, because the idol that he worships is in his estimation no better morally than he himself is. It is the inflexible and burning holiness, righteousness, and truth of the true God with whom he has to do that fills him with dismay, for he feels his utter unfitness for such a Presence.

But seeing that on account of the entrance of sin into the world man in his natural state is alienated from the life of God, the question as to what is to be the end of all the miseries of the fallen creature, and of all the unwearied activities of God with the poor foolish wanderer that would infinitely prefer to be let alone, must continually

arise until a perfectly satisfactory answer has been given. What is the object in it all?

With the light of the revelation God has been pleased to give us the question should not be difficult to answer. But before we come to that revelation might we not wisely ask ourselves why the creature exists? Surely it is not that he should go out fresh from the hand of his Creator, forget all about Him, and live to please himself. Surely it is rather that man should serve his Maker, and bask in the sunshine of whatever light may have been given to him by the One to whom he owes his existence. Right through the whole revelation God has given to us runs this glorious truth, that the end that God has in view is that He may be known by His creature.

Therefore it was a necessity that sin should be allowed entrance into this world, for though an enemy has brought it to pass, God will make it serve to give effect to His eternal purpose. It must not for a moment be supposed that He was the author of sin, or that He brought it into the world. Had He done either His purpose never could have been effectuated. It was by one of His creatures it was brought into existence, and by another of His creatures it found entrance into the world. The devil was the first sinner. His pride made him think he was the equal of God (Ezek. 28. 9); Adam by an attempt at equality with God allowed it to come into the world (Gen. 3. 5). That God could have prevented the existence of sin, or having allowed it to exist, He could have prevented its entrance into the world, cannot rightly be questioned. It is obnoxious to Him, and He will eventually cleanse His universe from its presence, but in the meantime He makes it, as well as the one who is its father, to serve His purpose.

The ways of God are intricate, inscrutable, and past finding out, and

they are very often perplexing, but how could they be otherwise than mysterious to the finite creature? To any creature they must be simply incomprehensible. If He is pleased to bestow upon us His Holy Spirit that we may understand His wondrous thoughts, that is entirely another matter; and because He has done so our hearts should be filled with thanksgiving, but without the indwelling of that Spirit, which He gives to all who believe on His Son, we could not understand the purposes of His divine mind (1 Cor. 2. 9-14). Nothing but the sinful conceit of the human heart would cause anyone to think otherwise.

To take His place in the centre of a universe that would be radiant with the knowledge of Himself, His creature finding his perfect satisfaction and delight in the knowledge of his Creator fully revealed, and the Creator having His delight in the blessing of His creature, was the purpose of the mind divine; and it was by means of man, through man, in man, and for man's glory, that this eternal purpose was to be brought to pass.

Men, even with the gospel ringing in their ears, see little more than the fact of man's fall, his resultant ruin, and the infinite pity of God in bringing salvation near to all by means of the cross of Christ, and though that is not a false view for the hearer of the gospel to take, it is very far short of that which he has yet to learn when he believes the gospel and has received the Spirit.

When he is anointed with the Holy Unction, he begins to view the whole matter from the side of divine counsel, and he sees God by the revelation of Himself bringing everything in heaven and on earth into new and eternal relationship with Himself, the glory of that revelation permeating and vivifying the length, breadth, height, and depth of that universe of blessing which existed in eternal counsel before this world was. And what an advance this

is from looking at the gospel as setting forth the compassions of God, however great and good this may be.

But as to the knowledge of God: for us to have any assurance of permanent peace and happiness two most important qualities must be found in the revelation which God has given of Himself: one is *righteousness*, and the other is *love*. Suppose—and may He forgive the supposition—that God thought as little of sin as man does, what guarantee would we have that His world would be any better than man's world? What an eternity of misery would open up before the vision of our souls! And suppose—and may He forgive this blasphemous supposition also—He cared as little for the welfare of man as man does for the welfare of his neighbour, what guarantee would we have against violence, oppression, cruelty, and wrong? For true rest for our souls we require to be assured that the Governor of the universe hates sin with a perfect hatred, but loves His creature with a perfect love. Have we any proof that those qualities are possessed by Him? Can we have any true knowledge of Himself?

Thank God, with regard to this we are not left in the least uncertainty. He has taken occasion of the utter ruin in which His creature man was found, by reason of his departure from his primal state, to bring Himself to light, not only in His attributes but even in His very nature, so that we might know Him, and that our knowledge of Him might give us the utmost confidence that all is unspeakably well with those who put their trust in Him.

In the sight of the universe of intelligent beings He has demonstrated His utter abhorrence and unsparing judgment of sin, that had filled this world with woes indescribable, brought death upon the human race, and made man amenable to eternal judgment and wrath.

But first of all the total ruin of the creature as dominated by sin had to be brought to light, and when by means of the various tests to which man was subjected, it was made apparent that there was no power in the creature to effect his own recovery, God in grace was presented to him in the person of Jesus; but this only served to disclose the unfathomable depths of moral depravity that lay in the fallen nature of the human race, for man in his natural condition was found to be absolutely irreconcilable to God. The dealings of God with man during the first four thousand years of the world's history proved that *man* could do nothing in the direction of his own recovery; the rejection of Christ proved that *God* could do nothing that would bring about the recovery of man in the flesh as a child of Adam. The carnal mind was proven to be enmity against God (Rom. 8. 7).

Sin, the thing that God hated, and that dominated man, had its seat in the flesh, and was so truly the nature of the flesh that the flesh is called "the flesh of sin" (Rom. 8. 3, Rev. Ver. marg.). Therefore if sin is to receive its judgment it must receive it in that in which it has its seat, and which is in its nature *sin*. There is no other way by which man can be delivered from its power and presence. How is this to be done and at the same time have a way of salvation opened up for the sinner? The answer to this brings to light the wisdom, the righteousness, the power, and the love of God.

I have said that the final test of man was the presentation of God to him in Jesus. But this was only one aspect of the life of Jesus here below. If He was God before the vision of man, He was also Man before the vision of God, the Man that in the counsels of the Father was destined to displace the man after the flesh, and yet the Man in whom salvation should be found for all the lost sons of Adam who would put their trust in Him.

Having been rejected as the Christ the Son of God, He takes the place of the Victim, in order that God might give expression to His holy abhorrence and unsparing judgment of sin. Sinless Himself, but in the likeness of the flesh of sin, He gives Himself up to be dealt with as sin deserves to be dealt with, and in the awful judgment of that cross of woe He parts with the life of flesh for ever, and risen from the dead He becomes the fountain of life—divine life—life eternal—for all who receive Him by faith.

Judicially sin—sin in the flesh—the flesh itself—has been brought to an end, the righteousness of God has thus been manifested, and sin is seen to be that cursed thing that God cannot tolerate, but the thing He must condemn wherever it is found. He can never now be charged with indifference to sin. Woe be to the sinner who appears before Him in the day of judgment in his sinful condition!

The blood is on the mercy-seat. The witness that the life of flesh is gone in the judgment of the cross is ever before God. It is the witness of His intolerance of sin. It declares His righteousness regarding the passing over of sins that had taken place before the cross, and also at this present time declares His justice when He pronounces righteous the sinner that believes in Jesus. The cross has vindicated Him against every charge of being indifferent to sin.

But in that same cross His *love* has been brought to light. He could very well have shown His hatred against

sin by the eternal condemnation of the sinner, but instead of doing this He sent His only-begotten Son to bear our deserts, and thus declared the infinite love of His heart: "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." When our lost condition had been thoroughly brought to light, then the "*due time*" was come when God took our salvation into His own hand, and manifested a love toward us such as never had been seen upon earth: "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Where His hatred against sin was fully declared, there also was manifested His great love to the sinner. This makes the cross infinitely precious to us. And surely above all thought precious to God and to us is the One who gave Himself that we might be saved, and that God might be glorified in our salvation.

In the light of the revelation of God our souls live. We know that in His universe of blessing, to which He has called us, no evil thing can ever enter. There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, in that sphere of eternal glory, for righteousness shall have its home there, and love also. And we shall be there, made fit for that scene of spotless purity by the cross and by the water of the word—the work wrought *for* us, and the work wrought *in* us—to live in the light of God made manifest in Jesus. Well may we praise Him who has brought us out of darkness into His marvellous light.

J. BOVD.

"Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood. And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they *also* which pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Amen."

Our Greatest Lack as Christians.

ASK your Christian acquaintances and you will be surprised at the variety of answers elicited.

Many say, lack of prayer, and doubtless this is a tremendous lack, which words can scarcely exaggerate.

Others say, neglect of the Bible, and they have very much reason for so saying.

Others say, purpose of heart; or again, practical Christianity, or aggressiveness in the gospel, or a right understanding of the church.

But all these fail to give a true answer. I believe that to be **THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD**. The necessary prayer of the Apostle Paul for the saints was that they might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and **INCREASING BY THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD**.

The knowledge of God is *the cause* from which spring all happy and holy effects, such as prayerfulness, study of the Scriptures, aggressiveness in the gospel, the knowledge of the church, practical Christianity, etc.

If we know a person intimately we know what his interests and joys are, and we should not be intimate unless we shared those interests and joys, and the more intimate we are the more we shall understand and share in those interests and joys. And the finer character this person is the more it will prove the character of his associates. A thief consorts with a thief, a liar with a liar, but those who consort with God must be godlike.

Can a Christian know God and not be led out in fervent prayer for His interests, whether in the gospel field or among His own?

Can a Christian know God, and fail to study prayerfully and adoringly the book that reveals Him, and tells us of His varied interests?

Can a Christian know God and not be deeply interested in gospel work?

The good news is *the gospel OF GOD*. That it is *of God* is sufficient.

Can a Christian know God and not be interested in *the church OF GOD* of which he is a part, and which carries with it the heavenly calling and destiny?

Can a Christian know God and be uninterested in prophetic truth—the foretelling of God's governmental ways in the earth?

Can a Christian know God and fail to be an example of practical Christianity?

The knowledge of God, then, is our great lack as Christians, not surely an absolute lack of that knowledge, for how could we be Christians if we did not know Him at all? But our knowledge is slender, scanty, superficial; communion is, alas! intermittent, feeble, poor.

But how are we to increase in this knowledge? Colossians 1. 9, 10 tells us that Paul prayed for it without ceasing for the saints. Surely then he prayed for it for himself. If the desire is awakened for it in our hearts, let us pray for it, let us cultivate intercourse with God in the reading of the Scriptures and in prayer and praise, bringing Him into all our circumstances, as, on the other hand, we seek to be interested in His interests and joys.

Above all God is made known in and through Christ, and it is in and through Christ we get to know God.

If Philip of old would ask of Jesus, "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us," the Lord could answer, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known ME, Philip? He that hath seen ME hath seen the Father" (John 14. 8, 9). "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God" (Rom. 12. 2).

A. J. POLLOCK.

A Song of a Sorrow-crushed Heart.

“Weeping may endure for a night.”

LORD, lift me up above
The griefs that round me roll;
And let me in Thy changeless love
Find comfort for my soul.

Thou countest all the tears
That sorrow makes me shed:
Thou hearest all my anguished prayers
E'en though they ne'er be said.

And I can find relief
In knowing Thou dost know
The full extent of all the grief
That weighs my heart down so

Nor yet, would I repine,
Nor murmuringly complain;
I only ask for grace divine
My spirit to sustain.

I know 'tis not in wrath
Or anger that Thou hast
Allowed with grief my earthly path
To be so overcast.

Ah no! Lord, faith can say
Far different is the case;
For me a rough and thorny way
Thy love saw fit to trace.

Therefore though dark and drear
All my surroundings seem,
I calmly on Thee, Saviour dear,
Unshakingly will lean.

Thou wilt on me impose
No more than I can bear;
And more than that, in all my woes
Thou ever hast Thy share.

Because as “Great High Priest”
Thou carest for me, where;
My name (though of Thy saints the least)
Thou on Thy breast doth bear.

Thy perfect, human heart
Doth exquisitely feel,
And thus Thou canst with heavenly art
Mine bind up, soothe, and heal.

Yea, I can thankful be,
Though sorrow makes me weep,
Because thereby Thy sympathy
I've found to be so sweet.

Hope's bright and buoyant dreams
Thou sawest fit to blight:
And turn to Marah all earth's streams,
In order that I might

Have all my thoughts withdrawn
From earth, and earthly things,
And up to Thee, the Heavenly Man,
Ascend on eagles' wings,

And find there where Thou art
(Where griefs can never come)
A rest, a refuge for my heart,
A calm and quiet home.

Thus with rich blessing fraught
Will be the sorrows given,
If Thou, Lord, by them hast me taught
By faith to dwell in heaven,

And find in that bright sphere
Unfailing, constant joy,
In spite of all things that down here
Would seek it to destroy.

The night of weeping soon
Will be for ever past:
Thy coming will disperse the gloom,
And shed sunshine at last.

Come, Jesus Christ, our Lord,
Amen! oh, quickly come,
Fulfil Thy precious farewell word,
Come and receive us home.

An early poem by A. Stevenson.

Let truth prevail in every article of your doctrine. Let wrong be assailed in every tittle of your conduct. Suffer no spurious charity to betray you unto graceless laxness.

A SANCTIFIED SELF IS A POOR SUBSTITUTE FOR A GLORIFIED CHRIST.

J. W. S.

The Glad Tidings of God. No. 1.

The Source.

HOW sweet is the melody of the spring of water, as, clear, cool, free, and refreshing, it leaps upward from the root of the sunken rock, to the ear of the lonely traveller, who feverish, footsore and weary, toils onward on his trackless way across the scorching sand, with the burning sun pitilessly smiting upon his unprotected head. And the more unexpected, the more beatific shall its music be. And, "As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country" (Prov. 25. 25). And surely unexpected, cheering and lifegiving, comes the good news from the land of darkness and the shadow of death, the land from which there was no expectation, and on which the gloom of midnight and of terror rested; the land from which the worst was feared, the unknown region toward which we were being swiftly hurried, and where a fear rested, which was the king of all other fears. This is the far country from which good news has come to us.

The Glad Tidings of God. Who would have expected it? What child of Adam would ever have dreamed of hearing anything from God that could be designated good news? Not Adam himself, with his sin staring him in the face, and a guilty conscience forcing its deadly sting into the centre of his trembling soul, and upon his ear the sound of his Maker's footsteps, as He walked in the garden in the cool of the day; not one of that rebel sinner's race, whose guilty life calls loudly upon the judgment of the righteous Ruler of the universe; not the devil who by his baleful wisdom had compassed the ruin of his innocent victim; not angel fell or faithful; not the reader nor the writer: for the wisdom, the grace and the resources of God are past finding out.

What is the natural thought of the fallen creature regarding God? Does he think He has any regard for His creature? Does he consider that the One he has so deeply offended desires his happiness? Does he not rather view Him as his greatest enemy? Does he not regard with suspicion every approach of God toward him in grace? If he could, would he not keep out of the presence of God for ever? Does he not view Him as a hard master, who reaps where He has not sown, and gathers where He has not strawed? (Matt. 25. 26). Is it not true that "there is none that seeketh after God"? (Rom. 3. 11).

Man is a fugitive flying from justice, and a vagabond upon the earth, and his great fear is of that day in which he must have to do with God. He may sometimes imagine that God thinks as little of sin as he himself does; and however terrible a thought that would be, he would prefer it to righteousness and holiness, for he well knows that a God of truth and righteousness must be against that which he feels himself to be.

The ruin of man was, in the estimation of Satan, the enemy of God, his greatest triumph, and truly it was fraught with the greatest consequences. The fair and stainless creation, fresh from the hand of its Creator, and which He had pronounced *very good*, was struck with the thunderbolt of man's transgression, and in a moment was dismantled and overthrown. As far as the creature was concerned all was lost. The creation was wounded in its head. Man made in the image and likeness of God was a complete wreck. The devil was triumphant, and God was dishonoured.

But on the part of the Creator there

is no perturbation, no apparent dismay at the awful discovery of man's apostasy, no precipitant or hasty action from insulted and outraged Majesty, no hesitancy regarding the course necessary to be taken in the matter: His movements are confident, peaceful, powerful and unembarrassed. The guilt of each actor in the horrid drama must be made manifest, and the judgment must be pronounced, from which there can be no appeal. Adam must obtain his bread by the sweat of his brow, until he returns to dust, out of which he was taken; in sorrow must the woman bring forth children, and the subtle and mischievous betrayer must come under the curse of God, and must also hear that from the weak woman, who has by his subtlety been deceived, One shall spring who shall bring to an end his wicked machinations, and destroy his power forever.

This is the first intimation of deliverance for ruined man, the first unfolding of the Glad Tidings of God. A Deliverer is promised. He is to be the seed of the woman. The humiliation of the enemy is to be absolute. The victory of God is to be complete. Truly the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment (Job 20. 5). "He made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch that he made. His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate" (Ps. 7. 15, 16). His head is to be bruised.

But man is naked. He is ashamed of himself. He is a transgressor, and exposed to the righteous judgment of God. Can this be repaired? Man can do nothing to fit Himself for the presence of God. Will God despise him? Will He drive him out from His presence in his nakedness and shame? Will He only act toward him as a just and austere Judge. Will He shut up His compassions, and deal with him as his sin deserves? or will He intervene in mercy on his behalf? Can He do anything if He were ever so well inclined? As far

as man is concerned all seems hopeless. With fig-leaves he attempted to annul the results of his transgression, but all to no purpose. The ruin was not to be repaired by the sinner. Even with the fig-leaves about his body he has to confess: "I heard Thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself" (Gen. 3. 10). No—

"Not the labour of my hands
Could fulfil Thy laws demands.
Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears for ever flow,
These for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and Thou alone."

Salvation is of the Lord. Once fallen, the creature remains fallen for ever, unless God intervene on his behalf. He might righteously have cast off his creature for ever. He was under no obligation to meet the need of the sinner. Moreover how is He to show mercy, and yet maintain His righteousness? What resources has He at His disposal that have not yet come to light? He will justify Himself when the time for doing so arrives, meantime He will act in mercy. Therefore we read: "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them."

Here we have the Maker at work again. In Genesis 1. we read of His six days' work, and of His rest on the seventh day. But that rest seems now rudely broken. Again He is at work, but this time a work that manifests the loving-kindness of His heart. From now onward, in the Revelation given to us of God, it is not a Creator-God that we are to become acquainted with, but a Saviour-God. This is the work in which He delights (Jer. 9. 24). We are not told that He delighted in creation, though He pronounced it very good; and when He laid the foundations of the earth "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy" (Job 38. 7). But the work of redemption, the meeting the need of poor sinners, is the great work in which is His delight.

Such a work as the recovery of a lost sinner He had never previously undertaken. The sentence pronounced against the sinner cannot be cancelled or recalled. It must be executed. But how then can the sinner be saved? It is in the garden this great secret begins to leak out. Here the problem is solved, at least in type. The judgment that rested on them falls upon a victim that dies in their stead. The clothing for the two naked sinners is found through death, and the victim that died for them becomes their covering under the eye of God. Here we see the mighty intervention of God in grace, and here we see the way of salvation set forth. Adam and His wife do nothing but submit themselves to the mercy of God. And regarding any poor penitent sinner, there is nothing he can do but confess in the words of the well-known hymn—

"Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling.
Naked, come to Thee for dress,
Helpless, look to Thee for grace;
Vile I to the Fountain fly:
Wash me, Saviour, or I die."

He made the coats and He clothed them. Who else could have done it? Who other than God could have invented the salvation of which this was a simple figure? In whom else could the grace and compassion for such a work have been found? Was there a creature in the heavens above who at that moment beheld in vision the anti-type of that work of God? What must the devil have thought of it? Could he have connected it with the word still ringing in his ears: "It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel." What did Adam and his wife think of it? Is it not almost a certainty that they saw in this gracious work of the Lord, that the judgment of their sin must be executed, but in grace another will bear it?

The sinner must, previous to this, have believed that God was against him. He had openly and presumptuously violated the commandment, though plainly ap-

prized of the consequences? What could he expect from a righteous Judge except condemnation? He has no excuse to offer that would shield him from the death he deserved, or in the least mitigate his offence. God he only knew as a beneficent Creator, who had given him an exalted position, which he was to hold by his obedience to the commandment which had been given to him. He could not think anything else than that God was against him.

But in His dealings with these poor naked transgressors God begins to manifest His grace. With his back bent at his daily toil, and the sweat of labour damp upon his brow, Adam knows God better than he knew Him in the short day of his innocent life. I have no doubt that the tender consideration of his Maker for his fallen and exposed condition reached, and in measure, comforted, his sorrowing heart, and caused hope to spring up there where that heavenly plant had never bloomed before. I question if he would have given up what he now had learned of God even to return to innocence. To keep himself in the blessing of innocence he was cast upon his own resources, but now he is cast upon the resources that are in God, and this far more than counter-balances all he has lost.

The mighty volume of grace and love that is yet to be lavished upon man does not all come to light at once, nor could it come until there was a vessel here adequate to contain it. But it was all there pent up in the heart of God, and was beginning to let itself out in word, and type, and shadow, according to Divine and eternal wisdom. Satan shall see it, and read his own discomfiture in the merciful way in which God deals with His erring mortal; demons shall see it, and tremble at the prospect of their doom; angels shall see it, as with earnest desire they study the grace bestowed upon men; and men, the recipients of it, shall see it and rejoice in it throughout all eternity.

A Little While.

John 16. 16.

The setting of the picture is full of pathos and tenderness.

It is the night of the betrayal. The Lord had shielded and cared for and carried His loved disciples for three years and a half. They had only half realized who He was.

How little do any of us take in adequately the thoughts of the glory of His person, the glory of His gracious stoop, the glory of His wondrous manhood as well as Godhead!

But little as they realized it He loved them just the same. He was about to leave them. Their hearts were filled with sorrow at the thought of being left, with a sort of dull apprehension as to what might happen.

What an hour it was! The Passover had been celebrated, the shadow had engaged their attention, the type had once more come before them, but how surpassingly wonderful *the Person*, who took the head of that festal board. He was none less than the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Creator and Sustainer of all things, the Substance, who would chase away the shadow, the Antitype who would fulfil the type. *The hour*, how wonderful, the "hour of darkness," the very night of His betrayal, when all should be fulfilled in His death.

He knew it all. Little did His dull disciples realize it.

Then it was He told them, "A little while and ye shall not see Me," referring to His death and ascension, "and again, a little while, and ye shall see Me," referring to "the promise of the Father," the gift of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, when in that way He would come to them.

We have "another Comforter," and are not left orphans. "Greater is He that is in you, than He that is in the world" (1 John 4. 4).

"Another Comforter"—that means they were not to lose the One they had, even Himself. We have one Comforter on high—the Lord Jesus Christ, our great High Priest, our Advocate, and "another Comforter" on earth, even the Holy Spirit of God, and in that way the Lord has come again to His own.

How cheering! How comforting! How full of wondrous meaning is this!

The Lord in John 16. 16-24 discusses the fact of His coming in this way. In John 14. 23 He speaks a searching word.

The ENJOYMENT of His coming is *conditional*. He says, "If any man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him and make Our abode with Him" (John 14. 23).

This wonderful fact of the Holy Ghost's indwelling means very little to most Christians, not enough to any of us. We are dry and cold and lifeless. We are not "channels of blessing," as we might be. Out of our belly does not flow "rivers of living water."

How is this? The answer is simple. We do not love the Lord as we should. We do not love Him sufficiently to keep His words.

Ah! our rooms can testify how little we read the Scriptures and how little we pray. Our lives can testify alas! as to how little we keep "His words."

May this search our hearts in His presence. How He will invite our confidences, and help us to clear out of our lives many things that are inconsistent with His words.

How blessed when in the power of an ungrieved Spirit we are made conscious of the Father's love (it is always ours) and the abiding presence in our hearts by the Spirit of the Father and the Son.

May the "little while" of the Lord exercise us each one.

A. J. POLLOCK.

Growing unto Salvation.

AS newly-born babes, desire the the spiritual, guileless milk, that you may grow thereby unto salvation " (1 Peter 2. 2, alternative reading). The term "salvation" in Scripture is used in different ways. The beginning and the ending of our walk in newness of life, as well as the development of that life from commencement to consummation are severally described as salvation.

In this passage of Scripture a very natural figure is introduced. In physical life, the infant longs for the nourishment suited to growth. So the newly-born into spiritual life longs for the pure milk afforded by the Word of God which is the essential to enlargement in that life.

The word translated "desire" literally means "get an appetite for." This implies that "growth in the new life" is susceptible to desire. A decided Christian does not allow adverse agencies to wither his life. God has given us resources for the promotion of growth, but we must be determined to guard against being removed from the sphere of their influence. Some Alpine flowers are very beautiful although they grow in scanty soil in crevices near the snow line, but their growth is due to exposure to the warmth and light of the sun's rays. John Bunyan evinced great spiritual development during twelve years spent in a cheerless dungeon. David Livingstone was fragrant in the depressing circumstances of darkest Africa.

The milk of the word is characterized as "sincere" or "guileless" in contrast to the things of "guile" in the preceding verse. Many Christians are hopelessly stunted in growth by the biological process known as "reversion to type." The Christian is not exempt from natural law, and therefore the vermin of natural vices are apt to retard the development of spiritual graces.

Therefore we are exhorted to lay aside malice, guile, hypocrisies, envies, and evil speaking (ver. 1). "Malice" is manifest ill-will, the others are instances of hidden malice. "Guile" plots, "hypocrisy" pretends not to be so engaged, and "envy" rejoices if the plot succeeds. "Evil speaking" is literally detraction or "talking down." To the Ephesians the Apostle Paul sums up the evils as the characteristics of the "old man," and counsels the Philippians to think of true, honest, just, pure, lovely things of good report. Wherefore the Apostle Peter earnestly exhorts his readers to lay aside these natural tendencies which will surely prevent growth.

Many Christians are cast down because after years of spiritual experience they appear to have made little progress. But even in physical life quick growth is not usually healthy. Mushrooms are said to be the product of a night, but they vanish quickly, while the slow-growing oak outlives the centuries. Glass and diamond are not distinguishable by the unaided eye. Yet the latter is incomparably superior to the former in hardness, infrangibility and crystalline structure. Glass solidifies in an hour or two, while the cooling of the diamond extended over countless ages under great pressure in the "bowels of the earth." So too, in our case, the formation of Christian character is often only acquired under great pressure over long periods of time.

Air or atmosphere, exercise and food, are the three great influences which tend to develop growth in physical life. So too there are three analogous influences which tend to develop growth in spiritual life. The spiritual atmosphere appropriate to newness of life is certainly communion, we need to keep clear the channel of communication with "the top," so that fresh supplies of the air of heaven may come

down to enable us to be competent exponents of the graces of Christ, where there is not a breath to inflate the lungs of the new life. The exercise in spiritual life is as essential to growth as muscular exercise in the natural sphere. We must not be lazy. Whatever comes to our hand, we should do it with all the earnestness that within us lies. Of course exercise alone is not sufficient. We need also suitable food. A well-known servant of God once said that if he had his life to live over again, he would read his Bible less and pray more. But this is very dangerous ground, because the uncontrolled illumination of the soul from within is apt to degenerate to mere spiritism, and unwittingly the victim becomes the plaything of the powers of darkness. The Christian's food, to which reference has already been made, is the Word of God. If we treated our bodies as badly as we often treat our souls, we would indeed be "famine-stricken children."

Returning to our text "the milk" of the word does not refer, as elsewhere, to its elementary teaching, but to the analogy of that which calls up the intense desire of the newly-born. But we shall not strain the sense of the passage unduly if we seek to impress the contrast between the purity of the Word and the immediate antecedents of guile and hypocrisies, to which the Word of God is the only antidote. It is not only promotive, it is corrective

too. Well might the Psalmist answer his own question.

Q. Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?

A. By taking heed thereto according to Thy Word.

Christians often make the mistake of testing the Word from the analyst's standpoint rather than from that of the newly-born child. The Word will bear the closest scrutiny. But the goodness or "profit" of the Lord is not to be tested in that way. The higher critic or "new theologian" may investigate and remain entirely ignorant of the purpose and power of God's Word, while the simplest believer, endowed with new faculties, longs for and receives that which enlarges the life of the new man.

So the scholar who is always testing the properties of the Word, may be a fool through never tasting its sweetness, and proving its nourishing qualities for himself.

In writing to the Colossian believers, the Apostle Paul urged them to let the word of Christ *dwell* in them richly in all wisdom. If the aforementioned phases of the action of the Word may be likened to "milk," then this special inflexion is indeed the "cream." When due to continuous subjection the soul is permeated with the word of Christ, the new life is being nourished with the cream of the resources of God.

T. OLIVER.

Our Faithful Saviour.

"**T**HOSE that Thou gavest Me I have kept, and none of them is lost" (John 17. 12). As the Chief Shepherd, He shall make an account of all His lambs, and tell His Father, these be all My sheep. I went through woods, and waters, and

briers, and thorns, to gather them in, and My feet were torn, and My hands and My side pierced, ere I could get a grip of them; but now here they are. I found them, saved them, kept them; not one of them is lost.

Remarks on Paul's Gospel. No. 1.

THE subject matter of the Epistle to the Romans is the "gospel of God," and although we do not find in it the highest form of doctrine as set forth elsewhere in Paul's writings, yet from the fundamental character of the epistle and the great foundation truths set forth therein, it yields in importance to none of the writings in the New Testament. It is the basis on which the highest doctrines of the Apostle rest, viz. the setting forth of the "righteousness of God" as the principle on which "He can be just, and the justifier of him who believes in Jesus." But seeing that "there is none righteous; no, not one," for "both Jews and Gentiles are alike under sin," this involves His "justifying the ungodly," an idea which to the mind of man it is impossible to connect with righteousness. To justify a righteous man, i.e. to clear him of all charge of guilt, is simple enough. It is natural law. But to justify the ungodly, and in doing so to act righteously, is supernatural; it is divine; and this is the proposition set forth in "Paul's gospel" as shown in the Epistle to the Romans. To him is specially given this ministry; so much so that none of the other apostles takes it up; and twice over in this epistle (chaps. 2. 16 and 16. 25), as also elsewhere frequently, as we shall see later on, the Apostle claims it as *his gospel*.

Arrested in a remarkable manner on the road to Damascus by a vision of Christ in glory he was from the start apprised of the glorious destiny of God for man, and he becomes in due course "the minister of the gospel of the glory of the Christ who is the image of God," which he covers in its uniqueness with the title of "Our Gospel," (2 Cor. 4. 3, 4).

Connected with this gospel is "the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began, but now made

manifest for the obedience of faith among all nations" (Rom. 16. 25). In this mystery are contained "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," as we read in Colossians 2. 3, while in Ephesians we see how bound up in his mind is "the mystery of Christ and the church" with "the mystery of the gospel" (cp. Eph. 3.; 5, 32; 6; 19). Thus the basis of all that he unfolds in the higher truths of Ephesians and Colossians is laid in Romans; nor can these scriptures be rightly understood apart; and there can be little doubt that the sorrowful misconception among Christians of all classes of what the church is, is largely due to the almost universal ignorance of what Paul calls "my gospel." Gospel, blessed and glorious, is proclaimed by other apostles as well as Paul; but to him was given a special ministry of the gospel, which he claims as "his own," while also he is "minister of the church"; and these two ministries, while they are distinct, are inseparable (cf. Rom. 16. 25-27; Eph. 3. 1-12; Col. 1. 23-25).

In an old book, now out of print, the author speaks of the difficulty, before the days of printing, of procuring even portions of the Scriptures, existing as they then were only in manuscript. These portions were in request according to the predilection of those who were fortunate enough to be able to procure them. The portions most in demand were the Psalms, John's writings and the Revelation. After these the Epistles of Peter and other portions. But the Epistle to the Romans was least called for; practically not in circulation at all. The epistle in which "God's glad tidings" are specially set forth was unread, unknown. No wonder that the church was driven on the rocks as the Master-pilot was disregarded (Acts 27. 21), and that the building fell into ruins as the warnings of the Master-builder were ignored (1 Cor. 3. 10). Already in

Paul's day he was in constant conflict with the opposers of "his gospel." Judaizing prejudices and tendencies were sapping the foundations of what he with such labour preached, and even Peter himself and Barnabas were "carried away with the dissimulation," that at first threatened and finally succeeded in corrupting the springs of Christian truth (Gal. 2. 11-13). Peter indeed seems never to have fully understood the special character of "Paul's gospel," and though he appears finally to have recovered himself somewhat, yet even then the wisdom, which he owns was given to Paul, was apparently still beyond him (2 Peter 3. 15).

Finally, it was a "known" fact that all in Asia forsook Paul (2 Tim. 1. 15), from which we might conclude that his letter to the Galatians was written to them in vain (Gal. 4. 11), while his Epistle to the Romans has been openly branded as "heresy" to be wiped out as pestilent by the stake and torture, and that by the very people to whom by its title it belongs, and Peter was chosen by them as the patron saint of Rome, though there is not a tittle of proof that he was ever there.

For long centuries "Paul's gospel" was *non est* in Christendom, and when during the last century it was again brought to light from Scripture through the ministry of the late J. N. Darby, his teaching was opposed by the great mass of evangelical Christians, who failed to recognize the long-lost title deeds to their "justification by faith in a risen Christ." They had forgiveness through the blood of Jesus, supplemented as they believed (wrongly) by a righteousness wrought out for them by His fulfilling the law on

their behalf, but they retained in their creed, as justified, the man on account of whom Christ died, and clothed him with a robe of righteousness not his own, and to which he had no title, i.e. they retained the first man, man in the flesh, whom God has set aside in the cross of Christ, instead of finding themselves before God by faith in a risen Christ according to Paul's first recorded sermon when, having expatiated on the death and the resurrection of Christ, he says, "Be it known unto you therefore, brethren, that through this man remission of sins is preached to you, and from all things from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses, *in him*, every one that believes is justified" (Acts 13. 30-39, N.T.).

Now, as regards the preaching. The object is not at all times to expound "Paul's gospel." To do so would be often out of place. With the inexhaustible fullness of John 3. 16; Acts 10. and similar scriptures besides, the evangelist has endless resources from which to draw. But unless his mind is furnished for himself with the outline of "Paul's gospel," "justification in a risen Christ" founded on the righteousness of God, his preaching will not carry the emancipating power of that truth, and his building will lack the strut that holds the framework plumb, and provokes the company to walk together in the faith of Christ, "endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace." The gospel, as so often preached, has for its end the good of man. "Paul's gospel," i.e. "God's gospel" (Rom. 1. 1), attains this end effectively, it is divine philanthropy (Titus 3. 4-7), while its objective is the glory of God.

E. CROSS.

Philadelphia.

PHILADELPHIA (Rev. 3. 7) means "the love of the brethren," and it is useless to talk of keeping the Lord's word and

not denying His Name if brotherly love is lacking. His one commandment is that "ye love one another."

“Why Tarry the Wheels of His Chariot?”

A GREAT many Christians, if they put the innermost feelings of their hearts into words, would frame a question much on the lines of these words. We have heard ever since we can remember that the Lord Jesus Christ is coming. We have read it again and again in the Scriptures, but He has not come yet. We have been told again and again that we are in the last times, and that the Lord may be here at any moment; but He is still tarrying. Why does He tarry? Why does He not come? If He loves us with so great love, and if we can look up into His blessed face, and feel that we are speaking truly when we say,

“And we love Thee, blest Lord,”

if His church is so dear to Him, and if He is so dear to us; if He really wants us, and God wants us up there in that bright scene of effulgent glory, where in the Father's presence, without any hindrance or reserve, we shall share in all the joy of the unveiled mystery; if everything there is ready, except that we are not there, and if it is the one great desire of the Father and the Son to have us there, that we should fill that place that the purpose of God has marked out for us; if God wants us there, the Lord Jesus wants us there, and the Spirit joins with the bride in saying, “Come”; if the Spirit works that response, and we ourselves want to go: why does not the Lord Jesus come? Why are the days of His tarrying so prolonged. Why tarry the wheels of His chariot? With Sisera, to whom the question primarily refers, the answer is a very easy one. His mother looks out of the window, and says, “Why does he not come?” She returns answer to herself. She had some plausible explanation. Her wise ladies would say to her, “Don't you know your son is a warrior, and most surely he has won a magnificent victory, and is long in gathering up the spoils, but he

will soon be here.” Such an answer would be altogether false. Sisera had met with a crushing defeat instead of an overwhelming victory, and he lay there in Jael's tent, with an iron tent peg through his dishonoured head. He would never return.

With the Lord Jesus Christ no explanation of His delay like that is possible. He is the mighty Victor. He has come triumphant from the field of conflict. He is the gatherer indeed of the spoils. There is no reason like that to delay His chariot wheels. Why then do we not hear Him at the gate? There are not a few passages of Scripture which would lead the reader to believe that the Lord Jesus was on the very verge of coming, when those scriptures were written long centuries ago. At the beginning of the Gospel of Mark, the Lord Jesus Christ went about the hillsides of Galilee, saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand.” People would naturally think that in a few more months it would be established. Then when you come to the Epistles, the Apostle very distinctly says in Hebrews 10.: “Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry.” He tells the Christians the day is so near that they can positively see it approaching. Four times over in the Book of Revelation the Lord says, “I come quickly.” Perhaps the most remarkable thing of all is the contrast between the last of Revelation and the last chapter of Daniel. After all those wonderful visions Daniel was told to seal up the book, because the time was not yet; but John, after his Apocalyptic visions, is distinctly told not to seal the book, because the time was ripe for fulfilment.

How do we explain it all, when the Word of God says these things? We remember that “God has magnified His word above all His name.” He

would rather let all the glories of His name perish than be false to His word. Every promise He has made shall be fulfilled. It is easy to bring *some* explanations which will show that it is quite consistent with the Word of God that there should have been this long period of tarrying. We may read, as we do, in 2 Peter 3, that God does not reckon time as we do. A thousand years are with the Lord as one day, and one day as a thousand years, so that in God's reckoning it is not two days since the Lord Jesus was here, and since all these promises were made. But to us His word seems long of fulfilment and there must be some immense reason for the Lord Jesus tarrying so long. Yet we must not allow the hope of it to wane in our souls. We read in Matthew 24. 48: "If that evil servant shall say in his heart, My Lord delayeth His coming, and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants." Forgetfulness of the imminence of the Lord's return has led to the terrible smiting of His servants—the terrible persecutions of His servants through the centuries. Think of the awful butcheries, of which the children of God have been the victims, all of which they might have been spared if the Lord had come.

By His tarrying thousands of His people have had to pass through untold anguish. In the first great pagan persecution, under the monster, Nero, many awful things happened. Christians were tied up in the skins of wild animals, and thrown to the dogs to be bitten to death. Christian men and women, covered with tar, were used as flares and torches, their bodies charred to cinders, to illuminate his gardens.

Under the second great persecution forty thousand Christians were done to death under very cruel and tragic circumstances. In the last of the ten pagan persecutions no fewer than 880,000 Christians were done to death with the most horrible atrocities. But all these are thrown into the shade when you

come to think of what the professed fellow-servants have done—I mean under the papal power of Rome. It is computed that over fifty millions of Christians have been butchered and slaughtered for Christ's sake in the dungeons of the Inquisition. Think of it, and it could not have been but for Christ's tarrying. If He had come early in the church's history, all His beloved people would have been spared those terrible torments. We speak about God loving the world well enough to give His beloved Son to die; that is the transcendent proof of it, but think of this other proof, that the Lord should allow these millions of His beloved people, whom He cares for as the apple of His eye, and whom He loves with a divine love that no words can set forth; that He should hold back the day of His coming, for which Christ Himself longs, and for which the church, the bride, as taught by the Spirit, longs; that God should hold it back, even though it means the sorrow and the suffering and the butchery and martyrdom of untold thousands of His beloved people: He must have some tremendous reason for this that surpasses all human understanding.

What can be the reason of His tarrying? Why do we not hear His chariot at the gate? Why has the patient waiting of Christ been prolonged through all these centuries. For God's answer let us turn to 2 Peter 3. First of all note the fact—for, thank God it is a fact—that His own word does not fail. It is true that the tarrying has given rise to the scoffing of scoffers, who say, "Where is the promise of His coming?" They are willingly ignorant that on momentous occasions God's word came true. God said, "Let the waters be gathered together . . . and let the dry land appear," and it was so. On another occasion God said, "Behold, I, even I, do send a flood of waters on the earth," and it came to pass. The word of God, which came true against all appearances on those two occasions,

is going to come true again. Though men our hope deride, nevertheless it is going to come to pass. The Apostle says we are not to be ignorant of the way the Lord reckons time. "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise" (ver. 9). He has not forgotten it. Slackness on the part of the Lord is not the explanation. Some men might say He has forgotten the fulfilment of His word. That is certainly not the reason. "He is long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." Again, in the fifteenth verse, "account that the long-suffering of our God is salvation."

The answer is, the long-suffering of God to the world. We quote John 3. 16, but not one of us has ever fathomed the vastness of God's love. No human mind or heart can understand the love and long-suffering of God towards this world, which led Him to give His beloved Son to die for it, which allows Him to put off the day of Christ's return, while fifty to sixty million of His beloved saints are done to death. God has allowed that in the days of His tarrying, rather than cut short this world's day of salvation. What a tremendous thing must be the long-suffering love of God towards the world. I do not think it acts upon us as a sufficiently powerful thing. If it has moved God to prolong the day of His tarrying so that the world's day of grace might be extended, it is something altogether too stupendous for words. But surely, when we speak of God's long-suffering, we must not only think of the world, and His long-suffering towards it, there is His long-suffering towards His slow-moving children. If we were quicker to learn our lessons, if we were more diligent students in the school of experience, if we, like Mary, were more attentive to the things He has to say to us, He would not have to be so long-suffering towards us, and He would not for our sakes, for our spiritual education, have

to delay so long our transference to heaven.

God is long-suffering towards us, as well as to the world. He knows that our time of sojourn here is our education and preparation for all those joys that are yet to be our portion. It is open for us to do what the twelfth verse says, "Looking for, and hasting unto the coming of the day of our God." It is open to us to make better speed towards it. We have had reminders that the Lord Jesus is really coming, and we are getting nearer and nearer to the day of His advent. Things that are happening in the world show the great prophetic crisis is at the very doors, and if we are to be caught clean out of this world before it comes, then the Lord's coming must indeed be very near. God grant that this exhortation may have weight with us. The Apostle seems to let himself go in his love and earnest desire for the saints. I do not know any other chapter in the New Testament where the saints are addressed four times over as "Beloved." The Apostle seems to be unloosing his affections towards his hearers in order to give urgency to his exhortations, in view of the long-suffering of God coming suddenly to an end. We sometimes sing:

"Whosoever will, for ever shall endure."

That is false. "Whosoever will" is soon coming to an end. In view of the time when "Whosoever will" will no longer be sounded in the ears of sinful men, the Apostle, with all the urgency of God-wrought affection, exhorts these beloved saints. He says in verse 11, "Seeing that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought we to be?" Read also verses 14 and 17. He exhorts them in the first verse to be mindful; in the second verse not to be ignorant; in the fourteenth verse to be diligent; and in the seventeenth verse to beware lest they fall from their own steadfastness. We have to lay these exhortations to heart, and

in view of the coming of the eternal day of God; and in view of the fact that we are indeed in the last times, we have this tremendously powerful lever to move us. The long-suffering of God waits not only for the salvation of sinners, but that we may make better progress in our education. He wants us to have to the full opportunities of learning of Him here which will make us much better able to enjoy Him there. He wants lessons to be learned by us now that we shall have no opportunity of learning in heaven, because they can

be only learned amid scenes of sin, sorrow and suffering. He wants us to learn lessons of His grace, lessons of His power, lessons of His priestly ministry, lessons of what He can do for us amid circumstances of need and suffering. If only we were quicker to learn these lessons, if only we went in for our Christianity in a more practical way, I believe the Lord would soon come, the days of His tarrying would be ended, and we should be forever with the Lord.

Address by HAROLD P. BARKER.

“Our Father Knoweth.”

IT is a great thing to trust God daily and hourly; not thinking we can provide for ourselves and secure ourselves against the power of evil, but to trust God thoroughly.

And what is the measure of the supply? Nothing short of “His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” He must glorify Himself even in the falling of a sparrow—for there is nothing great and nothing small with God. He thinks of what His love will glorify itself in.

“My God shall supply all your need!” How could Paul tell that? He knew Him. Not that he had not been in a condition of want, but he had felt the preciousness of being met in it by God. Things may look very dark, but we have always found that, if He led us by the wilderness where there was no water, He brought water out of the stony rock for us there. He always exercises faith, but He always meets it. The coats of the Israelites did not grow old for forty years.

“My God shall supply all your need.” He (Paul) was counting on blessing for others. What a comfort! Instead of walking by sight to be walking through this world in the blessed consciousness of what God is for oneself, and so be able to count on Him for others. We

find ourselves almost dreading to press a person into the path of faith, but we should not dread, but count on grace for them. Faith is always triumphant. The Lord give us to count on Him always and we shall then say, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Philippians 4.)

J. N. D.

Paul does not say:

God shall supply your need.

Nor—God shall supply my need.

Nor—My God shall supply my need.

Nor—Your God shall supply my need.

Nor—Your God shall supply your need.

Nor—My God shall supply your need.

But—My God shall supply all your need! And that “according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”

How could Paul know that? Because he knew God. He knew that, above the prison at Rome and the poverty at Philippi, there was His God, who not only possessed riches in glory, but who would also supply them to His suffering children by Christ Jesus. What a God! How well worth knowing!

J. W. S.

Peace.

SEVEN times in the epistles we read of "the God of Peace," and surely He will supply abundance of peace for those who love Him. Once is that beautiful title given to Christ by the Spirit—"the Lord of peace." How encouraging is the verse where it occurs—"The Lord of peace Himself give you peace continually in every way. The Lord be with you all" (2 Thess. 3. 16).

Let us consider some of the benefits and priceless treasures of peace which are freely given to those who have been called by the grace of God.

1. Judicial Peace.

Peace with God (Rom. 5. 1). This is judicial. It comes to us from a transaction which took place between God and our Lord Jesus Christ, when Jesus was delivered up for our offences, when the chastisement of our peace was laid upon Him. The whole question of our sins having been settled by divine justice, God raised Christ from among the dead for our justification; and, possessing this on the principle of faith, peace with God is consequently ours. It is unchangeable. It rests upon a solid basis of righteousness. It cannot be altered. Though we have it, yet we did not make it. It was made between God and Christ for us, and it is eternal. God was the author of it and Christ the procurer of it. Wars can neither make it nor mar it. Peace with God is ours through the work of another. He made it, and we take it by faith. It is fundamental and abiding.

2. Spiritual Peace.

Peace of mind (Rom. 8. 6). This is spiritual, and results from the fact that the Holy Spirit dwells in us. The mind

of the Spirit is life and peace, but the mind of the flesh is enmity against God. If a true believer minds the things of the flesh, he has an experience which is the very opposite to what is called "life and peace." The Holy Spirit dwells in us to lead us into the things of God, to fill our thoughts with the glories of our Lord Jesus Christ; and as the mind is occupied with and furnished by these things, peace of mind is ours. We prove in our spiritual experience the truth of that word: "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose *mind* is stayed on Thee" (Isa. 26. 3). To have the mind guided in the right direction is all-important in this connection.

3. Circumstantial Peace.

The peace of God (Phil. 4. 7). This is circumstantial. By that we mean, peace in relation to our circumstances; and, wonderful to relate, it is *God's own peace* which is ours in this connection. Peace with God is ours as the result of what Christ has done; the peace of God is ours as the result of what we do; as we read, "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts (*the seat of your affections*) and minds (*the seat of your thoughts*) through Christ Jesus." These are the terms for the enjoyment of the peace of God. Full of care for nothing; prayerful and thankful to God in everything. Peace with God is ours through faith, this through prayer and thanksgiving. The first is ours in regard to the putting away of our *sins* at the cross; the second is ours in regard to *all circumstances*, as we gratefully leave our cares with Him who gives us His own peace instead. Words cannot

express the infinite grace and sweetness of this: it "passes all understanding."

4. Universal Peace.

Peace by blood (Col. 1. 20). This is universal. "Having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things to Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." How far-reaching are the blessings that flow from the cross of our adorable Saviour. Universal disturbance has come in through sin, peace and reconciliation result universally from its removal by Him who died and rose again. The Old Testament eloquently describes the earthly blessings; and the thrones, dominions, principalities, powers and authorities in heaven will also benefit. Israel will rejoice in the Saviour presently as "the Prince of Peace: of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end" (Is. 9. 6, 7); but righteousness, peace and joy shall fill the earth, and the heavens likewise. "The mountains shall bring peace to the people" we are told; and Christ "shall have dominion from sea to sea"; then "men shall be blessed in Him"; but the heavens too shall reap rich results through Him who made peace by the blood of His cross. Already the redeemed can say in the language of Ephesians 2. 4, "He is our peace." Those who know the Saviour have reached their desired haven: peace is theirs now for ever.

5. Intentional Peace.

The counsellors of peace (Prov. 12. 20). This is intentional. The intent and counsel of their heart is for peace; therefore we read, "To the counsellors of peace is joy." This truth is applicable to all who counsel with such Christ-like intent; but it surely carries our thoughts up to the supreme council chamber of the divine majesty. There

the Godhead counselled peace. Sin spreads its disastrous disorders. No one else could secure peace and equity. Man is helpless in himself; but the gracious and august deliberations of the Trinity counselled the way of peace through the cross of Christ; and, though the blessings of that counsel and work are ours, the glory and the joy shall be theirs eternally; for, as we have seen, not only are believers reconciled as the present result of the death of Christ, but eventually all things in earth and heaven shall be reconciled also. "To the Counsellors of peace is joy"—joy now, joy for ever. How worthy of this is our God—the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who counselled, procured, and proclaimed it to us.

6. Conditional Peace.

The God of peace (Phil. 4. 9). This is conditional; that is, as far as our experience of His presence with us according to this verse is concerned. If we "do" the things referred to, it is said, "The God of peace shall be with you." What company may be ours in a world like this! We have seen from verse 7 that our hearts and minds may be garrisoned by God's own peace; now we are told, we may have the company of the God of peace Himself with us. What high honour! What a priceless privilege! Meditation upon these words will be more likely to produce the desired result than extended dilation upon them. "What ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, these things DO; and the God of peace shall be with you" (N.T.).

7. Practical Peace.

The makers of peace (Matt. 5. 9). This is practical. The Lord Jesus said, "Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called sons of God" (N.T.). It is not that peace-making constitutes us sons of God. The relationship of

sons is ours "by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3. 26, N.T.); but it means we shall bear that character—that God-likeness; so we shall be known as sons of God. We read of sons of light, sons of the day, and sons of thunder. This is character rather than relationship. Peace-making is to be characteristic of us. The blessedness, happiness, and recognition of this will then be ours. Surely, beloved brethren, since we are recipients of such abundance of peace ourselves; since we belong to Him who is the God of peace; since we are eternally at rest through the work of the great Peace-maker, our Lord and Saviour; since we are called to follow Him, we should seek in every possible way to make peace consistent with the holiness of God. Happy are the peace-makers. It is difficult to think of any of the saints of God seeking anything different from this. They are *all* peace-takers; they should *all* be peace-makers; surely none can intentionally be peace-breakers. We are exhorted to "follow peace with all."

O ye children of God, rejoice greatly in the abiding peace which is yours through our Lord Jesus Christ!—

*"Peace like an even river flows,
And mercy like a flood."*

O ye spiritual priesthood, having approach to God to offer up your "spiritual sacrifices," feed abundantly on the "peace offerings" divinely provided for you!

And ye soldiers warring in the heavenly conflict of Ephesians 6. see that ye stand your ground firmly, strong in the Lord, "having your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace"!—peace *in* the struggle is thy portion!

Finally, may grace and peace be multiplied to us in the knowledge of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter 1. 2). Again and again, in nearly all the inspired letters, the Spirit begins by desiring for us, "Grace and peace from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ." **LORD, LET THY BELOVED SAINTS PROVE THIS! PLENTIFULLY AT THE PRESENT TIME.**

H. J. VINE.

The Good Shepherd.

John 10.

Luke 15.

O Shepherd, good and true,
Slain for Thy wandering sheep,
Thy gentle hand, with rod and staff,
Those Thou hast saved will keep.

We hear Thy tender voice
Calling Thine own by name;
The wolf may come, the hireling flee,
But Thou art still the same.

Sought by Thy shepherd care,
Bought with Thy precious blood,
Found by the Spirit's searching light,
Brought home with joy to God,

Met with the Father's kiss,
Clothed in the robe so fair:
The ring and shoes they tell the tale
Of love and sonship there.

The fatted calf is killed,
Heaven's feast of joy begun;
The Shepherd's love revealed in death,
For us this feast has won.

Oh! joy of light and love,
The dead, the lost is found;
The angels gaze with wonder filled
Upon this grace profound.

W. GALLOWAY.

A Grave Indictment.

“Behold the Lord’s hand is not shortened, that it *cannot* save; neither His ear heavy, that it *cannot* hear. But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He *will not* hear” (Isa. 59. 1, 2).

THE first verse of this solemn chapter is frequently quoted by the Lord’s people when praying for blessing on the preaching of the gospel. On this assurance is based a fervent petition that at a certain meeting there may be soul-saving results.

The meeting takes place, the word is faithfully preached, the audience disperses, the servant returns to his Master, and he is unable to record any fruit. This raises various questions, e.g. when we prayed for blessing, did we expect it? We ask this because sometimes we have observed at the close of an impressive meeting, immediately the Lord’s people get up on their feet, they lightly talk together in such a fashion as to give unsaved souls the impression that the seriousness of the occasion has not affected them. When a meeting ends thus, are we conscious of defeat, and do we, like Joshua, fall upon our faces and seek to discover the reason?

We are familiar with many current expressions. “The Lord does not always permit us to see fruit”—“We might be puffed up,” etc. etc. This, however, is not satisfactory. If we believe that “the gospel is the power of God unto salvation,” then souls should be saved when the gospel is preached. If we believe that “now is the day of salvation,” and that the Lord may come at any moment, we should be distressed beyond measure when souls leave the meeting without Christ.

We should feel that God has been robbed of the joy that He seeks, that the Lord Jesus Christ has been deprived of the glory of which He is so worthy, and that the Holy Spirit has been hindered in His operations. We will at once admit that the fault is not on God’s

side. “His hand is *not* shortened, His ear is *not* heavy.” What He did in the early days of the history of the church He can do to-day. Why does He not do it? The fault must rest with us. May we not find in Jehovah’s grave indictment of His ancient people the explanation that we seek?

“Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you that He *will not* hear.”

What may those sins be in our case? May we suggest?

(1) THE SIN OF WORLDLINESS.

If this characterizes the preacher, or those of the Lord’s people who connect themselves with his preaching, it is bound to constitute a great hindrance. If our homes, our dress, our recreation, our habits, our business methods, our conversation, are worldly, we cannot expect to gain God’s ear, or reach His heart. James 4. 4 quite precludes the idea of our being able to do so. Nor can we expect the people of the world to believe the message that we carry to them. The testimony to the Thessalonians was “in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance” (1 Thess. 1. 5). “In power,” because it was backed by the consistent life of the preachers and those associated with them; “in the Holy Ghost” because for the aforesaid reason, He could; and did, clothe the word with power; “in much assurance” because the messengers had an overwhelming sense of the importance of the message; and “knowing the terror of the Lord” on the one hand, while “constrained by the love of Christ” on the other hand, they persuaded men (2 Cor. 5. 11, 14).

What occurred then, will happen now *IF* we observe the conditions.

(2) THE SIN OF STRIFE.

Again we turn to that eminently practical Epistle of James. Chapter 4., from which we have already quoted, commences with the question: "From whence come wars and fightings *AMONG YOU?*" This question is put, be it noted, in connection with the subject of asking and not receiving. If we are fighting, obviously we are not agreeing, and agreement is a condition emphatically stipulated by our blessed Lord in Matthew 18. 19. To pray together when we are not agreeing is mockery. As for the world, they say, and say rightly, "Agree amongst yourselves, and then come to us."

We must get rid of conventionality and formalism. We must be real. We have to realize that we have to do with God, that the honour of His name, the glory of his Son, the work of His Holy Spirit, the prosperity of His people, and the success of His gospel are at stake. What then are we to do?

TURN TO THE BIBLE.

Hear what God has to say to us in His Holy Scriptures. Let that Word search us, expose us, convict us, smash us up; do with us as saints what it did when as sinners we were exercised as to our sinful condition. Then, having accomplished its corrective work, it will set Christ before us as the one and only living and commanding object of our life, and will show us that the remedy is to

TURN TO CHRIST.

Away from the world, away from cliques and parties, away from every-

thing that the Word of God does not sanction, to Christ Himself. Christ the object of our heart, Christ filling the vision of our souls, Christ the director of our whole course, Christ the centre of gathering, Christ the Master Whom we love to serve, Christ the One Whom we delight to preach. When this is true of us then we shall

TURN TO GOD,

conscious that His ear *will* be open, that He *will* put forth His hand of power, and that He *will* work for the satisfaction of His own heart, and for the glory of His own great name. Beloved fellow-Christians! are we satisfied with things as they are? Can it be that with the light that God has been pleased to give us, with the Lord's coming so near at hand, with many dear believers in difficult circumstances hungering for "the bread of life"; with the world hastening on to its doom; we can rest content? It cannot be? We do not wish to be pessimistic, nor do we desire to occupy saints with themselves; yet we do in all affection urge that the seriousness of the situation demands that we should

STOP AND TAKE OUR BEARINGS.

Shall we get alone into the presence of God, away from every sight and every sound of earth, let Him search us, speak to us, show us what He desires, and what we need, and then, fresh from His presence, go forth as He bids us, to discover in very truth that "the Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save, neither His ear heavy that it cannot hear?"

W. BRAMWELL DICK.

Let us with ravished hearts new voices raise
To God, of every good the Living Fount.
Him for His great salvation let us praise,
Let our thanksgivings to the heavens mount.

Praise Him on high, on earth, on land, on sea;
Creation ransomed sing with sweet accord.
Praise Him His saints, His servants, bond, and free--
Let everything that breatheth praise the Lord.

The Heavenly Life.

ON two former occasions we have considered the heavenly life: first, as it was inherent in our Lord Jesus Christ, and second, as it is found in the Christian associated with Him, a partaker of the same life, by means of His death and resurrection.

We have now to inquire as to the conditions necessary for the development of that life in the disciple which has been seen to such perfection in the Master. An acorn bears small resemblance to an oak, but it has the same principle of life, and given the proper conditions will become a tree, bearing fruit after its kind.

Condition 1—Sowing.

Apart from sowing, an acorn will remain an acorn, the life is there but it will be undeveloped. So with the believer; none can dispute that he that believeth on Him hath eternal life; the fact is plainly stated in Scripture. But to possess is one thing, to grow is quite another. For this there must be that which answers to sowing; viz. the definite acceptance of our death with Christ, to the flesh, the world, and the power of Satan. This truth indeed is taught in the initial rite of baptism, that being planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also of His resurrection. If there is to be progress in the Divine life, there must be a moment when with a faith as simple as when we accepted the fact that our sins were forgiven, because Christ died for us, we now accept the additional fact that we are crucified with Him. Yes, in His death, we have died; there the flesh in us has met its judgment; we no longer belong to the world in which flesh finds its home, and Satan has no longer any lawful claim over us, his power of death is annulled. Accepting these things in faith, the soul enters upon new ground, it reckons itself alive

unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. To use our figure, the acorn has commenced to grow: it is not yet the mature oak, any more than the Christian who so takes account of his place before God has attained to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. But let it be once more stated that apart from the acceptance of these things there can be no knowledge of true Christian life and experience. We may speak of total surrender of the will, receiving a second blessing, and being endued with a new power, but any value there may be in these expressions, consists in that which has been said, that we are dead with Christ in His death, and risen with Him, through faith of the operation of God who has raised Him from the dead. Then it is that the Holy Spirit becomes to us the power of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

Condition 2—Food

Life must have this most necessary thing. Peter saw the urgent need of the sincere milk of the Word, that growth might be produced in those who were as new-born babes; and great was the anxiety of Paul lest the beloved Colossians should be spoiled and stunted in their growth, through the lack of the word of Christ dwelling in them richly. They were turning their ears to men's philosophy, vain deceit, and tradition, all of which were rudiments of the world and did not nourish the life which should be after Christ. We have not to search far, in the light of these scriptures, for the reason why so many Christians seem to make but little progress, for they listen, alas, to the sayings and interpretations of men, instead of the words of God. In the reading of many books which only set forth the many conflicting minds of their authors, they lose themselves in the mists of uncertainty, because they will not give

attention to the plain statements of the Word, and trust the Holy Spirit to mean exactly what He has written for our learning, that we through endurance, and through encouragement of the Scripture might have hope.

Condition 3—Air.

Apart from a pure atmosphere neither child nor plant can develop its life. The air which the Christian is to breathe, in which he is to live and move and have his being, is the love of God. No circumstance must be allowed for a moment to cause a doubt of that love, no fear must be permitted to cloud it. It is the birthright of God's children to know that they are loved of the Father, as Christ is loved. God is love and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him. It is in this atmosphere that the life begins to bear its proper fruit, for we love, because He first loved us. Loving Him that begat we love also those that are begotten of Him, and this love to the brethren becomes the proof to others that we are followers of the Master. To live in this love is the only safeguard from the poison gas of Christendom's apostasy, which is spreading its deadly effects on every hand. "But ye beloved . . . keep yourselves in the love of God" (Jude 21.), for this is the pure air of heaven.

Condition 4—Exercise.

"Exercise thyself unto godliness" (1 Tim. 4. 7), for it has promise of life in the present and the future. Life must be connected with experience, and in this prayer will occupy a very large place indeed. Prayer is the intercourse of the soul with God, the child with the Father. In this, life draws from its source; thus, we hold communion with our Eternal Lover; and by it, we walk with Him. The daily circumstances of our way which often appear so contrary are intended to promote this

dependence upon and communion with God, by which the heavenly life grows strong in Him; and they afford the opportunities by which, in taking all to Him, we may exercise ourselves unto godliness.

All true service is the result of the power of life in the soul, strengthened by communion with Him. There are many instances of those who had first to learn in quiet, often for a long season, before they were ready to be used in the way that God intended. But whether or no it is His purpose to use in any special way, His object for each is the same, to conform us in life to the image of His Son.

Condition 5—Purpose.

To have God's purpose before the heart is of the utmost importance, in order that we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, even Christ. We are God's husbandry; the care which He bestows on each plant of His planting is that it should bring forth fruit after its kind; that the Christ life should grow, and be sustained, and nourished from its living Head, bearing in consequence the precious fruits of lowliness, meekness, and love characteristic of Himself.

So shall it be if God's purpose is ours also; and as we ever bear about in our bodies (that is in our bodily condition on earth), the dying of the Lord Jesus (in which our history after the flesh was closed, the greatest act of His love was displayed, and the authority of that love over us was established), so shall the life also of Jesus be manifest in our bodies. With clearer vision also, shall we understand God's ways with His own; for we which live are always delivered unto death (things are so ordered, that we trust not in ourselves but in the Living God), for Jesus sake (He the object), that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our mortal flesh (2 Cor. 4. 10, 11).

JAMES GREEN.

The Song of Songs. Canticle III.

The Communion of Love—*continued.*

The Bridegroom.

Ch. 4. 9, 10, 11.

If the Bridegroom desires to carry away the affections of the Bride, it is indeed because he can say to her, "Thou hast taken away my heart." Twice he repeats, "Thou hast taken away (or "ravished") my heart." It is well for us to have our affections delighting in Christ, but nothing so establishes the heart and fills it with adoring joy as the realization of the delight that Christ finds in His people. Few and poor are our thoughts of Christ, but we may say with the Psalmist, "Many, O Lord my God, are Thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee . . . they are more than can be numbered." Little wonder if our hearts were ravished with Christ, but that His heart should be ravished by His people is indeed a world's wonder.

And what could the King see in the Bride that his heart should be ravished? No great thing as men speak. It was but a glance of the eye and a chain of the neck. But that look was a look of love, and the chain spoke of the adorning that he himself had put upon her. As we should say, "We love Him because He first loved us." The glance of the eye speaks of the love of the heart, and the chain of the neck proclaims that the love of the heart is the fruit of His own love.

Of the Bridegroom's love the Bride has already said it is better than wine, and His name as ointment poured forth, and now the King, using the same figures, but with increased intensity, expresses his delight in the love of the Bride. Not only is her love better than wine, it is "much better," and the

fragrance of her ointments exceeds all spices. So to the heart of Christ, His people's love is much better than all earthly joys, and the graces of His people beyond compare with all that can minister delight in nature. Simon may spread a sumptuous feast for the Lord, but the uninvited guest—the nameless woman that was a sinner—spread a yet greater feast for the heart of the Lord, "for she loved much." As one has well said, "Our Lord Jesus takes special notice of the frame of the heart; He lays more weight on our lives than on our works, though true love can never be without works."

But not only the look of the eye and the chain of the neck proclaim the love of the Bride, but the "lips," the "tongue" and the "garment" all minister delight to the King's heart. Of the wicked it is written, "the poison of asps is under their lips," but of His own He can say, "honey and milk are under thy tongue." Words fall from their lips that are sweet to the Lord, and the practical righteousness of the saints—their garments—are like the smell of Lebanon, the cedar wood that speaks of human perfection.

Verses 12, 13, 14, 15.

Having expressed His delight in the Bride, the King proceeds to liken her to a garden enclosed, thus setting forth how completely the Bride is set apart for His delight. In the midst of a barren desert the King has His garden enclosed wherein there are fountains of water and pleasant fruits for the pleasure of the King.

From the beginning of time it has been God's purpose to have a garden in this world for His pleasure. In accord with this desire the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden. And in

that garden there were trees pleasant to the sight and good for food, and a river that watered the garden and flowed from thence to the world around. But sin entered and the garden was marred and brought forth thorns and thistles.

But again, in the course of time, the Lord planted a garden. He chose Israel from among the nations and likened them to a vineyard in a very fruitful hill. Separating them from the nations, He "made a wall about" His vineyard, and gathered out the stones, and planted it with the choicest vine, and He looked for fruit. But again sin marred the garden, and it brought forth only wild grapes, and so the garden was laid waste and became a place of briars and thorns (Isa. 5. 1-7).

Moreover to-day the Lord has His garden upon the earth, for the Apostle can say of the Christian assembly, "Ye are God's husbandry," and in this garden one may plant and another may water, but God giveth the increase (1 Cor. 3. 6-9). But, alas, once again the garden has been marred, for "while men slept" the enemy has sown "tares among the wheat," with the result that God's broken and scattered people present but faint traces of the garden of the Lord.

But when we turn from the people of God to the word of God, we find enshrined in the Song of Songs a perfect description of the garden that is suited to the Lord. And as we linger within the precincts of this fair garden we realise not only what is suited to the Lord, but how little we answer to the desire of His heart.

Let us first remember that the garden of the Lord is "*a garden enclosed.*" This speaks of separation, preservation, and sanctification. Under the eye of God this world is but "the barren place where Jesus died;" but in this waste there are those whom the Lord can call "His own," and as we listen to the desire of the Lord for His own as

expressed in the great prayer of John 17. we begin to realise the deep spiritual meaning of "*a garden enclosed.*" If "*a garden enclosed*" involves *separation* from the surrounding desert, then, in like manner, we hear the Lord telling the Father that His own are not of the world even as He is not of the world. If "*a garden enclosed*" has in view the *preservation* of the tender plants, then, in accord with this thought, we hear the Lord praying that His people may be kept from evil. And lastly, if "*a garden enclosed*" implies a spot *set apart* for the owner's enjoyment, then, in harmony with this, we hear the Lord's desire that His people might be sanctified.

Such are the desires of the Lord; to have a company in this world, definitely separated from the world, preserved from the evil of the world, and set apart for His pleasure, to form for Him "*a garden enclosed.*"

But the garden of the King is not only "*a garden enclosed,*" it is a *watered garden*. Israel in their decline are likened to "*a garden that hath no water,*" but in the day of their future restoration the Prophet can say to Israel, "Thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not" (cf. Isa. 1. 30 and 58. 11). And so the garden of the King has its "spring shut up, and fountain sealed." It is not dependent upon the surroundings desert for its supply, the spring is within the garden. And so with the Lord's people; they have a secret source of supply, the Holy Spirit, "whom the world cannot receive because it seeth Him not neither knoweth Him." He indeed is the "Spring," but let us not forget the Spring must be "shut up." It is possible to grieve the Spirit into silence, and then how parched our souls become, how unfruitful the Lord's people, when the Spirit is quenched. We need to carefully keep the door "shut" against the intrusion of the flesh, lest the Philistines once again stop the wells with earth as in the days of Abraham.

Moreover, the "spring shut up" is "a fountain sealed." A spring yields an unfailing supply, a fountain an abundant supply rising up to its source. The Holy Spirit is not only an unfailing spring, abiding with us, and meeting all our needs throughout our pilgrim path, but He is also a fountain within the believer springing up into everlasting life (John 4.14). Moreover, the fountain is set apart for the King—it is "sealed." As the Spring the Holy Spirit is occupied with us and our needs, as the Fountain He is wholly occupied with Christ and engaging our hearts with Him.

Furthermore, the garden of the King is a *fruitful garden*. The plants of this garden form a paradise of pomegranates, with "precious fruits" and "trees of frankincense," and "all chief spices." The plants may vary in size and beauty, in fragrance and fruitfulness, but all are for the delight of the King. And so in the garden of the Lord; no two saints are alike, but all minister to His delight.

And lastly, the King's garden not only ministers to his delight, but it is a *source of blessing to the regions beyond*, it is like "a well of living waters, which stream from Lebanon." And so if the garden of the Lord is "enclosed," if it is watered with "a spring shut up, a fountain sealed," if it yields its precious fruit for the Lord, then indeed it will be a source of blessing to the world around, a channel for "rivers of living water" to flow to dying men.

How good for our souls to linger awhile within the garden of the King and seek to learn the spiritual significance of the walls by which it is enclosed, the spring by which it is refreshed, the fruits and spices which grow therein, and the streams which flow forth to the barren lands beyond.

And we need every lesson of the garden, for our service is oftentimes poor and partial. We are apt to expend much

labour on one part of the garden to the detriment of another portion. Thus in the history of the Lord's garden it has often come to pass that some have been so busy "hedging and ditching" that they have neglected the flowers and fruit. Such have almost wholly confined their labours to the maintenance of separation from the world and the exclusion of evil from the garden of the Lord, and have had little time for the care of souls, with the result that they have indeed secured an exclusive garden, but in it little fruit for the Lord and little blessing for the world around.

Then, again, others have forgotten to keep the spring "shut up." The flesh has been allowed to work unhindered in the garden of the Lord, and so the Holy Spirit has been grieved and hindered, and in this way the garden has ceased to yield its pleasant fruit to the Lord.

Others, again, have been so attracted by the flowers and the fruit, that they have overlooked the hedges and the ditches, with the result that the encircling walls have fallen into disrepair, and evil has entered through the breaches, and the garden of the Lord has been choked with weeds and become unfruitful.

Finally, there are others who have been so engrossed with the streams that flow forth to the world around that they have overlooked the plants that grow within, and thus the garden has ceased to yield fruit to the Lord.

Let us remember the garden is not ours but the Lord's, as the King can say in the Song "My garden" (16). It is "enclosed" for the Lord; the spring is to water *His* garden; the precious fruits are for *His* delight; and if the streams of living water flow from the garden it is only to rear plants for the garden. Keeping this in mind, how careful should we be of any neglect that would render the garden of the Lord unfruitful.

HAMILTON SMITH.

Answers to Correspondents.

On Keeping the Sabbath.

A. The tract you send, issued by the International Tract Society (Seven day Adventists), is simply a demand that we return to the law. The writer does not know the gospel; he confounds the old covenant with the new, and so is unable to rightly divide the Word of truth. It is a glaring example of an endeavour to foist upon us the error that had ensnared the Galatians; to whom Paul wrote, "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth. . . . Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the healing of faith? . . . As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse . . . the law is not of faith" (Gal. 3. 1-12).

The Sabbath as given to Israel belonged to the first covenant, but they transgressed that covenant and God could find no rest in them, nor were they entitled to rest, of which the Sabbath spoke, for their six days' work was all evil.

When the Lord came into the world the leaders of Israel were full of wrath because He did not keep their Sabbath, and sought to slay Him for it; but He told them that there was no Sabbath

either for Him or His Father, until the work was done that should deliver men from their sin and misery.

The Sabbath of the old covenant was to come when the work was done, but as no flesh can be justified by the works of the law the work was never done, and so no rest could be found on that ground. Jesus becomes our Sabbath, for He says, "Come unto Me . . . and I will give you rest." And we begin with this in the Christian faith, for the Lord gathered His own together on the *first* day of the week; they were to *begin* with rest and peace on that resurrection day, the new beginning. And that rest and peace were not to be based upon their faithfulness to Him as in the *first* covenant, but upon His finished work and once-for-all sacrifice. The eighth day, the day of resurrection, is our day; it is the Lord's day.

He has set aside the shadow and brought in the substance; Col. 2. 16, 17, tells us that the Sabbath was a shadow, but Christ is the Substance. He has set aside the first that He might establish the second. He has redeemed us from the curse of the broken law, and we must not again be brought into bondage.

The Bones of Joseph.

E. B. H. Hebrews 11. 22 shows us that it was faith on Joseph's part that led him to give commandment concerning his bones. The glory he had in Egypt did not satisfy the aspirations of his soul. His hope and faith looked onward to the time when God would fulfil His word to His people, and when he, like Daniel, also a great ruler, but an exile in a Gentile land, should stand in his lot at the end of his days (Dan. 12. 13).

The Israelites carried these bones about with them until the land was

settled, and they would be a constant reminder to them, if they had hearts to learn the lesson, that not the glory of this world, which Joseph had known to the full, but the promises of God, had to govern them.

There may be an analogy between this and 2 Corinthians 4. 10, as you suggest, certainly, what the Apostle had before his soul, as he lived the life he there described, was the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; of this Caanan was a figure.

“One Sinner that Repenteth.”

THERE ARE ONE THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED MILLION INHABITANTS of this world—all sinners—yet we read, “There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over *one* sinner that repenteth.” We are not told that anything else moves heaven to this special joy, but this we are told, twice over, in one discourse by the Lord Himself, and He never repeated Himself without a purpose. The name sinner is an ugly word, but it fits us all, and it is not qualified here by any adjective that would make this revelation of heaven’s interest in men applicable to one class only. Whether the sinner be young or old, high born or of lowly birth, black or white, religious or profane, is all the same in God’s reckoning; it is the person that counts, the person, with a never-dying spirit, capable, if repentant and reconciled, of the supreme joys of communion with God in heaven for ever, or if not, of speechless woes in the lake of fire.

We may not be able to understand it, but such a statement twice made by the Lord ought to impress us with the value of souls, ought to teach us at least that nothing in the wide earth can compare in value with the souls of men or be worth seeking and saving in comparison with them.

TWO GREAT EVENTS, one past and one still to come, may help us to realize the value of one sinner, and heaven’s joy at his repentance. That which is past was enacted at Calvary. Upon the centre cross erected there the Son of God was impaled, condemned to a malefactor’s death by the popular clamour and deliberate verdict of the Roman judge. But when that sentence was executed, so far as men were able to do it, a thick darkness covered the earth, wrapping the day in an impenetrable gloom. Out of that darkness there arose the never-to-be-forgotten

cry, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me”; and in that cry there was expressed the unfathomable suffering into which Jesus went when He was made sin for us. And He died, shedding His blood for the remission of sins. Why? “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,” is the answer. As we consider that scene the value of one soul must grow upon us, for that was the price of its salvation. The coming event is told by the seer in Revelation 19. 6, 7. Says he, “And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice and give honour to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready.” Here is the height of the joy as yonder there was the depth of the sorrow. Here is the full and blessed fruition of yonder travail of soul. Here is the multitude of sinners who have repented viewed now according to God’s purpose as a holy and suited wife for His Son, and the joy thereat is not merely in heaven in the presence of the angels of God, but rolls in mighty volume to the uttermost bounds of the universe of bliss.

Every soul that repents hastens that day of joy, is one more gathered out of the world for God’s honour in that hour. It is this that causes joy over one sinner, for heaven looks on to the completion of God’s work and sees in every soul another for that great aggregate. And it is our privilege to be in communion with heaven and with the heart of God over repentant sinners. If we live in the presence of the sorrow of Calvary and of the joy of the coming great marriage-day we shall not lose our interest in the repentance and salvation of souls.

From Man's Wretchedness to God's Greatness.

Psalm 77.

Introduction.

ONE of the attractive things about the Psalms is the way they present to us experimental truth. We are permitted to see the practical working of the truth in the experience of favoured saints of old, so that, no matter what our experiences may be, we can always find in the Psalms some allusion to feelings of a like kind. We are made to feel that after all our experiences are not absolutely unique, and that there are others who have tasted the same things.

Now this 77th Psalm is as highly experimental as any we can find. You will notice it is a Psalm of Asaph. There are a group of these Psalms, all written by the same sweet singer. They begin with the 73rd. The second Book of Psalms ends with that magnificent millennial Psalm, the 72nd; the Psalm which gives us such a wonderful view of the glories of the coming kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, that the Psalmist himself felt he had nothing left to pray for. He saw the consummation of all his desires in the day of the King who was coming. The glimpse he got by the Spirit of the coming kingdom was so satisfying that it left him without a prayer on his lips. The next Psalm opens in a very different strain. It is the perplexity of Asaph, the godly man, at the apparent prosperity of evil on the earth. He could not understand it. The godly seemed to be perplexed and plagued, and the wicked to flourish. He felt tempted to utterly abandon all faith in God; his steps had wellnigh slipped. But at last he went into the sanctuary of God, and there, in the presence of God—as far as he might know it in those days—he found the solution of the problem.

I think you will find there is a distinct progression in these Psalms. Psalm 74. is a lament. It is the kind of lament

which the godly Jews in a coming day will take on their lips, when they see the devastation wrought on the earth by the powers of evil, headed up in Antichrist. Then we pass on to Psalm 75., which announces God's judgment, and Psalm 76., which anticipates the divine triumph at the beginning of the millennial age, when "the stout-hearted are spoiled . . . they have slept their sleep . . . and none of the men of might have found their hands." This probably had a preliminary fulfilment in the great deliverance wrought in the days of Hezekiah, but its exhaustive fulfilment will be in the coming day. That will be the time, as the ninth verse says, when "God arises in judgment, to save the meek of the earth," to make manifest before men at large the truth which Asaph says he learned in the sanctuary of God in Psalm 73.

Mental and Spiritual Difficulties.

In Psalm 77. Asaph unfolds to us the mental and spiritual difficulties through which he passed. He went through a very depressing and trying time, and he rehearses the matter to us from the beginning. "I cried unto God, with my voice, and He heard me." A saint never does cry to God without being heard.

From verses 2 to 6, Asaph tells us what was the state of his mind. The fact is, he was afflicted with a dreadful attack of introspection, which is only another word for self-occupation. Some of us may get occupied with ourselves because we are naturally of that turn of mind and therefore very apt to turn in upon ourselves. We think that in doing so we are seeking the Lord, as Asaph did, for he says, "In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord." As a matter of fact, however, he was seeking

some point of rest and comfort in himself, for he goes on to tell us, "My sore ran in the night, and ceased not; my soul refused to be comforted. I remembered God, and was troubled." Think of that! You would expect that a saint could not think of God without a song on his lips. No, he remembered God, and was troubled, because, although he remembered God, what was filling the vision of his soul was simply himself. "I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed."

He felt absolutely at the end of his resources; sleepless by night, and as though he could not speak to anybody by day (ver. 4). We might well have asked, "Asaph, what have you been dwelling upon?" If we want to be happy, we must dwell on happy subjects. If you come across one who is always dwelling on unsavoury things, you will find such a one a very unsavoury individual. A person who is always dwelling upon mournful subjects, invariably goes about with a long face. You may say, "I do get so depressed and cast down." Do not dwell on the gloomy side. Is it not possible to have the eye of your heart lifted off to that which is bright?

He tells us in verses 5 and 6 the things that had been occupying his thoughts. "I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times." I have been thinking about bygone history. Old Christians are very apt to be troubled like this. They think the former days were vastly better than these. It is doubtless true that twenty-five years ago there was more interest among the saints of God, and in the work of God. We look back, and say, "Ah, those bright days of twenty-five or thirty years ago." We find Asaph had known brighter days personally. If conditions had been better, as connected with his circumstances, conditions had also been brighter in his soul. "I call to remembrance my song in the night." I was so happy; I remembered when I could have laid awake on my bed, and sung to God. "I com-

muned with my own heart." "My spirit made diligent search." Yes, but in what direction? Evidently *within*.

Now this is most depressing work. Some of us have experienced it. Some of us may not be as bright to-day as we might have been, because of this habit of looking within. We consult our own feelings, and are occupied with ourselves or our circumstances. There are many dear children of God being robbed of their birthright in the way of spiritual joy, and happiness and power, because of that habit. Such is the subtlety of this kind of thing that its effect is to make us doubt, not ourselves—not to make us so conscious of our own utter worthlessness that we say self is no longer worthy of being cultivated—but to make us doubt God.

This was the effect with Asaph. It raised a whole host of questions—not about himself, but about God. He says, "Will the Lord cast off for ever? Will the Lord be favourable no more? Is His mercy clean gone for ever? Does His promise fail for evermore? Has God forgotten to be gracious? Hath He in anger shut up His tender mercies?" Here are six questions, all casting reflections upon God. You will find that is the spirit in the world around. All these calamities that have come upon the civilized world are being seized upon and made an excuse to blame God. Here Asaph actually doubts the Lord. There may be some one here who has had an experience of that kind. You have felt you would almost doubt God Himself.

Then there comes that little word "Selah"—stop! It is about time we did stop when we can actually question the mercy and graciousness of God.

In verse 10 Asaph appears to start as a man awakening out of sleep, and he says, "This is my infirmity." Perhaps he had been thinking previously that all this self-occupation with its attendant misery was very pious and very right. There are dear Christian people who are

in a state of inward misery, and they in a way pride themselves on being in that state. If they were not miserable, they would begin to be miserable because they were not miserable. The fact is that all this kind of thing is our *infirmity*. It is a great thing to label things by their right names. This is INFIRMITY, and not *piety*!

The Cure.

Now what is the cure? I am afraid our circumstances have occupied a great deal of our thoughts, and we get no strength whatever from being so occupied. Look at the contrast in verse 10: "I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High." This is something which stretches far outside the little course of time's history. The mind of Asaph was lifted up to things beyond the stars. He left himself with his wretchedness and littleness behind him when he began to remember the years of the right hand of the Most High. "I will remember," he says, "the works of the Lord: surely I will remember thy wonders of old." He is speaking of the God who marches through the circumstances. "I will talk of thy doings."

Suppose, brethren, we could walk a little bit in Asaph's footsteps, what a transformation it would produce. Suppose we fix the eye of our hearts, not on the seen things, not on the failings of our brethren and on the peculiar things they say and do, but on the God who marches through the circumstances, who works His sovereign will, who has revealed Himself in the Lord Jesus Christ, who is going to let the right hand of His power be seen in a way we have never yet seen it: we should be transformed! There could not be a greater contrast than between the spirit of these early verses of the Psalm and the spirit of verse 13. He says, I will get before my soul the works of the Lord. "Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary. Who is so great a God as our God." The man begins to triumph. If I may adopt the

language of Romans 7, he was previously saying, "Who is so wretched a man as I am?" Now he says, "Who is so great a God as our God?" We see here the change that was wrought in a man when he got the eye of his heart off his circumstances, and on to God. It is like Psalm 73., where Asaph went into the sanctuary and got the problems and difficulties solved. So he says here, "Thy way is the sanctuary." If we seek the presence of God, we shall understand His way. Then he tells us God's way is a redeeming way: "Thou hast with thine arm redeemed thy people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph. Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known."

Let us take it to heart. God's way is in the sea. Amidst the masses of mankind, amidst all the jangle and strife of the various races that inhabit Europe, so like the sea, which represents people in unrest and anarchy; God's way is there. His path is in the great waters. When men are agitated, and start their movements, not in the least knowing where they are going, God moves through all the conflict. His footsteps are not known. In another way they *are* known, because He has led His people "like a flock, by the hands of Moses and Aaron." Moses and Aaron have been superseded, as the Epistle to the Hebrews tells us, by One who is infinitely greater than Moses and Aaron, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus. He is the true Moses, the true Revealer: and the true Aaron, the true Priest who holds up His people and leads them on.

These are His footsteps through the raging billows of Europe to-day. While His people are here, He leads them. If you and I get into the sanctuary with God, if we get our eyes on God and His things—the eternal things, we shall see more clearly what His way is. We shall learn His strength—that which will supply us with the energy we need.

An Address by
F. B. HOLLE.

Remarks on Paul's Gospel. No. 2.

FIXING the dates of the different books of Scripture is largely a matter of surmise, and in many cases conclusions can only be drawn from data that are more or less vague, but it seems probable at least that the Epistle to the Galatians was written prior to the Romans. The former epistle is a defence of Paul's doctrine against the judaizing influences that were "perverting the gospel of the Christ" (Gal. 1. 7); the latter is a full and methodical setting forth of the "gospel of God," addressed in its wide and all-embracing importance to the saints at Rome, the then capital city of the world. The former is controversial and special; the latter is expository and general. In both the Apostle claims to be the special exponent of the gospel which he had received directly from God, so much so that without contravening whatever ministry others might have had committed to them, he at least got his own in such a direct and special manner, and with such a special character attaching to it, that he insists and lays great stress on calling it "his gospel." And this we must keep constantly and clearly before our minds as a condition of prime importance in the understanding of the entire scope of his writings from the opening to the climax of his ministry. We shall see this more fully later on.

Each of the apostles, John, Peter, and Paul, had great and glorious subjects of gospel testimony committed to them. John sets forth the divine nature and Person of Jesus the Son of the Father, and eternal life in Him; Peter speaks of the present ways of God's government, and the security of the promises, despite the conflicting circumstances of Israel's dispersion, with the assurance of the fulfilment of the prophecies in their highest and far-reaching purport in a new world where righteousness shall dwell; to Paul was committed "the gospel of God" wherein is revealed His righteousness as the basis

of His relation with man as man, whether Jew or Gentile, through the faith of Christ—"for 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).

"God's gospel" is the glad tidings of His way out of the ruin of the first man through the folly of his disobedience, and the resources at His disposal in another man, "in Christ," to accomplish His purposes in the creation of man and to effectuate the counsels of glory for which He had predestined him. The first word spoken of man opens up a vista of unsurpassable glory in his behoof: "Let us make man (the generic term) in our image after our likeness, and let them (the family) have dominion over" the whole creation, earth, air, and sea (Gen. 1. 26). To what glory is he not here predestined—this Adam—Son of God (Luke 3. 38), and how great the mystery in the formation out of him in his sleep of a woman, who was to be a helpmeet for him in the glorious destiny allotted to them both! The first and most glorious type in Scripture, it sets forth the "great mystery of Christ and the church" (Eph. 5. 32). But between that and its fulfilment is a long way—a *via dolorosa*—and the history of the first man must run its course with all the sin and sorrow attached to it up to the cross, until in Christ raised from the dead we see the Man of God's reserve, in whom the believer gets a new place before God, and all His purposes in present blessing and future glory find their fulfilment. These first scriptures, from Genesis 1.—2., seem to be the seed-plot of all Paul's writings. They contain implicitly all the purposes of God, as Adam was a type of Christ (Rom. 5. 14), and Eve of the church (Eph. 5.). And the special ministry of Paul, separated from his mother's womb and called by the grace of God, was to unlock and develop the

vast schemes of grace and glory bound up in these few verses.

Luke, "the beloved physician," was Paul's devoted companion, and it seems as though his gospel was inspired as the personal basis of the Apostle's doctrine. It is in Luke's Gospel that we get the true genealogy of Jesus and the account of the immaculate conception, as the angel says to Mary, "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; wherefore the holy thing also which shall be born shall be called Son of God" (Luke 1. 35).

This was the manner of the coming of this Child into the world; and it was the immediate object of attack of the devil: "If thou be Son of God . . ." (Luke 4. 3). It was the charge on which the people, misled by their rulers, condemned Him to death: "And they all said, Thou then art the Son of God? . . . and they arose and led Him to Pilate" (Luke 22. 70). It was the confession of the centurion at the cross, "Truly this Man was Son of God" (Mark 15. 39); and, as though unconsciously anticipating Paul's doctrine of justification, he declared, "Certainly this was a righteous man" (Luke 23. 47). It was the opening text of Paul's preaching, immediately after his conversion, "And straightway in

the synagogues he preached Jesus, that He is the Son of God" (Acts 9. 20). The Epistle to the Romans begins with the same statement, "Marked out Son of God in power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by resurrection of the dead" (Rom. 1. 4). It was the subject of Paul's ministry all through his life, and he sets it forth as the crowning object of glory in the coming world to which we are predestinated "to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren" (Rom. 8. 29), as it is the highest objective now of all the gifts of an ascended Christ "for the perfecting of the saints . . . till we all arrive at the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, at the full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." It is thus we pass out of the state of unnatural babyhood (*νήπιον*) into manhood and the individuality of corporate usefulness (Eph. 4. 13-16).

The revival of Paul's Gospel among us would be a true revival. It is up to the evangelists to begin there, and pray earnestly to the Lord for themselves first, to give them spiritual intelligence and power to "seek faithfully the old paths," and sound forth again "the gospel of the glory of the Blessed God."

E. CROSS.

The Servant's Work.

It is not the man that sees defects and does no more than talk of them, though we should see them, and feel them, but the man who, like Nehemiah, removes them, who is doing the Lord's

work. One might expose and descant upon the prodigal ways long enough, but the work of the servants was to put the best robe upon him, and rejoice in the Father's grace that welcomed him.

Adding.

There is a great difference between knowledge of the Word and the Word dwelling richly in us. When it is the latter one finds it ready to bud. It is not stationary knowledge, it is grow-

ing. Hence the truth I know in my heart best is the one I long to know more about, and the one I feel I know so little of, though ever enjoying it. "Adding" is a mark of life.

The New Jerusalem.

A Bible Study on Revelation 21. 9 to 22. 5.

21. 9. "And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife."

Q. Why commence our study of this subject at verse 9 instead of at the beginning of the chapter?

W. K. The first eight verses refer to a totally different time from what follows. From chapter 21. 9 we have to go back again to the millennium; whereas the previous verses are the fullest account that the Word of God furnishes of the new heavens and the new earth, in the proper sense of the words.

Q. How do you prove that?

W. K. In the eternal state, all time distinctions are at an end. There is no such thing then as kings and nations. Whereas if we look at the latter part of the chapter we have nations and earthly kings. Consequently, it is not the eternal condition which we have, but a previous state.

Q. Is the bride here Israel or the church?

J. A. T. If the bride of the Lamb be Israel in chapter 21. it must be Israel in chapter 19. Now the terms of the description in the latter preclude the possibility of it. The heavenly glory of the nuptials settles in itself who is the subject of them. It is *the church* thus publicly owned in suited heavenly glory.

The Introduction.

W. K. There is a striking analogy in the way in which Babylon (Rev. 17. 1) and the heavenly Jerusalem are introduced, and though, of course, there is the strongest and most marked difference between the two objects themselves, still there is enough to make it manifest that the Holy Ghost had them together in His mind.

J. A. T. Then it was to see the unholy alliance of the apostate church with the world. And do we not enter in some little measure into the wisdom and preciousness of the grace that does not give us the glorious espousal of the church, as in chapter 19., until the overthrow in judgment of that which had held the place and profession of the bride in the awful Satanic counterfeit, nor finally close the Revelation without bringing out her true and recognized place in the Kingdom?

10. "And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God."

Q. Is the city the bride, or is it the place where the bride dwells—her home?

W. K. The scripture itself most positively says that it is (not the dwelling-place of the redeemed, but) the bride herself described as a city.

J. N. D. It is the bride; not in its Pauline character, the one body, but in its governmental. It is a city, not a body.

Q. Why the great and high mountain? Has this any significance?

A. In the beginning of chapter 17. it says: "He carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness." John was carried into the wilderness to be shown the "whore." Now he is taken to "a great and high mountain." That means that you must get very much above the earth if you are to understand about the bride. You can understand the great whore in the wilderness.

J. A. T. How suited the wilderness, from which John looks out on the moral chaos, where no trait of the life of Christ was found, to be fruit for God!

The Position of the City.

Q. Do the words "descending out of heaven" imply that the city comes to the earth, and is here during the millennium?

J. N. D. She is not found on the earth; there is no thought even of her there.

J. A. T. Take a parallel case in 1 Thessalonians 4. 15: "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven." Must we adopt the conclusion that He comes to earth? We know that He does not.

F. G. P. She does not come to the earth, but is let down that the earth may see her glory, the glory of God displayed in her.

J. N. D. It may be manifested to the earth, but in its origin it is heavenly, also in its character; in its nature also.

Q. Besides saying that the city descends from heaven, it says that she comes from God. Is there anything to remark as to this?

J. N. D. This was its double character: from God, divine in its origin, and also heavenly. It might be of God, and earthly. It might be heavenly and angelic. It was neither: it was divine in origin and heavenly in nature and character.

W. S. Her state is holy, her home is heaven, and her source is God Himself.

11. "Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal."

J. N. D. It has the glory of God: immense truth! "We rejoice in hope of the glory of God"; its display and its dwelling-place shall be in us. God is glorified there; all shines with His glory; all relates to it, bears witness to it, and is clothed with it.

F. G. P. She has the glory of God, and yet it is called "her light." Why is this? God has produced the graces of Christ in the saints here; pure grace has done so, yet He has counted it to them.

So here; if the church has the glory of God, yet it is her light, by His grace.

Q. Of what is the jasper in this verse a symbol?

W. K. It appears to me that this account of the city's bright lustre like a jasper has a very close connection with what had just before been said of it, as "having the glory of God." For when God Himself was seen on the throne in chapter 4., He was in appearance like a jasper and a sardis. But this is not all. We are told in the 18th verse that "the building of the wall of it was of jasper." Hence it is plain that this is peculiarly the stone which is used to describe the glory of God, as far as it can be seen by a creature.

J. A. T. "Her shining" is like jasper. The word for "light" is, more fully, "shining." The force of this is at once seen by the only previous use of jasper in this book. It is the symbol of the glory of God. In Philippians 2. 15, where the very word (*φωστῆρ*, shining) is found, we are set to be the display of the glory in its moral characteristics, in the world. This is just what Christ was. The only difference is that now we possess the treasure in an earthen vessel that too often obscures the manifestation of it. But in the new Jerusalem the vessel is suited to the glory it contains, and there is the perfect shining of it.

The Wall.

12. "And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates, twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel."

Q. What does the wall signify?

W. S. Strength and security; everything unsuited to the glory of God can find no admittance to that holy place. All within are safe, and divinely guarded.

J. A. T. The heavenly city is enclosed and shut in thus, against all that is unsuited to the glory of God, of which it is the dwelling-place.

J. N. D. It is secure, having a wall great and high.

W. K. Besides this, we are told that it had "twelve gates." God is pleased to remember that He is dealing with people on the earth, and the New Jerusalem has a very special relation to men during the millennium. Accordingly there are twelve gates.

J. A. T. The gate is the place where rule is administered in the East.

Q. The number twelve is prominent here. *Why?*

J. N. D. The twelve gates are full human perfectness of governmental administrative power.

Twelve notes perfection and governmental power. There is the perfection of administrative order and power.

F. W. G. Twelve is the number of manifest sovereignty, as it was exercised in Israel by the Lord in the midst of them.

Q. Why are angels introduced, as standing at the gates?

J. N. D. Angels are become the willing doorkeepers of the great city, the fruit of Christ's redemption-work in glory. This marked the possession too, by man thus brought in the assembly to glory, of the highest place in the creation and providential order of God, of which angels had previously been the administrators.

W. K. In this day of glory the angel is happy to be a porter at the gate of the heavenly city—happy, if he do not enter, to have his work and mission outside.

W. S. Angels never rise above the position of servants; we are children and sons. Angels wait at the gates, to obey.

The Names of the Gates.

Q. How is it that the names on the gates are not those of Christians, but of the tribes of Israel?

J. A. T. The order of government on earth was ever connected with Israel

and its twelve tribes as the centre of it. But now that which is thus the fitting symbol of rule and government is found connected with the heavenly city, in the names of the tribes inscribed on the gates. To us, the heavenly saints, the church, under Christ is entrusted the judicial administration of the world to come.

14. "And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb."

Q. What is the connection between the foundations of the wall and the apostles?

J. N. D. They were, in their work, the foundation of the heavenly city. It is the assembly as founded at Jerusalem under the twelve—the organized seat of heavenly power, the new and now heavenly capital of God's government. They had suffered and served the Lamb in the earthly, and under Him founded the heavenly.

W. K. Ephesians 2. 20 gives us, I think, the force of the symbol: "Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets." God has brought out His full mind as a foundation of truth. Upon this broad and deep foundation—where not merely the dealings of God with individuals are shown out, but where all that can be known of God by the creature has been revealed in His Son—upon this foundation the church is built. "The twelve apostles of the Lamb" were the instruments of this revelation.

F. G. P. The twelve apostles have a double place: in relation to the kingdom below, as in the church on high. The Lord promised them: "Ye shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (see Matt. 19. 28).

J. A. T. Their promised place in the kingdom would not in any way interfere with their being of the body of Christ when it was formed at Pentecost, for the church was also to have intimate connection with the kingdom.

(To be continued.)

Colossians 2. A Chapter for To-day.

WHAT could have made the Apostle Paul desire that the church at Colosse should know of the great conflict which he had for them, and for others besides, were he not aware of the immense spiritual dangers to which they were exposed? He knew their peril; he could see the effort of the serpent by whom the hallowed precincts of Eden itself had been invaded and its inmates beguiled; he was conscious that no power but that of God could preserve the saints from a similar temptation, and therefore, as a true shepherd, he had this struggle against a subtle foe who was deftly using human instruments for the accomplishment of his work. They had a battle to fight and greatly required divine courage to face it; they needed the uniting power of love, whereby their affections should be firmly knit together for mutual support; they had to be possessed of the wealth of a clear understanding of the revealed will of God, that they should be in the enjoyment of full and well-grounded assurance; as well as a full knowledge of the mystery of God—the revelation He has now given of His mind in the glorious person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ—for in this mystery are hid every treasure of wisdom and knowledge, and outside of it there could be therefore only darkness. All else could only have had their seduction from the truth for its enticing object.

But the fact that the Apostle could behold the absence of such disorder as, for example, he had to mourn at Corinth, in those to whom he is here writing, as well as a steadfastness in the faith of Christianity, led him to rejoice, and to urge them that, as they had received Christ Jesus the Lord, so they should walk in Him, in the sense of His sufficiency; and being rooted and grounded in Him, and thus established in the faith in which they had been taught, they should abound therein, as in

pasture rich and nutritious, with a thanksgiving which would indicate their hearts' entire satisfaction.

The *sine qua non*, the urgent necessity for that day, and our own, was and is a firm and thankful establishment in the great and unchanging facts of our faith—"the faith once delivered to the saints," never altered, nor modified, nor amended, but which is as complete and perfect, and suitable, and blessed to-day, after its long and glorious course, as ever. Woe to the man who would derogate from its peerless worth.

But warning was necessary, for the same subtle foe, who had succeeded by the use of intellectual wiles in Eden, was at work, with similar weapons, in the church. He sought to spoil and lead captive the confessors of Christ, and, by the use of wicked men to bewilder the minds of His followers. Thus to this end he employed philosophy—the speculation of the human mind, which, after all, could only be guesswork, whether as applied to creation, or to the more serious work of theorizing on the God-head, both matters utterly beyond the reach of man, save as by the revelation of God Himself. Such philosophy is but vain deceit, and is a sinful tampering with that revelation.

Let the philosophers of old, or the professors of to-day, restrict their minds to that which is within their range of vision, and then they will neither stultify themselves nor wickedly deceive others.

Besides these cosmogonies and desecrating theories there were the traditions of men—teachings subversive of the doctrine of God and the faith of Christ; and, yet more, there were worldly elements and principles which were necessarily and essentially opposed to the heavenly and unworldly economy of grace.

Surely the cloven foot was visible in

all this—nor is that foot withdrawn to-day. But the whole deception is met by the three following words of divine contrast: “*not after Christ.*” Christ is the absolute antithesis, the pattern and touchstone—“for,” it says, “in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” Not a lack, not a deficiency, not one single quality that goes to make up that fulness, but is found to be bodily in Christ. So then, if in Him, we too are complete, filled full, without lack or deficiency either—yea, if in Him! If so, what room can there be for poor human philosophy, or teaching, or worldly elements? God’s fulness cannot be complemented! It suffices for Him, and therefore for faith. Oh! let us maintain earnestly the magnificence of this God-inspired statement: “In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” Then, how comes it that we, once so destitute, should be thus “complete”? What has happened to us?

Is the old rite of circumcision obligatory? Nay, for we are circumcised in the circumcision of Christ—that is death (with Him we also died) has for us put off the body of the flesh in its entirety. How circumcise a man thus dead? But not only dead, but buried, as the Christian rite of baptism declares; not only buried, but risen also with Him through the faith of the operation of God! The Christian is thus a dead and risen man in the sight of God—a fact wellnigh forgotten by saints to-day!

This, however, implies a new life, and so we are “quickened together with Him,” He is our life, as the following chapter abundantly shows, and all offences are forgiven. What a position! Further, did an obligation rest on Israel to fulfil their side of the covenant at Sinai? That obligation, or agreement, was blotted out for them at the cross. Again, did hostile principalities and powers stand in the way? He spoiled them there, stripping them of their supremacy over us, and making a show of them openly. He, by dying,

“destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil,” and

*“Peace like an even river flows,
And mercy like a flood.”*

Glorious victory indeed; and just as His fulness meets all our need, so His death clears us from every spiritual foe. That is, the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ constitute the grand basis of Christianity. His person can have no possible addition; His work calls for no poor useless human supplement of any kind whatsoever, be it the Mass of the Catholic or the merits of the Protestant. And why? Because “the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin.” All the glory is due to Him.

Finally to “hold the Head,” and to derive solely from Him from whom all spiritual nourishment comes, lifts you above a worship of angels who, though high, are only creatures and can supply no such increase. Nay, but being dead with Christ (mark the words) from the rudiments of the world (sorry things at best) why, as though alive in it, be in subjection to ordinances? Oh! the idea of a man who is dead and risen with Christ, and thus belonging to a new world, placing himself in subjection to rules which appertain to the old one! How deplorably inconsistent! Hence the human, philosophic, ritualistic system of bodily starvation and neglect, while exceedingly imposing, is not humility but pride in its subtlest form; so that, while the body suffers, the flesh is pampered. It is not “mortifying your members” in the power of the new life; it is only pandering to the precepts of a wretched religious philosophy which, instead of being “after Christ” and doing honour to Him “in whom all the fulness of the Godhead dwelleth bodily,” has for its object the glorification of man and the activity of the flesh, in which “no good thing dwelleth.” A greater insult to the blessed revelation of God could not be offered.

“ I Will Go.”

Genesis 24.

THE servant gave Rebecca precious things,
Sent by his master for his Isaac's bride;
But not the bracelets, nor the golden rings,
Led the fair damsel from her father's side.
The servant *spoke of Isaac*, and she heard
As he the glory of his master's son did show:
Her heart was touched, its deep affections stirred;
In simple faith she answered “ I will go.”

They start.—Behold the handsome cavalcade,
The camels with their trappings decked with gold.
They camp near the Euphrates, where the shade
Of lofty date-palms doth the traveller hold.
Bright birds are there and flowers, while lovely scents
Come wafted on the cool refreshing breeze.
They do not tarry long; they strike the tents;
Rebecca hopes for better joys than these.

The desert safely crossed, they now arrive
On Jordan's banks, and view fair Galilee,
Where vines and olives grow, and cedars thrive,
And noble streams go rushing to the sea.
Judæa's rocky heights are safely passed,
They have a sure, an ever-faithful guide;
Lahai-roi and home are reached at last,
And Bethuel's daughter now is Isaac's bride.

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At God's right hand sits Christ the Risen One,
Who once this world of sin and darkness trod;
Exalted Man, but the all-glorious Son,
Grand object of the eternal thoughts of God.
And we in Him are blessed, oh wondrous thought,
Destined with Him and like Him soon to be;
Linked with Him *now*, but soon to glory brought,
Sharers of all His glorious dignity.

Our blessings, who can count them? Who can tell
A thousandth part of e'en our present joy?
And when we see the One we love so well,
What ecstasy, what bliss we shall enjoy!
But oh, the BLESSED! How we long to be
At home with Him, whose glory and whose grace
Have drawn our hearts; oh how we long to see
Himself, and gaze for ever on His face.

The Spirit now conducts us on our way,
 A never-failing Guide; and as we go,
 Delights to give refreshment by the way,
 And the great glories of the Son to show.
 But whether in these shady groves we rest,
 Or tread with weary steps the desert sand,
 We hasten onwards to our home so blest,
 Where Jesus sits enthroned at God's right hand.

The journey's almost ended. Lord, we raise
 Our eyes, expecting soon Thy face to see.
 The very thought fills hearts and lips with praise,
 But oh, what triumph and what joy to *Thee*,
 To meet Thy Bride, Thy fulness, blessed Lord,
 Who filleth all in all, and lead her home.
 We look for Thee, our ears await Thy word,
 And hearts respond with rapture, "Come, Lord, Come."

T. H. WILSON, Belgian Congo.

Only on Thee I'd wait.

Psalm 62; "The 'Only' Psalm."

ONLY on Thee my soul would wait,—
 My Stay and my Salvation Thou,
 My God, whose grace and glory great,
 And love, are known in Jesus now :—
Only on Thee I'd wait.

Only on Thee !—when rising tides
 Of human ills lift up the head ;
 When no one else the torrent bides ;
 When all the fearful floods have fled,—
Only on Thee I'd wait.

Only !—for Thou, my God ; ne'er fails
 The soul that trusts alone in Thee :
 My bark the dangerous deep still sails,
 And peace and power Thou givest me :—
Only on Thee I wait.

Only !—for Thou art God alone,
 And at his best man is but frail :
 Both strength and grace attend Thy
 throne ;
 Thy truth and peace can never fail :—
Only on Thee I wait.

Only on Thee my soul is cast ;
 'Midst storms my anchor shall not slip :
 On Thee, my Rock, faith's cables fast
 Take hold, and Thou dost hold the
 ship :—
Only on Thee I wait.

Only !—and I shall ne'er be moved ;
 For all my strength from Thee is sent :
 With everlasting love I'm loved
 By Thee,—and 'tis my soul's intent
Only on God to wait.

H. J. VINE.

An Unpopular Subject.

NO one will pretend that *Righteousness* is a favourite theme among men. If they are present at a meeting where a speaker announces it as his subject, they settle in their minds that the discourse is going to be a dry and uninteresting one. They do not *love* to hear about this quality.

Scripture recognizes this feeling as existing among men, in that it affirms that "scarcely for a righteous man will one die," while on the other hand it states that "for a *good* man some would even dare to die" (Romans 5. 7).

But in the eyes of God, righteousness is of great price. Not only is it a great necessity, but it is a quality that He *loves*. His affections go out to it; He clasps it to His very bosom; it has a warm place in His inmost heart. "The righteous Lord *loveth* righteousness" (Psalm 11. 7). It was the same with the blessed Saviour in His pathway here. He not only acted in perfect and unswerving righteousness, but He *loved* it. It could be said of Him, as in Psalm 45. 7, "Thou lovest righteousness." It is also an object before the mind of the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, for He is in us as life *because of righteousness* (Romans 8. 10).

Having said this much by way of preface, I am going to ask the reader to consider the way that Righteousness is brought before us in Psalms 22., 23., and 24.

THE DECLARATION OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Psalm 22. is the Calvary psalm. It unveils to us something of those deeper sufferings of the blessed Lord where no human foot could follow Him, sufferings at the hand of a holy God that none but He could ever endure. The glorious result was to be widely proclaimed. Notice how the psalm ends. "They shall come and shall declare HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS . . . that He hath

done this." The proclamation of what has been accomplished by the cross may therefore be called the declaration of righteousness.

One may say that it is the declaration of *love*. Yes, that is true. Love; mighty, matchless, superlative love, the love of God is made known in the gospel. But that is not the point here. In the gospel the *righteousness of God* is revealed. (Compare Romans 1. 17.) The cross for ever forbids the interpretation of the love of God as mere indifference to sin. It proves beyond all doubt that He has regard to the inexorable claims of justice. If love gave the spotless Victim to stand in our stead, it was righteousness that smote Him and forsook Him in the hour when He was made sin for us. The glad tidings, therefore, are not merely the announcement of God's love and mercy. They come to us with the news that Righteousness has acted and has secured its ends; that sin has met with its due punishment; and that the claims of justice have been fully met. Here lies the secret of *peace with God*. It is not, we repeat, merely that wonderful love has been revealed, but that righteousness has been active, and has accomplished its aim, the utter condemnation of sin, in the person of the holy Sin-bearer. This sets divine mercy free to act, and it acts to-day in causing the declaration of righteousness to reach the ear of many a conscience-burdened sinner.

PATHS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Passing on to Psalm 23. we find mention made of the paths of righteousness.

In verse 2 we learn the goodness of the Shepherd, where He leads us *for our own sakes*. For our comfort and blessing He makes us lie down in pastures of tender grass; for our refreshment He leads us beside the waters of quietness. Who among us has not experienced the

gracious leading of the Shepherd in this way ?

But there is something further that He has in view. Not only is *our blessing* an object that He pursues, but the glory of His own Name. Hence we read, in verse 3, that He leads us in certain paths *for His Name's sake*. Surely this awakens a response in our hearts. We desire that there should be something for the glory of His Name in our walk, and therefore we are glad to be led in paths of righteousness. May His grace enable us to walk in the paths wherein He leads His own.

THE REWARD OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

We come now to what may be termed the reward of righteousness. This we find in Psalm 24., where we read: "He shall receive . . . righteousness from the God of His salvation." The reference is undoubtedly to Christ, and looks on to a day that is yet to come. When He was in the world He was most unrighteously treated. He was the rightful heir, but was cast out and slain. God did not interfere to set Him on the throne of David. The brow that should by rights have worn the diadem of the

whole wide realm of creation was wreathed with a circle of thorn.

But all that is to be changed. His worth will be publicly acknowledged, and God Himself shall set Him in the place of universal honour. To do so will be but righteousness, for He is worthy of it all. He walked through the sad scenes of this sin-filled earth with clean hands and a pure heart. Vanity and deceit, so characteristic of men, were far from Him. He was altogether what God desired man to be. To recognize and reward such infinite worth will be the crowning act of righteousness. Does it not make your heart leap with joy, dear Christian reader, to think that your Saviour, He who has endeared Himself to you in so many gracious ways, is going to be acclaimed and honoured in the very place where His Name has been covered with contumely ?

The story of righteousness will then have reached its climax. And we too, made the very righteousness of God, will be there to triumph in it all, and rejoice that righteousness has been vindicated in the everlasting exaltation of Him whom grace has taught us to love.

HAROLD P. BARKER.

"God was in Christ."

IN lowly life with sorrow rife and tears bewet,
Briar and thorn, reproach and scorn, He meekly met ;
And in His ways, before our gaze, God's love He set.

Yea, on the cross, 'mid shame and loss, despised, denied,
With thorn-crowned head, His blood He shed for sin, and died ;
And dying thus, God's love to us was verified.

Thus all unsought He mercy brought to Adam's race ;
Who all deceived had long believed the falsehood base,
That God was hard nor did regard our desperate case ;
Of that foul fame He on God's name left not a trace.

In all His ways, thro' all His days, His every breath,
His work, His word, beheld and heard, His life, His death
The heart of God proclaimed abroad for hope and faith.

Here brightly shines in living lines before our gaze
The heavenly light in all its bright unsullied blaze,
By which we read His love indeed in Jesus ways,
And in that shrine of light divine to Him we raise
Our sweetest songs, to Whom belongs eternal praise.

J. BOVD.

“The New Revelation.”

THIS book, by Sir A. Conan Doyle, one of the newest contributions to Spiritualistic literature, teaches us three things.

(1) That there is a striking agreement between messages given by wicked spirits at different times and through different mediums. The author asks: “How does the hostile critic account for this absolutely independent agreement between unconnected witnesses?” (page 151). The explanation is, we believe, that one master mind controls the whole campaign, the mind of Satan himself. He is the prince of every spirit that works in the children of disobedience (Eph. 2. 2). This would account for the noticeable agreement between many independent messages.

(2) That the evidence as to the reality of spirit communications is such as to absolutely convince the hitherto sceptical mind of one who is so much at home in matters connected with investigation and proof that his detective stories hold the first place in the English language. Page 127 gives us the names of other prominent men, leaders in science, etc., whose “mature and considered opinions” are in favour of the reality of spiritualistic phenomena. The author remarks (page 130): “The evidence upon which this system rests is so enormous that it would take a very considerable library to contain it, and the witnesses are . . . men of character and intellect.” Quite so; we agree with Sir A. Conan Doyle when he says further: “The days are surely passing when the mature and considered opinions of such men . . . can be dismissed.” We *must* admit that there is a real power behind these spirit manifestations. They are not due to trickery or sleight-of-hand. We believe that they are Satanic in their origin and nature.

(3) That after a long period, during which the attention of the public has been claimed for spiritualistic *phenomena*, table-rapping, automatic writing, etc., these phenomena are now being used in order to direct attention to the *doctrines*

taught. Sir A. Conan Doyle says (pages 129, 130): “These phenomena have passed through the stage of being a parlour game; they are now emerging from that of a debatable scientific novelty; and they are, or should be, taking shape as the foundations of a definite system of religious thought.” Again (page 136): “Get away from the phenomenal side and learn the lofty teaching.”

This is just what the Word of God leads us to expect, “that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and *doctrines* of demons” (1 Tim. 4. 1). The doctrines to which the demons, who impersonate the spirits of deceased persons, seek to secure adherence are declared by this new convert of Spiritualism, Sir A. Conan Doyle, to be as follows: Man has been not created but evolved through stages of a man-like ape and an ape-like man. Consequently there has never been any Fall, such as the Bible describes. With the doctrine of the Fall goes that of the Atonement. “Far too much stress has been laid upon Christ’s death” (page 73). Christ Himself was not perfect. He was “always progressive and open to new ideas.” But “He did occasionally lose his temper.” Christ came to earth merely “to give the people the lesson of an ideal life” (page 75). And of course, for the Spiritualist, “crude ideas, such as the eternal hell idea, have already gently faded away” (page 76). And so on.

These then are the principal *doctrines* of the demons that are carrying out the present-day campaign devised by the astute mind of their Prince. The phenomena are but the means for securing credence.

It is well to know what the great enemy of God and man is about, so that we may not be ignorant of his devices nor seduced by the wiles of the spirits who are his agents, nor deceived by their clever strategy.

H. P. BARKER.

“Be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long.”

The Song of Songs. Canticle III.

The Communion of Love—continued.

The Bridegroom.

Ch. 4. 16. Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow forth.

THE King calls for the cold blast from the north, and the scorching wind from the south, to blow upon his garden and thus make the spices thereof flow forth. Thus it is the Lord often calls for the contrary winds of this world to blow upon His people to call forth from them the precious fruits of His own grace. The plants in His garden have ever increased most and thriven best in times of hottest persecution.

The Bride.

Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat its precious fruits.

The Bride, taking up the figure used by the King, seems to say, "If I am a garden, and if the King can see in his garden a paradise of precious fruits, then let my beloved come into his garden, and eat its precious fruits." In the eyes of the Bride the garden would be but a poor place without the presence of the King. And we may say, "What would heaven be without the presence of Christ? What would paradise be without the Lord? And what the assembly of His people on earth without Himself in the midst?" What gave all the blessedness to that garden enclosed when the "disciples were assembled" on that first day of the week in the upper room with the doors shut for fear of the Jews? Was it not that "then came Jesus and stood in the midst"? And do we not read of that same visit to His garden that one disciple "was not

with them *when Jesus came*"? It was the coming of Jesus into the midst of His own that turned His garden into a paradise.

The Bridegroom.

Ch. 5. 1. I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse; I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk. Eat, O friends! drink, yea drink abundantly, beloved ones.

How gladly the Bridegroom responds to the invitation of the Bride. And may we not say Christ delights to be constrained by His willing people? The Emmaus disciples "constrained Him, saying, Abide with us." And with what immediate grace the Lord responds, for we read, "He went in to tarry with them." And having come into the garden, the King not only partakes of the fruits of the garden but He spreads the feast, for He can say, "Eat, O friends; drink, yea drink abundantly, beloved ones." We may spread our little feast for the Lord, as in the home at Bethany, but how rich a feast He spreads for us. If He found delight in the midst of His own, yet it was His presence that filled their hearts with gladness, for we read, "Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord." Thus, again and again, as we journey on, He delights to come into His garden, set apart from this wilderness waste, and sup with us and we with Him, "until the day break and the shadows flee away." Then at last we shall sit down to the marriage supper of the Lamb in His own home of heavenly glory, to go out no more.

Canticle IV.

The Restoration of Love.

The Bride.

*Ch. 2. I slept, but my heart was awake.
The voice of my beloved! he knocketh.*

The bridal feast is over; the King has departed to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense, until the day break and the shadows flee away. In the night of the Bridegroom's absence the love of the Bride has waned, and she seeks her ease in her own home. How soon she passes from feasting in his presence to sleeping in his absence. In earlier times her love had weakened, but this was a more serious decline; before, she had rested in her home, but now she sleeps. If, however, she sleeps, it is but a restless sleep—"I slept," she says, "but my heart was awake."

Alas, like the Bride, again and again our love can grow cold even though we have known and enjoyed the love of Christ. How quickly, too, our hearts can change, like the disciples who pass from feasting in the upper room to sleeping in the garden. But such repose is only an uneasy sleep, for the heart that has tasted the love of Christ will ever be restless if it turns aside to seek its ease in this vain world. It has too much of the world to enjoy Christ, and too much of Christ to enjoy the world. Sleeping but restless, describes the condition of such.

But the love of the Bridegroom never varies. The Bride may sleep, but love gives him no rest until he has awakened her slumbering affections. And how true are the words of another: "Christ's heart is never wearied, it is as freshly set on the bride as when God chose us in Him before the foundation of the world."

The Bridegroom.

*Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove,
mine undefiled; for my head is filled with
dew, my locks with the drops of the night.*

The Bride may seek her rest, but not so the Bridegroom. He knocks at her door seeking admission. In love he appeals to her affections, seeking to restore the heart that has grown cold. His touching words, "Open to me," express the longing of his heart to fill her heart. He lavishes upon her every term of endearment; "My sister, my love, my dove, mine undefiled." He could have said, "Thy king, thy friend, thy beloved," but love takes another way more calculated to reach her heart. He reminds her of all that she is in his sight. Her waning love has not changed his thoughts of her. And then, as a final appeal to her heart, he speaks of his sufferings on her behalf. He has faced the night, the cold, the darkness, and the dew, to awaken her love.

In all this mystic scene can we not see the way Christ takes to restore our wandering affections to the enjoyment of His love. In the night of His absence we may seek our ease in this poor world, but He loves us too well to let us rest apart from Him. Solemn indeed, if the Lord has to say to us, "Sleep on and take your rest." But if we wander, He follows with restoring grace, and knocks at our door. Alas that there could ever come a day that finds the door of our hearts closed and barred to Him, and that our Laodicean lukewarmness should compel Him to say, "Open to Me." How touching these words! What a sorrowful tale they tell of wandering affections, and empty, unsatisfied hearts; and yet, withal, how blessedly they speak of His unchanging love, and His longing to fill our hearts

with Himself. It is as if He said, "You have turned to other objects and found no rest; your soul sleeps, but without rest; your heart waketh, but without satisfaction, now open to ME."

But Christ will never force Himself upon the soul. He will not be an uninvited guest. He loves to be "constrained"; and so the word to the Bride is "Open." The Bridegroom is waiting and willing to enter, but the Bride must "open" the door of her heart. Do we complain of little love to Christ? Let us remember He is willing to fill our hearts if we will but "open" the door and let Him in.

And what more calculated to arouse our slumbering affections than the realization that, in spite of all our wanderings, He loves us still; that He is still ready to say, "You are mine," "My sister, my love, my dove, mine undefiled."

But, further, how must it move the heart that has grown cold, to hear again of the sufferings that Christ has endured for our sakes. What a journey the Bridegroom of our souls has taken to win our hearts! What night of woe He went into; and in that night what dews of sorrow fell on Him to win our love. He broke *His* heart to win *our* hearts.

If our hearts have turned aside to other objects; if our love has grown cold, may we get a fresh view of the One who stands at our door and knocks, and may we listen to His pleading voice as He says:—

I want your heart's affections, "Open to Me."

I love you: "My sister, my love, my dove, mine undefiled."

I have suffered for you, "For my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night."

The Bride.

3. *I have put off my tunic, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I pollute them?*

The Bride, though not insensible to this touching appeal, knows not how to

cast off her sloth. She finds it is easier to put off the tunic than to put it on, easier to ungird the loins than to gird them up. To respond to this appeal calls for energy and sacrifice. Selfish ease has enfeebled the Bride, and twice she asks, "How shall I?" She has to learn, indeed, that, left to herself, she cannot throw off her lethargy. So, too, when affection for Christ grows cold and we, like her, settle down in our own things, we may, indeed, be interested and moved somewhat by some touching appeal, and yet know not how to cast off our spiritual languor. If, however, we cannot restore our souls, He can, and He does. "He restoreth my soul" is the experience of the Psalmist. And in the scene that follows we see the way love takes to work the restoration of our wandering affections, a way that may indeed be painful to the flesh but leads to a blessed end.

4. *My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door; and my bowels yearned for him.*

Already he had spoken, but now the Bridegroom stretches forth his hand to the Bride, and this silent appeal fills her with yearnings after the Bridegroom. Such also was failing Peter's experience when in the very moment of his denial the Lord "turned and looked" upon him. It was a look that, speaking more effectively than words, seemed to say, "You have denied Me, but I love you." And that look, like the Bridegroom's hand in our Canticle, began the work of restoration, for "Peter went out and wept bitterly." And do not our hearts burn within us when the Lord stretches out His hand towards us in our failures, that hand with the wound-marks that tell of His unchanging love?

5, 6. *I rose up to open to my beloved; and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with liquid myrrh, upon the handles of the lock. I opened to my beloved; but my beloved had withdrawn himself; he was gone. My soul went forth when he spoke. I sought him, but I found him not; I called him, but he gave me no answer.*

This appeal has overcome the lethargy of the Bride. She rises to open to her beloved. The door at which he had

(Continued on page 96)

The Glad Tidings of God. No. 2.

The Mediator.

IN writing these papers I have endeavoured to keep in mind that the faith of the reader must ever be brought to rest on the written Word of God, not on what I or any other may say about the subject on hand. What anyone may say concerning the truth of God is of very little account, unless it leads the soul to that which has been put on record for our instruction by the Spirit of the living God. The Lord had made known to His disciples all that would happen to Him at Jerusalem, when He was on His way with them on their last journey to that city, but when these things did actually take place they were as bewildered as though they had never heard of them. And when they beheld Him risen from the dead they were still unbelieving, until they saw it all clearly portrayed in the prophetic word.

Human creeds and expositions of Scripture are always defective, however well-meaning and careful the authors of such may be; and they must be defective because they are human and not divine. When one comes to Scripture, one comes to that which is absolutely reliable, because the Scriptures are "by inspiration of God"; and every word, as it came from the pen of prophet or apostle, is as truly given of God as was the writing on the wall of the palace of King Belshazzar. This therefore is the test by which everything that men would seek to impose upon us must be tried. Of the subjects of which Scripture treats man knows nothing, therefore in his dealings with such subjects the product of his own mind is valueless. My thought, then, in putting forth these papers is, not to press upon readers the theories originating in my own mind, but to direct attention to what God says in His holy Word, and should they accomplish this purpose I shall be well satisfied.

We have seen that the source of glad tidings is the heart of God, whose desire is that all should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2. 4). That all will not be saved is a certainty, for as long as the testimony of God is in this world there will always be those that believe, and those that believe not (Mark 16. 16). But that does not alter the fact that the heart of God goes out to all in infinite goodness and genuine philanthropy.

And the proof of this is, that He has approached men in a Mediator, who gave Himself a ransom for all, and thus opened out a way of salvation for all. He has drawn near to men in the Man Christ Jesus. The mercies with which He has surrounded men; the fact that He gives fruitful seasons, and fills men's hearts with food and gladness; the way in which He preserves even the unthankful and the unholy; the kindness that He lavishes upon His unworthy creature; the way in which He daily bears with rebellious sinners: all these things testify to a God of infinite compassion, and to a friendliness on His part that is neither appreciated nor reciprocated by man.

But immeasurably greater grace than this is evinced in the sending of the Mediator, for without Him we must have remained in nature's darkness, and in the bondage of Satan and of sin. But the heart of God is seen to be equal to every demand that the condition of man imposed upon it, and the way in which He has answered to the demand calls forth the ceaseless praise of all who believe in the mission of the Mediator.

To give expression to the disposition of God toward men a mediator was always necessary. Man cannot bear to have to do directly with God, even if it were possible for God to have to do

with man apart from an intermediary. Until the Son was here all His dealings with men were by angelic means, and the law was given by the disposition of angels (Acts 7. 53), but even then a mediator became necessary, for man could not bear to hear the demand of God uttered by angelic ministration. The people say to Moses: "Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die" (Ex. 19. 19). And the complaint of Job was: "For He is not a man, as I am, that I should answer Him, and we should come together in judgment. Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both" (Job 9. 32, 33).

Here we get the essential character of the daysman: one who "might lay his hand upon us both." One who could represent God to me, and who could represent me to God, who could lay one hand upon the Almighty, and lay another hand upon a poor worm of the dust like myself, a hand not too heavy for me. One side of this was true of Job's daysman, Elihu. He says: "Behold, I am according to thy wish in God's stead: I also am formed out of the clay. Behold, my terror shall not make thee afraid, neither shall my hand be heavy upon thee" (Job 33.). But he could not say: "He that believeth on Me, believeth not on Me, but on Him that sent Me, and he that seeth Me seeth Him that sent Me" (John 12. 44, 45). He was but a faint foreshadowing of the true Mediator, the Man Christ Jesus: "The Man that is My Fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts" (Zech. 13. 7), the Man that could lay His hand upon us both. Wondrous Person! Marvellous revelation! Incomprehensible mystery! Son of God! Son of Man! Seed of the woman! Everlasting God! Creator of the worlds! My Lord and my God! This is the Mediator, in whom God has approached His poor ruined creature in infinite compassion.

"No man hath seen God at any time" (John 1. 18), but here we have

One who had seen the Father (John 6. 46), One who had eternally dwelt in His bosom, who could bring Him to light before the eyes of men, so that those who saw Him saw the Father. It was God drawn near to men in the Person of the Son become Man in order that He might bring God near to man.

The gospel is the setting forth of this wondrous Person. Naturally our thoughts are all about ourselves, and we judge by what we consider God will find in us as to what we are likely to find in Him. We suppose that He will deal with us according to that which He finds us to be, and if we cannot put ourselves into a state that we think will be pleasing to Him, we must bear the consequences. We view Him as a merciless Judge, and have therefore no inclination to come near to Him.

Along with all these wrong thoughts we have perhaps a substratum of confidence, that the good that we have done, or yet hope to do, may cause Him to forget, or pass over, the errors that we feel have been so objectionable in His sight, and if we could only pass out of this world in a right frame of mind, we might expect to escape the consequence of our sins.

Or supposing that we could only believe the gospel—this seems to be all that is necessary. And hence there is a search after faith, and the question as to whether we have faith or not is more than we can very well decide. If we could only satisfy ourselves that we believe—that we have the right kind of faith, we would then be quite sure that we had fulfilled the terms imposed upon us by the gospel, and settled peace would take up its abode in our souls. But that is just the question, and with very many true believers it never gets quite settled.

The reason of this is, the soul is occupied with self, and is on the principle of law, even in connection with faith in the glad tidings of the grace of God. The law occupied man

with himself, and set before him his obligations, which he was to fulfil in order to enter into life. Hence, as regards his part in the blessing of God, the only question with him was as to whether he had fulfilled his obligations. If he had, he inherited the blessing; if he had not, he inherited the curse.

But the glad tidings of God turn our attention to another Man altogether. They turn our thoughts to Christ. The testimony is addressed to us, but it is not *about* us; it is about the Son of God. We are turned away from ourselves, and from what we are, and from what we have done, and we become engaged with Christ, and with what He has done. The glad tidings are concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Let us keep this in mind. Let us not get back to Sinai and to law, and to self-occupation. Let us listen to the testimony of God regarding His Son. There is a great deal said about us in the Word of God, but there is nothing there to our credit. Our sinful history is the black background that throws into relief the infinite grace of a Saviour-God. We get to know what we by nature are when we read what the law says regarding all that are under it.

In all that sinful history there is not one bright spot, not one element of good that might give us reason to think that man was capable of improvement. And our own experience of ourselves confirms the witness of Holy Scripture. But the Last Adam has not come in to make up for the shortcoming of the first Adam. He has come in to displace the first altogether. God has found His satisfaction in Christ, and He desires that we might find our satisfaction in Him also. He does not expect any good thing from us, and we should not be expecting any good thing from ourselves.

Many an exercised soul has been heard to say that he has not the slightest question regarding the truth of the gospel—that he believes that God sent His Son—that He died for our sins,

and that God raised Him from the dead all this he will tell you he believes, but that his difficulty lies in his inability to believe in himself. What he means is he cannot believe himself to be a believer. But this is only an attempt to justify himself by fulfilling the obligations which he supposes the gospel imposes upon him.

But what he has yet to learn is, that Christ, and not himself, is to be the object of his faith; that it is not what God says about him, but what He says about His Son that is to bring peace to his heart. The gospel is concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord. He is the subject of the gospel. In raising Him up as a Man in this world the promises that God had made to the fathers were fulfilled. The promises were deposited in Him, and in Him they were presented to God's earthly people. But they, knowing neither Him nor the testimony of the prophets to Him, condemned Him to death, and hung Him on a gibbet, and thus they forfeited every promise that had been made to them by God. This is the way in which they fulfilled their obligations.

But He was not only the Son of David, but the Son of God with power, and manifested as such by the Spirit of holiness, that characterized His whole walk through this sinful world, and by the fact that death had, in every instance in which it came before Him, to acknowledge Him as its Conqueror. It could not withstand the power of life that was in Him. Wherever it crossed His path it had to relinquish its prey. And when at last He went down into its dark domain, it could not hold Him. He went down into it in order to break its power, and when He touched it, its power was annulled. Every other man that entered its domain had to remain there.

How could it be otherwise than that He should prove Victor over death? What power could death have over the life that was in Him as the Son of the

living God? He took the life that was common to mankind in order to be able to die: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." This life of flesh and blood (in Him altogether holy) He gave up, as that upon which the judgment of God rested, not in His case surely, but in ours, for whose sins He suffered, and thus was closed forever in the judgment of God our whole history as children of Adam; and the shedding of His precious blood is the witness to this, "for the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul" (Lev. 17.).

God would have all men to be saved, and therefore the Mediator gave Himself a ransom for all (1 Tim. 2. 4-6). And this opened up a way of salvation for all. All may not take this salvation that has been made available for them, but that is because the world in some form has such attractions for them, that the fear of coming judgment has lost its power over their souls, and the future becomes sacrificed to present advantage.

But the work by which salvation has been made available for all has been done by the Mediator. It cost Him everything to accomplish so stupendous a work, and no one but Himself could have undertaken it. He is the One who made the worlds, but the making of the worlds was but a small affair compared with the work of redemption. See, in the words of the prophet (Isa. 50. 2-6) how He interrogates Himself with regard to this great work. He asks Himself: "Is my hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem?" What could He do? He says: "Behold, at My rebuke I dry up the sea, I make the

rivers a wilderness: their fish stinketh because there is no water, and dieth for thirst. I clothe the heavens with blackness, and make sackcloth their covering." All this could be done without, on His part, any "strong crying and tears" (Heb. 5. 7); without any agony and bloody sweat (Luke 22. 44); He had only to speak, and it was done (Gen. 1.).

But the work of redemption was another matter. He cannot accomplish that work by the word of His power. The Creator has to come in the likeness of His fallen creature. He must take flesh and blood. He must become a man, a real man. Godhead He could not give up, but He could add manhood to Godhead. He must take the form of a servant, and this He does by being made in the likeness of men. There was no deception about it, no simulation, no counterfeit, no sham, no make-believe: He was the seed of the woman, born as any other man is born, but begotten of God, and without taint of sin. Here to have his path marked out for Him by God, to speak only that which was given Him to speak, to do only that which was given Him to do, to walk in dependence upon God, as a slave to hear and to do the commandment addressed to Him.

He says: "The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned (disciple) that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: He wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned (disciple). The Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. 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." And this was but the pathway to that cross of woe where His soul was to be made an offering for sin, by means of which a way of salvation would, to the glory of God, be opened out for men.

If the pathway to Golgotha was so marked by reproach, shame, and suffering, what must have been those three

hours of thick darkness, in which God gave expression to His utter abhorrence of sin, and in which His righteous judgment against it was poured out; when He the spotless One was made that cursed thing that God hated? Deserted by His disciples, abandoned by God, He drank the bitter chalice of Divine wrath to the dregs, and having finished the work, He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.

"O Lord, Thy wondrous story
My inmost soul doth move;
I ponder o'er Thy glory,
Thy lonely path of love.

But O, Divine Sojourner
'Midst man's unfathomed ill,
Love, that made Thee a mourner,
It is not man's to tell!

We worship when we see Thee
In all Thy sorrowing path;
We long soon to be with Thee
Who bore for us the wrath."

The work is finished, and finished to God's infinite satisfaction. He has been glorified by His Son, and here on earth where by sinful man He was rebelled against and dishonoured. And now the One who glorified Him is seated at His right hand in heaven. He has the highest place in glory, and He is worthy of that place, not only because He is God equal with the Father, but on account of the work He has done. No one but He who was God could have taken up such a work, and finished it to the glory and praise of God. Moses proposed to make atonement for Israel, when they had made the golden calf (Ex. 32. 30-33), but God would not listen to him, for Moses, had he known it, required an atonement to be made for himself. But the Son of God offers Himself, and God accepts the sacrifice, for it is of infinite value in His sight.

J. BOYD.

Continued from page 91

sought an entrance was redolent with his presence, but he himself had withdrawn. This, however, was the way love was taking to awaken her affections. If, when he drew near, the Bride would not respond, he will now withdraw, but only to quicken her affections by his absence. And how effectual the way he takes. The Bride is thoroughly aroused. "I rose up," "I opened to my beloved," "I sought him," "I called him," is the language of her heart. Every expression proclaims the renewed energy of her affections. But for the moment all in vain. He was gone, and he gave her no answer. The Beloved was at first the seeker; not finding any response from the Bride, his love takes another way which turns the Bride into the seeker, to find, in her turn, no response from the Bridegroom. Had then the love of the Bridegroom changed? Had he given up his Bride? Ah no, it was not the love, but the manner of expressing the love, that had changed. The Bride must learn that the communion of love is easily lost but only

recovered through humbling experiences.

And after this same fashion love deals with the "slow hearts" of the two disciples on the way to Emmaus. They wandered, but the Lord followed, and so dealt, in restoring grace, with their affections that He turned their "slow hearts" into "burning hearts," and, having awakened their affections, He "vanished out of their sight." The One who sought them withdrew from them, and in so doing left behind Him *two seekers after Him* in place of *two wanderers from Him*. For that same hour of the night, they rose up and returned to Jerusalem. They sought the Lord, and they found the Lord, in the midst of His own.

The Lord loves to be sought after, and those that seek will not be disappointed, even though they may have to pass through painful experiences before their wandering hearts are restored to the enjoyment of the love of Christ. Such was the experience of the Bride in her further search for the Bridegroom.

(To be continued.)

Editorial Notes.

CHRISTIANS WILL NOT FORGET, in these times of distress and upheaval, that they have been set in priestly nearness to God, and that it is their privilege to make supplications, prayers, and intercessions on behalf of all men, for kings and for all that are in authority (1 Tim. 2.). This is the part that they have to play in regard to the public affairs of the day. It is a hidden service, unnoticed, and unappreciated, perhaps, by those to whom it is rendered, but that will not in any wise deter them from pursuing it. We must remember that God is the preserver of all men, even of the unthankful and unholy, and being His household, we who know Him must bear His character and continue in prayer and intercession before Him that the rulers of the nations may not make confusion worse confounded, but that they may act with discretion, and that God's wise hand may still be upon the reins, restraining and guiding, that we may lead quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty.

WE KNOW WELL THAT NO IMPROVEMENT in the moral and spiritual state of the world can be expected, even though material improvement may apparently be effected; this the sure Word of God most clearly teaches—only the coming of the Lord to judge in righteousness will put things right. Still we may pray that evil may be restrained from running its full course in our day. As Abraham interceded for Sodom, a doomed city, so we may intercede for the nations, even though the thick clouds of judgment are already appearing on the horizon. It is most encouraging to see that the Lord did not go with the angels whose mission was the destruction of the cities of the plain, but stayed behind with Abraham. This fact teaches us that He found greater delight in Abraham's intercession than in the destruction of those guilty cities,

for judgment is His strange work, and He delights in mercy. Indeed the intercession of Abraham was communion with God. The chapter which tells the story is worthy of careful study (Gen. 18. 16-33).

WE ARE TO GIVE THANKS on behalf of all men, too. This perhaps is less understood than prayer, but we must not neglect it. The majority of men do not give thanks for God's goodness and mercy to them. They take His benefits as though they had a right to them and never acknowledge God as the Giver. But the Christian may do this on their behalf. He can thank God for seed-time and harvest; for the laden bread cart as it distributes its precious burden; for life, breath, and all things which are given to men richly to enjoy; for all these things are God's good gifts. But most of all may we give thanks for the gospel; for the story of the cross; for the full salvation that is offered to men in the name of Jesus our Lord, and for the wonderful long-suffering of God that still waits to be gracious. On every hand and every moment the Christian may find occasions for blessing God, not only on his own behalf, but also on behalf of all men.

IT IS CERTAIN that none who have any knowledge of God could connect His name with such apparently silly proceedings as those which take place at spiritualistic services, some of which have been reported with amazing enthusiasm by Sir A. Conan Doyle, who is using his great ability to convince all who will hear him that the flying about of rattles and tambourines *in the dark* are introductory signs of a new revelation. How different from these trivial performances were the works that accompanied the coming into the world of the gospel of God's grace to sinful men.

We learn from the early chapters of the Acts that the signs and wonders performed by the apostles in the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth were of such a sort that "all men glorified God for that which was done" (Acts 4. 20). The works of these servants of Christ were "notable," and done *in the light of day* for all to see, not in darkened chambers before specially selected audiences. They were works which convinced every unbiased mind that they were of, and from God, and those who opposed them wilfully opposed themselves to God.

There is much of human trickery in these sensational spiritualistic antics, but there is also that which is from beneath, which is definitely and terribly diabolical, thence the need of darkened chambers. "For everyone that does evil hates the light and does not come to the light that his works may be shown as they are; but he that practises truth comes to the light, that his works may be manifested that they have been wrought in God" (John 3. 20, 21, N.T.).

THE AUTHOR OF "THE NEW REVELATION" tells us that these apparently useless performances are but the ringing of the telephone bell. We believe that he is right, but who are they who wish to communicate with us from the other side? The messages that he reports as having come through from the "spirit world" leave us in no doubt as to this. These messages amount chiefly to this, that in the next world all are alike; the sort of life lived on earth, or the religion professed, makes no difference at all. Catholics, Protestants, Buddhists, Jews and Atheists have equal share of happiness and opportunity for advance; that surely means that REPENTANCE TOWARDS GOD in this life is needless. And Sir A. C. Doyle concludes, as a result of his investigations, that we have made too much of the death of Christ, which means that FAITH IN OUR LORD

JESUS CHRIST is not necessary to salvation as the Bible teaches.

These two great things, repentance and faith, are inseparable from the one and abiding revelation that God has made of Himself in Christ, and whatever would deny them is from beneath and not from above, it is darkness and not light, it will lead not to peace and salvation, but along a road of misery, deception and disappointment to destruction.

The Bible is a lamp to our feet, it is sufficient for us to enlighten and to comfort us as to this life and the next, we need no new revelation.

CHRISTIAN PARENTS sometimes ask if they will know their children who have fallen asleep at the coming of the Lord. We certainly believe that they will, and we base this confidence upon 1 Thessalonians 2. 19, 20. In that passage the Apostle Paul is speaking of those who had been brought to the knowledge of the Lord through his labours, and he says of them, "What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For ye are our glory and joy." Equally, if Christian parents have laboured to bring their children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and have agonized and prayed for them, they shall see the fruit of their exercises and toil; they shall find the children of their love and labours again at the coming of the Lord, and while natural ties are all dissolved by death, yet these precious ties abide for ever, the ties formed by God's grace and in Christ. Be comforted and cheered, ye sorrowing parents, and the mothers especially, for your service for the Lord lies chiefly in the training of the children for Him; these whom you have won for Him shall be your crown of rejoicing and your glory; and be encouraged all, who still have children whom you can win for the Saviour, for your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

Spiritual Prosperity.

THE Lord is interested in the welfare even of our bodies. His desire for us finds its echo in that expressed by John for his "well-beloved Gaius," for whom he wished above all things that he might prosper and be in health, even as his soul prospered.¹

The same care shows itself in the apostolic command to Timothy, to use a little wine for his stomach's sake, and his often infirmities,² a command which (like all others that are divinely given) cannot be ignored with impunity.

But, after all, the body is secondary to the soul. The soul and its welfare must necessarily take precedence over everything else. And it is of *soul-prosperity* that we would speak at this time.

Even those who are most zealous in the service of the Lord are not exempt from the need of watchfulness as to this. Indeed, their very zeal makes it more than ever incumbent upon them to keep a constant eye upon the welfare of their souls. There is always the danger of neglecting one's own vineyard while industrious about the vineyards of others. It is admittedly difficult to strike the even balance between the culture of the inner life and diligence in outward service. We are too apt to resemble Ephraim in being like "a cake not turned."³

Gideon and his fleece should be a lesson to us. First he wanted the fleece to be soaked with dew and the surrounding earth to be left dry. Then, going to the opposite extreme, he asked that dew might be upon the ground while the fleece remained dry.⁴ Let the fleece stand for our souls, and the ground for the part of the great harvest field where we seek to labour. Are we not often like Gideon in sometimes devoting ourselves too exclusively to contemplative and devotional Christianity, seeking Heaven's blessing upon our own souls, singing, "To advance be all our care," and forgetful that the crying need of

the great world around us calls for toil and prayer? And do not some of us pursue an exactly opposite course? Anxious for blessing in the gospel, praying for a revival in the world, and unmindful of our own soul's need of being daily moistened with the dew from heaven. We need the dew *both on the fleece and on the ground.*

In the well-known narrative of Genesis 24. we have an instance of prosperity being sought and granted in connection with a special service. Abraham's representative asks that his way might be prospered,⁵ and with gratitude he acknowledges: "The Lord hath prospered my way."⁶ Prosperity here takes the form of guidance and divinely-given success in connection with a special errand, and is the result of prayer, dependence, and confidence in God.

But something more than this is to be desired. There is the prosperity that flows from quiet communion with God in secret; not supplication in view of service, but communion for its own sake. Of this we have a picture in Psalm 1. The godly man here portrayed has no seat at the council-board of the ungodly; he stands apart from the subtle plans engineered by Satan and carried out by men who are his duped and deceived tools for their own exaltation. His truest delight is found in the inexhaustible treasures of God's Word. Day and night he walks up and down its sacred paths in sweet meditations. These are the rivers of water from which he, like a tree, derives his sustenance, and, as a result, he brings forth fruit for the glory and pleasure of God.

In recognition of this, God prospers him in everything to which he puts his hand.⁷

It is true that none of us come up in spiritual stature to the man of Psalm 1.

One only answers in full measure to the description. And to Him, the altogether perfect One, it is a relief to turn from ourselves with all our imperfections, so apparent and so real. Dwelling on the glories that cluster so thickly around His name and shine with such brilliance in Himself, it is a delight to the heart to trace out the way that prosperity has attended all that He has done. In the truest sense of the word *the pleasure of the Lord has prospered in His hand*.⁸

In His hand Jehovah's good pleasure as to ZION has prospered, and the future glory of David's royal city will be the witness of how full the answer has been, in and through Him, to the petition: "Do good in Thy good pleasure to Zion."

God has declared also that He would take pleasure in the restored TEMPLE.⁹ But for this to be, a greater Builder and Restorer than Zerubbabel must take the work in hand. The Man of Psalm 1., who prospers in all that He does, shall undertake it. "Even HE shall build the temple of the Lord."¹⁰ Then shall prosperity indeed attend the work, and in this connection too the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in His hand.

Exceeding in wonder that of which we have spoken, in the fact that it is also the pleasure of God (not now named as Jehovah, but as the Father) to give the KINGDOM to people, a little flock, of whom a few poor fishermen were samples. Not to the mighty and high-born, not to czars and emperors, not to forceful leaders of multitudes, not to establishers or overthrowers of dynasties, but to men despised, poor, meek and counted as nothing by the great ones of the world. And since this was the Father's pleasure, it was committed to the hand of Jesus, and in His hand it has prospered. He it is who has called to Himself those who are destined for this honour; by His work He has secured their title thereto, and ultimately He will bring them to glory and make them co-heirs with Himself of all the wealth of God.

Once again, it is the good pleasure of God the Father to head up all things in Christ, that in the administration of the fulness of times He might be the Supreme Centre of everything.¹¹ To this wonderful purpose, too, the Blessed One of Psalm 1. will give effect. By His death on the cross He has laid the foundation for it all, so that all things, on that ground, can be brought into harmony with the mind of God, and for His pleasure He will administrate all. Thus shall the pleasure of the Lord prosper in His hand.

All the Father's great things are given into His hand.¹² We, too, are in His hand, not only to be saved from perishing,¹³ but that all God's pleasure concerning us may prosper.

As an illustration, reference may be made to Joseph. "He was a prosperous man";¹⁴ prosperous, though a slave in the house of an Egyptian; prosperous, because *the Lord was with him*. But not only did he thus prosper in a manifest way, but "the Lord made all that he did to prosper." Everything was put into his hand. In lowly service, and in a holy walk, God prospered him.

Wrongfully accused, he was flung into prison. There also, "that which he did, the Lord made it to prosper." Does he not thus serve as a type of Him who, like a tree planted by the rivers, prospered in all that He did? And may he not also serve as a lesson for us, if we would be truly prosperous? Prosperity may not mean a pathway of ease. Slavery, false accusation, and imprisonment were not inconsistent with true prosperity in Joseph's case. *Soul* prosperity may not only survive, but be positively increased by temporal adversity.

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|--------------------|------------------------|
| 1 3 John 2. | 8 Isaiah 53. 10. |
| 2 1 Timothy 5. 23. | 9 Haggai 1. 8. |
| 3 Hosea 7. 8. | 10 Zechariah 6. 13. |
| 4 Judges 6. 37-40. | 11 Ephesians 1. 9, 10. |
| 5 Genesis 24. 42. | 12 John 3. 35. |
| 6 Genesis 24. 56. | 13 John 10. 28. |
| 7 Psalm 1. 3. | 14 Genesis 39. 2. |

H. P. BAKER.

Remarks on Paul's Gospel. No. 3.

THE ministry special to the Apostle Paul has for long centuries been practically ignored, and it is even now but feebly apprehended though the teaching of it has of late years been revived. This is the more serious because he is in a peculiar sense our apostle (cf. Rom. 11. 13; Eph. 3. 8-11; 2 Tim. 1. 11); and the special truths that characterize Christianity to-day, both as regards the gospel and the church, are brought to us through his teaching (cf. Rom. 3. 26; Eph. 2. 13; 3. 10).

Peter was the apostle of the circumcision, He is occupied with the government of God and the fulfilment of prophetic promises; adjusting them to the actual circumstances of the "Diaspora" (1 Peter 1. 1), and right on until in new heavens and a new earth righteousness will find its undisturbed abode (cf. Isa. 32. 17; 2 Peter 3. 13).

To John is committed the revelation of the person of Jesus, "the Word made flesh"; a new and divine nature in man; and the power of its expression by the Spirit in the life from which it flows; the love of God manifested in the Son; and eternal life as the portion of the believer in Him.

Paul has before him the purposes of God in man, according to the counsels of Grace in which He created him, to be fulfilled in the Second Man, the last Adam; and these purposes are by the the Apostle, all through his ministry, kept constantly and fully in view.

We may here revert to the way in which man is introduced into the theatre of God's creation, and the part he is in consequence destined to play therein: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the sea . . . the air . . . the earth. So God created man in His image, in the image of God created He him, and said unto him, Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth, and subdue it, and have dominion over

the sea . . . the air . . . the earth" (Gen. 1. 26-28). From this it appears that Adam was sent forth into a world already in revolt, to subdue it and bring it back—reconcile it to God. This will be accomplished finally by Christ, when the forces now operating in it in hostility to God are reduced into subjection to His will, and "all things, both those on earth and those in heaven, are reconciled to Him," so that in the universe, created for His "pleasure" (Rev. 4. 11), God will be finally supreme (1 Cor. 15. 28; Col. 1. 20).

This is the grand and glorious subject matter in outline of Paul's ministry, and it is interesting and instructive to note how jealous he is of the trust thus committed to him. He does not belittle those whom he recognizes as "pillars" in their own spheres (Gal. 2. 9), nor does he "boast in another man's line of things" (2 Cor. 10. 6); but he is conscious of "the grace given him of God . . . that he has whereof he may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God" (Rom. 15. 15-17); and the jealousy with which he guards this trust in the constant salient of his ministry.

Let us trace this a little through his writings.

Twice in the Romans he speaks of the gospel he taught as "my gospel" (chap. 2. 16; 16. 25). Others had gospel to tell. Let them tell it. But he has "his own."

Again, where others are associated with him in the work, he speaks of "our gospel"; but it was always so as connected with himself. (*Vide* 2 Cor. 4. 3; 1 Thess. 1. 5; 2. 14.) And mark too what delivering power from the world and the darkness of it there was in "the gospel of the glory of the Christ," as preached by him (2 Cor. 4. 3-6), in separating a people to His name, as they received the gospel thus preached to them. Read also the boldness of his

testimony before King Agrippa and his courtiers, assembled "with great pomp" to hear from the poor "prisoner of Jesus Christ" in bonds such words as they had never heard before. (*Vide* Acts 26.)

In Galatians he asserts with still more emphasis the uniqueness of his gospel. In a very special way it is "the gospel of the Christ" (Gal. 1. 7-12). But on this subject the whole epistle should be prayerfully studied. James, Cephas and John, pillars though they seemed to be, in conference added nothing to him . . . but contrariwise they perceived the grace that was given to him, and so they gave the right hands of fellowship to him and Barnabas for the special work to which they were called. But when Peter was come to Antioch he had to withstand him to the face before them all; and even Barnabas, his divinely appointed companion in the work to which they were called (Acts 13. 2), "was carried away with their dissimulation" (Gal. 2.). So that even from the start Paul stood alone for "the truth of the gospel."

There is no need to expatiate on Ephesians. Here we have the mystery of the gospel (chap. 6. 19), and the heavenly and eternal purposes of God concerning "Christ and the church," and the special administration connected therewith committed to Paul. The subject is here only referred to. It is too vast to attempt even to outline it. But it goes to show with the rest the special place that Paul had committed to him in his ministry.

In Colossians we see again the same consciousness of his mission both as

minister of the gospel and of the church (chap. 1. 23, 25), "whereof," he says, "I Paul am made minister," and note the "I" here is emphatic.

To Timothy again he repeats the fact of his special commission: "I thank Christ Jesus Our Lord who hath enabled me . . . putting me in the ministry" (1 Tim. 1. 12; and in 2 Tim. 1. 8-12); this magnificent passage in which he comprehensively sums up the great principles of the gospel, he adds, "whereunto I am appointed preacher and apostle and teacher of the gentiles." For the special sufferings which he inherited with this great boon, and the noble fidelity with which he preserved his stainless soul in this holy trust in the faith of Christ and in His service to the end, the reader is referred to the earnest and prayerful study of this Second Epistle to Timothy.

"All in Asia forsook him" (chap. 1. 15). Demas, who was once with him (Col. 4. 10) forsook him, having loved this present world (chap. 4. 10). Was he afterwards restored? Philemon 24.: "At my first answer," he plaintively says, "all forsook me. May it not be imputed to them! Notwithstanding, the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the gentiles might hear." Brave man and faithful!

There has been no endeavour in this paper to set forth, however imperfectly, the special nature of Paul's gospel, but only the fact of it, as compared with the writings of the other two apostles.

E. CROSS.

A Prayer.

O LORD, behold us in our low estate,
And shine upon us in compassion great,
That to Thyself our weary hearts may turn,
And in Thy presence we may better learn
How great our failure in the woeful place
Of Thy rejection, but how great Thy grace
That can our fickle foolish hearts sustain
In Thy great love until Thou come again,
When never more our ways shall give Thee pain.

J. BOYD.

The Preacher.

WHEN our Lord Jesus Christ had ascended on high He gave gifts to men. These gifts varied. He gave some apostles; some evangelists; some pastors and teachers, while God set others in the assembly (1 Cor. 12. 28). The apostles have passed away, but their inspired writings remain, and form part of the Word of God. Evangelists, pastors and teachers remain; the first to form the assembly by the call of the gospel, and the others to instruct, edify, comfort and feed those thus called. Let us consider :—

The Evangelist.

1. The Theme of the Preacher—for such is the evangelist—is GOD! The God who has deigned to make Himself known. Here we make our start; but let us remember what we are in His sight, let us own the awful fact of sin as our natural condition, with the inevitable result of personal guilt, so that, ere the preacher unfolds the truth as to God, he should insist on the lost and guilty condition of the sinner, and his consequent doom under eternal judgment, if he remains impenitent. Let him press on his hearers the fearful issues of “the great white throne”—that dread tribunal, before which all the guilty must appear to be judged out of the books, for their sins and impenitence. He must lay this foundation deeply, after the model given in the Epistle to the Romans. Thus he will insist on the rights of God—His authority and holiness. Then he will unfold the immense truth of “the righteousness of God,” as wholly distinct from all human merit, and how that God can, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, be “just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.” At the same time he will proclaim—and this is his evangel—the love of God, as announced by the greatest Evangelist in John 3. 16, and also the grace of God, which is

the chief feature of the present dispensation. Moreover, he will delight in presenting the person and work of the Son of God, what and who He is, the value and necessity of His death, the power of His resurrection, and its wonderful fruits, as in 1 Corinthians 15. This, at least, is his glorious Theme. He will seek to preach not about himself—for self may well be obscured by subjects so infinite. The Spirit of God will seal such a ministry with divine blessing; and, if the preacher counts on help from on high his illustrations, etc., will be carefully guarded and made subsidiary to the life-giving Word of God. It is that Word which the Spirit loves to own. I remember quoting, in a small meeting, John 3. 16 five times over in succession, till I was almost ashamed of my constant repetition; but that repetition was used of God in conversion. Let the preacher never suffer from such shame; but rather recall how the great foe was silenced by the Word alone—“the sword of the Spirit.” “Preach Christ” was the last advice given me by Duncan Matheson shortly before his death in 1868. The advice was good.

“I began by preaching Christ,” said another servant of God, “but I dropped down to the preaching of principles; now I have returned to my old theme, for I am persuaded that we have never discovered all His fulness.” Surely, for Christ embraces all divine principles, and illustrates all right practice. The world of to-day needs not an idolized civilization, but a purified and scriptural Christianity. “There is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.” (Acts 4. 12).

His Responsibilities.

2. He is responsible to his Lord and Master alone, whose servant he is, though he has relations with his fellow saints and servants which he is bound to

observe; but he obeys the Lord. "What wilt Thou have me to do?" is his constant prayer, for, if right with the Lord, he is clearly right every way. If he owns Christ as Head of the assembly he will endeavour to walk in the divinely ordered path, be the difficulties of the day what they are. If he also acknowledges Christ as Head of the body, he will strive, as a member of that mystic body, to be in true articulation. He is not the servant of men, though in love he would serve all men. He takes his orders from Christ. He refuses the control of an organization or a society. He is not beholden to man but to the Lord. In proportion as he is governed and sustained by man so is he diverted from the free governance of Christ. He is not then absolutely Christ's servant. The case of Philip is very helpful in this connection (Acts 8.). He held himself entirely at the Lord's disposal and that with the happiest results. Philip is the only one called an evangelist, though Timothy was enjoined to do the work of one. Alas, present-day methods have not only clipped evangelistic wings, but have largely taken His servants out of their Master's hands, appointing their spheres of service, it may be, where He never intended them to go. No doubt His grace may overrule as, thank God, it does; but we can see how miserably man, with his methods, has succeeded in making a deplorable maladministration of the house of God. All very humbling; nor can things be put on their original footing. Reconstruction is hopeless. We cannot go back. Our comfort is that the living Lord remains, and that He can make Josiah's Passover as blessed as that of Samuel, and Philadelphia as bright as Ephesus. The Spirit of God abides. Hence, to-day, as ever, the true-hearted evangelist must lean, as must all of us, on the Lord alone, as our only but all-sufficient Resource. And what an honour thus, by personal love for Him and faith in His Word, to bear witness that He is the same yesterday, to-day and for ever!

His Duties.

3. These are both personal and relative. The evangelist is a private Christian as well as a public preacher, and this brings him under the public eye. If therefore any one should zealously guard his conduct it is he. He holds his Master's credit in his life and ways. He is an ambassador of the Courts of Heaven. No angel, thence, ever held such an honour. He is a sinner rescued at infinite cost, gifted and sent into a God-hating world, to make known the nature of God and the joys and glories of his celestial home. He should be, in very deed, a light in darkness, and a son of God, shining amid a crooked and perverse generation. A Nazarite* of old would be his type. And thus Paul laid stress on his own "manner of life," as the first and chief part of his testimony. "Ye know," he said to the elders, "what manner of men we have been among you at all seasons" (Acts 20.). A preacher whose "manner of life" is unworthy of Christ is not fit to be His servant. How few preachers would remain if this test were generally applied. The private life is the great criterion. The preacher must give himself to prayer ere he attempts to minister the Word, and that continually. By the study of the Word he will become efficient, helpful and instructive, but if he desires to be a successful fisher of men, he must be most prayerful. This will produce the charm of real humility, sobriety, and self-concealment, as opposed to the accursed pride and vanity which, so frequently, degrade the popular preacher. Before the Lord, and in His holy presence, there is no place for pride. Moses was the meekest man on earth, and Paul served the Lord with all humility of mind and many tears. His "manner of life" is his duty. Let it speak more loudly than his tongue, and let him aim at nothing but the true presentation of Christ by both, whether to the many or the few, in his home circle or amid strangers.

A keen linx eye is upon him, and a tongue of unsparing criticism likewise. Moody is reported to have said : " I will take care of my conduct and God will take care of my character," a saying worthy of publication. His duty is just to be a " man of God," like Timothy of old.

His Reward.

4. It has been said that the evangelistic is the greatest of all the gifts. This may be so; but it is perhaps the happiest, and, at the same time, the most strenuous. The evangelist has few of the many trials, sorrows, and disappointments that befall the true pastor and teacher. " If you want to be happy," said one of the foremost of Christ's servants, " preach the gospel, but if you want a broken heart minister to the saints." True, but grace is needed for both, and without it there could be nothing but dire disaster. Each shall have a plenteous reward when the Master says " Well done."

A reward! Can a reward by and by suffice as a stimulus now? Hardly. As the Apostle laid his head on the block he surely anticipated " a crown of righteousness," but he added that the same crown would be given by the Lord to all who love Him.

That is the secret—love for the Lord! My brother, it was His love that first affected your heart; that led you to understand and value the deep meaning of Calvary; that has kept you perhaps over half a century (as it has kept the writer) by a constraining power that baffles comprehension; and that will present you faultless before His glory, on that day, with exceeding joy. To that love you and I would respond, not in expectation of material reward, but in the long-cherished hope of seeing Him " Who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, making us kings and priests to God," and allowing us the thrice-sacred honour of serving Him in the gospel, while seeking to follow Him here below.

J. WILSON SMITH

The Glad Tidings of God. No. 3.

Man Inexcusable.

ALL men have not the same opportunities, for all have not the same measure of light from God. There are " the dark places of the earth " (Ps. 74. 30), and there are the parts that have been illuminated with the light of a revelation from God, through messengers sent out from His presence, and filled with the Holy Spirit. But whatever be the measure of light men may through the goodness of God possess, to that light they are to be faithful, and the measure of that light is the measure of their responsibility, in the day in which they shall have to render account to God. For, " that servant that knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But

he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more " (Luke 12. 47, 48). " The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness." Men may have the truth, and boast in the possession of it, but if their conduct is a denial of it, then better they had not " known the way of righteousness " (2 Peter 2. 21), for the higher they have been exalted by their privileges, the more terrible shall be their fall, when cast down to hell (Matt. 11. 23), as they shall be when the judg-

ments of God are let loose in the day of His fierce anger.

What use has man the wide world over made of the light bestowed upon him? Has it had the effect of turning his feet into the way of righteousness? or of leading him as a poor helpless sinner in repentance to God, and in the confession of his helplessness? Alas, it has done neither. We have the sinful history of man's fallen race in THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS clearly delineated, and what painful reading it makes!

The immediate descendants of Noah are the first that are brought under review in chapter 1. The antediluvians are passed by without notice, for the horrors of that age are better left buried beneath the waters of judgment. The descendants of Noah were, no doubt, well acquainted with the evil, for it would be often spoken of by those who had passed through the flood. They would also know how God dealt with those who wickedly departed from Him, and they would know how they, by means of sacrifice such as Abel offered, could find acceptance with Him. Besides, they had the testimony that creation bore to the eternal power and divinity of God, so that the idolatry into which they seem very quickly to have fallen was excuseless. They sinned against light.

And the reason of the down-grade trodden by their wandering feet was their deep-rooted detestation of their Creator: "They did not like to retain God in their knowledge." This was the cause of their rapid plunge into idolatry. "When they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful: but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things." Their course down

the steep declivity of God-forgetfulness was rapid, reckless, and ruinous.

It was not the lack of light that turned the course of the world so early into the channel of demon-worship (Deut. 32. 17; 1 Cor. 10. 20): of light they had abundance. It was that innate hatred of having to do with a God of righteousness, holiness, and truth—a God who is an observer of His creature—an omniscient Being—a God to whom man is accountable—a God who sees and condemns the lust and the pride that fill the human heart, and give character to all his actions. Such a God as this cannot be attractive to such creatures as we by nature are. And therefore we do not like to retain Him in our knowledge. We prefer to forget Him, and to go on as if He had no existence, though even in the dark places of the earth men are surrounded with abundant testimony to the power and divinity of God, for—

"The spacious firmament on high,
With all the blue etherial sky,
And spangled heavens, a shining frame,
Their great original proclaim.
The unwearied sun, from day to day,
Doth his Creator's power display,
And publishes to every land
The work of an Almighty hand.

"Soon as the evening shades prevail
The moon takes up the wondrous tale.
And nightly to the listening earth
Repeats the story of her birth;
Whilst all the stars that round her burn,
And all the planets in their turn,
Confirm the tidings as they roll,
And spread the truth from pole to pole.

"What though in solemn silence all
Move round this dark terrestrial ball?
What though no real voice, nor sound,
Amid their radiant orbs be found?
In reason's ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious voice:
For ever singing as they shine:—
'The hand that made us is divine.'"

There are also made manifest traces of His goodness, for He gives rain and fruitful seasons, filling men's hearts with food and gladness. Men are little aware of how they are dependent upon God for preservation from the abominations in which the flesh delights to riot.

If God altogether withdrew His protecting hand from His poor devil-deceived mortal, what a world this would soon become! He is the Preserver of all men, though specially of them that believe on His Son (1 Tim. 4. 10). But if men are determined to dishonour God by their beastly idolatry, and if they will, in order to escape the stings of an accusing conscience, worship and serve the creature, even in the likeness of a creeping thing, they can scarcely complain if God withdraws His preserving power, and leaves them to dishonour themselves, as without His guardianship they most certainly would do. And we find it has been so, for "God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves," and then we have men wallowing in such a midden of moral pollution as appals the imagination, and not only wallowing in it themselves, but delighting in those who take part in their beastly orgies.

The moraliser, be he Jew or Gentile, may in the pride of his corrupt heart judge all this in his neighbour, but God does not let him off on that account, if he does the same things that he condemns in others. "Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast in the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?" And this was so, "For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written" (Ezek. 36. 19-23). And "wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself: for thou that judgest doest the same things." Thus, whether it was the Jew teaching the law, or the Gentile moraliser teaching ethics, both are proved guilty of doing the things they condemn in others, and proved guilty by God who knows the heart (Rom. 2.).

But every way in which a man may

choose to walk has its own sure and certain result. If by a life of patient well-doing a man seeks for glory, honour, and incorruptibility, he cannot fail of eternal life. As to the power by which one may live such a life we must learn it in the gospel. It is true also that where men are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation, and wrath, tribulation and anguish shall be their sure reward, and that from the hand of God, who has no respect of persons. "As many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law." The light he has had will be that by which he will be judged. "And as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law." This is the Jew, the only people to whom the law was given. There is nothing about the Christian here, for a true believer does not come into judgment (John 5. 24), though where one is a Christian in name only, and not a true believer in the Son of God, he must be judged according to his works, and the standard by which he shall be judged cannot be less than the light of Christianity.

It will not do, in the day in which God will judge the secrets of men, to plead that we have been orthodox in our views, or that we have taught others how to behave themselves, if we ourselves have practised evil, for "the judgment of God is according to truth against them that commit such things," and to "hold the truth in unrighteousness" is to render oneself liable to the wrath that is revealed from heaven.

The four thousand years of man's probation have proved him to be un-mendably evil, the thoughts and imaginations of his heart only evil continually, and the more favourable his circumstances the more rebellious and unclean his ways. His activities are always reprobate, for they proceed from his own evil heart, and "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"

"I the Lord search the heart," and therefore He alone can tell us what it is (Jer. 17. 9). We are dependent upon Him to tell us what we are, and He does it, in order that we may turn to Him, as those that are afraid of themselves, and find in Him One who is able to deliver us from that which we by nature are.

The light that the impenitent sinner has had will rise up against him in the day of judgment and will condemn him, because he has been unfaithful to it, as the law, under which the Jew was placed, has already risen up in his condemnation; for of all under it it says: "There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways: and the way of peace they have not known: there is no fear of God before their eyes."

This is a terrible indictment, but it is as true as it is terrible, for "the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good." Therefore it is a ministration of death and condemnation (2 Cor. 3. 7. 9), for being addressed to one who is by nature a transgressor, it cannot do otherwise than condemn him: it can no more justify the wicked than it can condemn the righteous. Man is seen to be the slave of sin: he serves it with every member of his body, when with every member of his body he should serve God.

There is yet another way in which man has been tested, and that was by the coming of Christ into the world. In Him God was presenting Himself to men in the goodness and grace of His Son. He was making no demands, He

was not setting before men what they should be. He was not presenting to them their responsibilities, He was telling them what God was. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them" (2 Cor. 5. 19). He was not presenting the demand of God, but was there Himself the gift of God in their midst. He was approaching man in a way that would surely have won the affections of his heart if man in his very nature had not been implacable in his enmity against Him. He healed the sick, cleansed lepers, opened the eyes of the blind, raised the dead, cast out demons, fed hungry multitudes, and went about doing good. No evil thing could stand before Him.

"Disease and death and demon,
All fled before His word
As darkness the dominion
Of day's returning lord."

But all to no purpose. The heart of man remained obdurate, in spite of this revelation of infinite grace. For His love He had hatred. He laboured in vain, and spent His strength for naught: man simply would not have God in any way whatever. Without law, he was lawless; under law, he was a transgressor; visited by God in grace, he is proven to be a God-hater. He is a bad tree, and can produce nothing but bad fruit.

He has been tested in every way that the wisdom of God could invent, and he will not listen to his Maker, nor will he acknowledge that he has any obligation to show Him the least respect. The Son of the Father upon a gibbet is man's final answer to the overtures of infinite Love. The case is closed, never to be reopened: he is stark naked in his sinfulness, as our Lord has said: "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin" (John 15. 22). Man is without excuse: he is condemned by every test to which he has been subjected.

The New Jerusalem—*continued.*

A Bible Study on Revelation 21. 9 to 22. 5.

The Measurement of the City.

15. "And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof."

Q. What is the significance of the golden reed?

J. N. D. The golden reed, the exact righteousness of God, measures all and judges all.

F. C. P. If you look at the earthly Jerusalem in Ezekiel, He measures it with a line of *flaw* (40. 3) as His possession. But this will not suffice to measure that which is the fruit of the travail of Christ's soul.

16. "And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal."

J. N. D. We get now its proper perfection. It has not divine perfectness (that could not be), but it has divinely given perfectness. It is a cube, equal on every side, finite perfection. It was twelve thousand furlongs, the number twelve again marking the administrative perfection in man, only largely multiplied in fact.

Q. Of course there is no thought of literal measurements of a material city?

J. A. T. I will ask any simple Christian to read again the description of the glorious city in Revelation 21., 22. and tell me if it conveys to his mind the idea of what is material!

W. K. When we read of the city forming a quadrangle of equal length, breadth, and height, it is simply to be understood as figurative of its perfectness. At the same time these symbols must not be run into one another. First we have the general idea of a city which is in every way square, a cube in fact; then, when we come to the details of the wall, a height is given which shows that

we are not to look for mere literal consistency as if it were a portrait.

Q. What does the measuring mean?

A. I believe it is the demonstration that every demand of divine righteousness is answered. You get the whole thing completed and displayed; that is the measure of the city.

17. "And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is of the angel."

J. N. D. The wall has its perfection, 12 by 12. It is not divine in its nature—it is the measure of a man, though God measures it by the angel.

W. S. Instead of the "equal" and amazing size of the city, the wall is but 144 cubits; the former measurement expresses the church's perfection in the glory *according to God*; the latter the church's perfection in glory *according to men and angels*.

18. "And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass."

Q. What does the "clear glass" symbolize?

W. K. Holiness, now fixed and without flaw. With regard to our need of holiness, the means of it are represented under the figure of water, because it is a question of cleansing from defilement in a practical way. In the Revelation this is not the case; for from the fourth chapter the saints who are put in connection with holiness are risen saints, and consequently are beyond the means of cleansing. They are therefore represented, as also in the case of that body of saints mentioned in chapter 15., as on a sea of glass, because it is purity, and this in a fixed unalterable condition. Their state is no longer that which might need to be cleansed. It is holiness that repels

everything defiling. So here, the city is of pure gold, like unto clear glass. Divine righteousness has its full way now, and holiness that nothing can touch.

W. S. The building of the wall was of jasper, that is, the glory of God will be our defence and security, while the city itself was pure gold, like clear glass. As to the gold, we are made the righteousness of God in Christ even now; *then* it will be displayed,—the purity will be transparent.

The Precious Stones.

19. "And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper! the second sapphire," etc.

J. N. D. Besides the general idea of every character of beauty, there is the special character of the stones,—the variegated display of colours into which light transforms itself, when seen through a medium, when God is revealed in and by the creature, or in connection with his state, in creation, intercessional representation, and here in glory.

Q. Is there anything to be learned from the actual stones?

J. N. D. The difference of the stones contains details which are above my knowledge. It is said of Satan that before his fall he walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire,—that every precious stone was his covering (Ezek. 28. 14). The precious stones were on the breastplate of the high priest. These stones are not pure light, but the reflection of the divine glory, where the most elevated creature walked before its fall. It is in that position that Christ places the church on His heart, as high priest, and in the full manifestation of which He places her in the glory.

J. A. T. As the prism catches the ray that falls upon it, and breaking it up

into its several colours, reflects it thus in its varied beauty and perfection, so will the church be to Christ in the coming day of millennial glory.

W. K. Without pretending to give the spiritual meaning of the various precious stones, we may learn thence that in every variety of beauty will God array His people in that day of glory. There will be different rays of His glory reflected through them, set forth by these different precious stones.

R. The idea which it conveys to me is, that it is the precious result of the formative work of God individually in the saints. No precious stone gives light, but refracts light. But then each is the result of the work of the lapidary, everything that would obstruct light has been removed.

21. "And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl; and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass."

J. A. T. That which first meets the eye as a walled city is approached, is its gate. Thus at every approach there shines out, amid the surrounding wall of the divine glory, the pearl—the chosen symbol of what the church was to Christ, of His own special delight in it as He saw it in eternity, in His own thoughts about it.

W. S. Israel, angels, and men will then learn, as they look upon the gates of pearl, that Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it—the one pearl of priceless value to Him.

W. K. If the Lord saw any beauty in the church, it was all derived from Himself. He saw the church as she was in the mind and purpose of God, and sold all that He might purchase this pearl of great price, which after all is but the reflection of His own beauty. So here, the spotless pearl, the perfection of moral beauty that had been so precious in the eyes of Christ, is the figure of what, even at the entrance, will appear in the eyes of men and angels.

(To be continued.)

The Love of the Brethren. No. 1.

"We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren.
He that loveth not his brother abideth in death" (1 John 3. 14).

WHEN the purpose of God has come to full fruition in a reconciled universe; when the eternal results of the purpose of the ages in Christ Jesus our Lord have become the glory of radiant hosts; when the Saviour shines in supreme splendour as the Head and Centre of all; when, among the many brethren, who shall be fully conformed to His image, He is known as the Firstborn; then the love of the brethren for God and for one another will be fervent, full and unhindered, pure, perfect and eternal.

To be devoid of that love is to be devoid of eternal life—of life in the Son of God. "He that loveth not his brother abideth in death." There may be a high religious profession, and a zeal for Christianity so-called, but to be destitute of love for the brethren is to be destitute of divine life. Any one, no matter what his pretensions, who is without this love is dead: he has not "passed from death to life." Amidst the mixed state of that which uses the Name of Christ to-day, this becomes an essential and healthful test for us. The Holy Spirit foretold these times through Paul, so we need not be surprised by the present condition of things, but rather the reverse.

Divine love is specially given as the vital test in what the Spirit of God has spoken through John's writings. Having loved His own who were in the world, our Lord Jesus Christ loved them to the end, and "His own" are to love one another as He loved them.

It is cheering and edifying to see the way the apostles expressed their love for the brethren in their epistles. This stands out in vivid contrast to the cold statements of officials in religious documents to-day. The apostles showed zealous care for the flock; and they also preached the gospel with

untiring earnestness; whilst, to them, all those who belonged to the assembly were brethren beloved, for whom, writes one apostle, "we ought to lay down our lives," because the Son of God laid down His life for us. It is by this that love is known to the children of God.

Some may say, "How can we love those we have never seen?" Paul did so. He wrote to the brethren at Rome before he had been there. "I greatly desire to see you," he said; "to have mutual comfort among you" (1. 11-12). To the Colossians he wrote, "I would have you know what combat I have for you, and those in Laodicea, and as many as have *not seen my face* in flesh; to the end that their hearts may be encouraged, being united together in love" (2. 1-2); and he spoke in the same letter of their "*love in the spirit*" for himself; of their "*love to all the saints*"; of "Tychicus the beloved brother"; and of "Luke the beloved physician," who saluted them. To the Corinthians—though he had to say to them, "I, brethren, have not been able to speak to you as spiritual, but as to fleshly; as to babes in Christ" (1 Cor. 3. 1.)—yet he affectionately called them "my beloved brethren" (1 Cor. 15. 58), for they were so. "My love be with you all in Christ Jesus," he said, as he encouraged them to show love one to another. The letter to the saints at Ephesus, after the vast and exalted unfoldings which it contains, is concluded with words which fervently breathe strong affection: "Peace to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruption." Do we also find the same Spirit-begotten desires in our hearts for "*all*" such? "God is my witness," he wrote to the brethren at Philippi, "how I long after

you all in the bowels of Christ Jesus " (1. 8). " So that, my brethren, beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, thus stand fast in the Lord, beloved " (4. 1). What true and deep love expressed itself then. James, in his letter, over and over again spoke to the brethren as his " beloved." Peter also reiterates the same endearing term in both his letters; and exhorts the brethren to be " all of one mind, having compassion one of another—love as brethren." The same expression of love is found in John. His last letter begins, " The elder to the beloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth." All recognized the presence of the divine nature with the saints; and they knew well how to encourage and strengthen the gracious work of God in them; therefore this beautiful affection and trustfulness found free expression in holiness and truth. Why should it not be so now? The nature, the work and the grace are the same—divine and holy in their origin. Failure and difficulty existed then even as they do now; but that which is in Christ abides now as then. It is this which is to be furthered. The " elect of God, holy and beloved " are still so.

In the revival of recent times, which partook of an apostolic character, these expressions of affection and confidence showed themselves with much emphasis at the beginning; but, all at once, save with some of the least known, they suddenly disappeared, like the warmth of summer before the chill of an early winter. One aged servant recently remarked, " Times of quarrelling and violence came upon us then." He himself said, when speaking of 1 John, and of the love of the brethren which is given prominence to in that letter, " I have to judge myself for having so little of it." Alas, this is where we all fail; though love itself " never fails." This is a striking feature stated in 1 Corinthians 13, and we should all do well to ponder it. Those who have a professed zeal for certain teachings—

mistaken perhaps in thinking they understand them better than other brethren whom they disparage—might benefit with us all, by heeding one of the last-written exhortations of an honoured teacher, flowing from matured judgment and experience: "*I do add, let not JOHN'S MINISTRY be forgotten in insisting on Paul's.*" His next, and latest dated letter in print, shows, too, that he looked for no narrowing of the testimony, but rather for a widening out, for he says, "*I feel satisfied that if there be a godly recognition of God's hand upon us, and lovely confidence in the purpose of the Father for THE GLORY OF HIS OWN SON, there will be a great deal of blessing, and SPREADING FORTH into doors which He opens*" (Letters J.N.D., Vol. 3, p. 345. March 19, 1882). This must always be the way of divine love.

Love to God and to one another is inseparable. " Everyone that loves Him that has begotten loves Him also that is begotten of Him." He that loves not his brother whom he has seen cannot have love to God whom he has not seen, though he may say he has. " But," says someone, " we must keep His commandments." Truly! " And this commandment have we from Him, that he that loves God love also his brother " (1 John 4. 21). There is nothing grievous in this; for where the divine nature is, the desires correspond exactly to this commandment, which gives liberty to those desires to express themselves in obedience and truth.

Who are the Brethren?

The answer to this question is all-important to those who desire to respond to the Word which exhorts us to love the brethren. It is a vital matter; for if we do love them, we know we have passed out of death into life; and, to-day, we are surrounded with a world-wide brotherhood movement, which embraces those who are still in death; those who have not received Christ

Jesus the Lord; therefore, in connection with our subject, it is necessary for us to know who the brethren really are, according to the Word of God; otherwise we may be led astray, and, though a true believer, be found amongst the dead like those addressed in Ephesians 5. 14. The importance of this matter is also intensified, because of the existence of a proud ecclesiasticism on the one hand, and of a false evangelism on the other. The one is distant, cold and official, loveless and "dead," though often ethical, being also a restraint to certain worldly and national dangers. The other knows little or nothing of this restraint, but, taking the line of *good-in-all-men*, bases its mistaken appeals and organizations on that ground. Neither is characterized by the scriptural marks which associate themselves with those spoken of in the Word as "brethren in Christ." I speak not now of individuals, but of systems. There are also petty parties, schools of opinion, sects and other evils to be avoided. We will turn, however, to the positive and vital side of our subject, for the Bible's answer to our question will show us that which we are to associate with, and thus we shall be preserved from the dangers referred to.

1. The first thing to see is: The brethren are "*the born of God.*" The nation of Israel were the people of God by *natural birth*, the brethren have their beginning in a *new birth*; they are born of the Word and the Spirit. "Everyone that believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." There is consequently a new nature; therefore we read, "Everyone that loveth has been begotten of God." He would have a new family of this sort; even as James writes to his "beloved brethren": "According to His own will begat He us, that we should be a certain firstfruits of His creatures" (1. 18). If we are not of this company by our natural birth, neither does baptism, confirmation or church membership introduce us to it; nor joining a sect, school or party,

no matter how 'scriptural the name claimed by such. The "brethren" of scripture are not thus denominated, and while the name may seem to express the truth, it is often used in an intensely sectarian way, the more subtle because it is scriptural. And when the names of special teachers are used as distinguishing and dividing how sinfully is the sectarian leaven manifest. It is a shame to us all, especially when we think of the fact that *Christ died* to gather us together in one—all the brethren—all the children of God, for they are all "BORN OF GOD."

2. The brethren are the "*forgiven.*" Eternal and justifying forgiveness through our Lord Jesus Christ, through faith in Him, is theirs; as it is said, "Your sins are forgiven you for His Name's sake" (1 John 2. 12). Again, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." They were remembered once upon Him, who bore our sins in His own body on the tree; therefore, "where there is remission of these, there is no longer a sacrifice for sin," because the work is done once for all, and they are eternally FORGIVEN.

3. They are the *cleansed*. They stand in all the value of the blood of Christ. Judicially, before God, they are discharged from every sin, for the blood has met His holy claims. It is not that they are being met day by day, or moment by moment, as some think; but the value of the one sacrifice perfectly meets all, as we read, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from every sin" (1 John 1. 7, N.T.). "By one offering He has perfected in perpetuity the sanctified" (Heb. 10. 14, N.T.). Once for ever they are judicially CLEANSED.

4. They are the *sealed by the Spirit*. It is true of all the children of God that they have received the Holy Spirit, as it is said, "Ye have the unction from the Holy One." When we heard the gospel, and believed on the Christ of

whom it speaks, He came to seal and indwell us; as it is written, having heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom having believed ye have been sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise (Eph. 1. 13, N.T.); and, "Because ye are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." The brethren are all SEALED BY THE SPIRIT.

5. They are *the children of God*. Some of them may enter into this wonderful fact with greater intelligence and appreciation than others. They may understand this great honour and act up to it better than others of the family. We see this even in an earthly prince's house. Some members of his family show a greater sense of the dignity that is theirs than others; nevertheless, all are alike of the family. So great is the honour bestowed upon us, it is said, "Be ye followers of God, as beloved children" (Eph. 5. 1); and, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the CHILDREN OF GOD."

6. They are the *possessors of life* in the Son of God—they have eternal life. "God has given to us eternal life; and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life: he that hath not the Son of God has not life"; and we are told that the first letter of John was written that we may "*know*" that we "*have eternal life* who believe on the Name of the Son of God" (5. 13). The brethren are POSSESSORS OF LIFE.

7. They are *the members of Christ's body*, the assembly. Some may inconsistently be members of other bodies; but, surely, if God has brought us to be members of the body of Christ, if we understand the privilege and dignity of this, we shall avoid membership of man-made systems of religion. What can be greater than belonging to "the assembly which is His body, the fulness of Him who fills all in all"? To seek other membership is not only

to show a poor appreciation of the honour which is ours, but to slight the love which Christ has shown in giving Himself for the assembly, and also the care which He lavishes upon it. "No one has ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, even as Christ also the assembly: for we are members of His body; we are of His flesh and of His bones." The brethren are THE MEMBERS OF CHRIST'S BODY.

Space and time forbid our dwelling at length on other distinguishing features of the brethren, as they are revealed in the Scriptures. In contrast to the world and to being still in sin, they are "*in Christ*." As in Him they are saved, redeemed, and justified by God; they are taken into His favour for ever—"accepted in the Beloved"; yea, they are blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ (Eph. 1. 3). They have passed from darkness to light, from death into life, from Satan to God, from the authority of oppression into the Kingdom of the Son of the Father's love. They are now living stones, who have come to Christ the Living Stone, and are collectively built together for a spiritual house, an habitation of God in the Spirit. They are "the saints" (1 Cor. 1. 2), and that by God's call, and not by man's decree.

Finally, the risen Son of God, the Lord of Glory, speaks of them as *His* brethren (John 20. 17). What infinite grace! We are also told, that, like Aaron's priestly family, they are all of one with Himself, "for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren" (Heb. 2. 11). They are not of the world, He said, even as I am not of the world. Universal brotherhood and political-religious organizations are excluded by these words. To His brethren He makes known the ineffable grace of God, saying, "I will declare Thy Name unto My brethren." They speak of Him as "LORD," not as "brother," or even "elder brother," though their hearts, may well rejoice greatly that *He* should speak of them as brethren. H. J. VINE.

The Song of Songs. Canticle IV.

The Restoration of Love—continued.

7. *The watchmen that went about the city found me; they smote me, they wounded me; the keeper of the walls took away my veil from me.*

Loss of affection means the loss of the company of the Bridegroom. But further it exposes the Bride to the dealings of the city watchmen, and the keepers of the walls. The business of the watchmen is to keep order in the city at night, without the Bridegroom? This is contrary to order and they rightly rebuke her. They "wounded" her, but "*faithful* are the wounds of a friend." Again the keepers of the walls have to protect the city from attacks of the enemy, and in following their calling must needs challenge all comers, to distinguish friends from foes. They are true to their work in their dealing with the Bride. They must discover if she is really what she professes to be, and therefore they strip her of her veil. When we wander do we not expose ourselves to rebuke from those who watch for souls? It is often thus the Lord carries on His restoring work through the means of others. May we not say that Paul was doing watchman's work when he had that sharp contention with Barnabas in regard to John Mark? And again was he not doing the work of a keeper of the walls when he withstood Peter to the face and exposed his dissimulation; thus, as it were, taking away his veil. But painful as such experiences may be, they work recovery in the true soul. And so with the Bride; the dealings of "the watchmen" and "the keepers" awakened in the Bride deeper longings of heart after the Bridegroom—yearnings of heart that she cannot conceal from others.

8. *I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my Beloved, that ye tell him, I am sick of love.*

Unable to contain the longings of her heart, the Bride charges others, if they

find her beloved, to tell him she is sick of love. She supposes that all would know to whom she refers. To those, however, to whom she appeals the Bridegroom is as one unknown.

Daughters of Jerusalem.

9. *What is thy Beloved more than another Beloved, thou fairest among women? What is thy Beloved more than another Beloved, that thou dost so charge us?*

They have never known the intimacy of love with the Bridegroom, and cannot understand the affections that fill the heart of the Bride. They ask, "What is thy Beloved more than another Beloved?" But this is only another step in the restoration of the Bride. Her motives must be searched. Is her Beloved more to her than another? It hardly appeared so in the eyes of others. She had taken her ease without the Bridegroom, and when he knocked she could not even bestir herself to let him in.

Peter professed *great love* for the Lord when he said, "Although all shall be offended, yet will not I." But Peter evidenced *little love* for the Lord when he slept in the garden, and *no love* for the Lord when he denied him in the palace. How seemly it is that in the way of his restoration Peter must be searched with the thrice repeated question, "Lovest thou Me."

The Bride, in response to this searching question, proves the reality of her affection by pouring forth all that is in her heart concerning the Bridegroom.

The Bride.

10-16. *My beloved is white and ruddy, the clearest among ten thousand. His head is as the finest gold; his locks are flowing, black as the raven; his eyes are like doves by the water-brooks, washed with milk, fitly*

set; his cheeks are as a bed of spices, banks of sweet herbs. His lips lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh. His hands, gold rings set with beryl; his body, bright ivory overlaid with sapphires; his legs, pillars of marble, set upon bases of fine gold; his bearing as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars; his mouth is most sweet; yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, yea, this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.

This lovely description is but another step in the awakening of love, for as the Bride unfolds the perfections of the Bridegroom to others, her heart, engaged with himself and his glories, is afresh stirred to its depths. To witness to others of the glories and perfections of Christ will most surely kindle afresh one's own affections for Christ.

This glorious imagery can alone apply to Christ. It is His perfections that pass before us. He alone is "white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand." Whatever others may be, He is the "chiefest"; however many there may be, He is "the chiefest among ten thousand."

His divine majesty passes before us in the head as the most fine gold.

His locks are flowing and black, betokening the vigour of manhood. No white hair, no trace of age or decay will ever pass on Him. Where all grows old, He never grows old. His years shall never fail.

His eyes, as the eyes of doves, speak of His tender compassion. "Washed with milk" speaks of purity. "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look in iniquity." "Fitly set" speaks of the perfection of His vision before whom "all things are naked and open."

The cheeks speak of beauty and attractiveness. The world saw no beauty in Christ, and smote Him on the cheek. Judas professed attraction to Christ but only to betray Him by kissing Him on the cheek. The believer, on the other hand, can delight in the beauty and attractiveness of Christ as a bed of fragrant herbs calls forth the admiration of the passer-by.

His lips are likened to lilies dropping sweet-smelling myrrh. The lily may speak of purity and the sweet-smelling myrrh of grace. Isaiah had to confess he was a man of unclean lips, but the lips of Christ were pure; no guile was found in His mouth. And of Christ it could be said, "Grace is poured into Thy lips." As He passed through this world, words of grace were ever dropping from His lips like sweet-smelling myrrh.

His hands are likened to rings set with beryl. The ring is the emblem of authority (Gen. 41. 42; Esth. 3. 10), and the token of love (Luke 15. 22). Man expressed his hatred to Christ by nailing His hands of love to a cross, but the believer delights to recognize that all power is in the hands of Christ; but the hand that wields the power is moved by love.

His belly, or body, is likened to bright ivory overlaid with sapphires. The whiteness and smoothness of the ivory may indicate the perfection of Christ without blemish or spot, and the sapphires the preciousness of Christ. Peter presents this twofold view of Christ when in one place he speaks of Him as "without blemish and *without spot*" and in another writes, "Unto you, therefore, which believe He is *precious*" (1 Peter 1. 19; 2. 7).

His legs as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold, speak of the stability and strength of purpose that ever marked the Lord Jesus. The base of fine gold may indicate that all the steadfastness and strength of Christ had its foundation in divine righteousness.

His countenance or "bearing" signifies "not the face only but the entire aspect." It is likened to Lebanon, a figure which brings before us the excellence and dignity of Christ.

His mouth is most sweet. In the imagery of the song, it is the *kiss* rather than speech that is connected with "the mouth." This clause in the

Bride's glowing description would therefore serve to set forth the sweetness of the love of Christ.

"He is altogether lovely." In Christ we have a perfect object, One who is altogether lovely. Here the heart can rest with satisfaction. In Daniel's image the head was the fine gold, but the toes were of iron and clay. Here the head of the Bridegroom is likened to fine gold, and the legs of marble are set upon bases of fine gold. In the Beloved there is no deterioration. His whole bearing is majestic, He is altogether lovely.

And having closed her description the Bride can add, "This is *my* beloved and this is *my* friend." So too each of the redeemed can say of Christ, "He is my Beloved, He is my Friend" even while they unite to sing—

"Join all the glorious names
Of wisdom, love and power,

That mortals ever knew,
That angels ever bore;
All are too mean to speak His worth,
Too mean to set the Saviour forth."

Daughters of Jerusalem.

Ch. 6. 1. Whither is thy Beloved gone, thou fairest among women? Whither is thy Beloved turned aside? that we may seek him with thee.

The lovely description of the Bridegroom raises a further question in the minds of the Daughters of Jerusalem. They had inquired, "What is thy beloved more than another beloved?" Now they ask, "Whither is thy beloved gone?" The full revival of the Bride's affections lies in the answer to these two questions. If our love to Christ has grown cold, let us but answer the two questions, "Who is He?" and "Where is He?" and once again, as we are occupied with Him, our cold hearts will be warmed with the glow of His love.

HAMILTON SMITH.

Answers to Correspondents.

Fasting.

A. M. M.—*What place, if any, should fasting have in our lives as Christians? If we practised it more should we have power in prayer?*

I ESTEEM fasting to be a bodily discipline which, if preceded and accompanied by a spiritual exercise, is framed to give intensity to spiritual affection and power to spiritual activity. If, however, it be merely a rule or practice, or an effort to attain merit, a sort of "quid pro quo," in the sight of God, as with much of the Roman and Anglican fasting, it is of no more worth than that of the Pharisee in Luke 18.

Fasting as a *regular* thing does not seem to be of a character in accordance with *Christian* liberty. But I do not think it out of keeping with it, if it be the product of exercise. Acts 13. is the introduction to the distinctive Pauline ministry (ver. 2). If the attendance on meals and eating be a distraction to a saint or servant because of eager pursuit

after Christ he should not be under a law to eat. If there be some subject of prayer, or some delight in communion, to interrupt which is almost like sin, fasting may become the most natural thing. Then there are occasions of confession, and occasions of agony in pleading for some object or purpose, when one may regard it as a positive carnality to study appetite. But in all such times it is the intensity of the exercise before God which produces the fasting; and not the fasting that produces the exercise. Alas! little wonder then that there is little fasting.

W. H. WESTCOTT.

It has been happily expressed that in prayer we say "yes" to God, while in fasting we say "no" to ourselves, and this clearly indicates their relation to one another, for if in prayer to God we are

not at the same time saying "no" to ourselves, we are in danger of coming under the condemnation of James 4. 3: "Ye ask and receive not because ye ask amiss, that ye might consume it on your pleasures." But it should be well noted that no value attaches to fasting in itself: hear the Lord's words in Zechariah 7. 5, 6: "When ye fasted and mourned . . . did ye at all fast TO ME, EVEN TO ME." See also Isaiah 58. for an even sterner rebuke, and when we come to the positive teaching of the N.T. the same point is emphasized (see Matthew 6.) where we find man's righteousness (R.V.) under three heads—almsgiving, prayer, and fasting, and in each case the exhortation is that the exercise should be towards God, who sees in secret. Here then we have the definite instruction that fasting forms part of the right relations of the believer with God.

We may now refer to two occasions, in which fasting was used, related in the Acts, first in chapter 13., where we read of a meeting of prophets and teachers waiting on the Lord, in order to get His mind on no less a subject than the evangelization of Satan's stronghold, the great heathen world. In order to minister to Him without distraction, they refuse the body its usual support, and there is a direct answer, the Spirit speaking doubtless through one of the prophets. Thus the victory was won upon their knees before the work was begun. But it should be further noticed that, having obtained the answer sought for, they again "fasted and prayed" before sending their brethren on their journey. The other occasion referred to is found in chapter 14. 23, in connection with the appointment of elders in the young assemblies, who were about to be left without apostolic oversight. In such cases prayer becomes of the nature of conflict (Col. 2. 1 and 4. 12), against the leagued forces of Satan, and when combined with fasting, the servant of the Lord is enabled to wait on Him abstracted from occupation with the needs of the body.

C. E. H. WARREN.

In the religious world fasting is compulsory, limited to stated times, confined to abstinence from food (or certain kinds

of food), and has a superstitious merit attached to it. All this is the opposite of true fasting, being merely the gratification of religious flesh, and as such is condemned by the Word of God (Col. 2. 20-23; 1 Tim. 4. 1-3).

True fasting is the exercise of self-denial in relation to things which, in themselves, are perfectly legitimate. This fasting, or self-denial, is presented in the New Testament: (1) in a general sense as the habitual practice of the believer, and (2) in a special sense with some particular object in view.

For the practice of fasting in the general sense see Luke 5., a passage which presents fasting in its true place as following upon blessing and not as leading to blessing. The palsied man is *forgiven* (20); the forgiven man becomes a *follower* of Christ (27); the follower of Christ *feasts* with Christ (29); lastly, the one who feasts with Christ is the one who *fasts* where Christ is not (35). Luxurious living, costly apparel, palatial homes, and a life of idle ease ill become those who profess to be strangers and pilgrims in a world that has rejected Christ. It is only consistent for such to exercise habitual self-denial in all things, and this, in a general sense, is the true spirit of fasting.

But we also find in the New Testament that the exercise of self-denial may take particular forms in connection with special seasons of prayer. See Matthew 17. 21; Acts 10. 30; 13. 2, 3; 14. 23; 1 Corinthians 7. 5.

On these occasions of special prayer in order that the inner man may be undividedly before the Lord, everything that would simply minister to the outer man is denied. The merely natural, though perfectly legitimate, is for the time refused lest in any way it should hinder the spiritual exercise in progress.

This denial, on special occasions, of what is legitimate but natural, may take different forms, as for instance abstinence from food, or abstaining from sleep. It may also be deliberate or unpremeditated.

In the cases cited in above references the fasting is evidently deliberate. The

solemn matters engaging the prayers of these saints leads them to the deliberate denial of everything that would distract their attention from the matter in hand.

In Luke 6. 12 we have a perfect example of unpremeditated fasting. There we read, "It came to pass in those days, that He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God." The Lord denied Him-

self the legitimate night's sleep. But He did not go out with this purpose in view. "He went out into a mountain to pray." Absorbed in prayer the night passed without natural sleep. Of Peter, also, we read, "He went upon the housetop to pray" (Acts 10. 9, 10). He did not go up to fast; but absorbed in prayer he forgot his food until nature made him conscious of hunger.

HAMILTON SMITH.

"They had been with Jesus."

Acts 4. 13.

QUESTION.—*The "New Translation" reads "they were with Jesus." Does this carry a different thought from that given in the Authorized Version?*

The N.T. probably gives the truer thought. It was the power and authority with which Peter and John bore witness to the truth that made the leaders of the Jews to marvel. This power was not theirs either by nature or education, for they were ignorant and unlearned. It was a supernatural power, the very same

that these Jews had felt when they had come face to face with the Lord. Jesus and the authority with which He spoke was vividly brought to their minds by the apostles, they were with Jesus. The power of the Holy Spirit filled them, and this we should covet more and more.

EDITOR.

Children and the Age of Responsibility.

SOUTHSEA AND HEBRIDES.—*What do the Scriptures teach as to the responsibility of children?*

The question of the measure of responsibility of men towards God, in the varied states of life in which they are found, is one which God alone can decide; and so also in the case of young children it is not capable on our side of exact definition.

Probably the age of responsibility varies according to the natural conditions of the child; its parentage, circumstances, upbringing, and dispositions. Some are bright and keen, others dull and unimpressible. Some from earliest years learn the Saviour's name, and being brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, have no recollection as to the time when they began to believe in Him, while others are conscious of that change which takes place at conversion. Yet again, how many, alas, grow up even in this land without the knowledge of even the way of salvation. That there is a time when responsibility

begins seems pointed out in Isaiah 7. 16: "Before the child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, etc." The word here used for child, "na'ar," covers the period from infancy to youth, but the time indicated by the prophet was comparatively early, for the prophecy was fulfilled before the child was three years old. Probably the period of responsibility is gradually reached and is not a sudden change, but until then the child is protected by the work of our Lord Jesus Christ, as His own words point out: "The Son of Man is come to save that which was lost" (Matt. 18. 10. 11), and "It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish" (Matt. 18. 14), clearly showing the use He would have made of those early years, over which He has cast His saving grace. These considerations surely lay stress upon the importance of teaching the

children betimes the truth of God's salvation, that they may grow up in that kingdom to which they belong, "for of such is the kingdom of God" (Luke 18. 16). And those who addict themselves to this service for Him shall in no wise lose their reward.

JAMES GREEN.

One incident only of the Lord's youthful days is recorded for us in the Word, and that is given in Luke's Gospel, where He is shown to us as man, fulfilling all the responsibilities of man towards God. He was twelve years old when He appeared definitely choosing the good—"His Father's business"—and refusing the evil, and we conclude that it was thus that He entered upon the life of responsibility, and in it He increased in wisdom and favour with God and man.

That we should be definitely told that the Lord was then twelve years of age is significant and instructive, and we believe that it will be found that it is about this age that children often definitely show their distaste for the things of God if their hearts have not been won by His love previously, and we suggest that about this age is the age of responsi-

bility. Children who die go to the Lord, for of such is the kingdom of heaven; not because they are innocent, for they are not, or because they have been baptised (there is no merit in that), but because the Lord Jesus came to save them, and all the merits of His death stand for them until they refuse Him and choose the self-willed way.

It is beautiful to see how children generally delight in Bible stories, and especially are they attracted by the life of the Lord; distaste for this begins to manifest itself when the will—"the mind of the flesh" (Rom. 8. 7)—which is always opposed to God, begins to assert itself. Often the heart is won definitely for the Saviour before this crisis is reached, and this would account for that which one of our correspondents tells us, namely, that he never knew a time when the Saviour was not precious to him. But, even so, such a one will have to learn the truth of the incorrigible evil of the flesh within him, and pass through an experience similar to that outlined in Romans 7., or there will not be any great advance in the knowledge of grace.

EDITOR.

The Prayer of Faith shall Heal the Sick.

QUESTION.—*Does James 5. 14 still hold good in cases of sickness?*

We are sure that James 5. 14, 15 may still be acted upon. It is a question of individual faith—the faith of the one who is sick—and the will of God. If one who was sick was convinced that it was the will of God that healing should come in this way, and had faith to call in elders according to the Word, we are sure that God would not disappoint that faith. The passage seems to imply, however, that the sickness in question was not ordinary sickness but governmental, that is, it was in consequence of some sin or course of sin (see 1 Cor. 11. 30). 1 John 5. 16 would confirm this. There is no warrant at all in this passage for setting up a system of "faith healing" for all, no matter what the cause of the sickness.

When we come to Paul's epistles, in which the full truth for this present period comes out, we do not find that he exercised the power of healing of sickness upon his fellow-servants, or urged them to seek it. For Epaphroditus was sick and nigh unto death for the work of the

Lord and he did not heal him (Phil. 2. 25–28), Trophimus he left at Miletus sick, without any effort to recovery him (2 Tim. 4. 20); and he tells Timothy, not to call in the elders so that his "oft infirmity" might be cured, but to take a little wine for it (1 Tim. 5. 23).

We gather from this that the more we advance in the knowledge of God the more readily we shall accept sickness from His hand and seek to learn the lessons of patience and mercy that He would teach us, and also not to despise the means of healing which He as a wise and faithful Creator has placed for us in His creation. We do not honour the Creator if we despise the things that His wisdom has created, whether for food or medicine (1 Tim. 4. 4). This does not mean that we are to put our faith in the creature instead of the Creator.

Hebrews 12. 5–11 is a comforting scripture for any who suffer either in body or circumstances.

EDITOR.

“When Ye Come Together.”

WE desire to press upon our readers the necessity of deep heart-searchings before God as to the present general condition of things, and the lack of spiritual power and freshness in the gatherings together of the saints of God. Much depends in the way of testimony to those without, as well as edification to those within, upon the condition of the assemblies of the saints (1 Cor. 14.), and the glory of the Lord is ultimately linked up with it. Thence the importance of the subject.

When the soul is not honest and open before God it is easy to persuade oneself that things are not so bad after all, better, at least, in the limited circle in which we move than in any other. We exaggerate what seems right and minimize what is undoubtedly wrong, and compare ourselves with others to our own advantage, and in so doing we are like children playing at “let’s pretend,” and all the advantages of such folly go to our tireless and subtle enemy. Delusions of this sort are specially fatal, for they hinder us from going to God in true soul exercise and learning in His presence how we appear before Him, which is the only road of recovery.

It will do us no harm to hear what solemn things God had to say to His people of old. They might well come home to us to-day. He said: *“This people draw near to Me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour Me, but have removed their heart from Me, and their fear toward Me is taught by the precept of men”* (Isa. 29. 13). That indictment described **THEIR PRAYERS AND WORSHIP WHEN THEY PROFESSEDLY GATHERED TO HIM**. Do they describe ours? and do our consciences stir uneasily as we read the words? Notice what went along with this condition, that which probably was the chief cause of it—the precept of men had taken the place of the Word of God

and His fear. The Word had been ousted from its authoritative place, and precept and tradition had become the rule of conduct, and they walked in the fear of what men thought and taught instead of the fear of God. Consequently the Word was a sealed book to them; seers, prophets, and rulers could not understand it and the unlearned could not read it. The whole state is laid bare in this solemn passage (vers. 10–13).

But is not this increasingly the condition of things to-day? How often does some teaching, tradition, or man-made rule bind the conscience instead of the Word! How often is the plain Word—the commandments of God—neutralized, made of none effect by the precepts of men! Could any condition be more deplorable than this? For does it not prove that man is more to us than God, that God Himself has been displaced in the heart? It surely does, for **“IF A MAN LOVE ME HE WILL KEEP MY WORDS.”**

God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth, and if men’s words have taken the place of His, this cannot be done, and to profess to draw near to Him in prayer or worship when the heart is removed from Him can only move His displeasure, for it is mere pretence. And where such a condition of things has set in recovery is needed, and recovery can only be reached by the way of repentance.

There is another solemn description of these people not less searching: *“The children of thy people . . . speak to one another, everyone to his brother, saying, Come, I pray you, and hear what is the word that cometh forth from the Lord. And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and **THEY HEAR THY WORDS, BUT THEY WILL***

NOT DO THEM; for with their mouths they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness. And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for **THEY HEAR THY WORDS BUT THEY DO THEM NOT**" (Ezek. 33. 30-32.)

Here is described their gatherings for the **PREACHING AND TEACHING OF THE WORD**.

These people came to be interested and pleased by the preaching, to approve or to criticize as the word accorded or otherwise with their particular view of things, but they had no intention of being subject to the Word they heard. They did not gather with Samuel's cry in their hearts, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth." Nor did they inquire with Saul of Tarsus, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" Their minds were already made up to go their own way, and to please themselves.

Happy are we if this state of things does not describe the meetings with which we are familiar, but the test as to this surely is, "How much does all the preaching and teaching of the Word to which we have listened affect our practical living? Do we go forth from hearing the Word to do it? Or are we like these hypocrites of old who with their mouths showed love, but whose hearts went after their covetousness?" Solemn questions these, and yet it is only by searching and probing that the true condition of things is revealed.

There is a further passage which brings out the awful subtlety of the human heart, and proves the necessity of living before God if we are to be preserved from being deceived by it. It tells us that when Israel was in trouble under God's chastening hand, "*They sought Him and enquired early after God. . . . Nevertheless they did flatter Him with their mouth, AND THEY LIED UNTO HIM WITH THEIR TONGUES. For their heart was not*

right with Him, neither were they steadfast in His covenant" (Ps. 78. 13-37).

"They lied unto Him with their tongues." With these ancient people there was merely the wish to escape trouble, they did not intend to hear the rod, or learn the lesson that God's chastening love would teach them. They professed sorrow and piety, but it was hypocrisy. From such an awful condition may the good Lord deliver us. But we need to search our hearts. God is not less holy than ever He was, though the fulness of His grace has now revealed itself. For lying unto God Ananias and his wife were stricken with instant death. "Our God is a consuming fire."

It will be noticed that in each of these scriptures quoted the heart has a prominent place.

1. They removed their heart from Me.
2. Their heart goeth after their covetousness.
3. For their heart was not right with Him.

Everything depends upon the heart—out of it are the issues of life. When the people of God become sick with this heart malady He alone can recover them, but how comforting it is to know that He is always ready to do this. The heart is reached through the conscience, and that again is reached by the Word, but the Word is ineffective unless there is revived in the soul the fear of God. The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom, it is the gate of every true blessing. Under its influence His Word assumes its proper sway in the conscience, enlightens the understanding, and revives the languishing faith, so that "GOD IS" becomes the prime fact in our lives. Men sink into their true insignificance, the thoughts and intents of our hearts are laid bare, judged, and repented of, and we and our brethren are all measured according to His presence.

How to Serve the Lord.

IF the question were asked, "What was it in Paul that made him, with one grand exception, the foremost of the servants of God on earth?" it may be answered, "The grace of God." That is surely true, for none can serve Him apart from grace; but can we not detect aught in the great Apostle which led him at once, after his conversion at Damascus, to shine so brilliantly throughout his entire career as a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ? I think we can.

Soon as ever the light from heaven changed, radically, the whole current of his thoughts, showing him that there was One up there who knew him, and all about him—his very name, his murderous mission, and his bitter hatred of Jesus of Nazareth, and to those who followed Him; and Who, by the power of that light, might have destroyed him in a moment, he cried to Him in astonishment and submission: "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" In that prayer we find the secret of all his subsequent effectiveness as a servant of that Lord to whose will he then fully surrendered himself. He abandoned his own will in order that the will of Christ should be supreme in his life and ways. That was the chief feature in this servant of the Lord, as it should be in all.

A will surrendered to the Lord is the first qualification in all who seek to serve Him. Having gained the will Christ has gained the man; for the will of God is then paramount. (Study Rom. 6. as to this.)

Whatever learning or influence Paul had naturally it was subordinated to the will of Christ. He became a vessel, and only that, in his Master's hand; and hence his extraordinary usefulness!

If, therefore, we seek to serve the Lord in any way let us sink our will in His, let us take example from this honoured servant, who, throughout his many epistles has presented himself to

us in his mode of service, not, surely, in the spirit of egoism nor of self-parade, but as one filled with the Spirit of God and worthy of our imitation.

It would be very interesting in this connection to review such passages as Romans 15., 1 Corinthians 3., 2 Corinthians 4., Galatians 1.-2., Ephesians 3., Colossians 1., 1 Thessalonians 2., 2 Timothy 3., and others; but we find a summary of them all in Acts 20., where, at Miletus, he addressed the elders of the church at Ephesus, and gave to them, like Samuel in his day, an account of his stewardship. It may have been his farewell address to men in whose midst he had laboured and suffered for long, and by whom he and his work were so well known.

"Ye know," he says, "from the first day that I came into Asia what manner of man I have been among you at all seasons."

1. What he had been, not what he had done. The practical life for Christ must precede the preaching. It is the life that tells. If Christ should not absolutely command the life, the preaching, the talk and service are of no real value. What he had been, from the first day and at all subsequent seasons, was the principal part of his testimony, and the elders could bear witness to this. The start was for God, and so, too, was his whole course.

I was going to hold evangelistic meetings in a town on the other side of the Atlantic, and, while in the cars, a fellow-passenger asked me when I purposed beginning my mission. I replied, "In a day or two." True enough, so far as the preaching was concerned, but the words were hardly spoken when I felt my mistake. The "mission" should have begun, before God, the very moment of my arrival at the place. Our business is with God, and from the first to the last we should be after Paul's "manner." God first,

service afterward, blessing will follow. Begin every "mission," every action, by silent prayer to God.

That is, the mission of the servant should be, in the highest sense, chronic and habitual—an "all-season" mission!

2. But beyond this "manner" there was serving the Lord personally—not the church, though surely amenable to it, but recognizing his responsibility to the Lord and to His will. Hence he served not only humbly but with "all humility of mind"; and not only with tears but with "many" of them. He served with a tender heart and one from which the curse of pride, which ruins so many, was wholly absent. He went forth weeping as he scattered the precious seed, and he will come again rejoicing, bringing his golden sheaves. What a pattern servant! And why should we not follow his example?

3. He kept back no ministry that was profitable, which means that he did keep back what was unprofitable—a further example to be honestly pursued; and, from house to house and publicly, to the few or the many, he had the good and the profit of all at heart. To "say little, to serve all and to pass on" is exceedingly good advice. To edify and not to destroy, to encourage and not to dishearten, should be the aim of every true servant of the Lord, in whose perfect ministry there ever rang the note of "good cheer."

4. He held his life in his hand—he "died daily." Opposition of every kind assailed him, but in His Master's service "none of these things moved him," not even the highly probable loss of his life, so that he "might finish his course with joy and the ministry of the gospel of God's grace" committed to him. Unswerving fidelity to that royal commission marked his career until it closed in martyrdom and triumph—just as he would, doubtless, have wished. We can surely pray that the same fidelity

to the gospel commission may mark our little careers, and that the opposition of an infidel day and cold but intellectual rejection of the "Word of God," may not deter us from exercising all the greater zeal in its announcement.

5. Thus he could say that he was "clear of the blood of all men," like the faithful watchman of Ezekiel 33. 4, whose duty it was to warn against the approach of enemy or sword, but who himself was clear if his warning was unheeded. Solemn thought! For the watchman would expose himself to severe criticism, ridicule, contempt, and danger; but, adds the Apostle, "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God."

It is the declaration of the counsel of God that provokes opposition. No doubt the gospel may also do so; but the truth—the salt of God's counsel—His plan and purpose concerning those to whom the gospel has proved itself efficacious—that, not only should they thereby be saved, but being saved, they should respond to the will of the Lord as His church, His assembly, and His body, in faithfulness to Him, in separation from the world, and in practical holiness of life, awaiting His return to take them hence to the Father's Home in Heaven. It is this that stirs up the hostility of those to whom this passing scene is their all.

But response of heart to the will of our blessed Saviour and Lord would lead us to announce the sacred counsel of God, as occasion offers, as it also would to proclaim the gospel, and to illustrate its virtues by a "manner of life" worthy of its holy character.

A thousand times over, after more than fifty years of very feeble service, I would urge my beloved fellow-servants to pay the greatest possible attention to their "manner of life," to keep constantly near to the Lord, while they, too, cry to Him: "What wilt Thou have me to do?"

J. WILSON SMITH.

God's Aged Pilgrims.

Outline of an Address given at Findochty.

THERE are no Methuselahs among men to-day. Even those who live the longest are junior to Jacob, who at the age of a hundred and thirty declared that his years had been few.¹

There are many, however, who in the language of the Bible, are "well stricken in years." We can say with Eliphaz, "With us are both the greyheaded and very aged men."² When these are found among the people of God, men and women who have for many a long year walked in His ways, they are worthy of all honour.

Monuments of Mercy. We love and value our aged brethren and sisters. How it encourages us to see them, monuments of divine mercy, kept by the power of God through all the ups and downs of a long life. We thank Him for the cheer which comes to us through His aged pilgrims, His Barzillais and Mnasons, His Elizabeths and Annas.

The days of restless youth with their golden dreams have faded into the remote past. Gone, too, is middle life with its stress and conflict. Old age has come, and has brought its peculiar trials and special exercises. In view of these, we desire to address a few words of cheer and loving exhortation to those who are nearing the end of their pilgrim journey. This we would do in the spirit of the apostle's words to his son in the faith, entreating them as fathers, and the elder women as mothers.³

Fruit-bearing in Old Age. There is no reason why the Christian's declining years should not be the brightest and best of all. Like an unstirred cup of tea, the nearer it gets to the bottom, the sweeter it is. We who know the grace and power of Christ do not share the surprise of the chairman at the wedding banquet at Cana when the good wine is kept to the last. We

know whom we have believed, and are persuaded that He is able to make the evening of our days golden with the shining of His love.

Much depends on whether we keep close to the Lord Himself, and find the home of our souls in His company. To those who abide in His love, and in this sense are "planted in the house of the Lord," a cheering promise is given: **"THEY SHALL STILL BRING FORTH FRUIT IN OLD AGE."**⁴

The Service of God. In the days of long ago there was an age limit for the servants of God. The ministry of the Levites ended at fifty.⁵ Not so in Christianity. Service may continue till our Master calls us hence, if only the soul be kept "fat and flourishing."⁶

Let none, therefore, think themselves useless, mere burdens to others. Barzillai feared that he was this, and as he had reached his eightieth birthday, it was perhaps only natural that he should. "Wherefore, then, should thy servant be yet a burden unto my lord the king?" he asks.⁷ But in point of fact he was far from being a burden. Though "a very aged man" he rendered a considerable service to his weary and exiled king.⁸ Equally acceptable was the service of that "old disciple" who showed kindness and hospitality⁹ to the beloved apostle who was on his way to Jerusalem to face suffering and possible death. Age is no bar to service of this sort.

"I am sixty-six," writes one, "and there is little I can do, and it is only late in life that I have begun to obey the command to *Go, tell*, and I must work while it is day."

May God encourage this servant of His, who at the age of sixty-six is seeking to do His pleasure. Surely the fact of

having lived three score and six years in the world is no reason for letting our hands be slack.

"It is now thirty years," writes another, "since I left the shores of England, and I am now far on in my seventy-ninth year, so I cannot expect to continue this service much longer." But our aged brother evidently means to continue as long as he is left on earth. He has no intention of seeking a place on the retired list. Why should he? He has not reached the age of Barzillai yet.

But Barzillai was a "great infirm and poor man," and the "old disciple" was yet able to move about. What of those who are not only aged but poor? What of those crippled by infirmity? Can they be otherwise than a burden?

They can indeed. In the city of Aberdeen lives one such, Mrs. K., blind and bed-ridden. But how she can cheer those who visit her. Never a complaint does one hear from her lips, but thanksgiving and praise. Her very face reflects the gladness that fills her heart. Often a depressed visitor has come away uplifted and refreshed from her bedside. All unconsciously the dear blind, bed-ridden saint has "washed the feet" of her fellow-disciples,¹⁰ and in doing this has served her Master well.

Perhaps Anna, with her full sheaf of years, was another such. She could no longer get about the streets of her native city, but was confined to her lodging within the Temple precincts.¹¹ Full of praise, she too could testify of the Christ who was even then among them. Of Him she spake "to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem." Happy service, in spite of her widowhood and the weight of her years.

God's Tenderness. God has special regard for His aged saints, and shows peculiar tenderness towards them. He was thinking of them in their weakness when He said, "EVEN TO YOUR OLD AGE I AM HE; AND

EVEN TO HOAR HAIRS WILL I CARRY YOU."¹² As a loving mother carries her tired child, so does our God graciously carry us over the rough places of life. Nor does he ever set us down. Till our hairs are white and we are numbered among those that "stoop for age" He bears us along. Like the shepherd of the parable, He carries us all the way till He brings us HOME.¹³

In David's old age psalm,¹⁴ David's Experience, he twice prays that God will not forsake him. First he says, "Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth." And again, "Now also, when I am old and grey-headed, O God, forsake me not."

Was it likely that God would forsake His aged and way-worn servant? Would not the God of his youth be also the God of his declining years?

David's own experience might be called on to supply the answer. From his earliest days he had been "holden up" by the power of God.¹⁵ When in the full vigour of youth, though "great and sore troubles" fell to his lot,¹⁶ he had been marvellously helped. Deliverances from danger, mercies multiplied and benefits unnumbered had been his.

But one thing he had never seen. He tells us what it is: "I have been young, and now am old, YET HAVE I NOT SEEN THE RIGHTEOUS FORSAKEN."¹⁷

Instead of forsaking His children in the evening of their lives God comforts them on every side,¹⁸ and so strengthens their faith and ministers to their souls that they are "a wonder unto many."¹⁹ He Himself is their "strong refuge."

No, God never deserts His saints. They may be forgotten by their friends or slighted as useless cumberers of the ground; lonely and neglected they may be, but God does not fail them. And their Saviour loves them TO THE END.²⁰

A Sad Old Age. If God's aged pilgrims "continually resort" to Himself as their "strong habitation"²¹ they will be maintained in spiritual freshness and joy. But old age in itself is no guarantee of this.

We have a mournful instance of what I mean in the story of Uzziah.²² He was one of the greatest and best of Judah's kings. He sought the God of his fathers, and walked in His ways. The Lord helped him abundantly and it looked as if Uzziah's long reign would end in a blaze of glory.

But at sixty-eight he fell. Finding himself strong, "his heart was lifted up," and *he thought that he could do without the priest.*

A fearful mistake indeed, and attended with terrible consequences. But let us take heed lest we fall into the same snare. A long life spent in the fear of God may close under the shadow of a great shame if we imagine that it enables us to dispense for a moment with the services of our great High Priest.

He it is who lives to save us to the uttermost,²³ through every trial. Through Him we "obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."²⁴ We cannot do without Him. Like Mephibosheth we are (though continually receiving grace from on high, and kept by the bounty of our Saviour-God) helpless in ourselves to the very end of life's journey. If we forget this, disastrous will be the result.

Living in the Past. One notices sometimes a tendency on the part of our aged brethren and sisters to unduly magnify the past at the expense of the present. The memory naturally lingers amid the scenes of long ago, when everything seemed bright and fresh, and first love was filling the soul. Perhaps things *were* brighter then. There may have been more widespread interest in the things of God. People assembled in greater numbers to hear

the gospel. Since then, the zeal of many seems to have waxed cold.

But the things that warmed our hearts in those never-to-be-forgotten days remain. The grace of God never fails. The unchanging love of Christ is still ours to enjoy. We have the abiding presence of the Holy Ghost with us. Prayer is a privilege that belongs to us as much as to our fathers, and "the comfort of the Scriptures" is as great as ever it was. Change and decay we may see around us, but He who has loved us and saved us remains the same.

The Old Men's Tears. We have an example of what I mean in what took place when the foundation of the second Temple was laid. Among the many who shouted in the greatness of their joy, there were certain "ancient men" who "wept with a loud voice."²⁵ They remembered the glories of the former house, and this one was in their eyes as nothing in comparison with it.²⁶

Yet it was the fruit of a distinct work of God. We read how God had visited His people in their bondage and given them a little reviving.²⁷ True, it was a little one, and comparatively few were affected by it. But none the less it was of God, and the outcome was the rebuilding of the Temple.

Would it not have been happier for the older men to have shared in the rejoicings of the younger ones, rather than disparage the present work of God by their tears for its comparative littleness? And is it not better that the older ones of to-day should encourage their younger brethren to addict themselves to the service of the Lord and help them by their prayers, rather than dishearten them by continually bemoaning the past and belittling the present?

Filled with the Holy Ghost. Zacharias and his wife were both "well stricken in years." They had lived blamelessly before the Lord, walking in His fear. But there was nothing very remarkable about them.

Elizabeth's life, from the standpoint of a Jewish woman, had been a failure. Zacharias, though a man of prayer, could hardly be called a man of great faith.

In their old age a wonderful thing happened. They were both filled with the Holy Ghost.

First, Elizabeth was filled.²⁸ Immediately her lips were opened, and in an outburst of joy she spoke of the great One about to be born as "my Lord." Her heart now found its object in Him.

It was some weeks after this, it seems, that Zacharias was filled.²⁹ The result was with him that he gave utterance to a song of praise that celebrated the expected advent of Christ into the world.

This is how it always is. Those who are filled with the Holy Ghost do not speak of themselves, their own experience, or their work. Their eyes are upon Christ, their hearts are strongly drawn out in affection to Him, and their lips utter His goodness. They testify of their Saviour, not of themselves.

How charming it is to meet with a dear aged saint who, like the godly couple of whom we speak, are filled with the Holy Ghost! Even if his or her life has been of a very ordinary kind, what we might call a low level life, it is not too late to seek this wonderful filling; not too late to give heed to the word, "*Be filled with the Spirit.*"³⁰

It may be that among the **A Warning.** aged readers of these pages there is one still unsaved. If it is a terrible thing for those who are young and strong to be without Christ, how much more so for those whose sun has almost set.

"If a man live many years, and rejoice in them all; yet let him remember the days of darkness, for **THEY SHALL BE MANY.**"³¹ The longest life is but a passing shadow compared with the days that are to come, days that

have no end. And if *they* be days of darkness, of what avail will have been the rejoicings with which all the years of the present life have been filled?

To trust in the Saviour, to build our confidence upon the firm foundation of the work that He **FINISHED**, to rest in His faithful word concerning "all that believe,"³² is to ensure peace for the present and glory for the future. To take any other way than this is to consign oneself to those days of darkness that will be the endless portion of all who have refused the proffered salvation.

One word in conclusion. Alone, Yet Does the aged Christian feel not Alone. lonely? Are the loved ones of earlier years all gone? While you wait and watch for your Saviour to come, do you feel "as a sparrow alone upon the housetop"?³³

Take comfort then from the case of "Paul the aged," as he calls himself.³⁴ The friends of former days had left him.³⁵ In the hour of his need, no man stood with him, but all forsook him.³⁶ "Notwithstanding," he triumphantly exclaims, "the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me."³⁷ Happy man: alone, yet not alone.

Thus it will ever be. To the very end, God's aged pilgrims will prove the truth of His promise, "**I WILL NEVER LEAVE THEE NOR FORSAKE THEE.**"³⁸ Blessed be God for this.

Many passages have been referred to in the foregoing pages. The reader is urged to look them up. He will find the "comfort of the Scriptures" a very real thing. The following are the references:—

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| ¹ Genesis 47. 9. | ²⁹ John 13. 1. |
| ² Job 15. 10. | ³¹ Psalm 71. 3. |
| ³ 1 Timothy 5. 1, 2. | ³² 2 Chronicles 26. |
| ⁴ Psalm 92. 14. | ³³ Hebrews 7. 25. |
| ⁵ Numbers 4. 47. | ³⁴ Hebrews 4. 16. |
| ⁶ Psalm 92. 14. | ³⁵ Ezra 3. 12. |
| ⁷ 2 Samuel 19. 35. | ³⁶ Haggai 2. 3. |
| ⁸ 2 Samuel 17. 27-29. | ³⁷ Ezra 3. 8, 9. |
| ⁹ Acts 21. 18. | ³⁸ Luke 1. 41. |
| ¹⁰ John 13. 14. | ³⁹ Luke 1. 67. |
| ¹¹ Luke 2. 37. | ⁴⁰ Ephesians 5. 18. |
| ¹² Isaiah 46. 4. | ⁴¹ Ecclesiastes 11. 8. |
| ¹³ Luke 15. 3-6. | ⁴² Acts 13. 39. |
| ¹⁴ Psalm 71. | ⁴³ Psalm 102. 7. |
| ¹⁵ Psalm 71. 6. | ⁴⁴ Philemon, 9. |
| ¹⁶ Psalm 71. 20. | ⁴⁵ 2 Timothy 1. 15. |
| ¹⁷ Psalm 37. 25. | ⁴⁶ 2 Timothy 4. 16. |
| ¹⁸ Psalm 71. 21. | ⁴⁷ 2 Timothy 4. 17. |
| ¹⁹ Psalm 71. 7. | ⁴⁸ Hebrews 13. 6. |

Modern Blasphemies.

THE OBJECT OF THIS MAGAZINE is not to call attention to the many blasphemies that are current in these apostate days; but to keep before all who will read it, "Whatsoever things are true, honest, just, lovely, and of good report" (Phil. 4. 8). But many Christians are ignorant of how swiftly the current of anti-Christian teaching is running, and how terribly men are being deceived in the name of religion and even in the name of Christ, and how the war has contributed to this that we feel pressed to seek to enlighten them, and to stir them up to deeper exercise and more earnest energy in their defence and circulation of the truth.

A 16-page tract, entitled "Blood Brothers," has been sent to us by a Christian soldier in France. The writer of it is J. J. Callan, a chaplain of the Canadian army; it has been published by the S.P.C.K., at the request of Bishop Gwynne, who is, we believe, the Deputy Chaplain-General of the Forces. We read it with indignation, and have no hesitation in saying that the writer of the tract, the Bishop who urged its publication, and the Society that published it are preaching "another gospel," and so bring themselves under the twice repeated curse of Galatians 1. 8, 9. May God have mercy on them and bring them to repentance.

The story of this tract, which we suppose is true—it would be a relief to learn that it is entirely fictitious—is of a soldier boy, who, like tens of thousands of his kind, was attractive, generous, and courageous. He had received a terrible and mortal wound in attempting the rescue of some of his comrades when he might have saved himself. We have the greatest possible admiration for his devoted courage, and should have been greatly rejoiced if some faithful servant of Christ had been near him to tell him of the wonderful Saviour who laid down His life at Calvary as a sacrifice for sin, and to save sinners.

But instead of this the Canadian Chaplain seized his chance, and set to work to persuade the dying soldier that he was a most religious man, that he was in fact "like Jesus Christ," and that when Jesus saw what he had done He would say to Himself, "There is a chap something like Me, I must keep My eye on him." And God would say, "There's a chap willing to do what My Son did, nearly nineteen hundred years ago; he must be something like My Son; I must keep My eye upon him."

The lad at first stoutly refused to accept this strange teaching. He urged that he was not religious, that he could not be unless he were converted, and that "Jesus was so different."

But finally the lad's early teaching was overcome, and he was persuaded that he belonged to a "blood brotherhood"—"the brotherhood of saviours of the world," the chief of whom is Jesus.

And so the lad died, if the story be true, not with faith in the peace-giving message of an almighty Saviour who died for our sins and arose again, in his heart, but with the lie in his ears and the deception and darkness in his soul. But while he died, the one who deceived him lives, with thousands of his kind who will continue to preach their God-dishonouring, soul-destroying errors—blind leaders of the blind are they, and thousands will follow them to destruction, but the knowledge of this should make those who know and love the truth the more zealous and unflagging in their labours. Paul's last charge to his son Timothy comes ringing down to us; it is for us, and was never more needed than now.

"I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom; preach the Word" (2 Tim. 4. 1-5).

EDITOR.

Correspondence.

Is our Faith the Ground of our Peace or the Cause of our Blessing?

DEAR MR. EDITOR,—

In Mr. Boyd's valuable paper in April No. of *Scripture Truth* he makes one or two statements that seem to me to be open to question, any way in some cases.

He cites the case of one who believes the tidings of the death and resurrection of Christ (bottom of p. 94), but "who cannot believe himself to be a believer," and says, "This is only an attempt to justify himself," etc., and that, "what he has to learn is that Christ, not himself, is to be the object of his faith."

Now, I cannot see that the person in the state described is necessarily either trying to justify himself, or has himself as an object of faith.

If you were satisfied, in a given case, that a person really did believe the precious facts of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus *as feeling their importance for his own salvation* (not a mere mental assent as accrediting historical facts), would you not rather assure such a one, if you found he had doubts as to his faith, on the strength of such a passage as Acts 13. 38, 39, that he was justified from all things?

What Mr. Boyd says would discourage, rather than help such, it seems to me.

A. H. L.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—

I think that upon further consideration you will see that the statement you question is altogether right and of great importance. There are many who never enter into peace with God and the full assurance of salvation, because *they are looking within themselves for some cause why God should bless them*. They confess that by their works they have no claim upon Him, but think that their faith might give them this claim, and so the quality or quantity of their faith becomes the question that fills their minds rather than the free grace of God, the efficacy of the work of Christ and the infallibility of the Word of God.

They are really self-occupied, looking within for the cause of justification and the ground of it, instead of outside themselves to God and the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

Take a verse of Charlotte Eliot's beautiful hymn:

"Just as I am; Thou wilt receive,
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;
Because Thy promise I believe:
O Lamb of God, I come!"

The "because" of that verse is more often misplaced than not, and it is supposed that, because we believe and come He will welcome and pardon, etc.; but that is wrong, it is because in the gospel God proclaims the fact that He will welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve whosoever will come to Him through Christ, that we, emboldened by His Word, believe and come. A very great difference. The cause is on God's side and not on ours.

"Being justified FREELY by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3. 23), means this, for the word "freely" might be translated "without a cause"; indeed, it is so translated in John 15. 25. There was no more cause in us why God should justify us than there was in Jesus why men should hate Him. God has found the cause in Himself, it is entirely of His grace.

Of course it is on the principle of faith, and this excludes all boasting on our part, for faith is merely receiving what God is offering. If a man has been saved from drowning, he does not go about boasting in the fact that he allowed his rescuer to do it by trusting him. He makes his boast in the power and willingness of the one who rescued him, and by so doing confesses that he himself was helpless and lost. So faith means turning away from self-effort and self-righteousness as a means of justification before God to find it in another—even Jesus. And we learn the blessed fact that God is just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.

God's grace is the cause of it; the redemption which is in Christ Jesus is the righteous ground upon which He accomplishes it; our faith is simply submission to God's grace. It is what God is and does and says in and through Christ that draws out our faith and love. But all this was God offering to us before we believed it; it was not our faith that turned God towards us, but His grace that turned us towards Him.

No scripture could be better than Acts 13. 38, 39 for such a case as you mention, but the emphasis should not be laid upon the faith but upon "this Man" through whom the blessing comes and in whom it is enjoyed; then Christ and not our faith becomes our occupation, joy and confidence.

Yours affectionately in Christ,

THE EDITOR.

The Administration of the Ministry.

To the Editor of Scripture Truth.

VARIOUS thoughts have been expressed as to the interpretation of some verses in Ephesians 3. I only propose to consider two points, in the hope that others may either correct or confirm the thoughts expressed. Is there any present administration of the mystery? Is the "now" of verse 10 applicable during the present Christian period?

The general bearing of the passage seems clear. The grace of God (vers. 2, 7, 8) had bestowed a special administration (it is really the same word "oikonomia," in verses 2 and 9) on the apostle in connection both with the gospel and the church (see also 1 Cor. 9. 17 and Col. 1. 23, 25). The same double ministry is referred to in Romans 16. 25, and its scope on the evangelic side is described in verses 7 and 8 of Ephesians 3., and what a scope it is! To preach as glad tidings among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, riches perfectly adapted not only to meet the need of man, however great, but to lay a foundation on which all the purposes of God could be brought to pass.

But in verse 10 another subject is introduced, the assembly; and the apostle tells us it was his object to enlighten all with the knowledge of what is the administration of the mystery, that is as it has been well expressed, "not only the counsel of God but the accomplishment of that counsel in time, by bringing the assembly together under Christ its Head." That a special place of priority was given to Paul in this service is unquestionable, but if his object be as stated the bringing together the assembly under its Head, the very

same purpose is declared in Ephesians 4. to be the object of the ministry of the gifts which has in view the building up the body of Christ, more fully stated in verses 15, 16, as "growing up to Him in all things, who is the Head, the Christ, from whom, etc."

In any case, whether the ministry were by the apostle or by other gifts, the effect where it was received would be immense. Under the eye of heaven in place of diverse and opposing nations sunk in corruption and unbelief, there would grow up, under the eye of Heaven, a new company, to whom Christ was all things, and in every one of whom He had become power of life in order that in him might be displayed the moral virtues of the Head (Col. 3.). What grace and wisdom are here disclosed? And what a victory over the evil of our nature? And the power of Satan! According to the administration of the mystery instead of one Christ in one locality, He, wherever the truth had reached, would have many representatives enjoying the power of union with Him in heaven, and setting forth His excellency on earth. Thus the triumph of divine wisdom would come into evidence and the heavenly hierarchies find a new lesson book in the order of the assembly. Wonderful it is, too, to notice that it was in order that there might be a scene for this display that God created all things (ver. 9), plainly indicating the importance and value He attached to it.

But we have been briefly and feebly seeking to set forth that which ought to be. Alas, if we look at that which is, we have to admit a sorrowful difference and contrast. As a witness in this world the church has become evidence of the power

and subtilty of Satan, though regarded from another point of view "the body" is still here invincible in the life of its Head, against that life no forces of evil can prevail, so that even in the presence of corporate breakdown, there is grace and power available in Christ for the individual so to live that in his body, whether by life or death, He should be magnified. Such was the earnest expectation and hope of the great apostle himself, while at the same time he was constrained to testify of others that he had no man like-minded, all were seeking their own, not the things of Jesus Christ (see Phil. 1. and 2.).

On the other hand, with regard to the

future, we are told in the last verses of Ephesians 3. of a power working in us adequate to secure the glory of God IN THE CHURCH IN CHRIST JESUS unto all generations for ever and ever. But this blessed consummation in no way affects present privilege and responsibility as set forth in verses 9, 10, and emphasized by the little word "NOW," according to which such a testimony should be rendered, in the unity of the body, that the wisdom of God might be learned by those heavenly beings who can intelligently enter into the carrying out of His plans.

Your affectionate brother in Christ,

C. E. H. WARREN.

Answers to Correspondents.

The Sufferings of Christ upon the Cross for our Sins.

QUESTION.—If we had only the New Testament, and not the Old, to what scriptures would you go for the doctrine that the judgment our sins deserved was borne by Jesus; and, in what did that judgment consist?

There seems to be a certain reserve in Scripture in applying the term "judgment" to the atoning sufferings of our Saviour, perhaps to teach us that what is man's righteous due at the hands of God, had no claim on Him personally; but that the doctrine referred to in the question can be proved from the New Testament is clear from the following considerations.

In Matthew 27. 46, and in Mark 15. 34, the Lord at the ninth hour immediately before yielding up His life makes use of the first words of Psalm 22: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" If we had only the words of the Psalm there would be no certainty as to their application or fulfilment, but the fact that they were uttered by the Saviour at that solemn moment enables us to understand the import of those hours which stand so absolutely alone. Many attempts have been made to prove that this forsaking was not penal; even the great Martin Luther fell into this snare; and such statements, reckless if not impious, are made that the faith of Christ failed at the last moment, or that He thought Himself forsaken, when

really it was not so. A more modern theory characteristic of the levity of our times is that the verse of a Psalm came into the Lord's mind and He uttered it without any thought of application to Himself. Other scriptures will help us to interpret this scene more truly: "Him who knew no sin He made to be sin on our behalf" (2 Cor. 5. 21). "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body upon the tree" (1 Peter 2. 24). And in chapter 3. 18 of the same epistle "Christ also suffered for our sins." Hebrews 9. 28 is to the same effect. These scriptures make it plain that our precious Saviour was identified with sin upon the cross, that there the sins of His people were borne by Him and that as a consequence He was forsaken by God. This forsaking, not without the sacrificial death of the Holy Victim, is God's judgment of sin.

C. E. H. WARREN.

The answer to the question, "Can it be proved from the New Testament alone that the Lord bore judgment directly at the hands of God for sins?" is most decidedly *yes*; though it would be a fatal mistake to leave out the Old Testa-

ment in the examination of the subject of the sufferings of Christ. But what do we read in the New Testament ?

"It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment" (Heb. 9. 27), and that judgment results in eternal banishment from the presence of God in everlasting fire. Then again we read : "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness" (Rom. 1. 18). And again : "How shall ye escape the damnation of hell?" (Gehenna) (Matt. 23. 33).

Now all this our sins deserve, and God is no respecter of persons, for His judgment is against them that commit such things (Rom. 2.), and the "death," of which such are "worthy" (Rom. 1. 32), does not end with the death of the body, but goes on to eternity (chap. 2. 16). Our sins involve eternal consequences.

Now the love of God has come to light in this, that He sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins (1 John 4. 10). He "bore our sins in His own body on the tree," suffered for them (1 Peter 4: 24; 3. 18), died for them (1 Cor. 15.). Whatever those sins merited He endured. God was compelled to justify in the sight of the universe His gracious ways toward the sinful sons of men. The cancelling of our sins was no arbitrary act on the part of God. On the cross our Saviour made purgation for them (Heb. 1. 3), gave Himself to bear the judgment due to them, glorified God in the furnace of His affliction; and when He had borne all that our sins deserved, as far as wrath and forsaking were concerned, He said : "It is finished," and dismissed His spirit.

When the Word tells us that He died for our sins, we must not suppose that only the act of dismissing His spirit is contemplated. There are two parts in the death of the wicked. There is the separation of body and spirit, and there is the eternal separation of man from God. This is the second death. All this, or its equivalent, was suffered by our Lord

when He hung on the cross. The cup given Him of the Father took in all that sin and our sins deserved. When we are told He was *made sin* (2 Cor. 5. 21), what is meant but that in His cross God gave expression to His holy abhorrence and righteous judgment of that hateful thing? And where we are told that He bore our sins in His own body on the tree, what else is meant than that all that our sins deserved was borne by Him? And when the Word says, "Our old man is crucified with Him" (Rom. 6. 6), what do we understand by the statement other than that, not only the sins have been made an end of judicially, but that the man that committed the sins also is judicially ended?

"By His stripes ye were healed" (1 Peter 2. 24). Is this only the giving up of His spirit? What stripes were by this inflicted? The surrender of His spirit to the Father was His own act (John 10. 18). The reference is clearly to Isaiah 53. 5. The sufferings on the cross are looked at as one in Scripture, and therefore we have His dying for our sins as though it were the mere act of giving up the ghost. But when taught of the Holy Spirit we see that all that caused the agony in the garden took place before this.

We are said to be washed from our sins by His blood, and the blood of Jesus Christ is said to cleanse us from all sin (Rev. 1. 5; 1 John 1. 7). But it was after He had died the soldier pierced His side with a spear, and which caused blood and water to flow forth. All the work wrought for us on the cross is summed up in the one statement : "He *died* for our sins." But Paul says of Him : "Who loved me, and gave Himself for me." What Paul deserved from the hand of divine justice fell upon Christ. But the Spirit alone can give us understanding regarding this holy subject. I think, however, that the scriptures I have exhibited justify the statement that the suffering of Christ for our sins is clearly set forth in the New Testament. Indeed, in the act of death there was no suffering at all.

J. BOYD.

The Love of the Brethren. No. 2.

Their Relationships and Responsibilities.

WE have partly anticipated our subject in examining what the Word of God tells us as to who are the brethren. It is necessary, however, to understand the relationships which are ours as "brethren in Christ," otherwise we shall fail to carry out the responsibilities connected with those relationships; or, like many, nowadays, waste our precious time and energies in religious works which "brethren in Christ" are not instructed in Scripture to be engaged in at all. Through this, like Israel of old, who lost their blessing before Jehovah, many lose the *enjoyment* of that which is theirs in Christ, and consequently cease to respond practically to the grace and love of God.

It is therefore important to be rightly established in the truth which is made known concerning our relationships, then the response in carrying them out will not be found irksome, as abundance of grace and power are divinely supplied for this, and the will of God is found to be "good and acceptable and perfect" (Rom. 12. 2), as the Word says.

First, then, they stand in special relation to God as *the subjects of His saving grace*. That grace has righteously cleared them from the judgment which was their due in their former condition, and justified them freely through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. The love of God is shed abroad in their hearts by the Spirit, and He gives to them the sense of the new relationship which is theirs as the sons of God, "a spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." We do not now speak of natural relationships, which, indeed, are to be recognized and beautified in divine grace; nor of our place under

government, where we are to be subject to the authorities (Rom. 13. 1); but those which are ours in redemption—which belong to "brethren in Christ."

The same grace which has saved, and brought into adoption, has also given to the brethren the nearness and dignity of *priests to God*. They have access to Him now as priests, and their offerings are of a spiritual character, and acceptable to Him who is righteous and holy by Jesus Christ. They are loved by Him, washed from their sins in His blood, and made priests to His God and Father (1 Peter 2, 5, and Rev. 1. 5, 6).

We have spoken of the adoption which is theirs; but they are also begotten of God, and are consequently *His children*. It is said, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God." In this precious relationship God is known as Father, and the love of that relationship is theirs to appreciate. Paul speaks mostly of our judicial adoption as "*sons*"; John, of our being begotten as "*children*." It is in John 20. 17 where their new and wonderful relationship is declared by the risen Son of God, that they stand in it as He Himself does, for he said, "*My Father and your Father, My God and your God*." This was said in a message to those He graciously named, "*My brethren*." Elsewhere we read that God has given the Spirit of His Son into their hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Mark, that involves the Spirit of this relationship, as well as the relationship itself. How blessed this is.

The relationships we have spoken of are to God, and there are those also in which brethren stand as to Christ; the holy Spirit being the power of them. Moreover, they all involve relationships with one another. Even the individual blessings have what is collective in

view. It is so with the subjects of saving grace; with those who approach as priests; and with the family of God's children; and when we speak of the "ONE BODY IN CHRIST," the exercise of their different "offices" in that body can only be rightly carried out with reference to others. "For, as in one body we have many members, but all the members have not the same office; thus we, being many, are one body in Christ, and each one members one of the other." The relationship in view here is not quite the same as that of the body of which Christ is Head. This is "in Christ"; and the members have offices and gifts which they receive through divine grace—"the grace given."

There is then the further relationship of being MEMBERS OF CHRIST'S BODY, the assembly, of which He is the Head. This is more intimate, and involves not simply union, but unity. The members are one with Christ. The members are united to their glorious Head, as well as to one another. When, as Man, He was exalted above all, the Spirit came down from Him, and took up His abode in those who belonged to Christ, baptising them into one body, and livingly uniting them to their exalted Head in heaven. All who have heard and believed the gospel since, have been brought into that vital body. The relationship begun then exists now, however little it may be understood. What joy the heart experiences when it sings in truth—

*"Lord Jesus! are we one with Thee?
O height! O depth of love?
And crucified and dead with Thee,
Now one in heaven above.
Ascended high, in glory bright,
Life-giving Head Thou art;
Nor life, nor death, nor depth, nor height,
Thy saints and Thee can part."*

The grace of God having justified them, and a spirit of adoption being given, so that the brethren in Christ are not only freed from judgment but brought into a place of favour with

God, the responsibility to respond to such grace—shown to them through our Lord Jesus Christ, through His death and resurrection—becomes a matter of true liberty. Having got their freedom from sin, now, by serving God, fruit appears unto holiness, and the end eternal life (Rom. 6. 22). The Spirit, too, being given to them; as they walk not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit, the righteous requirement of the law is fulfilled in them, though they are "not under law, but under grace."

And what is to be expected from those who are made "*priests to God*"?—from those who are favoured with access to Himself in virtue of the work of Christ? Surely it is that they approach to God, and by Him offer up their spiritual sacrifices. The exercise of this office is not to be neglected. Sad results followed in the nation of Israel when the sacrifices to God failed. The sacrifice of praise should arise to Him in full measure; and this will be the case as we first receive from Him; for it is of His own that is given back to Him in thanksgiving, and praise, and worship. What a magnificent spiritual offering that is in Revelation 1. 5, 6: "Unto Him who loves us, and has washed us from our sins in His blood, and made us a kingdom, priests to His God and Father: to Him be the glory and the might to the ages of ages. Amen."

When we think of the brethren as *the children of God*, what responsibility is to flow from such a relationship? What response is there to be to the love shown in giving us that relationship?—to the love which was expressed in the sending of the Son to put away our sins, and to bring us into the life of our new relationship? Let the Word of God answer: "Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another." It seems remarkable to speak of love as an obligation. Yet it is so; indeed, it is commanded; but not as though it

was a grievous burden put upon the brethren, for such "love because He first loved" them; and "everyone that loves has been begotten of God, and knows God." Moreover, it is distinctly stated to such, "His commandments are not grievous." Brethren in Christ are never told to love God, though they are exhorted to keep themselves in His love to Him; but they are told to love one another, and this is intimately connected with love to God, as we read: "Everyone that loves Him that has begotten loves him also that is begotten of Him." In this case their responsibility is to do that which their nature as God's children delights to do.

Special service is in view in connection with *the one body in Christ*. It is moreover individual, for the members have different gifts; "all the members have not the same office," we are told. One has grace granted to him for teaching, another for exhorting, another for leading. This being recognized the members would be preserved from letting all the service fall into the hands of one brother. One may have grace given to him of God for giving—he is to do it in simplicity; another for showing mercy—he is to do so with cheerfulness. Love is to mark all, and to be unfeigned. Evil is to be abhorred, and good is to be cleaved to. All is to be carried out in relation to Christ, and to one another; for, though the service is individual, yet we are reminded, "we are each one members one of the other." This would preserve from magnifying the service of one to the detriment of that of another, and keep us all serving with the divine objective in view. Just as the Levites served as a body in relation to the tabernacle, where the presence of the Lord was known, and where He was approached. One Levite might carry a rope, or a peg; but he was as necessary as another who was fitted to carry a larger burden. Each fulfilled the divinely appointed office. That was enough, and it is all God asks. Brotherly love, kindly affection, showing honour,

diligent zealousness, and fervency of spirit, are to mark them in thus "serving the Lord" (Rom. 12. 10, 11). Rejoicing in hope, enduring in tribulation, persevering in prayer, distributing to the necessities of the saints, showing hospitality, blessing, and not cursing are to be manifested by the members.

Then as *the members of Christ's body*, the assembly, of which He is the Head, it is expected of them that they respond to the grace and dignity bestowed upon them; first by avoiding all other sources of teaching, and second by "holding fast the Head, from whom all the body, ministered to and united together by the joints and bands, increases with the increase of God." The gifts were given in view of the edifying of this body; but in speaking of the brethren, the members themselves are before us; and they are to see to it that they hold fast the Head, the Christ, and grow up to Him in all things; also that they fill the place and fulfil the function which are theirs; for according to the working in its measure of each one part, it "works for itself the increase of the body to its self-building up in love" (Eph. 4. 16, N.T.).

Those who own Him as Lord, and stand thus in relation to Him, are responsible to depart from what is not consistent with this. "Let everyone who names the Name of the LORD withdraw from iniquity" (2 Tim. 2. 19, N.T.). Then they are to follow with others, who call on the Lord out of a pure heart, that which is pleasing in His sight. It seems almost inconceivable that anyone can truly know what the love of Christ really means, and what it has done for them, without desiring in every possible way to be agreeable to Him. As those therefore who are so richly blessed through and in Christ Jesus our Lord, may we, as brethren,

*"Go forth and serve Him while 'tis day,
Nor leave our sweet retreat."*

The Song of Songs. Canticle IV.

The Restoration of Love—continued.

The Bride.

Ch. 6. 2. My beloved is gone down into his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens and to gather lilies.

The Bride has dwelt with rapture on the perfections of the Bridegroom, and occupation with Him has so quickened her intelligence that she can at once tell whither the Beloved is gone. She had sought him in the city but he was not there. "My Beloved," she says, "is gone down into his garden," a fragrant spot where he can feed and gather lilies. There are none that minister to the heart of Christ in this world but "His own which are in the world." With them is all His delight. There only He finds the bed of spices. The garden of the Lord is composed of His loved ones, and the restored soul knows full well that Christ can be found with His people. It was thus with the two disciples of Emmaus. When restored they rose up the same hour and returned to Jerusalem (Luke 24.).

The Bridegroom.

4. Thou art fair, my love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, terrible as troops with banners.

Step by step the Bride is led on until she finds herself in the presence of the Bridegroom, and at last hears his voice. The first words that fall on her astonished ears are, "Thou art fair, my love." What more touching to the heart that has wandered and grown cold than to be drawn again into His presence; there to realize, in all its sweetness, that, in spite of all its wanderings, it can still say, "I am His and He is mine," and to hear those words pregnant with grace to a restored soul, "Thou art fair, my love." Just when the heart is ready to reproach itself with having wandered from such a Saviour, at the very moment when the restored soul is so sensible of its own

unworthiness, how sweet to hear Him say, "Thou art fair, my love." When my heart may well feel how truly I have merited a word of reproach, how touching to be greeted with a word of appreciation. Do we not recall a scene like this on the Lord's resurrection day. His own were gathered behind closed doors and "Jesus Himself stood in the midst." Some of them had slept in the hour of His agony, all of them had forsaken Him in the presence of His enemies and fled from Him in the day of battle. We may well ask, therefore, will He be against them in this the day of His victory? Ah no! the first words He utters are "Peace unto you."

The Bridegroom continues to express the attraction he finds in the one who had cost him so much. Earth's fairest cities, and the world's bravest display are pressed into service to figure the beauty of the Bride.

5-7. Turn away thine eyes from me, for they overcome me. Thy hair is as a flock of goats on the slopes of Oilead. Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep which go up from the washing; which have all borne twins, and none is barren among them. As a piece of pomegranate are thy temples behind thy veil.

In spite of her wanderings the thoughts of the Bridegroom towards his Bride have not changed. *The same figures are used to describe her perfections as in a former canticle (4. 1-3).* She is thus assured there is no change in his heart.

8, 9. There are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number: my dove, mine undefiled, is but one; she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bore her. The daughters saw her, and they called her blessed; the queens and the concubines, and they praised her.

Here the Bridegroom no longer speaks to the Bride, though he speaks about her. He is not content to assure the heart of the Bride of his unchanging love and appreciation, but he goes further; he will vindicate her before others. All the world shall know that

he has loved her, and that she has a unique place in his affections. There may be other queens and other wives, but his Bride holds a supreme place in his affections. None can compare with her, and by unfolding before others all that she is to him, he secures the praise of the world for his Bride. Thus will it be with restored Israel among the nations in a day to come. And thus will it be when at last the wanderings of the church are over, according to those touching words of the Lord, "I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee." And is it otherwise with a restored soul? Not only is failing Peter restored in secret to communion with the Lord, but he is publicly owned and honoured in the service of the Lord.

The Daughters of Jerusalem.

10. Who is she that looketh forth as the dawn, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, terrible as troops with banners?

The Bridegroom has said that the daughters should bless the Bride and the queens should praise her, and now they unite to celebrate her glories. The Bridegroom had used the fairest cities of earth to set forth her beauty, and now the daughters of Jerusalem use the most glorious objects in the heavens to express their praise of the restored Bride. All trace of failure and wandering days are passed, and she comes forth fresh as the morning, pure as the light of the moon, and glorious as the sun.

The Bridegroom.

21. I went down into the garden of nuts, to see the fruits of the valley, and to see whether the pomegranates blossomed.

The canticle closes with the Bridegroom's satisfaction as he sees of the fruit of the travail of his soul. Our Beloved has been into the valley of death to secure His Bride. We too, like the Bride of the Song, have been in our wilderness journey, into the valley of humiliation, but at last Christ will gather "the fruits of the valley." He will take His place in His garden, in the midst of His own, and find fruit sweet to His taste. Time was when He came into the midst of His earthly people seeking fruit but finding none. When He comes seeking fruit in the day of His glory, will He find fruit? Will the vines bud and the pomegranates blossom? The answer immediately comes:—

12. Before I was aware, my soul set me upon the chariots of my willing people.

His willing people at once yield to Him the place of victory and glory. They set Him upon the chariots. They can say in the language of the Psalm, "In thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness." Time was when the Bride repelled the Bridegroom, but now He is received with acclaim. He may indeed work so wondrously that His people will receive the praise of all the world but, after all, it is He who is the victor. He is the One that is exalted to the chariots of His willing people. Restored Israel will say "He hath done this" (Ps. 22. 31). The glorified church will cast their crowns before Him, saying, "Thou art worthy, O Lord." All the redeemed, whether earthly or heavenly, will at last unite to exalt the Lord. In different times and in different ways the Lord will be set upon the chariots of His willing people.

HAMILTON SMITH

Silent unto God.

WHEN one realizes the great fact that the Lord God Almighty delights to have us ask Him for things which will bring glory to Him and blessing to those on earth; that we may now address Him as Father; and that

He does answer the prayer that is offered in the Name of Jesus; prayer becomes a joy, a precious delight. One looks forward to the time of prayer, and rejoices in knowing that much is being done by God because His little child has

asked Him. That is well. But sometimes the energy of the flesh creeps in, and while activity in prayer increases, the time of waiting decreases. One is too occupied with one's own desires to be silent before the Lord, and thus much deep blessing is lost.

"My soul is silent unto God; from Him cometh my salvation. He only is my Rock and my salvation. . . . My soul, be thou silent unto God, for my expectation is from Him" (Ps. 62. 1-5). Such is the silence when the heart can find no words to tell forth the depths of longing, of need, and of confidence, and bows before the Lord, till His presence becomes so real that the heart cries out

"Thou art near, O Lord!"

and with the overwhelming consciousness of His glory comes the silence of adoration, a silence filled with worship. "Praise is silent unto Thee, O God, in Zion" (Ps. 65. 1, margin).

Deeper still is the silence of His love, when the soul is drawn up into the glory by the revelation of His love, and He too is silent—giving no new messages perhaps, but resting in the full joy of perfect fellowship. "He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will be silent in His love" (Zeph. 3. 17).

SILENT BEFORE GOD.

The prophet Habakkuk beheld the turmoil and violence of the world, and above all their rabble and rioting, their sordid sins and foul shames, he suddenly got a vision of the mighty Jehovah in the vast glory of His sanctuary, and the calmness of eternity and holiness swept down upon his soul. . . .

"The Lord is in His holy temple: be silent before Him, all the earth!" (Hab. 2.).

Yet the earth refuses to be hushed by the awful majesty of the One Who dwelleth between the cherubim. The tumultuous ravings of the nations drown the gentler sounds of grace. The hurried life with its cares and questions finds no time to pause and listen to

heaven's song. But God must be heard. And the dread time is coming when fear will lay its ghastly hand upon the mouths of men, and they will be dumb, while heaven's very harps are soundless. Then through that great silence will come the Voice of God that shaketh the wilderness, yea, and breaketh the mighty cedars of the forest.

"Be silent, all flesh, before Jehovah; for He is raised up out of His holy habitation." "Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord God; for the day of the Lord is at hand" (Rev. 8. 1; Zech. 2. 13).

The silence of awe hushes the anthems of heaven, while the angels watch events upon earth at the return of our Lord in terrible wrath; and the silence of guilt stops the mouths of the wicked (Rom. 3. 19; Matt. 22. 12). In that great and final judgment day the refuges are swept away by the unveiled glory of the Face of God, and the dead, small and great, stand before God. There are no rocks and mountains to hide them, and in their nakedness they stand in the full glare of Justice on the throne, silent. They have no plea, for they rejected the Only Plea, when He was offered to them during their life on earth. And now they are dumb, while from the inexorable records of truth are read out their life-story of sin and folly. They have no answer, should the Judge in pronouncing sentence ask them if they have aught to say for themselves. As one reads the last part of Revelation 20. one is deeply impressed with the utter silence of the universe, as those books filled with incriminating evidence are read. "They are without excuse," silent before God.

Then, when the judgment scene has passed, we lift our eyes yonder to the glory that excelleth, and behold in the unfathomable ages of the future the ransomed throng varying the heavenly raptures with bursts of re-echoing song, or times of holy silent joy and love and praise beyond all finite thought in its soundless depths. Silent unto God.

God, our Refuge and Strength.

Read Psalm 46.

NEVER was there a time in the history of the world when Christians needed more to have a true knowledge of God, of His love, His power, His purposes, His ways than the present time.

Like a well-cut cameo Psalm 46 stands in an arresting way in this connection.

It is widely known as Luther's psalm, not that Luther wrote it, but that he profited by it in no ordinary measure. In dark days when difficulties and dangers beset the intrepid reformer's steps he would turn to his great friend and brother in Christ, Melancthon, and say, "Let us chant the forty-sixth Psalm, Philip"; and in this exercise his heart would be strengthened in faith and confidence in God.

Let us look first at the interpretation of this wonderful psalm. It has in view the sufferings and deliverance of the remnant of Israel in the great tribulation. It is divided into three sections, the close of each marked by the word *Selah*.

The first section, verses 1 to 3 inclusive, gives us (1) the confidence of the **JEWISH ELECT** during the great tribulation; (2) their terrible circumstances in that time.

The second section, verses 4 to 7 inclusive, gives us (1) the millennium of rest the godly remnant will enter into; (2) the affirmation of God's help; (3) the power of the enemy described; (4) the vigour and completeness of Christ's intervention on behalf of His people; (5) the confidence that the contemplation of all this gives to the heart.

The third section, verses 8 to 11 inclusive, gives us (1) the nature of Christ's intervention from the enemy's point of view; (2) its true meaning and result from the divine side; (3) an

exhortation and an affirmation as to God and His purposes; (4) the confidence that the contemplation of all this gives to the heart.

The Psalm begins well. The word **GOD** is the first articulate syllable that breaks the silence. No wonder that with such a start we should immediately find such words as "our Refuge and Strength, a very present help in trouble"—a strong Tower to run to for safety, an unlimited power to still the heart in the face of fearful perils, and that just when needed, "a very *present* help in trouble."

"Therefore." Happy deduction! Splendid reasoning! **GOD! GOD!!** **GOD** is superior—*infinitely* superior—to every possible hostile circumstance or combination of circumstances.

Could there be a more graphic description of the horrors of the great tribulation than is compressed in verses 2 and 3? What a divinely inspired pen-and-ink sketch! The mountains carried into the midst of the sea—everything that is solid and stable engulfed and carried away by the wild uncontrolled will of man, energized by Satan and governed by lawlessness and hatred of God and His interests.

The late great war and its aftermath has furnished us with illustrations of the state of things that must be engendered by war waged on the colossal scale that Scripture prophesies for the last time.

Yet amid such scenes the quiet confidence of His people will be in God.

But behind all this will be the great hand of God, using the tribulation to bring repentance and restoration to His sorely afflicted people, and carrying them into the rest that remains for the people of God.

So we turn from the terrific upheaval of things, from the mountains being flung into the midst of the sea, from the tottering of all that is stable and steadfast, and its being swallowed up by the raging of the nations; from the roar and swelling of the angry sea; we turn from that tempestuous scene, and passing the "Selah" of verse 3 we find ourselves in a very different scene—in the presence of a river, that is water flowing peacefully between its ordered banks, fertilizing, beautifying, blessing the land through which it flows. The roar of the tempest has ceased, the battling with the elements is over, and we are now beside "waters of quietness" (see Psalm 23. 2, *marginal reading*).

We are left in no doubt as to what is meant by the river. It is connected with the city of God, Jerusalem, and with the sanctuary, the temple. (Ezekiel 47. 1-12; Zechariah 14. 8; Joel 3. 18.)

It will be an actual river with actual streams, with a symbolical meaning. It will be the outward and visible sign that the glory of the Lord has returned to the temple, and that from the presence of the Lord will flow forth blessing, not only to the land of His choice, and the people of His land, but east and west to the whole world. What a day will that be!

Verse 5 is the promise that will greatly comfort the godly remnant in the hour of their sore trial, and prepare them for the deliverance God will effect.

Verse 6 gives us in seven graphic words the whole power of the enemy in those days: "The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved"; and in a similarly powerful and graphic seven words we get the Lord's intervention and its immediate result: "He uttered His voice, the earth melted."

Verse 8 gives us the result of that intervention from man's standpoint. The coming of Christ at the end of the great tribulation will be the signal for

the most awful happenings. Seismic occurrences of the most terrible character will take place. Cities will be levelled to the ground. If terrible happenings will have transpired this will be still more terrible.

Yes; but we know the end. It is the terrible knock-out blow that is to end the fight. It is the war to end wars. It is the war that alone can justly bring peace. Men may dream that the late terrible war is to end war, that never again will men be so foolish as during 1914-1918, that the League of Nations is to bring in the millennium, but the nations are simply building a pretty building of ideas upon a seething volcano of unrest and lawlessness.

No; there can be no millennium *without Christ*; there can be no peace save as founded on righteousness.

But the day is coming when the last terrible single stroke of Christ's arm will bring in desolation on man's aims and plans—man's as energized by Satan—but it will break the bow, and cut the spear in sunder and burn the chariot in the fire.

No wonder we hear the voice of God,

"Be still and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth."

Every question is settled:—

"The Lord of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge."

There is nothing more to be said. In the individual life of Jacob, the enlightened will be able to trace a typical likeness to the history of the Jewish nation as a whole, and the God who could be the God of a crooked stick like Jacob can and will be the Refuge of His erring but then repentant people.

And surely what can happen in such unparalleled circumstances to a whole people can happen to an individual in his little circumstances. The God who is sufficient for the whole universe can care for a sparrow, and the God of Psalm 46. is enough for you and for me.

The New Jerusalem—continued.

A Bible Study on Revelation 21. 9 to 22. 5.

The Street of the City.

J. N. D. The street of the city is of pure gold, as it were transparent glass; no defilement is any longer possible. Jesus will no more have to wash our feet in order that we may enter into the presence of God for our worship. In the glory we shall be standing on purity. The more we walk there, the more we shall get into purity, without having the need of conscience to be on our guard. This is a great rest to him who loves holiness.

Q. Does gold here, as elsewhere, stand for divine righteousness?

J. N. D. Righteousness is the very walking place of the saints there. Instead of its defiling us, as the world does now, the very place on which they walk will be the righteousness of God. "Transparent glass" denotes true holiness.

F. G. P. If the heart does not "watch and pray" now, how the soil is contracted, and the heart defiled! The heart rests in the thought of a scene where it may let itself go. There Christ alone will fill the soul. There the very street we shall walk on suits the nature of God. There we may ungird our loins, for all only reflects His glory.

W. S. The golden and transparent street of the city tells us that the walks of the wilderness are over. The sand of the desert exchanged for the golden street. No more defilement; no more feet-washing. We shall walk on that which cannot possibly defile or be defiled.

22. "And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it."

J. A. T. All that marked the distance of Israel's relationships is unknown. The millennial Jerusalem on earth will have its temple, but not so

the heavenly city. The whole city will be a sanctuary. The unveiled presence of God is there, where we have been brought even now by faith.

R. I doubt if there ever was a city without a temple, but the heavenly city has no temple, because the city itself is really the church, and is composed entirely of living stones; profession has no place. Where God dwells and is approached without a veil, a temple would be out of place.

W. S. There will be no "holy" and "most holy"; no curtains and veils; no temple confirming the glory of God to a favoured few. All shall see Him alike. The feeblest believer shall see Jesus equally with Paul. God and the Lamb make themselves known equally to all in the city of gold.

J. N. D. There is nothing that contains and hides the glory of God. God is the temple. He receives and encloses His people. We shall be shut up in God. He is the intimate centre of everything, as also the circumference of our happiness.

W. K. This also is a truth applicable now (Heb. 10.). We stand, as to our faith, in the immediate presence of God, with His perfect favour shining on us.

F. G. P. It is humbling to discover how little concentration of heart there is with us now for worship. Worship is the character of the place to which we are are going; there it goes on for ever.

Q. In John 4. we find worship connected with the name of Father. Why, instead of this, do we have "Lord God Almighty" in this verse?

J. N. D. It is the revealed dispensational Ruler, the true God, and the Lamb who has made good His glory. When the glory comes, there will be the full perfection of everything; the Lord God Almighty as concerns the glory, and the

Lamb as having brought us into security through His sufferings, are united.

23. "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."

J. A. T. The Lamb is the light (or lamp). It is the light that has made all so bright for our hearts already. It is the glory of God in the face of Jesus.

W. K. The Lamb is not merely the light, but the vessel of it, or light-bearer. We may consider the light diffused, as it is said, "the glory of God did lighten it"; but if we want to see the light concentrated, where are we to look? The Lamb is that light. Thus does God make Himself to shine through all the glorious city: the Lamb is the great concentrating object.

F. C. P. Would that, like the Queen of Sheba, we knew even now what it was to be so taken up with Him, in whom all the glory of God shines before the opened eye of faith, that self might be entirely displaced. *Then* it will be perfectly so. The heart that has learned to know His love will be at home with Him in that scene of light and untold joy.

The City and the Nations.

24. "And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour with it."

Q. Is this verse rightly translated?

J. A. T. "Of them that are saved," as is well known, has no authority; and it is "by" or "by means of" rather than "in."

W. K. Kings bring their glory *to* it. Not *into*, but *unto*.

Q. How then does the verse read?

W. K. "And the nations shall walk by its light; and the kings of the earth bring their glory unto it."

J. N. D. The city enjoys the direct light within; the world, transmitted light of glory.

Q. Who are the nations referred to here?

J. N. D. The nations spared in the judgments on earth.

W. S. What we ought to be *now*, the light of the world (Matt. 5. 14), we shall be *then*. The Lamb shall light the city *within*; we shall reflect the light *without*.

J. A. T. The world should have been able to walk by the light of the church now. In a sense it is so, in spite of all the church's failure, for apart from the revelation of God in Christ possessed by it, there is nothing but darkness in the world. But when the Lamb is the lamp, the faithful and true Witness if all else has failed, the church will fulfil its function to the nations according to the mind of God [having] become in glory the *perfect* vessel of the display of the light by which they walk.

F. G. P. If there is worship filling the scene, there is testimony, for the spared nations walk by the light of that heavenly city. The worship is feeble now, so is the testimony,—a poor gleam of light in a dark world. Still, the gleam is there, in Christianity, poor though it may be. And in that measure the nations of the earth walk; other light there is none.

W. K. The nations shall walk, not in the light of the Lamb immediately, but by means of the light of the heavenly city: precisely what we find in John 17., "that they may be made perfect in one; that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me." There is, I apprehend, what answers to the nations walking by means of the light of the city.

J. N. D. It is not merely "nations shall come to the brightness of its rising" [Isaiah 50. 3]—the acknowledgment of a new and dominant power owned of God and glorified in the earth; it is proper blessing. The church, which is the manifestation of the goodness and of the glory of God, shall be the light of the world. When the world shall see us

there, it will then understand that God has loved us as He has loved Jesus. The church shall be in the glory, the testimony rendered to grace; and the earthly Jerusalem shall exercise the severity of justice against sin. God is now rejected and despised in us; He shall then be glorified in us.

The City and the Kings.

Q. Why are kings mentioned as bringing their glory to the heavenly city?

J. A. T. Owning it in its due place as the heavenly metropolis of the throne of God and of the Lamb—so verse 26.

F. G. P. They own that the heavens do rule.

W. S. The seat of universal government is the heavenly city.

W. K. Its glory is over the earth; accordingly the kings and the nations bring their glory and honour unto it, in the way of homage, I suppose, to Him who dwells there.

J. N. D. They own the heavens and the heavenly kingdom to be the source of all, and bring there the homage of their power.

25, "And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there."

J. N. D. No defence against evil is needed, though divine security leaves no approach to evil.

W. K. No danger threatens the city.

J. A. T. The light of an endless and unclouded day is the sure and sufficient protection of the entrance to the city, even as it is given us already as the Christian's armour, "the armour of light" (Rom. 13. 12) For "that which doth make manifest is light." It detects and exposes all that is unsuited to itself, and thus guards the avenues of the heart against everything incompatible with the enjoyment of His presence, who is light.

F. G. P. Darkness is ignorance of God, with John. Where does doubting come from? From ignorance of God. All is gone now, and "there is no night there."

W. S. Absolute security; the open gates tell the certainty of perfect rest and quiet; but will they not be closed as the shades of evening draw their curtains over the face of creation? No, no; "for there shall be no night there." Blessed and everlasting day! No night with its weird shadows, with its fears and terrors. No night with its troubled dreams. All is light, all everlasting sunshine.

26. "And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations *unto* it."

J. N. D. Heaven is seen as the source of all the glory and honour of this world.

27. "And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."

J. A. T. Here, for the first time, we have the thought of inhabitants of the city. Up to this it has been the church corporate, in its relation to the millennial earth, expressed by the symbol of a city.

W. S. It is the home of the holy and glorified; no plea or title of any sort will admit any save those washed by blood, and whose names were written in the Lamb's book of life.

J. N. D. Nothing defiled enters there, nor what introduces idols and falsehood. Neither man's evil nor Satan's deceit can exist or produce any corruption there. How often, when anything good is set up now, the considerate heart knows that evil will enter, and Satan deceive and corrupt! There we have the certainty that this can never be. It was not merely the absence of evil, but the impossibility of its entrance, which characterized the holy city.

(To be continued.)

“Never Man Spake like this Man.”

John 7.

NEVER! This encomium was absolutely true!

Officers had been sent by the chief priests in Jerusalem to take this wonderful Speaker, and bring Him to them from the Temple, where He had been boldly stating His mission, whence He came, and who He was; but the statement was so pronounced, so definite, so unequivocal, that, envious as they were of His fame, and fearful of His rivalry, they could devise no other plan of silencing Him than by force. Hence the charge given to the officers.

They went, intending, doubtless, to obey the orders of their masters, but before attempting to apprehend Him, they listened to His words and became deeply interested. They heard Him say to the unbelieving crowd: “Ye shall seek me and shall not find me, and where I go ye cannot come.” These words, no doubt, struck them: they announced a Personality and opened out a wisdom and a superiority to circumstances, which at once placed Him, in their minds, above the level of ordinary speakers. Here was one who knew clearly what He was about, who spoke with calm authority and proclaimed an independence unknown to others. He thus asserted a right to speak and to command the hearing of all. Had such another speaker ever been heard in the Temple? Never.

What man was this? Needless to ask, for He had just made a sufferer of thirty and eight long years perfectly whole; and who could do that but God? That lowly Man who thus-spoke in the Temple under the frown and threat of Jerusalem’s rulers was in fact their promised Messiah—Son of Man and Son of God. His mighty works proved His Person.

No wonder that the officers were fascinated! Instead of finding a noisy

declaimer of Roman or other government they were brought face to face with a speaker so calm, so dignified, so uncompromising and yet so bold, that they were more than overawed. They felt themselves powerless to carry out their orders. The superiority of that presence, the majesty of that Person forced them into admiration of Him. Further, they heard Him say: “If any man thirst let him come unto Me and drink . . . out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.”

“If any man thirst”—and who, in this weary world, does not thirst? A universal thirst is proved by a universal discontent. That word is written big in the bosom of every individual, of every class and nation on the face of the earth—a thirst that nothing can slake but this wonderful “living water” given by the Son of God. There is to be found, as many have proved, an abiding satisfaction that leads them to eschew the overtures of a world that can never satisfy.

“If any man thirst let him come unto Me and drink.” That is all; but the result is glorious, for he shall not only be personally satisfied, but rivers of living water shall flow from him for the refreshment of this weary, barren, hopeless world. What a miracle, but how true, as the blessing of these two thousand years has proved!

“Come unto Me and drink”—that is all. But the secret is in that “Me.”

No religious festival can slake this thirst—the thirst returns, as we can testify.

No service, no ordinance, no priesthood, no imposition of hands, no human benediction, no power of man nor angel can give the “living water” which satisfies for ever. They who drink thereof are “born, not of blood, nor

of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." They come, as thus born, to the Son of God. They drink, they are satisfied, they become channels of wide and generous blessing to all around. Again, what a miracle!

And whoever had, before, heard such words?

It was the voice of Him who, on another day, said to His captors: "I am He"—words so uttered that they who heard them went backward and fell to the ground; but not so here. His voice which by and by "shall shake not the earth only but also heaven," but on this occasion His accents were those of grace and mercy and compassion for the thirsting souls of men.

The officers returned alone to their masters, who at once said to them: "Why have ye not brought Him?"

They could assign no reason. He made no resistance, nor did His followers, and yet bring Him they could not. All they could say was in these truest of all confessions: "Never man spake like this man."

They thus admitted that they had been overcome by His words themselves. They were "spirit and life";

and, their inherent and resistless power restrained them from carrying out their mission. His hour had not yet come.

"Are ye also deceived?" replied the Pharisees; "have any of the rulers believed in Him?" Impossible that any but the ignorant could do that.

Not a single ruler? Yes, one, and Nicodemus speaks out, who, in the shades of night, had heard the words of the lowly speaker, had been spell-bound by them, and had been drawn from his darkness into a knowledge of the love of God in the gift of His Son, of the substitutionary work of the Son when lifted up on the cross, and of eternal life through faith in Him.

To Nicodemus, as to the officers, "never man spake like this man"—no, nor acted, nor moved, nor suffered, nor sympathized, nor loved, nor died, nor was raised by the glory of the Father to be Saviour, Lord and Head like this Man, and to receive in heaven eternal adoration from myriads of worshippers, who are indebted to Him for the work He did, and the words He spoke.

J. WILSON SMITH.

The Love of the Brethren. No. 3.

"In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14. 2, 3).

The Brethren's Hope and Home.

THE hope of the brethren, thank God, is a sure and certain one. Their home too is safe and secure. The death, resurrection and exaltation of our Lord Jesus Christ has made their hope sure and certain; and the presence of the Son of God in the Father's house, as the glorified Man, has made their home safe and secure. Their hope is in Him, and their home is where He is. Though

all else change, He abideth ever—He remaineth; therefore nought can fail that subsists by Him, of whom it is said, "Thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail."

The brethren's hope does not centre in anything on earth, like the hope of the nation of Israel, for it is "laid up . . . in the heavens": theirs is a heavenly hope. Nor can it be touched by death or corruption; for they are begotten to a living hope

—to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and unfading, reserved in heaven. They are “saved in hope.” Saved already, they yet look on to the full realization of their hope. They look not to the political heads of nations to bring it to pass; and, though thankful for any measure of good government, their hope is not in the best administrations; for, instead of bringing salvation, the most prosperous will probably be the most forgetful of God, and eventually fall under the wrath to come. They are not appointed to wrath, “but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ” when He comes again; therefore they do well meanwhile to have the seat of their thoughts well covered by the helmet, which is “the hope of salvation.”

No national or empire greatness is their hope; but being justified by faith, and taken into divine favour, they rejoice in hope of the glory of God, of which our Lord Jesus Christ is the Head and Centre. Neither is any betterment of conditions of living in this world their hope. Along with it will increase not only the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes, but also the “pride of life.” Their hope is for “the life which is in Christ Jesus.” Already eternal life is theirs, for “He that hath the Son hath life”; as it is also said, “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life” (John 3. 36); but they look on to the fulness of it, in hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began. They look for the Lord Jesus Christ to come as Saviour, to transform their bodies of humiliation, to conform them to His own body of glory. Their life interests are not on earth, but in heaven, where He is; and they await His coming. They look to be like Him, and to see Him as He is. Their hope is in Him. The salvation, the blessing, the redemption, the life, and the grace are all in Christ Jesus, who is their hope. No wonder the Spirit speaks of it in the

inspired writings as “the blessed” or “the happy hope.”

*“Hope of our hearts, O Lord, art Thou,
The glorious Star of day.”*

He said to His own, “I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” This brings us to the home of the brethren. He had told them of the many abodes in the Father’s house; and of His going away to prepare a place for them. That place was to be where He Himself dwells. Not the abode of angels, or of other glorious and holy beings; but, oh, how wonderful! how ineffably blessed! their home is where He is! Eternal praise be to His holy Name for such transcending grace.

Before the foundation of the world He was the Object of the Father’s love, the delight of His heart. God’s purpose centred in Him. That purpose of love involved His glory as the Son in the home we speak of. Counsels of love and wisdom kept that same object in view; and even when God called those who were to be Christ’s brethren in that home, He “called” them “according to His purpose.” God loved them into loving Him, without demanding love; and He makes all things work together for their good. He foreknew them, and not only called them, but justified them, and predestinated them to be conformed to the glorious image of His beloved Son. But why? “So that HE should be the First-born among many brethren” in that home of indescribable glory and blessedness; in that radiant circle of divine pleasure; where, in redemption glory, God has gathered those whom His Son calls brethren; where He Himself as First-born is the adored Object of every heart, even as the Father’s love finds its eternal joy in Him too; and the Holy Spirit pervading all, in plenitude of life and grace and power, gives both perfection of appreciation and response in that home of divine love.

*“Oh, what a home! But such His love
That He must bring us there,
To fill that home, to be with Him,
And all His glory share.”*

H. J. VINE.

Studies in Preaching. No. 1.

The Apostolic Sermons.

A GREAT number of preachers, who profess to give God's message to the people, are discarding His gospel and substituting for it their own vain babblings, and the multitudes love to have it so. This clearly indicates that the time has come which the Word of God declared would come, "when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lust shall heap unto them teachers having itching ears, . . . and shall be turned to fables" (2 Tim. 4. 4). In view of this sad fact we feel that it will be helpful to those who are determined to earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints, to turn to the divinely-given records of the sermons preached by Holy Ghost-filled men when first the gospel of the glory of Christ shone in this world.

We believe there are many young men who have passed through a furnace of testing, and have proved in the trial the power and worth of the gospel which they have believed, and who long to tell it out to others in its integrity and blessedness; we want specially to encourage and help such to preach the Word courageously in dependence upon God; to be evangelistic in spirit in season and out of season, serving the Lord.

The preacher is a messenger sent forth with a report, not to seek popularity with those to whom he is sent, but to be faithful to the One who sends him; and "A FAITHFUL MESSENGER refresheth the soul of his Master" (Prov. 25. 13). He is an ambassador of peace from Christ to man, and he must know the divine terms if he is to present them and interpret them according to the mind of his Sovereign-Master, and "A FAITHFUL AMBASSADOR is health" (Prov. 13. 17). He is a witness in himself to the delivering power of the message that he

carries, and so can seek out those who need the deliverance that he has experienced with confidence; and "A TRUE WITNESS delivereth souls" (Prov. 14. 25).

Putting these three things together we learn that there are three great necessities for the preacher who would be efficient in his work.

1. HE MUST BE FAITHFUL TO THE ONE WHO HAS SENT HIM.

2. HE MUST DELIVER THE MESSAGE THAT HE CARRIES FAITHFULLY.

3. HE MUST KNOW THE POWER OF HIS MESSAGE HIMSELF.

Every bit of true service springs from the knowledge of the love and glory of the Lord; if we know Him we shall yield ourselves to His claims.

"Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands our souls, our lives, our all."

And we shall say with Samuel, "Speak, for Thy servant heareth"; and with Isaiah, "Here am I, send me"; and with Saul of Tarsus, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do."

"HOW SHALL THEY PREACH EXCEPT THEY BE SENT? AS IT IS WRITTEN, HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THEM THAT preach the gospel of peace, and bring GLAD TIDINGS OF GOOD THINGS" (Rom. 10. 15).

To understand Peter's Pentecostal sermon in Acts 2. we must approach it through Luke 24., for it was in this latter chapter that the disciples were commissioned by their Lord; and the commission given to them abides for us. These disciples not only needed to be commissioned, they needed to be rebuked because of their unbelief of the Scriptures, and instructed because of

their ignorance of the theme and purpose of them. They could not preach God's message, if they were doubtful or ignorant of God's Word, and to put them right as to this was the Lord's first labour. Here we reach the prevailing need of the day, for there are preachers, alas, an increasing multitude of them, who do not believe the Scriptures;—these are not as the disciples of the Lord, whose slowness to believe all that the prophet had spoken arose from their ignorance of the object of their prophesying;—but these deliberately refuse the Word, and impudently and presumptuously imagine that their own thoughts are better than those expressed for us in the God-breathed Scripture. From such we must turn away; their words eat as a canker; there is neither life, nor hope, nor salvation in them; they point out a way that seems right to them, but it is the way of death—the devil's way. They preach a gospel without Christ, and without the blood; they deny man's need of atonement, and mock at the future, teaching that whatever is for the present material good of man is for the glory of God. Those who would be faithful to Christ will refuse all association and fellowship with such, for what communion can there be between light and darkness? what concord between Christ and Belial? or what fellowship can a believer have with an unbeliever?

But there is another class of preachers who do not deny that the Scriptures are the Word of God, but like the disciples of the Lord they do not understand them, nor their central theme; consequently they have no certain, definite message, and they are in great danger of being carried away by the plausible theories, and the great claims to scholarship on the part of the critics of the Word of God.

To any who have doubts as to the Bible being God-inspired, and consequently the one authority on all questions of doctrine and conduct, we

would say, "Stop your preaching until your doubts are removed." And if we are asked how those doubts can be removed, we would answer, "Learn what the purpose of the Scriptures is, and who it is who is their One sole and absorbing theme. Only see Christ in the Scriptures and all doubt as to their origin will disappear."

In verse 27 the Lord opened the Scriptures to the disciples. He disclosed the one treasure that lay in the casket of Moses and all the prophets. He showed that they had one theme—HIMSELF; and in verse 45 He opened their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures. No word of theirs, when the time for preaching came, had to clash with what was written. The gospel they were to preach was to be according to the Scriptures, as Paul told the saints at Corinth. Their own opinions and notions were barred; the wisdom and philosophy of men had to have no place in their teaching; for their gospel was to be a gospel of deliverance, and God only can deliver men; this He does by His own Word, which has Christ for its subject.

Yes, Christ is the great theme of the Word. Beginning at *MOSES AND ALL THE PROPHETS* He expounded unto them *in all the Scriptures THE THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF* (ver. 27). (We may pay scant courtesy to the critic, since the Lord confirmed the Old Testament writers thus.) The Scriptures which spoke of Him, and their fulfilment in His death and resurrection and glory are inseparable; they are woven together in one glorious web, and if one is denied it is that the other might be damaged. The devil is behind this criticism of the Scriptures, by it he is blinding the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. His object is to enchain the souls of men in present darkness that they may share his doom in the lake

of fire for ever. The preachers business is to enlighten these souls, and deliver them, and it is by the preaching of the Word of which Christ is the great centre and theme that this is done.

The Scripture spoke of the sufferings of Christ and of His resurrection; these are the two great facts of the gospel, and because of them, repentance and remission of sins were to be preached amongst all nations. Men of all nations are to hear the joyful tidings that a way has been opened for them to return to God from their wanderings, their miseries and sins, and that returning they will meet a pardoning God.

This divine message had to be carried world-wide in Christ's name. Those who carry it have to do it as His representatives, on His behalf; a solemn consideration, of which we shall have more to say. Being a divine message, doing a divine work, it must of necessity be done in divine power; so that we are not surprised to learn that these disciples of Christ had to wait for power from heaven. The Holy Ghost is absolutely indispensable to successful preaching of the Word.

Lastly, these Christ-chosen men beheld their Lord ascend to the highest place in the glory of God, yet not forgetting them, for He went up with hands lifted in priestly benediction. And thus He serves all His servants who serve Him until their service is done.

Those then who are sent into the world to serve Christ in the gospel are to bear the following features:

(1) THEY MUST BELIEVE THE SCRIPTURES (MOSES AND ALL THE PROPHETS) TO BE GOD'S WORD TO US CONCERNING CHRIST THE SAVIOUR. APART FROM THIS THEY COULD HAVE NO MESSAGE, OF POWER AND AUTHORITY.

(2) THEY MUST UNDERSTAND THE SCRIPTURES, IN THE SENSE THAT CHRIST IS THE GREAT THEME AND CENTRE OF THEM; OTHERWISE THEY WOULD ONLY

CARRY LIFELESS AND LOVELESS DOCTRINES.

(3) THEY MUST PRESENT THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST, AND HIS RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD AS THE ONLY GROUND UPON WHICH REPENTANCE AND REMISSION OF SINS MUST BE PREACHED TO ALL NATIONS.

(4) THEY MUST KNOW THAT THE BLESSING IS OFFERED TO ALL; IT MUST NOT BE CONFINED TO ANY CLASS, DISTRICT, OR NATION.

(5) THEY GO FORTH IN HIS NAME, NOT TO SHOW THEMSELVES, OR TO PARADE THEIR OWN WARES, BUT TO REPRESENT HIM, THENCE THEY MUST SPEAK OF HIM, AND BEAR HIS CHARACTER.

(6) THEY MUST HAVE THE HOLY SPIRIT WITHIN THEM, AND WITH THEM IN THEIR LABOURS, FOR HIS POWER ALONE IS EQUAL TO THE WORK TO BE DONE.

(7) THEY MUST BE SUSTAINED BY THE KNOWLEDGE THAT THEIR EXALTED LORD IS INTERCEDING FOR THEM; AND THAT HIS GRACE IS SUFFICIENT FOR THEM IN EVERY INFIRMITY, AND THAT HIS STRENGTH FINDS ITS OPPORTUNITY IN THEIR WEAKNESS.

The Vindication of Christ.

Coming now to the Pentecostal Sermon, reported in Acts 2., we find that after a brief explanation to the wondering multitudes of the outpouring of the Spirit, Peter reaches the great theme of his preaching in verse 22. The words that he here speaks are the words of God, and he demands that the people should hear them. He then proceeds to vindicate the name of Jesus of Nazareth. This was the first thing. It was the fulfilment of John 15. 26, 27, "*But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of Me: and ye also shall bear witness because ye have been with Me*

from the beginning." In it there is no appeal to the people to repent, or to come to the Saviour—this took place in the inquiry meeting at the end of the preaching. There is not even the mention of blessing for those that heard and believed. This would come in its proper place. That which was first, and must ever be first in the heart and purpose of the faithful servants of Christ, is the vindication of His name, and the proclamation of the truth as to His person. Let this slip into the background and the Spirit's work will be correspondingly hindered. The gospel of God (which He had promised afore by His prophets in the Holy Scriptures) is concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom. 1.); and the Spirit's power goes with this preaching.

The great facts that Peter declares are:

(1) The perfect human life of Jesus, approved of God, and fruitful with works that God did by Him.

(2) His crucifixion and death, which though wickedly compassed by the people, was according to the foreknowledge and counsel of God.

(3) God had raised Him up from the dead; for death could not hold Him who had glorified God in life and death.

(4) It was not possible that death should hold Him, or that He should see corruption; plainly demonstrating the sinlessness of His humanity; and the absolute contrast between Him and the whole of Adam's race that to dust returns.

(5) The Scriptures had spoken before of all this; what had taken place was only the fulfilment of them.

(6) The risen Christ was to sit upon the throne of David.

(7) His exaltation to God's right hand, and that there He had received from the Father the Holy Ghost, for the effectuation of His work on earth. And incidentally His place in the Godhead is introduced, for none but God could sit in the throne of God.

(8) His Deity is definitely declared,

when Peter quotes the words of David that had already baffled the Pharisees: "The Lord said unto MY LORD, sit Thou on my right hand, until I make Thy foes Thy footstool."

(9) His exaltation to the position of supreme authority that every creature must acknowledge; He is Lord and Christ.

It will be noticed that Peter brings into sharp contrast the way the people had treated Jesus and the way that God had treated Him. He begins and ends upon this solemn note. There could be no more powerful weapon than this in the preacher's hand, for it brings into question man's whole state before God. What mattered the Temple with its gorgeous ritual, its perpetual service, its surpliced priests and crowded courts; what mattered praying Pharisees, and scribes and lawyers versed in every detail of the ceremonial law; what mattered all the parade of religion on the part of the people, if the One whom God delighted to honour was insulted and crucified by the consent of all? And what matters it to-day how fair a show men may make in their religion and philanthropy if they refused to yield to Christ the place that God claims for Him? Christ is the crux, and if men are out of harmony with God as to Christ they are utterly and in all things astray.

How blessed was the result of this vindication of Jesus! What joy must have been in heaven as three thousand souls, convicted and repentant, asked, "What shall we do?" And how great must have been the surprise of these inquirers when they discovered that through the Name of Jesus, so despised by them, the remission of sins was freely offered them. What confidence it gives the preacher when he sees that when men have done their worst God brings out His best; and where sin abounded grace did much more abound.

EDITOR.

(Questions and Notes are invited on these studies).

“A Land that I had Espied.”

“Thus saith the Lord God: In the day when I chose Israel, and lifted up Mine hand unto the seed of the house of Jacob, and made Myself known unto them in the land of Egypt, when I lifted up Mine hand unto them, saying, I am the Lord your God; in the day that I lifted up Mine hand unto them, to bring them forth of the land of Egypt unto A LAND THAT I HAD ESPIED FOR THEM, flowing with milk and honey, which is the glory of all lands” (Ezekiel 20. 5, 6).

THE Psalmist exclaimed on one occasion, “How precious also are Thy thoughts unto me, O God!” (Ps. 139. 17). And as we read the exquisite citation at the head of this paper we may well say: “How precious also are God’s thoughts of His people!” The words are instinct with divine love, and are chosen with that heavenly wisdom that gives infinite value to them, that at once arrests our attention, and that affords a wonderful insight into God’s disposition towards His own. In the first place He “chose Israel.” He did so before Israel existed. This, we think, is clear from Deuteronomy 32. 8, read in conjunction with Genesis 11. 1-9. He acted thus not because there would be anything in Israel that might seem to justify it, not because of any greatness in them, but simply and solely because He loved them (Deut. 7. 7, 8). They were on His heart, and were present to His mind when He “divided to the nations their inheritance.” Then it was that He “‘ESPIED’ a land flowing with milk and honey, the glory of all lands,” and that He reserved it for the people of His choice, the object of His love.

We desire, however, to extract yet a little more honey from this word “ESPIED.” A merchant goes from a provincial town to London to purchase goods for the new season’s stock. As he goes over a warehouse, he thinks of the requirements, the preferences and prejudices, of his various customers. Presently he sees an article, perhaps a handsome garment, the best and most costly that the wholesale house possesses. “That,” he says to himself, “will just suit my wife.” He purchases

it, pays for it, takes it home, and handing it to his wife, says: “My dear, when selecting my goods to-day I ESPIED this, and I thought it would just suit you.” While providing for the wants of his clientele generally, he thought particularly of his wife, and procured *the very best* for the one who was dearest to his heart. So when God “divided to the nations their inheritance,” and allocated to each that which He considered best, He ESPIED this choicest of all lands, and immediately He marked it off for His chosen and much-loved people.

The New Testament discloses to the people of God in the present dispensation a still more magnificent secret. It is unfolded in Ephesians 3., and as we read it our hearts are filled with wonder, and our lips are filled with praise. We learn that in eternity, before the earth’s foundations were laid, divine love was centred upon Christ, and then a plan was devised for His glory, such as only the heart of God could conceive; was purposed, and the secret was securely locked in the bosom of God. Coming into the region of time, we see God’s power displayed in creation, His sovereignty in calling out His ancient people. Outstanding men, whether represented by Abraham, Moses, kings or prophets, came on the scene and passed off. They gave expression to utterances which seemed to indicate that God had some purpose before Him which He had not been pleased to disclose. The Lord Jesus Christ came, lived, witnessed for God, bore testimony to the love of God, declared the Father’s Name, and died in order that the Father’s heart might

be revealed and His counsels fulfilled. He went back to Heaven, the Holy Ghost descended; His advent became the occasion of wonderful happenings.

The gospel went on ever making fresh triumphs. In time it broke down all barriers, leaped over every obstacle, and caught in its flow the Gentiles. Meanwhile Saul of Tarsus was converted, and this arch-persecutor was the chosen vessel through whom the secret hid in God from eternity was to be declared. Now it is all out. We learn that in eternity God had Christ and the church before Him. When He created all things it was in order that He might utilize the work of His hands for the display of this centrepiece of His Wisdom, and that "NOW unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known through the church the manifold wisdom of God" (Eph. 3. 10).

In the light of this we re-read the Holy Scriptures in an altogether new way. While the great truth of the church, as the body of Christ, was hid, not in the Scriptures, but in God, we can see what was pre-eminently before the mind of God right down through the ages, from Genesis 1. 1 to Acts 2. He was thinking of that which He had chosen, not in time, *as was the case with Israel*, but in Christ before the foundation of the world; He was thinking of the church which is the body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all, and for which, or shall we say for whom, He had "ESPIED" a place of favour, of nearness, of delight, such as Israel never has known, and never shall know. Like Israel, He chose us because He loved us. Why He should love us at all we cannot tell; why He should love us so much as to select us for such untold blessing, which could only be procured at such tremendous cost, passes our comprehension. The choice, the cost, the call, the care, the consummation, all alike fill us with wonder; fill principalities and powers with admira-

tion, and will for ever fill heaven with praise. In this mystery "are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2. 3). With the revelation of it we have the completion of the Word of God (Col. 1. 25), and as we contemplate it all we worship and adore. The church will be the complement of Christ, for He in whom God will "gather together in one all things" (Eph. 1. 10) is given "to be the Head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1. 22, 23). It will also be the vessel for the display of the glory of Christ unto the eyes of ages (Eph. 3. 21). And in it God will be glorified and admired in the day of the manifestation of Christ in glory (2 Thess. 1. 10).

What a place the church must have in the mind of God that He designed such a position for it. What a treasure indeed it must be to Christ who "loved it and gave Himself for it" (Eph. 5. 25). How earnest the work of the Holy Spirit to-day in calling out those who should form the church, and how tender His care in conducting it to its destined home. How well we may thank God again and again that we have been born in this unique dispensation, called by His grace, and made part of His church. We need scarcely say that the church is entirely dependent upon Christ for all that it requires during its sojourn here. For its health and nutriment it draws upon Him its living Head. He is the Dispenser and also the Disposer of the gifts, and no ministry is of any value save that which comes from Himself. If it be a question of the glad tidings for the world, Christ is the Depositary of the gospel, and it is from Him, and Him alone, that the message comes that brings hope to the hopeless, salvation to the lost, and out of the quarry of this world takes those who, prepared, polished, and placed, shall form part of that which will be for the deep delight of His heart for ever and ever.

Remarks on Paul's Gospel. No. 4.

THE Apostle Paul claims for himself that he is "servant of Christ and steward (or administrator) of God's mysteries" (1 Cor. 4. 1).

In the Gospels of Matthew and Luke we read of "the mysteries of the kingdom"; in Revelation 1. 20 of "the mystery of the seven stars," i.e. the providential ordering of the churches during the time of professed Christianity; in Revelation 10. 7 of "the mystery of God," i.e. in His outward government, the allowance of evil apparently frustrating His purposes for good in this present world; and in Revelation 17. 5 of "the mystery of Babylon," i.e. the corrupting influences at work in the professedly Christianized Roman Empire; but, except in these passages, the use of the word is confined to the writings of Paul, where it is found twenty times, used in a way special to himself and connoting for the most part subjects different from those mentioned above. It is therefore with reason that he designates himself "administrator of the mysteries of God," and seeing that this is so we may very well regard him as, in a special way, "the apostle of the mysteries." Keeping this in mind will greatly help us in the understanding of his ministry, and incidentally throw light on the purpose of God in the creation of man and the object He has in view in His predilection for the human race. This is in fact the great subject-matter of the Apostle's ministry, and it is worthy of our deepest attention; while also the apprehension of it in any degree calls forth at once the admiration and the homage of our souls. Let us address ourselves for a little to the consideration of it, humbly looking to God for the gracious help of His Spirit.

The word "mystery" is from *μύω* to conceal, keep secret. The meaning of the root *mu* is to close the lips, whence *mute*. From this the word passes to mean to "initiate into

secrets," or mysteries, hidden things that are not known except by the "initiated." There is nothing necessarily difficult in the understanding of a mystery, except that it is beyond ordinary conception—hidden from the mind until revealed. Romanism has made great stock of this whereby to hold its dupes in bondage, and so keep the administration of its mysteries for the advantage of its coffers. It is sufficient for the believer that the mysteries of the faith are revealed to us in Scripture, and no one need go to seek the light of them at second hand elsewhere.

It is true that a religion devoid of mysteries is flat and commonplace. It has nothing to present beyond what is merely natural to the human mind. To the knowledge of the mind of God it makes no pretence. While again a religion that makes merchandise of its mysteries is false and in open conflict with the Scriptures in which these mysteries are revealed for our profit.

To the Apostle the discipline of experience was a constant exercise in the mystery of life. Nothing to him was commonplace. Everything had a hidden meaning beyond its mere appearance, as he says, "In everything and in all things I am *initiated* both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need" (Phil. 4. 12). Thus all life was to him the unfolding of a great and heaven-ordered purpose, the mystery of his being; and it became accordingly instinct with spiritual impulse and energized with the power of Christ for all endurance, to fulfil the course which by the call of God was allotted to him here. How fully he entered into this and how greatly he succeeded we learn from such scriptures as Acts 20. 24, Philippians 1. 20, 2 Timothy 4. 7.

To interpret the mysteries of the Apostle Paul would be to interpret the

whole purpose of God, the counsels hidden in Him from before the foundation of the world, having for their objective His glory in the creation of man through all ages, for evermore. But while this impossible task is reserved, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, for the administration of the Apostle, it will be interesting and instructive to note the various places in his writings where he refers to this subject. Taking them in the order in which they occur in the New Testament we find:

1. Romans 11. 25: the mystery of the blindness that has happened in part to Israel, where, in that portion of the epistle (chaps. 9.-11.) he reconciles the promises of God to Israel with the present facts of the gospel to the world, and the rejection for the time being of His ancient people. This was a mystery to them then, and remains a mystery to them still, as long as they continue in unbelief.

2. Romans 16. 25. Here we have the establishment of the believer "according to Paul's gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret from times eternal, but now made manifest . . . to all nations for the obedience of faith." The Epistle to the Romans is bracketed between this word "establish" twice used (1. 11 and 16. 25); and it is manifest both from what the Apostle says here and from constant experience in daily life that in no other way is the soul established as it is according to Paul's gospel set forth as stated above. Much of the instability of souls that one meets with around, the lack of deliverance as regards their own state, the lack of intelligence as to their standing before God "in Christ," and their deliverance in consequence from this present evil world, its religion and its politics, its course and its end; and their incapacity to understand the nature and position of the church, its present purpose and its future destiny; these and sundry other

similar things we see among the people of God are largely owing to the lack of the preaching of Paul's gospel, as summed up characteristically in the passage before us, than which, for the consideration of the evangelist, there is hardly another of more serious importance.

3. 1 Corinthians 2. 7. "God's wisdom in a mystery." The testimony of God concerning "Jesus Christ and Him crucified" was folly in the mind of man. It is nevertheless "God's wisdom in mystery, the hidden wisdom which God had predetermined before the ages for our glory." The ruling minds, the great ones of this world, knew it not. It carried no meaning, no sense to them, or "they would not have crucified the Lord of the glory" they so eagerly desired. The cross stains the pride of all flesh. It remains to-day the barrier line which the man of this world cannot, will not cross, hindered as he is either by his open opposition to God, or by his futile attempts to reach Him some other way. "Jesus Christ and Him crucified." The way to God by the Spirit; a barrier impassable to the flesh. Jesus Christ incarnate in the attractiveness of a beautiful and holy life may attract, or repel, so far as a picture goes, but the Apostle adds the touchstone of "Him crucified," which stands like the flaming sword of the cherubim as it turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life. Folly in the sight of man, it is the wisdom of God in a mystery.

4. 1 Corinthians 4. 1. He claims to be accounted "appointed servant of Christ and administrator of God's mysteries." Little he recked what they thought of him. What is vain man's judgment worth? "He that judgeth me is the Lord." Better be accounted a fool for Christ's sake in the possession of such secrets than be accounted wise after the folly of man. "Therefore judge nothing before the time, till He comes who will bring to light the hidden things of darkness; then shall each one

be awarded by the [true] God the praise that is his due."

5. 1 Corinthians 13. 2. But the understanding of all mysteries is no makeweight for love. Love is the moving power of life. Without love all else is useless. Love, not knowledge, is the measure of the man. By that his worth is estimated; while also—

6. 1 Corinthians 14. 2. The profit of his ministry in the assembly is dependent on its being rendered in terms intelligible to those to whom it is addressed; for though in spirit he speaks mysteries, yet unless he speaks so as to be understood his ministry does not edify.

7. 1 Corinthians 15. 51. Here is a mystery. Who could understand it till it was revealed? "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed." Death is vanquished, broken by the power of God in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from among the dead, and is held, so to speak, "on the leash" to act no longer by its own unrestricted will, but in subjection to Him who "has the keys of death and of hades." It was the power of Satan, it is now an instrument of God to accomplish His designs; and that done the instrument is set aside. "There shall be no more death." The resurrection of Christ has broken its seal, and "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last

trump"—the trump that moves the camp and bids the forces "march"—"this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality . . . and then shall be brought to pass the word written, Death has been swallowed up in victory."

This is the victory now revealed to Christian faith, when the purpose of God in this respect shall be accomplished, and the manner of its accomplishment after this sort. Meanwhile we know the whole creation groans and travails in pain, waiting to be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. "The sufferings of this present time" are no mystery, and the hope of deliverance is instinct in every sigh, as the promise of it is definitely set forth in mystery, as the universal hope of the world, that "He will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death for ever; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces (Isa. 25.). The promise is plain enough and is no mystery. It only remains for the Apostle to lift up the cover and reveal to us the secrets of the wisdom and the power of God contained in this most remarkable scripture. This is Paul's task in 1 Corinthians 15. 54-57 and the great incentive to verse 58.

E. CROSS.

Resurrection.

I TRIED to visualize Jerusalem on the Saturday night before our Lord rose from the tomb. Three empty crosses standing black against the sky. The tomb in the garden near by with a Roman sentry mounted over it. Near by his comrades of the guard cooking their supper. The late wayfarer hurrying, fearful, past that place of horror and agony. Somewhere within the City walls the disciples sitting in an upper room, dazed by the sudden destruction of all their hopes, and the shameful death of their Master. Peter silent in

an agony of despair and remorse. The tearful women making their plans for the morrow. The Pharisees enjoying their triumph. The general public convinced that the dead man had been a fanatic or an impostor, and had been finally disposed of.

What but the actual resurrection could account for the subsequent course of events—the begetting of Peter and his fellow disciples from despair and disillusionment unto a "living hope"?

A. G. C.

The Song of Songs. Canticle V.

Chapters 6. 13 to 8. 4.

The Witness and Communion of Love.

THE last Canticle closes with the restored Bride in happy communion with the Bridegroom in the garden of nuts. In this Canticle two scenes pass before us. In the first, the Bride is displayed before the daughters of Jerusalem in all the comeliness the King has put upon her (6. 13 to 7. 5). In the second, the Bridegroom and the Bride are found in happy and unrestrained communion (7. 6 to 8.4).

The Bride, having been restored, displays the beauties of the one who has graced her with his own perfections, and thus becomes a witness to the Bridegroom before others. This witness is maintained by a walk in communion with the Bridegroom. So with ourselves, the fruits of restoration are seen in the display of the moral beauties of Christ, and this can be only maintained by a walk in communion with Christ. It was thus in the history of restored Peter. In the early part of Acts 4. he is before the world in a way that leads them to discern that he "had been with Jesus" and in the latter part of the chapter he retires to his "own company" to hold sweet communion with the Lord.

The Daughters of Jerusalem.

Ch. 6. 13. Return, return, O Shulamite; return, return, that we may look upon thee.

The scene opens with the daughters of Jerusalem calling upon the Bride to return. They had already heard from her lips the rapturous description of the Bridegroom, awakening in their hearts desires after the Bridegroom; then, apparently, she left them to join her Beloved in the garden of spices, and now they plead with her to return. Possibly the secret of their plea is the desire to learn more of the Bridegroom, and who so fitted to witness of the Bridegroom as the Bride, for now they

recognize she is in relation with the King. For the first time they speak of her as the Shulamite—the name of Solomon in its feminine form.

The Bride.

13. What would ye look upon in the Shulamite?

In reply to the call of the daughters of Jerusalem the Bride expresses wonder that they should desire to look upon her.

The Daughters of Jerusalem.

As it were the dance of two camps.

This appears to be the answer of the daughters of Jerusalem. The text may be translated, "As it were the dance of Mahanaim." The allusion is probably to the day when Jacob left the land of Mesopotamia to go to the promised land, with his wives, his children, his servants and all his goods. In the way "the angels of God met him; and when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God's host: and he called the name of that place Mahanaim" (i.e. two hosts or camps). There the heavenly and the earthly host met, and here the Bridegroom and the Bride have met in the garden of the King, and the daughters say, in the language of figure, "We would see the effect of this meeting." How good when others can see the effect of our having been "with Jesus." In response the Bride stands before them in all her beauty, and with great delight the daughters of Jerusalem describe her loveliness.

Ch. 7. 1-5. How beautiful are thy footsteps in sandals, O prince's daughter! The joints of thy thighs are like jewels, the work of the hands of a cunning workman. Thy navel is a round goblet, which wanteth not mixed wine; thy belly a heap of wheat, set about with lilies; thy two breasts are like two fawns, twins of a gazelle; thy neck is as a tower of ivory; thine eyes (like) the pools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bath-rabbim; thy nose like the tower of Lebanon, which looketh toward Damascus; thy head upon thee is like Carmel, and the locks of thy head like purple; thy King is fettered by thy ringlets.

The daughters of Jerusalem thus celebrate the beauty of the Bride. Formerly her words had borne bright witness to the King, but now she herself is a witness to all the comeliness the King had put upon her. It is the witness of *life* rather than *lips*, of *ways* rather than *words*. She had been with the Beloved in the garden of spices and she comes forth from his presence with the beauty of the King upon her. She is hailed as the daughter of the Prince. The stamp of royalty is upon her, and the grace and majesty of the King's presence surrounds her going. So in a former day the face of Moses shone with the glory of the One from whose presence he came. The world in his day saw, in a man on earth, the result of being in touch with heaven. Again, in a later day Elisha sees the vision of Elijah ascending to heaven and, on his return to Jericho, the sons of the prophets at once recognize that "the spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha." They had no vision of the rapture, but they discern its effect on Elisha. They saw in a man on earth the spirit of a man that had gone to heaven. So too Stephen, in his day and generation, sets forth the blessedness of a man on earth being in touch with the Man in heaven. "He being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God and Jesus." The world has no such glorious vision, but they saw the effect it produced in Stephen. They saw a man who could pray for his murderers, and thus reproduce on earth the grace of the Man that had gone to heaven.

We may well challenge our hearts by these examples of men on earth in touch with heaven. As we journey on our way, can the world see faces shining with the joy of the presence of the Lord after the manner of Moses? Can they discern in us the Spirit of Christ after the pattern of Elisha, or the setting forth of the heavenly Man as with Stephen?

Good for us also, when, by our lives and conversation we proclaim our high origin, and it becomes manifest that we are "a royal priesthood" chosen indeed to show forth the excellencies of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light. But alas! how little we know what it is to linger awhile in the garden of the Lord, enjoying the company of the Lord; and then, from that hallowed spot, to come forth bearing before others the impress of His presence, exhibiting the manners of heaven and the graces of the Lord. There is often a coarseness about our manners, a roughness of speech, and brusqueness of bearing, that tells how little we have been "with Jesus." Living so little in His company we learn so little of "the truth as it is in Jesus," and hence the life of Jesus is so little manifest in our bodies. More often we manifest the ways of earth than the manners of heaven. Too often our conversation is seasoned with the wit and humour of this world rather than the wisdom and holiness of heaven.

But with the Bride it was otherwise. She had been in the presence of the King. She had met the Bridegroom and she comes forth with the joy of that meeting—"the dance of two companies." She has been in the hands of "a cunning workman" and she wears the jewels his hands had wrought. The beauty of the King is upon her. The daughters of Jerusalem describe the Bride in language similar to that used by the Bridegroom, only, viewing her from above, he begins his description with her eyes, whereas, the daughters, viewing her from earth, speak first of her footsteps and end with the hair of her head. By nature "from the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds and bruises and putrifying sores"; but viewed as of spiritual and heavenly origin—as a prince's daughter—we are all fair from the sole of the foot even unto the head.

The New Jerusalem—continued.

A Bible Study on Revelation 21. 9 to 22. 5.

The River of Life.

Q. Is there any break in the subject at the end of chapter 21?

W. K. The first five verses of chapter 22. are necessary to complete the vision.

F. G. P. In chapter 22. you find the city in her relative, as in the previous chapter you had her personal character.

22. 1. "And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb."

W. K. God has linked together, in a very remarkable manner, the last book of the Scripture and the very first. For example, here we fall upon images which the Holy Ghost uses to describe the blessedness of the heavenly city in its relation to the earth during the millennium; and whence are these images derived? I must go to Genesis. There I find a tree of life, rivers, etc., to which evidently the Holy Ghost refers in the passage before us.

Q. The language is still symbolical, I suppose?

W. K. Of course. There will be no mere literal tree or river; but as the river of life's water symbolizes the abundant life and blessing which will flow through the city (that is, the Bride, the Lamb's wife), so here follows the benignant provision for healing the nations.

W. S. The river of life will flow uninterruptedly; *now* the waters should flow freely from us (John 7. 38). Alas! that their course should be so often checked and hindered by the working of flesh.

F. G. P. The river is the symbol of blessing flowing out. The Lord Himself is its source. If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink." The one who drank would be the channel for the river to flow into others.

J. N. D. We have not only the life in us, but we are drinking for ever of that life which proceeds from the throne of God, and flows in abundance through the city.

Q. Why is the throne mentioned here?

J. N. D. That throne, which was acting in judgment to bring about blessing, was now fixed in the heavenly city; but it is not the seat of judgment now. The river of water of life flows out of it,—divine, life-giving blessing.

W. S. The throne of God and the throne of the Lamb, but it is *one* throne; majesty and meekness combined maintain the blessing for ever; grace through righteousness then and now.

J. N. D. Now for the first time it is called the throne of the Lamb. We had the throne of God, and the Lamb in the midst of it, but the throne distinct from the Lamb. In chapter 21. 1-8, God is all in all. But here we have the Lamb's throne as well as God's, and the time and the character of the time distinctly marked.

The Tree of Life.

22. 2. "In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."

W. K. Here it is evident that we have pure grace reigning through righteousness, as far as the tree and the river are concerned. There is nothing liable to be corrupted by the power of Satan.

J. N. D. We have the tree of life, the constant supply in the street, and on either side the river, ready for all to enjoy, ever fresh, the full ripe fruit of life as Christ has displayed it.

Q. Will the nations partake of this fruit?

W. K. There is a reserve as to the twelve fruits, which may set forth a far higher and more various supply for the constant refreshment of the heavenly saints; but the leaves are expressly said to be for the healing of the nations.

J. N. D. Only the glorified ever ate the fruit of constant growth; but what was manifested and displayed without, as the leaves of a tree, was blessing to those on Earth.

Q. Why *twelve* manner of fruits?

W. K. The twelve gates, twelve foundations, etc., which we saw in chapter 21. set forth the aspect of this city towards man. It is viewed in its public governmental character. So in the tree too. By its bearing *twelve* manner of fruits, and yielding its fruit *every month* is shown the aspect of it towards man.

Q. Will the nations need "healing" during the millennium?

J. A. T. The church will be still in millennial glory the witness of *grace* to the nations, in marked contrast with millennial Jerusalem, which preserves its character too as connected with, and the earthly centre of, God's ways in *government*.

J. N. D. Evil will not absolutely gone below, though its power will, but remedy will be there. Not merely can the innocent eat and live, but there is remedial blessing for those on earth.

Q. Is there any reference to the tree of life in Genesis 2. 9?

W. K. There were two trees in the Garden of Eden, one of the knowledge of good and evil, and the other of life. Now whatever might have been the blessing vouchsafed to man in the tree of life, it was wholly useless to him, because the other tree put him to a test which man could not stand. He became rebellious. The consequence was that the tree of life was no longer available for his use. It would only have perpetuated a life of sin and misery. God

had reserved for man a better thing—the tree of grace, if we may so say.

J. N. D. One might have eaten in Eden of the tree of life, but in that tree there was no principle of healing. Here this is not the case.

W. K. Neither is there anything like the cherubim, jealous in keeping away man. Quite the contrary.

J. N. D. We see grace characterizing the assembly in glory. The nation and kingdom that will not serve the earthly Jerusalem shall utterly perish,—it preserves its earthly royal character; the assembly its own: the leaves of the tree it feeds on are for healing.

Q. Is not the earthly Jerusalem typical of the heavenly?

J. N. D. The earthly Jerusalem has almost all the characters of the celestial one. Yet there is an essential difference. It is in the heavenly Jerusalem that the glory is, and it is from thence that it shines upon the earthly Jerusalem.

3. "And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it: and His servants shall serve Him."

J. A. T. Here the Jerusalem of that day, that has supplied us with many a figure of a glory beyond hers or Israel's, gives us a contrast, for there the curse still lingers, if only upon the sinner. "The sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed" (Isa. 55. 20).

F. G. P. Sin's curse has been everywhere in this scene, but there will be no trace of it there.

J. N. D. The throne of God and the Lamb. This is the source of blessing, not of curse. Note again here how God and the Lamb are spoken of as one, as constantly in John's writings.

Q. The service rendered by God's servants will not be inconsistent with a scene of perfect rest, of course.

J. N. D. The rest there will not be a rest of idleness.

F. G. P. Service will be the joyous liberty of the heavenly glory. It is the happy rest of active joy.

J. A. T. How sweet the assurance for any who have sought to serve Him now ever so feeble, and who know the grace that makes so much of the least done truly for Him! It shall be theirs to serve Him without hindrance or ceasing for ever.

Face to Face.

4. "And they shall see His face, and His name shall be in their foreheads."

W. S. We serve Him in weakness and imperfection now; then we shall serve Him in strength, perfectly and for ever.

J. N. D. Nothing shall separate us from God, and we shall see His face. The pure in heart shall see God.

F. G. P. Not now as in a glass darkly, but face to face.

J. N. D. His servants shall have the fullest privilege of His constant presence, shall see His face.

W. S. *That* is a blessing beyond harp, or crown, or robe, or glory. The best wine is here poured out. We shall see the face of Him who died.

J. A. T. Thus the Lord meets the longing He has Himself created in our hearts, as He knew nothing else could meet it. We shall reign, and that for ever; but more blessed still, a witness of all that is deeper and more intimate in our association with Him is preserved in simple words (but how full for hearts that know Him!)—"they shall see His face."

Q. What is the thought of His Name being on our foreheads?

J. N. D. On our foreheads nothing will be seen that is not the expression of God. All that God is, His Name shall be manifested in us in the most visible manner.

Q. Is there any reference to our *belonging* to Him?

J. N. D. Slaves had the name of their masters marked in their foreheads. The whole world shall see that we are the servants of God.

Q. Is this connected with our seeing His face?

J. N. D. These are the three characteristics of the waiting people in glory: they serve Him directly and perfectly; they see His face directly and fully; their connections with, and confession of His name are complete and evident. Their belonging to Him as His own shall be evident to all.

W. S. Like Rebekah, when she lifted up her eyes and beheld Isaac, she veiled her face that she might shine in his likeness; so in that day His name on our foreheads will be the public bearing of His likeness.

J. A. T. Surely there ought to be the moral imprint of Christ, left by the glory in which we behold Him, on our hearts and lives now; but how marred, how dimly seen, is His image in any of us—bearing His name too often to His dishonour. Then we shall bear it before every eye, no more to fail to represent or glorify Him in anything.

Q. Is it God or Christ that is meant in this verse?

J. N. D. Doubtless this is God, but we cannot at all separate the Lamb, for when it is said "His name," it is God, so known as revealed in Him.

5. "And there shall be no night there: and they need no candle, neither light of the sun: for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever."

J. N. D. All that is here is an eternal state for the church. Night or obscurity there is none there, nor need of artificial or even created light. Jehovah-Elohim gives them light.

Q. Is this the difference between the *candle* and the *sun*?

W. K. The one represents the light of man's making, and the other of God; but all that suited this world is past for the city.

Q. Is the verse quite correctly translated?

J. A. T. "The Lord God shall shine upon them, not, as more feebly, "giveth them light."

The Eternal Reign.

J. N. D. It is not now merely "the Lord shall reign for ever and ever," but "they shall reign for ever and ever." This is not, I apprehend, their reign with Christ, but the statement of their story and joy which will never cease. "Ye have reigned as kings without us," says the apostle. This was false. That will be true and eternal.

Q. Then it is not the millennial reign of the saints in this verse?

J. N. D. They reign, not for the thousand years, as they do over the earth, but for ever and ever.

W. S. The millennium and eternity are here embraced. Both our service and reign are eternal, and our joys as well. Thus closes this truly marvellous and magnificent description of the church in the glory with a statement that reaches far beyond the millennial age. In the eternity of God the church reigns in a glory that shall never go down.

W. K. If we look at the heavenly city itself it is eternal. It will make little difference to the city whether seen in the millennium or in the eternal state that succeeds. While at the end of the thousand years all will be changed, still the heavenly city will abide for ever. There will be certain offices which the glorified church will cease to discharge towards the earth after the millennium is over: but its intrinsic blessedness remains the same.

Q. "For ever and ever" is literally "to the ages of the ages." Does this convey the thought of eternity?

W. K. The expression "to the ages," I apprehend, must be taken in the strongest sense here. It does not refer only to what is called "the kingdom" though of course the reigning begins then. It will be true throughout eternity. These words seem here to be used without restriction. All the account from chapter 21. 9 to 22. 5, inclusively, presents the relation of the heavenly city to the earth during the millennium. But there are certain features in it which are true everlastingly. One of these characteristics, besides its unchangeable intrinsic glory is, that the service of the saints will be for ever and ever. So as to the reigning.

Q. Will they reign in the same way in eternity as in the millennium?

W. K. The mode of the reign, as of the service, may be changed after the earthly kingdom is closed.

Q. What is the practical value to us now of this description of the new Jerusalem?

F. G. P. God reveals to us this scene where the Lamb's glories dwell, to cheer and fill our hearts with its present sanctifying power, and to give us a truer estimate of what the height of our calling is, as we see all that it is now made good to faith, and in the power of the holy Christ carried out to its full result in glory then. May He who is the centre and brightness of all that scene of glory fill our hearts, conducting the light of it into them, and displacing all that is unsuited to it more and more.

Collected by H. P. BARKER.

Books quoted in foregoing Bible study:—

W. Kelly's "Lectures on the Book of the Revelation."
J. N. Darby's "Synopsis"; "Thoughts on the Revelation"; "Notes on the Revelation"; "Notes on the Apocalypse," etc.
F. G. Paterson's "The Church of God."
J. A. Trench's "The New Jerusalem."
W. Scott's "Outline of the Revelation."

The Glad Tidings of God. No. 4.

The Preaching.

EVERY single particle of blessing that at any time has been, is being, or shall be, brought to any human being has its foundation in the cross of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. It is the basis upon which the whole vast fabric of eternal felicity shall be established. That which was there manifested is the light which shall make infinitely radiant God's universe of blessing; for there the love of God was expressed, and that love shall be the light, the life, the warmth, and the glory, of that world of unfathomable and endless delight.

And what a world that shall be! Fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore, shall there find their eternal abiding-place. That world was the conception of the Father's love, and that before the present world had an existence. And when this world shall have been brought to an end, that world shall shine with a splendour brighter than the sun in the cloudless heavens, for it will be radiant with the glory of redemption.

To that sphere of unspeakable happiness the gospel calls every poor sin-burdened soul. The light of that world is in the hearts of the messengers who to find such needy mortals search the darkness of this nether world. The Son of God is the way to that radiant scene, and to Him all the weary and heavy laden are directed; and all who come to Him in the confession of their undone condition receive a hearty welcome. None are rejected, and to this one gospel message bears witness.

The apostles were, in the first instance, the preachers, whoever might take up the work after them (Mark 16. 15). The risen Lord has given evangelists for this purpose (Eph. 4. 11). In Acts we read that on account of the great persecution that took place at the

time of Stephen's martyrdom, the saints were compelled to fly from Jerusalem, and that "they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word," so that the preaching was not wholly confined to the apostles. Afterwards Paul was converted, and was sent by the Lord direct to the Gentiles (Acts 26. 17, 18).

This sending of Paul to the Gentiles was in the most perfect harmony with the prophetic word to Christ: "It is a light thing that Thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give Thee to be a light to the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be My salvation unto the end of the earth" (Isa. 49. 6; Acts 13. 47). The gospel was to be preached world-wide. Peter was chosen to carry it to the circumcision, and Paul's mission was to the Gentiles (Gal. 2. 7). Therefore Paul considered himself debtor to the Greeks and Barbarians, to the wise, and to the unwise (Rom. 1. 14).

The preacher needed not the consent of any human being before entering upon this glorious work. No man could give him authority to take up the service, nor could any deprive him of the right to go forth with the glad tidings. His title and authority lay in the gift imparted to him by the risen Head of the Body, and to Him alone, as a servant, was he answerable. His gift might be small or great, it might consist of two talents or five, but to the Lord alone must he give account, as to the use he made of what was committed to his trust (Matt. 25. 14-30).

The Holy Spirit of God is the only power for the proclamation of this message of grace (1 Peter 1. 12). Though the apostles knew what they were to preach, and where they were to begin the work, they nevertheless

were told to tarry in the city of Jerusalem until they would be endowed with power from on high (Luke 24. 49). Not in human power, nor in persuasive words of human eloquence, was this heavenly message to be promulgated (1 Cor. 2. 1-5). Everything done for God in this world must be done in His power. He will not allow the man after the flesh to contribute anything. The flesh has, as we have seen, been proven to be worthless and unprofitable, its mind enmity against God, and it has been brought to its end judicially by the cross; it is therefore valueless in the service of God. All confidence in human power had to be taken out of the great apostle of the Gentiles, and he had to learn that the grace of his Master was all he needed, for the Lord's strength was made perfect in the weakness of the servant. This made him glory in his infirmities, for his own apparent weakness was but an evidence of the Divine power that wrought in him (2 Cor. 12.) in the work of the gospel.

The Old Testament prophets were, as far as we can discover, men of natural fervency and eloquence. They were to "smite with the hand and stamp with the foot" (Ezek. 6. 11); and contending with evildoers, they cursed them, smote them, plucked off their hair, and put them under solemn obligations to do the will of God (Neh. 13. 25), for God was dealing with men in the flesh, and in a probationary dispensation, but man being proven incorrigibly wicked, and unmendably evil, the trial is closed, and now man can only be in relationship with God as born of Him (John 3. 3-5). The trial is over, and now the work is entirely by the Spirit of God.

The proclamation was to be carried among all nations, and it spoke of repentance and forgiveness of sins for all. God was now speaking to men as He had never spoken before. The rejection of His Son had made the judgment of the world imperative. By His rejection it was *morally* judged (John 3. 18, 19; 12. 31). It was seen

to be not only corrupt but an inveterate hater of all that was of God, and absolutely irreconcilable. It cannot be improved. Nothing can be done with it but to visit it with the judgment that it has merited, and which will bring it to an end as a system of unmixed wickedness.

In view of this judgment the gospel calls upon the individual sinner to repent, and to believe the glad tidings. The day is appointed in which the judgment is to be executed, and during the time in which this judgment is delayed God assumes the character of Saviour towards all. There is no respect of persons. It is to the Jew first, as the man that dispensationally had stood near to God, and the preaching was to begin at the city that was stained with the murder of the Son of God. But it was not to end there. It was to go out to the whole world. All were to hear it, whether they were willing to hear it and to believe it, or whether it so aroused their wrath that they became ready to murder the heralds of it. It was good news, and the evangelist could not hold his peace.

Paul says: "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth: to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1. 16). It is the means that God uses to deliver souls out of this present evil world. It is the glad tidings of that grace that carries with it salvation to all men. It calls upon men to take their rightful place as sinners in the presence of God, and to receive by faith the forgiveness that is proclaimed to all.

The whole world being, on account of its sinfulness, subject to the wrath of God, which is revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness, none could escape unless God has resources beyond all that ever was dreamed of by the creature. These resources the gospel makes manifest.

It holds out to all a righteousness that will perfectly meet the need of every poor sinner that will avail himself of it: "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed, from faith to faith." That is, it is revealed on the principle of faith, and the man who believes the gospel has that righteousness.

The law demanded righteousness from the sinner, and cursed him because he had it not; the gospel ministers to him the righteousness of God, and all he has to do to make that righteousness his own is to believe in the grace by which it comes to him; in other words, to submit to God's way of salvation and abandon his own efforts to save himself. He is a sinner, and not righteous, and nothing that he can do can make him other than what he is; and therefore nothing that he can do can shelter him from the wrath that is revealed against his unrighteousness. If he will but submit to God's way of salvation as declared in the gospel he will find every need of his soul met in Christ, for He is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

God has taken up the attitude of Justifier of the ungodly, and the way in which He has assumed this attitude silences every accusation that might be brought against His righteousness by the enemy of mankind. He has not passed leniently over sin in the abstract, nor has He winked at the sins committed by those who believed the gospel. The blood upon the mercy-seat is the standing witness of His intolerance of sin. Him who knew no sin He has made sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. 5. 21). In His cross sin has received its judgment, and the One who took the place of the sin-bearer, and bore that judgment, has power to impart His own life to as many as are given to Him of the Father (John 17. 2), and thus, as the last Adam, link them up in life with Himself—a heavenly Head, and a heavenly race, all in new and eternal relationships with God.

"Now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested" (Rom. 3. 21). It is no longer a question of man putting himself into right relations with God by means of his own legal efforts; God has Himself undertaken the work, and He has wrought in the most perfect harmony with His own nature and character, not abating one jot of His claims upon His creature, not doing violence to one of His glorious attributes, not passing over the rank rebellion of His insolent subjects, not shutting up in His own heart His boundless compassions, but satisfying every single requirement of His blessed Being; and in the way in which He has done this making known His unspeakable love to objects unworthy of His smallest favour.

It is thus God has brought about righteousness for those who have none of their own, and it is presented to men in the gospel: "The righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all" is now held out to all without exception, "and is upon all them that believe." It is offered to everyone, and it is upon the believer; that is, he has become the righteousness of God *in Christ*. It is not human righteousness, which would have been by the law, but God's own righteousness; not man's consistency with the relationships in which he has been placed as God's creature, but the consistency of God Himself with His own nature and character, whether previously revealed or unrevealed; His consistency with Himself in taking up the attitude of Justifier of ungodly sinners. This is revealed in the gospel, and the believer stands in that righteousness in Christ.

David describes the blessedness of the man to whom God reckons righteousness, having no works of his own that would constitute him righteous in the presence of God, saying, "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin" (Rom. 4. 6-8). If He

dealt with the man according to the man's own works, He would reckon nothing to him but sin, but dealing with him in grace, and on the ground of the blood of Jesus, He reckons him to be righteous.

The man whose blessedness this is, is the believer in Jesus. He knows himself to be a sinner, and confesses himself as such in the presence of God, for the preaching has assured him that if he comes in this way to God his forgiveness is a certainty. His eyes have been opened to both his own ruined condition and to the attitude of God in Christ, and he has turned from darkness to light, for he knows that to all that the light makes manifest the blood of Jesus is a perfect answer, and on such a soul the devil has lost his strangle-hold; from his power he turns to God, and receives the forgiveness announced in the glad tidings (Acts 26. 18), and along with this an inheritance among all them that are sanctified by faith in Christ.

This is "the man in whom there is no guile" (Ps. 32.). He is not seeking to make the best of a bad life. His sinful condition is acknowledged. *Truth* is found where God desires to see it, "in the inward parts" (Ps. 51. 6), and a full confession is made of the iniquity that is discovered there; that is, *truth is done* (John 3. 21), and there is no longer need for the soul to abide in the darkness; the light is approached, and the knowledge of God is seen to be the source of the deeds that are wrought, "they are wrought in God."

Of the faith that justifies the sinner Abraham's was a grand example. He believed in "God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things that be not as though they were" (Rom. 4. 17). "I have made thee a father of many nations" was the word of God to Abraham when both himself and his wife were dry trees. But this gave God the opportunity of manifesting Himself as the quickener of the dead; and as to Abraham, he placed no reliance on his

body now dead, but gave glory to God, assured that He would fulfil the word that He had spoken, and therefore was he held to be righteous, not because of his works, which would only have condemned him, but on account of the faith that he placed in the God of resurrection. The reality of this faith was tested later on, when he was told to offer up his son as a burnt offering. But it answered fully to the test that was put upon it, for his faith was still in the God of resurrection, and he counted that God was able to raise Isaac from the dead, "from which also he received him in a figure" (Heb. 11. 17-19). This is the God in whom Abraham believed, when, as we are told, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness."

"Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (Rom. 4). The God of resurrection has brought Himself before us, not in vitalising our mortal bodies, but in raising from the dead Him who was delivered for our offences. The resurrection of Christ is the witness to us that the sacrifice that He offered for us has been accepted. We read in 1 Corinthians 15.: "If Christ be not risen, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins." But if He is risen, and our faith is in Him, our sins are gone: we are justified from all things.

And being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. We have learned God as the Justifier of the ungodly. We see the way He has taken to accomplish this marvellous and for us necessary work. The work has been His own invention, and He has done it when we were without strength to do anything for ourselves. He could have righteously left us to the consequences of our sins, but

He had compassion upon us, and found means for our deliverance from the judgment to which our sins had rendered us liable. He undertook our justification, and on His part there has been no failure. We see the One who was under our sins on the tree now on the Father's throne. It is the Judge of the work that has done the work, and His approval of it has been made manifest, and between Him and the believer there is not one disturbing element.

"By whom also we have access into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Through Him who laid down His life for us we stand in the favour of God. This is our assured place. Our Saviour has won it for us, and He maintains us in it. We have no standing in ourselves, and we need none, for He is everything for us in the presence of God.

And "we rejoice in hope of the glory of God." There is no going back to innocence and Eden. All that is lost, as well as earth itself. Had we been able to keep the law, we might have retained our place as living men on earth. But having lost earth by our works, heaven has been gained for us by the work of God. A new world of glory opens up before the vision of our souls. To this world we never had any title, nor had the Adam from whom we

sprung, not even in his innocent state. He was of the earth, made of dust, and of him in his fallen state we were; but Christ the last Adam, the heavenly Man, has linked us up in life with Himself, and our place is with Him where He is.

And the heavenly door has been opened, the resurrection world shines bright before faith's clear vision; life, glory, honour, and incorruptibility, is the goal to which our unfettered feet desire to hasten: we rejoice in hope of it. The Victim of Golgotha is there triumphant, the light and the centre of that sphere, and this gives the place an attraction for us. The path to that home may be filled with tribulation, but we can boast in it, for it will work endurance. It will not drive us from Christ, but will make us draw all the closer to His side, for only there we shall feel ourselves safe. And endurance will give us experience, for day by day, as the difficulties arise, we shall experience the delivering power of the Lord, who will give us grace enough to meet all the need of our souls, and enable us to triumph over every obstacle that may be placed in our path. And this shall give us hope, because the love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

J. BOYD.

Answers to Correspondents.

The Prince of this World cast out.

H.M.S.—What is the meaning of the latter part of the following verse: "*Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out*" (John 12. 31)?

The moment had arrived in the pathway of our Lord when He was about to meet death with all its consequences of shame and suffering. The final conflict with the powers of darkness was about to take place, and in it was involved the glory of God and the salvation of men.

Although the holy soul of the Son of

God shrank from the terrors of this hour, His perfect obedience was thereby made manifest. He does not seek to escape the cross, His only thought is the glory of the Father's name. Such perfection called forth heaven's immediate response, in the acknowledgment that already in His life the excellence of that name had

been declared, and would be again in the victory His death would secure.

The people around did not understand the meaning of the sound they heard, but it was on their account that the Father had spoken, for in the meeting of the holy requirements of God's glory in respect of sin lay the only way of salvation for men.

Then also the whole world system was exposed and judged, for in casting out the Son of God come in grace it left itself without hope, and uttered its final sentence. Henceforth the world is judged, and he who will be its friend is the enemy of God. Again Satan was the prince of this world, it lay under his dominion and power, in consequence of the authority he had acquired over men because of their sin and disobedience, and the righteous judgment of God in respect thereof.

But Christ was now to be lifted up upon the cross bearing the judgment of sin, and henceforth all the rights of Satan over man would be gone. He had the power of death, it is now annulled. He held men under his power as prince, but another force has come into operation, the attractive power of the Son of God, dying for the glory of God and in

love to men. Christ has spoiled principalities and powers, and in witness of His victory has been raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, and the consequences of His triumph will extend to the farthest limits of Satan's former authority, He draws all men unto Himself.

Satan is now spoken of as the prince of the power of the air (Eph. 2. 2, and comp. Rev. 12. 7, 8). He has assumed a new character as the god of the world (2 Cor. 4.), and blinding the minds of them which believe not, he, under various religious forms, seeks to neutralize the drawing power of the cross of Christ. Deceived by the ruler of darkness, the world will at last render him divine honours in the person of his representative, "the man of sin" (2 Thess. 2. 4).

Satan is called "the prince of this world" only in John 12. 31, 14. 30, and 16. 11, and each time in connection with his judgment by the cross. He led the world to crucify the Son of God, hoping thereby to secure without question his own position, and by this act brought about his absolute defeat and final overthrow.

JAMES GREEN.

The World.

M.—*What is the meaning of "the world" which the disciples of Christ are not of?*

THAT the disciple of Christ is *in* the world but not *of* it is a matter of common remark. John 17. 11-16 are verses which supply ample authority for the statement.

But what is the *world* which we are in but not of?

We are certainly *in* the world—not only on the earth but in the great world system, i.e. the whole society and structure of things, which has grown up amongst fallen men as a result of sin, and of which Satan is the god and prince. This society carries its own influences, its atmosphere, so to speak, and where civilization has held sway it has taken on an attractive outward appearance; it wears an elegant mask. *In* all this we are, *in a physical sense*.

But of it, in a *moral and spiritual* sense we are not. Born again, redeemed, possessing life and the Spirit, we spring from a new and incorruptible source (1 Peter 1. 23), we stand in new and

heavenly relationship (Eph. 11. 13-19). We can discern the true character of the world system and know it to be but the flimsy creation of man's will, showing, if analysed, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life" as its sole ingredients (see 1 John 2. 15-17).

The believer thus is entitled to regard himself as sent into the world by the Lord after His own example, his business therefore being to represent his Master as He represented the Father (see John 17. 18).

A word of caution is needed. There are many matters of daily life which are not of the world system, inasmuch as they have their origin not in man's will but God's appointment. Such, for instance, are the institution of *work, marriage, authority*, vested in "powers that be," etc. Such matters must not be confounded with the world system.

F. B. HOLE.

Editorial Notes.

The Authority of the Word.

WE QUOTE the following sentence from a letter recently received: "*The word of Christ as a living power over the soul seems to be quite lost. You say to a man, the Scripture in such a place says so and so; his attitude is, 'Well, suppose it does, what of that?'*" Our correspondent was not writing of infidels, or openly godless men, but of Christians, of those who as a matter of doctrine would stoutly maintain that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God. Is his witness true? If so, herein lies the secret of the widespread spiritual dearth and death that we have to mourn. Is it true? Let our readers answer for themselves, for it is a vital matter. We press it as being the most important question that we could press. **IS IT TRUE THAT THE WORD OF CHRIST AS A LIVING POWER OVER OUR SOULS IS QUITE LOST?**

BY THE SAME POST that brought the letter from which we have quoted, we received a copy of a letter written by the late J. N. Darby, giving an account of the way that the Lord led him when first those truths of Scripture which so greatly affected him and his generation began to be unfolded to his understanding. What impressed us was the place that the Scriptures had in his mind and life. He says, "As a result of great soul exercise, **THE WORD OF GOD BECAME TO ME AN ABSOLUTE AUTHORITY**, I had always recognised it as being the Word of God." And what was the effect of this? "*The three persons in one God, the divinity of Jesus, His atoning work on the cross, His resurrection, His seat at the right hand of God, were truths which, learnt as orthodox doctrines, began to be living realities to my soul. Not only were they truths, but I knew God personally after this manner; I had no other God but He who had thus revealed*

Himself, and I had Him. He was the God of my life, of my worship, the God of my peace, the only true God."

But not only did these as well as other great truths become living realities to him, but he was compelled in subjection to the same Word to test all his association and relationship by its light, so that, what "*was not in accordance with what I read in the Bible concerning the church,*" was judged and departed from by him. We could quote other exceedingly interesting and helpful passages from this letter, but our purpose is to emphasize the authority of the Scriptures as being God's Word to us, and the effect upon the soul and life when there is submission to this authority.

ON LAYING DOWN this very interesting letter we took up a paper written by the same hand about forty years after the exercises described, and we desire to bring to the notice of our readers the following forcible sentences. Speaking of the Scriptures, the Word of God, he says: "That only is the rule and measure of my responsibility, the expression of the authority of God over me. It is direct from God, and God's title is absolute, and embraces my whole being in obedience; He exercises His authority immediately by the Word. . . . My first, immediate, and all-ruling relationship is with God by the Word. It has precedence of all others, and claims absolute and immediate subjection. 'We ought to obey' is the Christian's ensign; but 'We ought to OBEY GOD rather than man' is the absolute claim of God, who has revealed Himself fully, and reveals Himself immediately to us by the Word."

THE IMPORTANCE of this matter cannot be exaggerated; the Scriptures

are the Word of God to men; the revelation of Himself, the declaration of His will; His voice speaking in love, with many warnings *and with all authority*. They "cannot be broken," said the Lord. In them we learn the way of salvation; they are sufficient to thoroughly furnish the man of God; (2 Tim. 3. 15-17); he who will not obey them is no fit company for any Christian (2 Thess. 3. 14); and those who wrest them and reject them do so unto their own destruction (2 Peter 3. 16). This word LIVETH and abideth for ever; it is the sword of the Spirit, quick, powerful; it is the discernor, or critic, of the thoughts and intents of the heart of man, to be heard and obeyed, and not to be criticized by him. Having such a treasure in our possession lays upon us the solemn responsibility of hearing it and being subject to it, that it may exercise its living power over our souls.

THE TENDENCY IS, when fervency of spirit wanes, and the divine life within grows feeble, to escape the exercise that is necessary in order to know the truth and will of God directly from the Word, and to turn to leaders and accept what they say simply because they say it. This is the easy path, but a most dangerous one, for the ear becomes dull to every other voice but the favourite one, and then the result is often carnal zeal for some special line of teaching or ecclesiastical procedure which may not be wholly according to the Word, and which can be adopted without that soul exercise which subjection to the Word demands, and thus are sects and parties formed.

It is true that the Word exhorts "Remember your leaders" (Heb. 13. 7), and this we must do, but our conviction is that these here spoken of were the God-inspired men, who, as the Scripture says, "have spoken to you THE WORD OF GOD." They were "His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit" (Eph. 3. 5), to whom the

truth was first given, and whose ministry is now embodied for us in the New Testament. But even if they be lesser men than we suppose. It is only as they have directed us to the Word that they have helped us. If their sayings become our guide instead of the Word, one of two things is certain, either their sayings are carnal or we have taken them up carnally. The writer from whom we have already quoted continues: "If another knows THE WORD better than myself, has more spiritual power, he can help me; and that is according to the will and mind of God. But he does not come between my soul and the Word, but brings me more fully into acquaintance with what God says to me in it. My soul is only the more in immediate relationship with God by His Word. . . ."

Another able writer has said:

"Leaders there always will be, and all right when it is their faith that carries them ahead of others. But faith must be in the Word of God, and have this to justify itself to others. This true guidance is always by the Word, and this is what preserves following from being a mere following of men. Apart from this, we may go easily astray in the path of very good men. Peter led Barnabas astray after this fashion. Paul says: "Follow me," but adds, "as I follow Christ."

THERE IS DANGER also in looking back to anything that is short of the beginning, or of taking as our pattern or standard any *effect of the truth* that we have seen or heard of. As to this we quote again from the writings of J. N. Darby:

"Let me here engage my reader to realize in his own mind, and, if occasion call for it, insist upon it with others. . . . 'Let that therefore abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning: if that which ye have heard from

the beginning shall remain in you, ye shall continue in the Son and in the Father (1 John 2. 24). Nothing has secure authority for the believer but that which was from **THE BEGINNING**. This alone secures our continuing in the Father' and the Son. There may be much 'reverend antiquity'; and the spirit of reverence, where the object is true, is a very important quality in the believer, but an amazing means of seduction when it is not; but as a *ground* of faith, the Christian must have, 'what was from the beginning'; the authority for believing must be 'that which existed from the beginning.' In the Scriptures I have that certainty—I have the thing itself; nowhere else. Many may preach the truth and I profit by it; but by the Word I have the certainty of what was from the beginning, and I have it nowhere else."

TRADITION holds a certain cast of mind in a thrall, from which only the Word can deliver. We must beware of this. The Pharisees of old were great sticklers for what they held to be correct, but they made the **WORD OF GOD OF NON-EFFECT** by their traditions, and were the most persistent critics and opponents of the Lord Jesus.

The traditions that we must follow are clearly indicated in 2 Thess. 2. 15. They were taught by the Apostles in word and letter, and are now contained

in the **Word** for us; as we stand fast in these we are safe.

CONSCIENCE is also often taken as a guide and standard instead of the **Word**; and this is a subtle snare, and the more so as people often confound their opinions with their conscience. To substitute conscience for the Word is bad enough in matters which are purely individual, but this becomes a serious matter when it obtrudes itself in questions that involve the name and testimony of the Lord, and when it assumes the place of dictator in the fellowship of saints and the service of the Lord's servants. Yet we fear that often the plain word is not sought or is set aside, and conscience, or what is said to be conscience, taken as a guide even in this sacred enclosure.

It is of the utmost importance that we should see the end of the commandment, which is "love out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned." But we must first have the Word, and the conscience subject to it, then all will be well. Without this we shall do serious damage in the interests of Christ on earth; and the more sincere and zealous we are the greater the damage, like Saul of Tarsus, who, with a perfectly good conscience, believing he did God service, persecuted the church of God and wasted it.

"To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and **TREMBLETH AT MY WORD**" (Isa. 66. 2).

"Jesus answered and said . . . **IF A MAN LOVE ME, HE WILL KEEP MY WORDS**: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me" (John 14. 23, 24).

"If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are **THE COMMANDMENTS OF THE LORD**" (1 Cor. 14. 37).

“No Divisions Among You.”

THAT there should be divisions in the religions of the heathen, or in the schools of the philosophers, is no wonder because all of them are the products of the mind of man, the results of speculation, or invention, or mental caprice of some kind, suiting the taste or inclination or passion of those who are influenced thereby; so that schools of thought, or parties of various religious cults are formed, which claim, each and severally, to be exclusively correct, and therefore possessing a pride which contemns all rivalry. “*Quot homines, tot sententiæ*”—as many ideas as men—is easily understood, and quite necessary, if certain men of masterful mind, whether religious or scientific are able to lead their fellows in their particular conceptions. But that there should be divisions among Christians—the followers of one Christ, one omniscient Teacher, and where there is but “one Lord, one faith, one baptism”; where, if a doctrinal unity subsists anywhere, it is there—this is the marvel and sorrow!

Yet the church is, alas, rent by disunity. What is visible to us is a hopeless chaos, a state of confusion which is beyond, far beyond, all human power of reducing to order, though we are happily conscious of the existence of a body which is divinely united, co-ordinated and immune from all possible harm—one against which the gates of Hell shall never prevail. That unity is visible to God, and will be manifested in its perfection in His time. Hardly had Christianity been established, however, ere division was threatened. The thing was too good for the great enemy. Spoil it he must; and alas, he has succeeded.

His effort was to lead the young converts at Corinth to make a choice or preference among the teachers who ministered Christ to them. Hence some said: I am of Paul; I of Apollos;

I of Cephas; I of Christ. Schools were formed—all bad and the last the worst; and thus, in the one assembly in that city, there was, not perhaps actual separation but, *division*—schism.

Against this deplorable condition the Apostle Paul pleaded most earnestly. He besought each and all of these discordant factions, by the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, to speak the same thing, for the Lord over all was the same, and that there should be no divisions among them. Such a thing was incredible. Their spiritual unity was complete before God; they had a common faith, they should therefore speak and think alike, and be of the same mind. They had no diversified philosophies, but only a common system of truth to follow, divergence from which would prove insubjection to its doctrine. Serious matter truly, but how does he, by the spirit of God, rectify this great error?

It surely is, with startling abruptness, that he asks the mighty question which supplies in itself the answer: “*Is Christ divided?*”

Pause, dear reader, at that query! It is of tremendous moment. A true, practical answer to it, on the part of all the saints, of all the divisions, and of all the parties in Christendom, would effectually heal all the breaches and schisms in the church (though certainly not in the vast hollow and empty profession) throughout the whole world to-day.

It establishes (if I may coin the word) the sole centreship of Christ; it makes His authority exclusive and supreme; it allows no sort of rivalry, no Paul, nor Apollos, nor Cephas, but it assigns these, and all other servants of His, to their own greatly inferior place; it centralizes on Him alone the entire admiration, attention, obedience, and love of the hearts of all His blood-bought people.

Into that sacred position there may be no intrusion of any other name under heaven, whether apostolic, prophetic, evangelistic, pastoral, ecclesiastical, sectional, or any other. It may not be Christ and Paul, but Christ alone; just as, on the "holy Mount," there was room but for the Beloved Son; so here, it may not be Christ and party, or tradition, or human counsellor; not you nor I; your preference or mine; no vain thoughts of ours, nor ideas of service or suitability; nay, but every tie, binding us to aught but an undivided Christ, the centre of the purpose of God, must be severed.

More than that glorious Centre and Spring of life and joy and blessing is quite unnecessary. This we admit in theory, while we cling, alas, to much that tends only to our loss and His dishonour.

The test, then, of every Christian, or company of such, is Christ, the Christ of Scripture, Son of Man, born of the Virgin; Son of God, the Son of the Father's bosom eternally, Creator, but here in grace and in perfect sinless human nature, crucified atoningly, risen and ascended.

Can this Christ be divided? Can any one dispute with Him the place, He holds? Impossible! He is pre-eminent.

No doubt there may be ignorance both in the individual and the assembly. Which of us is not ignorant? Forbearance is therefore necessary, and much of it; but, where there is not the pronounced defence of error, nor the denial of fundamental truth, where Christ is not divided, there should be, at least, the desire, and the effort, to demonstrate the practical unity of all the saints of Christ.

Shall not this be our object?

"No divisions among you." There would be none if we were all subject to Christ.

Among philosophers, scientists, politicians, schoolmen, idolators certainly, but not "among you"—Christians—children of God, and in whom His Spirit dwells, whose business it is to lead you into all truth.

May grace enable us to own an undivided and indivisible Christ.

J. WILSON SMITH.

Wisdom, Love, and Power.

IT is in the combination of these three things that God is doing the very best for His own.

Wisdom and Power are God's attributes. Love is His nature, His being, Himself, so we put Love between Wisdom and Power in our title.

Wisdom is the right use of knowledge in relation to practical affairs.

"Wisdom is better than strength" (Eccles. 9. 16).

"Wisdom is better than weapons of war" (Eccles. 9. 18).

How superlative is God's wisdom. How abundantly this is shown in the wonderful arrangement of creation. Still more is it seen in the wonderful redemptive scheme, where Christ is made unto us "Wisdom."

Love is God's very nature. "God is love" (1 John 4. 16). What rest of heart it is to know this, to trust One who is unaffected by selfishness, partiality, or caprice of any kind.

Power is a terrible thing in the hands of any not governed by Love and Wisdom, but in the right hands it is a

guarantee of right and truth being upheld. In God's hands power can only be for good.

The right combination of these three things can be well illustrated by homely life.

Power. A small boy runs up to his mother carrying in his hand his boots. The soles are completely worn and the uppers are worthless. He says, "Mother, buy me a new pair of boots." With tears she says, "My boy, I love you dearly, and you know I would get you boots if I could. It is not within my power to get them for you."

Here is love undoubted. The need is obvious. The power is lacking.

On the other hand, here is a rich father and he has an only child. He has love and power. All that the child asks for he gets. He is denied nothing. Whether it is wise or not to grant his requests nothing is denied him. He grows up selfish, petulant and thoroughly spoilt. The father had love and power, but he lacked wisdom.

Such illustrations abound on every hand.

How comforting to turn from incongruities and imperfections to God.

With Him is all perfection. He is "the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1. 17).

His love is undeniable—love, full and absolute; His wisdom is perfect, He makes no mistakes; His power can effect anything His love and wisdom direct.

Can we trust Him? This is a serious question. We trust Him generally and in ordinary trials, but we are tested when extraordinary trials come.

The last four years have been full of

sorrow on land and sea. Hearts have been wrung as never before.

Even old and well-established Christians when extra crushing trials come ask in their hearts, if not by their lips, Does God care? He does; a thousand times over we affirm it.

Shall Job, with his limited opportunities of knowledge compared to ours, put us to shame? He could say, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him" (Job 13. 15). Shall the three Hebrew youths put us to shame? When they were threatened with the burning fiery furnace, what did these noble fellows say? They affirmed that God was able to deliver them, but that if He should see fit in His wisdom not to do so, yet they would go forward in the path that had for its terminus the awful furnace heated seven times.

There is one charming word that settles everything for the Christian.

"He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things" (Rom. 8. 32).

And again :

"We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8. 28).

The Christian is called according to the loving purpose of God. Christ has died for him. In the light of all this can we doubt God's wisdom, love and power?

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

Let us trust Him at all times and never let us for one moment allow an unworthy suspicion of God's goodness. Indeed, could we see things as He does we should order things as He does. We shall yet praise Him for all His ways.

The Way of Revival.

Prayer.

REVIVAL is the great need of the present hour for those who believe in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. The felt necessity of this is evidence that decline has taken place, and while the outward marks of this are, alas, only too manifest, such as sectarianism, lack of power in preaching to sinners and ministering to saints, and the minding of earthly things for position or gain, yet the root lies deeper, viz. in the weakened apprehension of the love of Christ and the cooling of the heart's affection in response to it. It is this that needs reviving: "Awake thou that sleepest and arise from amongst the dead and Christ shall shine upon thee." The soul needs the word of Christ to arouse it from its slumber and to produce desires towards Himself. But desire alone is not sufficient, and it is here that the place of prayer in connection with revival is found. For unless these God-given desires return to Him in earnest supplication, the revival of spiritual affections will not be produced. "The soul of the sluggard desireth and hath nothing."

The marks of true prayer in this connection are:—

1. The Spirit-produced desire becomes a cry to God for help and light.
2. His presence is realized and reverence is begotten thereby in the consciousness of His holiness.
3. Confession will follow of that which has occasioned the departure: "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."
4. Petition then becomes definite, the expression of a purpose of heart to cleave to the Lord; the Holy Spirit at the same time joining His help with our infirmities.
5. There must also be the readiness to receive the answer in any way it may please God to send it. A sincere heart will be ready to surrender any hindrance, and here lies the test as to whether true submission of the heart to the will of God has been produced.
6. Expectancy: God may delay the answer in order that the blessing sought may be more highly valued and so become permanent and formative in the life and ways.
7. Thanksgiving: Will ever accompany true petition in the deep consciousness that grace far abounds over all our need and failure, and in the confidence that God is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think.

JAMES GEREN.

"Extra-Corpus Benevolence."

IS it not distinctly affirmed in Scripture that we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive THE DEEDS DONE IN HIS BODY? Why, then, should Christians so industriously plan that their best deeds should be done after they get out of the body? Is there any promise of

recompense for this *extra-corpus benevolence*?

After all benevolences of the dead hand are usually nullified. By a strange irony of customs we call a man's legacy his "will"; it is really too frequently an ingenious contrivance for getting one's will defeated.

A. J. G.

Studies in Preaching. No. 2.

The Apostolic Sermons.

The Power of the Name.

PETER's second sermon was preached to a multitude mightily impressed by a notable miracle. One of the most familiar figures at the gate of the Temple was a helpless beggar; priests and levites passed him continually and left him as they found him; worshippers thronged to the morning and evening sacrifices, but none could raise him up; he was a constant witness to the fact that there was no power in the Temple ordinances to relieve the miseries of men. His helpless wretchedness was figurative of the condition of Israel and mankind generally, who are without strength, as the Scriptures declare, to render to God what is His due, or to deliver themselves from the bondage in which sin has bound them.

But power had come into the world at last, wonder-working power, delivering power, and that power lay in the Name of Jesus of Nazareth. No better title could be given to the Book of The Acts of the Apostle than "The Power of the Name." Peter and John knew its power, and boldly used it, saying to the crippled wretch, "IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST OF NAZARETH rise up and walk." Quick from his helplessness leaped the man, his withered limbs thrilling with a new life at the sound of that name, and with feet made strong he entered the Temple with the apostles, "walking, and leaping, and praising God."

It was not by silver and gold that this miracle had been performed, there was plenty of that in the temple and in Jerusalem, and it was doubtless held in high esteem then as it is now. The pity is that that which is highly esteemed by men of the world should be so highly esteemed by those who profess to honour the name of Christ. It was said some

time ago by a leader in the religious world that what the church needed was more money, that its work of converting the world was held up by the lack of it. There never was a greater delusion, but it is a widespread and popular one, as a glance at some of the religious publications of the day will prove. The need is not silver and gold, but a return to the beginning, a renewed realization of the power of the Name.

It was a prepared audience that ran together to learn the secret of this marvellous miracle, and the servants of the Lord had a Spirit-given readiness to meet the situation. Peter had no need to prepare a sermon; the stream of living truth, of which Christ was the force and theme, burst forth with a blessed spontaneity. His heart was bubbling up (Ps. 45. marg.). He was like Elihu who said, "I am full of matter, the spirit within me constraineth me," and, like, this same Elihu, he was regardless of the estate or rank of those to whom he spoke as the greatness of his subject and the importance of the hour carried him on. He was no flatterer of his hearers, else he would have been an unworthy witness to the truth. This same spirit characterized Paul, who said of his preaching, "*Neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God is witness*" (1 Thess. 2. 5). No flatterer can be a faithful preacher of God's message, but the one who would be preserved from it must be in the fear of God all the day, or he will be betrayed by the fear of man, or by covetousness into that which is so hateful to God and so harmful to men.

But we will quote the words of Elihu in full, for the preachers of to-day need to ponder them well.

"For I am full of matter, the spirit within me constraineth me. Behold, my belly is as wine which hath no vent; it is ready to burst like new bottles. I will speak, that I may be refreshed: I will open my lips and answer. Let me not, I pray you, accept any man's person, neither let me give flattering titles unto man. For I know not to give flattering titles; in so doing my maker would soon take me away" (Job 32. 18-22).

Swiftly Peter removes the idea that he and John were wonderful people, to be applauded and pampered; his business was to turn all the thoughts of his audience to the One whom his soul loved, and by whose power the lame man had been healed. He was like John the Baptist before him, whose joy and ambition was to decrease that his Lord and Master might increase; and like a quaint old Yorkshire preacher of the last century, who would hide himself out of sight in the high old-fashioned pulpit in which he preached, and cry, "Not the man in the pulpit, but the man who hung upon the cross."

We suggest that no man is fit to preach Christ unless like the Apostles—

1. HE TRUSTS NOT IN SILVER AND GOLD, BUT IN THE POWER OF THE NAME OF JESUS.

2. HE IS FEARLESS IN THE PRESENCE OF THE MULTITUDE, VIEWING HIGH AND LOW ONLY AS THOSE WHO HAVE NEED OF HIS MESSAGE.

3. HE PREACHES THE TRUTH IN THE FEAR OF GOD, SEEKING NO FAVOUR FROM MEN AND REFUSING TO USE FLATTERING WORDS.

4. HE IS OF NO ACCOUNT IN HIS OWN ESTIMATION.

Out of the good treasure of his heart Peter brings forth that which is good. He proclaims the fact that GOD HAS GLORIFIED HIS SERVANT JESUS.

Thus had He put His seal upon His service, and the disapproval of that same service, by the Jews had not hindered Him from so doing. How triumphantly this Holy Ghost-inspired preacher rang out this note, a note sadly missing in modern preaching, in which man and his needs are so prominent instead of Christ and His glory. In Peter's sermon we have the fulfilment of the Lord's words in John 15. 26, 27:

"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning."

It is well for the preacher to dwell much upon the exaltation of Christ, the Holy Ghost will help him in this, and will also be with him in proclaiming the fact to others. Many a preacher is powerless because he does not stand up with the consciousness in his soul of the glory of his Master. He is defeated before he begins because the triumph of Christ is not real to him. What can be more arresting, more conscience-awakening than this, that God has glorified Jesus, whom men put to shame, that He has crowned with glory and honour the One whom they crucified as a malefactor.

There was divinely given wisdom in the way Peter announced this fact. It was no strange God who had done this, a God whom neither they nor their father's knew, but the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God to whom they owed their national existence, and in whom they professed to boast and trust. If He had done this one of two ways stood open to them, either they must own the worthiness of Jesus to be thus glorified, and so show themselves to be true children of the fathers, or still refuse Him and disown the God in whom their fathers trusted in so doing.

Moreover, another point of importance is here brought into prominence. It was the God of the Old Testament who has exalted Jesus, He is the God of the Old and the God of the New. Revealed as Almighty to Abraham, He is preached now as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. This we need to affirm, for there have arisen those who deny that the God of the Gospel is the Jehovah of the ancient covenants; they would destroy the value of the prophetic word, and the unity of the Scriptures.

With what force Peter brings the lash of the truth upon their consciences. They delivered up and denied God's perfect Servant, and bitterly opposed Pilate when he proposed to release Him. They sought as a favour that a murderer might be granted them and clamoured for the death of the Holy One and the Just. They killed the Prince of life.

Here is a pattern for every preacher; the state and conduct of the hearers are searched out and exposed by the truth. Their opposition to God and their love of violence and evil rather than of holiness and justice are plainly set before them; and also that they chose the way of death rather than the Originator, or Prince of life.

Notice how the Apostle keeps in the foreground the truth of the Person of Christ, this is the marrow of all true preaching. Christ came as the Servant of God, as He said: "*Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it was written of Me) to do Thy will, O God*" (Hebrews 10. 7).

As to His nature He was the Holy One, as to all His works and ways He was the Just One. Thus He stood alone amongst men, the only one who was always and altogether pleasurable to God, and upon whom death had no claim. But there was more, He was the Prince, or Author of life, this carries us back to the beginning, to the declara-

tion of His Godhead power and glory in John 1.

God had raised Him up, and the unparalleled wickedness of men in killing Him had not changed His wonderful character as the Author of life; He was raised up that He might be this effectually and eternally; not of physical life only, which men forfeited by their sin, but of eternal life which was the gift of God through Him, a life entirely of grace, founded and maintained upon what He is and not on what we are. And this life and blessing was now being preached to the most guilty men in the most guilty city on earth.

Again, as in his first sermon, Peter appeals to the Scriptures. What his hearers had done had not taken God by surprise, for He had before showed by the mouth of all His prophets that Christ should suffer. And He had fulfilled His word as to this, as He will fulfil every other word that He has spoken.

The points that are notable in this sermon, as far as we have considered it, are

1. GOD HAS GLORIFIED HIS SERVANT JESUS.

2. IT IS THE GOD WHO MADE PROMISES TO ABRAHAM, ISAAC AND JACOB WHO HAS DONE THIS, THE GOD OF THE OLD TESTAMENT IS THE GOD OF THE NEW.

3. THE HOLINESS OF THE NATURE OF JESUS; THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF ALL HIS WAYS, AND HIS DIVINE GLORY AS THE AUTHOR OF LIFE ARE MADE PROMINENT.

4. GOD HAS RAISED HIM UP TO BE THE FOUNTAIN OF BLESSING, AS WITNESS THE PERFECT SOUNDNESS OF THE ONCE LAME MAN.

5. HIS SUFFERING AND DEATH WERE ACCORDING TO THE WILL OF GOD FOR BLESSING.

6. THE SCRIPTURES ARE THE WORD OF GOD, FOR IT WAS GOD WHO SPOKE BY THE MOUTH OF HIS PROPHETS.

Notes and Queries.

I used to say that Peter must have preached a wonderful sermon at Pentecost to obtain such wonderful results. I do not say that now. Now I say, he must have preached A WONDERFUL SAVIOUR. We may not be able to preach with Peter's power, or command his fervency of spirit, but we can preach His Saviour, for His Saviour is our Saviour. And He through whose name three thousand were saved on that memorable day has still the same power, undiminished by the lapse of the centuries, or by the faithlessness of His professed servants, so that we may take courage.

Somebody remarked to me that on the day of Pentecost one sermon saved three thousand souls, but that now it seemed to require three thousand sermons to save one soul. I have no wish to make little of the powerlessness for blessing of much that passes for preaching to-day. But I replied to the remark; I believe that more than three thousand souls have been saved to-day, and if we

have not seen them, God has, and heaven has rejoiced over them. Yes, the work goes on, for Christ is still the Saviour, and the Holy Ghost still uses the gospel unceasingly and unweariedly, and will do until the day of grace is done.

The following questions have been sent to us, which we hope will be answered in our next issue.

"What is the cause of so much want of zeal on the part of many who have passed safely through the dangers of the past five years? I have in my mind a few whose lethargy, or 'fed-upness' (the words one used in regard to meetings, etc., were 'I'm fed up') with reference to the Lord's things and service is to-day most disappointing."—E. W.

"What constitutes being 'sent'!" "How shall they preach unless they be sent?" Regular gospel services are carried on, but often are not effective or productive, and the preacher wearies and his audience wearies too."—E. P. B.

EDITOR.

Notes and questions on these studies are invited.

Pleasant Places—My Lot.

Psalm 16. 11.

IN Palestine each village was a small commune, and on a certain day, at the beginning of the year, the villagers met for the annual allotment of the village land.

The lots were numbered, and each lot contained ten lines, and as the land was divided as fairly and evenly as possible, some of the lines would be in good ground and some in bad, so as to make the portions equal. The number of each lot was written on a small stone, and the stones were placed in a bag, which was held by the rabbi seated at the door of the village synagogue, the farmers standing all round him he would then call out a small boy from the crowd, tell him to pick a stone out of the bag and hand it to the first farmer in the row. The moment the man thus got his lot for the year he went off to see what the lines were like, and there

was often great disappointment. But whether good or bad they were his for the year; they were never all good.

We now begin to understand the Psalm. In verse 5, "Thou maintainest (or better obtainest) my lot, (therefore) the lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places." When I obtain my own lot of life by dipping in the bag of fate for myself, the result is very uncertain, and at best will be a mixture of good and evil; but where God chooses for me the path of life, when my times are really in His hand, when He really directs my path (Prov. 3. 6), then and then alone will "I bless the Lord at all times, and His praise will continually be in my mouth" (Ps. 34. 1), for all the different lines in my lot will prove to be good and pleasant because they are His choosing; and I would have none of them altered.

(Selected.)

Jerusalem and its Royal Owner. No. 1.

As seen by Zechariah.

The Lord will be the glory in the midst of her. Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold thy King cometh unto thee. All nations shall go up to Jerusalem to worship the Lord of hosts (Zechariah 2. 5; 9. 9; 14. 16).

TO those who belong to the assembly of which our Lord Jesus Christ is the Head it is declared, "Jerusalem above is free, which is our mother"; and our character is now being formed by God according to that of the heavenly city. It is revealed in its symbolic splendour at the close of the inspired volume. It is "free," and it has "the glory of God." Freedom or liberty is the birthright of this city's children in contrast to bondage, and glory is their heritage.

In a spiritual sense we are being transformed from glory to glory now, as we look on the glory of the Lord in holy liberty, for, where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty for this. In 2 Corinthians 3. 17, 18 we are shown the present line of progress in our moral transformation. "Liberty," "looking," and "glory" are brought together; the image of the glory of the Lord being revealed as the divine objective. We look in liberty on His glory and the transforming work is carried on by the Holy Spirit.

It is said to the earthly city, Jerusalem, "Break forth into singing; . . . thy Maker is thine Husband; . . . My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of My peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee. I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy battlements rubies, and thy gates carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones. And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children. In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression" (Isa. 54. 1-14). The same in

principle applies to the heavenly Jerusalem's children. It is because of this, we find the Spirit citing the above passage twice in the New Testament (John 6. 45 and Gal. 4. 27). Indeed, just as the tabernacle is spoken of as a figurative representation of the things in the heavens (Heb. 9. 23), so the earthly city has much to teach concerning the heavenly; and though it may be said truly, "The heavens are higher than the earth"; nevertheless, the Creator of the one is the Creator of the other; the Owner of the one is the Owner of the other.

That which was written aforetime was written for our learning; and we may gather much valuable instruction in what is said concerning the earthly city and her Messiah. Just as face answers to face as we gaze into a clear well of water, so in the pure word of God we see the reflection of the heavenly Jerusalem in the delineations of the earthly traced therein (compare Ezek. 40. 2; 43. 1, 5; 47. 1, 12; 48. 31, 35, and Rev. 21. 10-22, 2).

Zechariah might well be called the prophet of the city, which he names over forty times. The three post captivity prophets have each distinct and interesting features. *Haggai* is the prophet of the temple or the house, which he mentions ten times. His great message is concerning the latter glory of the temple (2. 7-9). *Malachi* is the prophet of the Name. He refers to this ten times also. He foretells the time when that Name shall be honoured from the rising to the setting of the sun (1. 11); and that to those who fear His Name the sun of righteousness shall shine forth (4. 2).

The Lord hath chosen Jerusalem.

The outstanding features of Zechariah's prophecy are: (1) that Jerusalem is chosen by the Lord (3. 2); (2) that He will yet be her glory (2. 5); (3) that He, the King over all the earth, shall be worshipped by all nations at Jerusalem (14. 9, 16, 17). In chapters 1. to 6. nine symbolic visions make up the first of the three divisions of the book; and these visions instruct us as to the world powers, and Jerusalem, and its Royal Owner. The last six chapters make up the third division; and show us the King coming to the city; sold for the price of a slave (11. 12, 13); but on His return they grieve and repent; and He, saving the city, reigns in it in great glory. The two centre chapters (7. and 8.) form the second division; and show how Israel's fasts will be turned into cheerful feasts of joy and gladness (7. 3, 5; 8. 9).

The great foundation upon which Jerusalem's coming felicity rests is the fact of the Lord's own choice. It is the same with ourselves, who are members of the body of Christ, the assembly, to-day. We read, He hath chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1. 4). This being so, nothing that has happened since the world was founded shall hinder Him from bringing to pass the eternal glory and blessing for which He chose us. Blessed be His Name, everything is secured already in Christ glorified.

Zechariah, however, shows that there is serious opposition to God's purpose (chap. 3.). Satan appears as an adversary to Joshua, who is seen in the fifth symbolic vision as representing the city; but Satan is rebuked, as it is said, "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan, even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" In the first five books of the Bible we see how God had set His heart on Jerusalem. He had chosen it as the place of His Name, and gave Israel most exact instructions

as to it. *Melchisedec* was King of Salem in Abraham's day; but when Israel entered the land *Adoni-zedec* was King of Jerusalem (Jos. 10. 3). Later, in Judges 1. 4-8, we are told of the defeat in Bezek of *Adoni-bezek*, who was punished, and died at Jerusalem; but, Israel, instead of establishing the city as God's chosen centre, fired it, and went off to settle on the good land for themselves! This is ever the tendency. It is so with believers to-day. Nor was it established until the King of God's choice was raised up,—David the son of Jesse, the great grandson of Ruth the Moabitess, and the great-great-grandson of Rahab the harlot. Sovereign grace provided him, as also Solomon his son, who builded the temple at Jerusalem. Man fails; but God never fails. He had chosen Jerusalem, and that for which he had chosen it must be gloriously brought to pass.

We see opposition also to David; but when he had slain the giant, he "took the head of the Philistine and brought it to Jerusalem" (1 Sam. 17. 54); and, though the Jebusites withstood him long, upon the ground of victory over these foes, God's earthly centre was set up. It will be so finally when David's greater Son, "THE BRANCH" (3. 8), is brought forth. The city of God's choice shall then fall no more. It will be "a brand plucked out of the fire." David saved it thus: so it will be again. Sodom and Gomorrah were not plucked out of the fire: they stand a witness to God's holy judgment upon wickedness: Jerusalem, guilty Jerusalem, will ever stand a witness to the wonderful mercy of God: just as the heavenly city shall shine in His glory as a witness to the exceeding richness of His grace.

The sinful state of Jerusalem is represented in the vision by Joshua's "filthy garments"; but God's mercy overabounds! Jerusalem is cleansed, clothed, crowned, and charged with the care of the house and courts of the Lord. Through the atoning work of

Christ, cleansing shall yet be hers; clothed too, in His beauty, she shall be honoured with the priestly crown, and have the charge of the glorious temple yet to be reared up. What a triumph of divine mercy she will then bear witness to! All-sinful once; all-glorious then! Fit for the fire: but fit city for the King of glory through His own work! Once opposed by Satan: now possessed and blessed by its Royal Owner! Happy city!

The fifth and central vision of the nine given to Zechariah teaches this. The previous four relate to the world powers and Jerusalem: (1) *A man on a red horse* (1. 8), speaking of energy in government in relation to the nations. Jehovah was displeased with them for being at ease and Jerusalem still desolate (1. 15, 16). (2) *The four horns* (1. 18), which speak of the world powers that "have scattered Judah, Israel and Jerusalem." (3) *The four carpenters* (1. 20), sent to fray the powers. This is a matter of deep interest. The word is not "carpenters." Some translate "*workmasters*," and yet point out that they are not masters in the ordinary sense, but men over the workmen. It is just such who are breaking up the powers to-day, though the full fulfilment is future. (4) *The man with the measuring line* (2. 1), speaks of the taking possession of the city, by the One who has chosen it for Himself, by its Royal Owner.

Following these four visions we have that of which we have spoken—(5) *Joshua representing the city* (3. 1); then four further symbols which are full of instruction and interest, though we only indicate them here. (6) *The candlestick of gold* (4. 1), which sets forth the fact that light for the world is yet to shine from the city chosen by "the Lord of the whole earth" (4. 14). (7) *The flying roll* (5. 1), having sanctuary measurements, it carries God's judgment to the man who sins against God and his neighbour (4.). It has reference therefore to the law, which shall "go forth" from Zion (Isa. 2. 3). (8) *The ephah* (5. 6) which is carried to

Shinar, the source of the "wickedness" and idolatry which brought ruin to Jerusalem before. It is set upon its "own base," in the land of Babylon, to be judged there. (9) *The four chariots* (6. 1), these speak of God's governmental energies in the earth; and their activities cease not until "the Man whose Name is the **BRANCH**" comes forth and establishes the royal city, the holy temple, and the throne of glory, bringing in governmental peace and blessing (6. 12, 13). He Himself will sit upon that throne, not simply in the right of Kingship, and in the dignity of Lordship, but also in all the grace of Priesthood; as it says: "He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne, and He shall be a priest upon His throne" (13.). We who know somewhat of His grace and love and glory now can say with Spirit-given intelligence, and with adoring homage, —HE IS WORTHY.

As **KING** He will rightly represent God in the government which He exercises: as **LORD** He will rule for God's glory and man's benefit in His dominion over the earth: and as **PRIEST** He will truly represent man before God in unfailing grace and consideration. Such an One has never yet filled a throne on this earth. The only One who could have done so, they crowned with thorns and hung upon a cross; but God raised Him from among the dead, and exalted Him to His right hand. In due time, thank God, He will return; and then, let it be repeated, "*He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne, and He shall be A PRIEST UPON HIS THRONE.*" Better things than the most extreme democrat ever thought of shall obtain then; higher authority than the most zealous autocrat ever strove after shall be maintained then; and glory beyond the ambition of the most devoted royalist shall surround the throne, when the King of kings, who is also Lord of lords and the Priest of the most High God, fills that throne, and rules with dignity and grace.

God the Blessor.

Psalm 32.

HOW do I stand with God? is a serious question—a serious question which every child of Adam should consider and consider well. It matters comparatively little how I stand with those around me, for it is not to them I have to give account. But “every one of us shall give account of himself to God.”

In Psalm 32. David gives to us something of his experience as he judged himself in the sight of God and came into the blessed knowledge of the forgiveness of his sins and of acceptance, in other words of how he stood with God.

Leaving the opening statements for the moment we find verses 3 and 4 telling of what he passed through under the hand of God, before the blessing was known. His proud spirit had no rest, his unbroken will and crooked ways were becoming manifest to himself. He was learning what he was as a sinner guilty and undone before his Maker. But as yet he would not bow and own his need. At length he could keep silence no longer, he was brought to the

CONFESSION

of his condition.

“I acknowledged my sin unto Thee and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.”

Broken in spirit and contrite of heart he owns what he is and what he has done. His “sin,” his “iniquity,” his “transgressions,” his evil in every form is brought into the light. Then at once we find the Lord’s answer to this, “Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.” “I acknowledged . . . Thou forgavest.” These things God has joined, Confession and Forgiveness. The sinner confesses to God and God forgives the sinner. Again and again this holy union

is seen in the Scriptures. The sinner says, “I have sinned against the Lord,” and the immediate answer is, “The Lord also hath put away thy sin” (2 Sam. 12. 13). Or again, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1. 9). Confession is followed at once by

CLEARANCE.

The storm is hushed, the conscience is relieved, the spirit is free. It is this which leads to the exclamations of verses 1 and 2:

“Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

“Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.”

“Blessed,” or *happy*, as it might be translated, thrice blessed and happy is the sinner in such a case. The clearance is complete indeed. Transgressions forgiven, sin covered, iniquity not reckoned. The sinner is now in the presence of God as having nothing against him. God himself has cleared him from every charge and stands between the sinner and his sins.

It was in view of the sacrifice of Calvary that God could righteously clear David. It is in view of the sacrifice of Calvary that God can righteously clear the sinner to-day. The atoning death of the Son of God is the alone ground on which sins were forgiven in past centuries and is the alone ground on which sins are forgiven now.

The transgressions being freely pardoned, the sinful condition being fully covered, the knowledge that iniquity will not be imputed at all to the sinner again, result in the heart and conscience being left free before God. There is no guile in his spirit now. He has nothing to cloak, nothing to hide. Every character of evil has been dragged

from its lurking place and condemned and confessed. *All* is known to God, and He Himself with His own hands has removed the load. One thus blessed may say, "He is my Friend and not my Enemy as I had thought Him to be. He knows me as a sinner and I know Him as a SAVIOUR-GOD. Instead of banishing me He has blessed me and I can now find delight in His presence, which once I shunned. I fear no disclosure. Every fresh discovery of my sinfulness will only discover to me more of the greatness of the grace that has provided for *all*."

"What though th' Accuser roar,
Of ills that I have done;
I know them all and thousands more,
Jehovah findeth none."

Balaam was forced unwillingly to proclaim this blessing of Israel by Jehovah when he said, "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel" (Num. 23. 21). The iniquity and perverseness were there and they were conscious of it among themselves, but Jehovah had covered everything and did not and would not impute aught to them.

We who believe in this gospel day of light and favour can say, "He hath imputed all my sins and evil to Christ and has judged it unsparingly at Golgotha and now He does not and will not impute them to me."

Thus being set free and without guilt on my conscience I can be without guile in my spirit. I have nothing to cover, for God has covered all, cleared all, cleansed all and calls me to joy in Him who has blessed me and is Himself **THE BLESSER**.

But there is more than this. If the matter of my sins is settled perfectly, there are my circumstances to be considered. I am still in a world of care and sorrow, of trouble and difficulty. I need

COMFORT

and comfort I find in God Himself.

"THOU art my HIDING-PLACE;

THOU shalt preserve me from trouble;
THOU shalt compass me about with
songs of deliverance."

Adam when fallen was found skulking away in fear, seeking—vain search indeed—to hide from God. David is found here hiding in God. What a world of difference exists between the two. God is now known as a refuge. The soul tempest-tossed and storm-driven and in a world of contrariety knows the secret place of the Most High and hides under the shadow of the Almighty. He is hidden, preserved and compassed about by God Himself. And He who is great enough for my sins is great enough for my sorrows. I may pillow my aching head on the bosom of infinite love and find relief for my weary heart in His infinite wisdom and power.

"The storm may roar without me,
My heart may low be laid;
But God is round about me,
And can I be dismayed?"

Such is His love and care for me that somehow—in ways I know not—He will work all for my good and all the ins and outs of my pathway, all the ups and downs of my journeying will yet bear witness to the intimacy of His interest in my well-being.

A piece of perforated cardboard was shown by a preacher to his audience. There were threads of silk of various colours crossing and recrossing one another. All seemed hopelessly confused and to indicate no design whatever. It was, however, the wrong side of a piece of work at which they were looking. The card was reversed, and then in clearness and beauty of design and execution the words were displayed "GOD IS LOVE." So we look at "the wrong side" now. We cannot see the import of this and that thread, of this and that stitch. The ways of God with us are "past finding out." But the day is soon to dawn when the whole design and purpose of God in all His dealings with us will be disclosed. Then shall we see how every thread was

helping to spell "God is love" on our earthly sojourning. Then shall we praise Him for all the way that He has taken with us and cry "He hath done all things well."

But, as we well realize, the journey is not yet completed, and many dangers and pitfalls may be before us. Blessed indeed is it to hear Him who is our Justifier and our Hiding-place cheering us by His word, "I will be thy Guide. I will give thee

COUNSEL

I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye."

Along the tortuous course which we may have to follow, He will direct our every going. Every twist and turn is well known to Him and He will be with us at all times. His eye is ever on His own. His hand is ever outstretched for their succour. His heart is unchanging in its love, and we may without a mis-giving depend upon Him for every foot-fall of the pathless desert until home is reached and rest is gained.

If we lack wisdom we may ask of Him, for He gives to all generously. Moreover He does not upbraid even when in our weakness or folly we may have sought to go alone. There are no difficulties with Him. "Is there anything too hard for Me?" is the inquiry of Him who is the Lord the God of all

flesh (Jer. 32. 17). And this God is our God.

We have to watch that we be "not as the horse or as the mule which have no understanding." We have to judge ourselves constantly that no self-will on our part hinders our hearing His voice saying "This is the way, walk ye in it," but still He has undertaken our case and will use bit and bridle if necessary for our welfare. In this too we may find comfort. Thus, in all, God becomes known to us in unfailing grace. As to our sins. As to our cares. As to our course. All He does for us and is to us tends to increase our

CONFIDENCE

in Himself, and with rejoicing hearts we praise His name and pass on our way saying as we continue our psalm of praise:

"Many sorrows shall be to the wicked: but he that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about."

Well, too, may we add,

"Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart."

Thus it is we stand with God. Our past is blotted out, our present is provided for, our future is assured, God Himself is known and delighted in, and in the joy of it all we praise the Blesser.

INGLIS FLEMING.

Notes on Preaching.

TO attempt to preach Christ without His cross, is to betray Him with a kiss.

Even if it be called immoral, as some have asserted, we yet believe that God "hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." We have no home-made theory; but our solemn witness is, that He "His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree."

If you turn away from the Bible and the gospel that it teaches, what have you in the way of preaching and religion? Simply the thoughts of men borrowed and reboiled. Such preaching has been aptly likened to soup made from a borrowed bone, but which had been lent out for a similar purpose on six previous days, so that no further flavour could be extracted from it.

The Song of Songs. Canticle V.

Chapters 6. 13 to 8. 4.

The Witness and Communion of Love.

The Bridegroom.

Ch. 7. 6-9. How fair and how pleasant art thou, (my) love, in delights! This thy stature is like to a palm-tree, and thy breasts to grape clusters. I said, I will go up to the palm-tree, I will take hold of the boughs thereof; and thy breasts shall indeed be like clusters of the vine, and the fragrance of thy nose like apples, and the roof of thy mouth like the best wine. . . .

The daughters of Jerusalem can contemplate the Bride as an object to admire; but the King not only admires, he possesses the Bride and finds in her a source of personal delight. The daughters as they look upon her, exclaim "How beautiful!" and the King says "How fair!" but he adds, "How pleasant art thou, O love, for delights." And the two figures used express the two thoughts. Viewing her in all her beauty he likens her to the graceful and stately palm: viewing her as an object of delight, he likens her "to clusters of grapes." And the King appropriates and enjoys those delights which others only gaze upon and admire. Others may praise her beauty, but he only can say, "I will go up to the palm-tree, I will take hold of the boughs thereof." In his Bride he finds affections that are likened to the clusters of the vine; that which is acceptable and well pleasing likened to the fragrance of citrons; and joys that are likened to the best wine. Thus will it be of the earthly Bride in a day to come. Of restored Israel the Lord can say, "I will make you a name and a praise among all people"; but of the Lord Himself it is said, "He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing." The world will admire and praise, but He will delight in His earthly Bride (Zeph. 3. 17-20). Nor is it otherwise with the heavenly Bride. She will be displayed in glory before an admiring world,

but Christ will see of the fruit of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. So too with a restored soul. Others may see and admire the outward results of restoration, but the Lord finds in the restored soul that which is a delight to Him. David, confessing his sin, says, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation," and then, he says, "will I teach transgressors thy ways," but he adds, as he closes his penitential Psalm, "*Then shalt thou be pleased.*" Restored David becomes a blessing to others, but a pleasure to the Lord (Ps. 51. 12, 13, 19).

The Bride.

That goeth down smoothly for my beloved, and stealeth over the lips of them that are asleep
10. *I am my beloved's, and his desire is toward me.*

The Bride, as she hears the Bridegroom expressing his delight in her, is constrained to speak. If the Bridegroom likens the joy he has found in her to the best wine, she immediately adds, "That goes down smoothly for my beloved." In times past the affections of the Bride may have wandered, but now the restored Bride is wholly for her Beloved. Once she has slept upon her bed, and, overcome with sloth, could not respond to the voice of her Beloved; but all the beauty his love has put upon her has awakened her affections and called forth her delight in him. The best wine has caused the lips of the once sleeping Bride to speak. And the words she now utters express the highest experience of her soul. Through all her wanderings and backslidings she has grown in grace. In the course of these experiences her heart had expressed itself with increasing fervour. When desires after the

Beloved were first awakened her great longing was to possess the object of her affections, and when gratified she exclaims, "*My beloved is mine and I am his*"; but as she grows in the knowledge of his thoughts towards her, she becomes increasingly conscious that she is an object to him, and, with this thought filling her soul, she is constrained to say, "*I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine*"; but at last when her affections are revived and she finds his love unchanged, and that instead of reproaches she hears only expressions of delight in herself, she realizes to the full that she belongs to the bridegroom and that his affections are set upon her, and with great delight she says, "*I am my beloved's, and his desire is toward me.*"

11-13. *Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the fields; let us lodge in the villages. Let us get up early to the vineyards, let us see if the vine hath budded, if the blossom is opening, and the pomegranates are in bloom: there will I give thee my loves. The mandrakes yield fragrance; and at our gates are all choice fruits, new and old, I have laid them up for thee, my beloved.*

The result of all the King's dealings with his Bride is to lead her to think his thoughts, to express his desires, and to share his affections. On former occasions he had said to her, "Come away," and she was slow to respond; but now she takes up his word and says, "Come, my Beloved." She would fain be with him to enjoy the communion of love. She says, "*Let us go forth,*" "*Let us lodge,*" "*Let us get up,*" and "*Let us see.*" Nevermore would she be parted from him. Wherever they go,

wherever they dwell, whatever they do, whatever they see, it must be together. And she says, "I will give thee my loves"; in times past her affections may have been drawn away to other objects, but now they are wholly for the King. So in a later day the Apostle Paul could say, "The life which I now live, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

Ch. 8. 1. *Oh that thou wert as my brother, that sucked the breasts of my mother! Should I find thee without, I would kiss thee; and they would not despise me. I would lead thee, bring thee into my mother's house; thou wouldest instruct me: I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine, of the juice of my pomegranate. His left hand would be under my head, and his right hand embrace me.*

The Bride is not content with the secret expression of her love for the Bridegroom. She desires that all might know her love to the King. Oh that thou wert as my brother, she says, then indeed I could manifest my love before all without any impropriety: "Should I find thee without, I would kiss thee; and they would not despise me." To express our love to Christ in a world that has rejected Him will call down the hatred of the world; but the time is coming when without hindrance we can publicly witness our love to Christ without being despised.

4. *I charge you, daughters of Jerusalem, . . . why should ye stir up, or awaken love till it please.*

The canticle closes with a charge to the daughters of Jerusalem not to disturb the happy communion of love.

HAMILTON SMITH.

God is so absolute that He can do whatever He pleases; but so just that He cannot be pleased to do an unrighteous thing.

It is an immature state of knowledge that renders men susceptible to doubts, but incapable of their solution.

The man who in reading the Bible does not learn to think less of himself reads it not only in vain, but at his peril.

He nothing knows, who knows not this,
That earth can yield no settled bliss,
No lasting portion give.

He all things knows, who knows to place
His hopes in Christ's redeeming grace,
Who died that we might live.

A saint is not free from sin, as to its presence, that is his burden; a saint is not free to sin that is his blessing. Sin is in him, that is his lamentation; he is not in sin, that is his consolation.

The Glad Tidings of God. No. 5.

The Word.

THE instant we come to contemplate the peculiar nature of the present dispensation we find ourselves face to face with eternal counsel. It may be a strange thing to say, but it is nevertheless true, that the fall, and consequently utterly lost condition of man, furnished an opportunity for the fulfilment of all that God had purposed to accomplish when He brought this creation into existence. It would be very difficult to convince anyone that acknowledges the infinite wisdom and might of the Creator, that there was no object in view in bringing into existence the heavens and the earth, and filling them with creatures set in intelligent relationship with Himself, or that when His work has been finished the universe will be other than that which He purposed it should be. Neither of these notions could be entertained by any sensible person that gave it a moment's consideration.

It is said that man is moving slowly but surely upward from the sponge, the jelly-fish, or the decapod, onward to Deity itself, but it is the vain dream of a soul desirous to get rid of responsibility to God. Anything is grasped at and thought to be better than having to do with a holy and righteous God, who will render to every one according to his works! The madness of the creature, or the foaming of demons, is better than having to give account to God!

What a relief it is to be brought out of this darkness into God's marvellous light! Let those who love the darkness wander in it. They prefer it to the light, because in it they can follow the desires of the flesh and of the mind, taking it for granted that responsibility to God is but a relic of barbarism, or a priestly bugbear. But their hatred of the Revelation that God has graciously been pleased to give to us only increases

our thankfulness for the fact that our God has opened our eyes to take in its glorious and life-giving beams.

Man, set on the basis of responsibility, has ever been a failure. When innocent, he was unable to maintain himself in the place of blessing in which he was set by his Maker. With his eyes open to the enormity of his offence he grasped at Godhead, and fell under the power of death. The interdiction that was placed upon the tree of the knowledge of good and evil should not have been by him considered grievous; it was but a small tax levied by the Giver upon such an immense estate. Had this single reservation not been made, it would have appeared as though God had given the whole earth away, and had left Himself without claim upon it. And Adam had abundance without it. He had all that a true heart could desire. But he fell, and he brought sin and death upon all his posterity.

When this had all been manifested, God fell back upon His eternal counsel, and proceeded to carry out the great thoughts of His own heart without any help from the creature, fallen or un-fallen. He manifests HIS WORD by means of the preaching, with which, Paul says, he had been entrusted (Titus 1. 1-4). His Word is the expression of His thoughts, His purposes, His eternal counsels, in short, it is the revelation of Himself in His nature. It began to come to light as soon as man had fallen, but very gradually while man was on his trial, and while God was dealing with him, in order to bring into evidence the need there was for His own intervention on his behalf, if any were to be saved from the righteous judgment, to which their sins had rendered them liable; and during that time promises were given through the prophets that the time was coming in which God

would take up the work of redemption, and bring deliverance to men apart from their co-operation in any way whatever, and that He would do this by means of the Messiah who was promised to Israel, but who was to be His salvation to the ends of the earth (Isa. 49. 6; Acts 13. 47).

Therefore Paul tells the Romans that he was "separated unto the gospel of God, which He had promised afore by His prophets in the holy Scriptures." In the past dispensations the gospel was in promise, but it is so no longer, it is now preached; and where it places the believer is "according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality (incorruptibility) to light through the gospel" (2 Tim. 1. 8-11); life as to our spiritual relations with God, and incorruptibility with respect to our bodies. The former we know now, for we live to God in the life of Christ, and for the latter we await His coming again. This corruptible shall then put on incorruptibility, and this mortal shall put on immortality (1 Cor. 15. 53).

All the activities of God are by His Word. As to creation, "He spake, and it was done" (Ps. 33. 9); "The worlds were framed by the Word of God" (Heb. 11. 3); and, "Upholding all things by the Word of His power" (Heb. 1. 3). By that Word, the creation subsists, and without it, it would have no existence. Hence He who is the *living* Word is ever said to be the Creator: "All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made" (John 1. 3, 10; Col. 1. 16, 17).

When here on earth He cast out devils, and healed all manner of diseases by His Word. He raised the dead, silenced the raging of the sea, and made the winds obedient to His will. His Word is living and powerful, sharper

than any two-edged sword (Heb. 4. 12), and by means of this His enemies are slain (Isa. 11. 4; Rev. 19. 21). It is also the means by which a generation of God is produced upon earth.

The preaching of the gospel is likened to a sower that went forth to sow. The seed is the Word of God. It is the vital copula between the soul and God. It produces a new nature: "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3. 6), just as "that which is born of the flesh is flesh." That which is produced is always of the same nature as that which produces it. The believer is born of God (1 John 5. 1). "Of His own will begat He us by the Word of Truth" (James 1. 18). His Word is the expression of Himself. It is what He is, because it is His Word. When God speaks He gives expression to what He is; and it could not be otherwise, for His Word is Truth. No distinction can rightly be made between Himself and the Revelation which He has made to man, for that Revelation is the Revelation of Himself. Hence to be born of the Word of God is to be born of God.

It is the TRUTH: and nothing else is. The books written on theological subjects are legion, but not one of them is the Truth. They are every one of them defective, for the best and purest of them is only what the writer has learned concerning the Truth, and though they may be very useful as a means of turning the soul to the Fountain of the Truth itself, they are but human writings, disfigured by many a spot and blemish, and to make such a standard of faith would be destructive to the soul.

Though mingled with a great many hypocritical utterances, it is in the main true as regards man, that when he speaks he gives expression to that which he is, for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh (Matt. 12. 34). Hence we read: "Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness" (Rom. 3. 13,

14); all these things come out of the heart, the seat of life, "and they defile the man" (Matt. 15. 18). These things manifest what he is, and they come forth out of the mouth.

We are born again by the living Word of God. Hence where new birth is, there life is: it is the principle of life in the soul. This in itself does not bring a man into Christianity, for Old Testament saints were all born of God, and they were viewed dispensationally as in the flesh, and a Christian is not in the flesh, but in the Spirit (Rom. 8. 9). But where the Word has been heard, and has been received, and has taken root in the soul, a new nature is the result, and that nature is divine; the one in whom the Word has thus taken root is a child of God, he is born of the incorruptible, living, and abiding Word of God, the link between his soul and God has been formed.

The Gospel is the Word of Truth (Eph. 1. 13), and of that Gospel Paul was not ashamed; it was the power of God to salvation to every one that believed (Rom. 1. 16). It speaks in the ears of men declaring a Saviour-God. It opens the blind eyes to His abounding grace. It reveals His gracious attitude toward all men. It makes no demand upon the poor bankrupt sinner. It tells men, not what they should be, but what God is. If the Word fall into the heart of the careless multitude, the devil, who is ever watchful, has no difficulty in taking it away; if it fall into the hard and stony heart that has never felt the gravity of sin against God, there may be joy for a little, but the frown of the world will swiftly cause it to wither away. If it fall into a heart filled with the cares and riches of this world, it will presently be choked. If it fall into a heart that has been alarmed by the prospect of judgment to come, it is likely to take *root* there, and no power in the universe can prevent its springing up to the salvation of the soul.

But it is not only that by which we are born again, it is also the food of the

believer's soul. As new-born babes we are to desire the sincere milk of the Word, that by it we may grow up to salvation (1 Peter 2. 2, New Trans.); that is, to the complete emancipation of the soul from every evil thing that would hold it in bondage. The prophet could say, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart" (Jer. 15. 16). The Word is the food of our spiritual being as natural bread is the food of our bodies. That which is fed with the bread that perishes will itself perish, but that which is fed with the bread of life, the bread that comes down from heaven, will live for ever (1 Cor. 6. 13; John 6. 58, 63). We are apt to imagine that all that is required is to have the body well nourished with natural bread, and forget that "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word of God" (Luke 4. 4).

It is the means by which we are kept from defiling influences in our passage through this unclean world (Ps. 119. 9). It searches us, probes to the centre of our moral being, discerns the thoughts and intentions of our hearts, warns us when there is the least deviation from the path of righteousness, and cheers our hearts with the bright prospect of arriving at the rest that remains for the people of God. It opens heaven to our spiritual vision, it surrounds our earthly pilgrim pathway with light divine, and it sheds its light into the very belly of hell, giving us to appreciate the grace that has delivered us from the eternal consequences of our sins. It rebukes the will of the flesh, stimulates us to walk after the Spirit, holds ever before the eye of faith the witness of the fathomless love of God in the death of His only begotten Son.

It is the means by which God gives effect to His counsels. Without it there never would have been anything for Him in this fallen world. By the encouragement which it poured into the heart of Adam he was enabled to call his wife "Eve, because she was

the mother of all *living*." In the light of it Abel offered the acceptable sacrifice, Enoch walked with God, and Noah prepared an ark for the saving of his house. It kindled a hope in the heart of prophet and martyr that no power on earth could quench and no hell-invented instrument of torture could extinguish. It converts the sinner, establishes the saint, and judges the impenitent. It lifts up the fallen, supports the feeble, and emboldens the faint-hearted. It is God in a world that knows Him not, Christ in the sphere of His rejection, and life in a spiritual necropolis. It slays the rebellious, awakes the drowsy conscience, and heals the broken heart. It is hated and feared by the devil, scorned and derided by the wiseling, and, alas, too often neglected by the saint. It is the commandment of the Father, the witness of the Son, and the sword of the Spirit. It throws light upon the beginning, makes manifest the end, and contains all we need for the present time. In Christ we see it living, in the Scriptures we have it written, and in the Spirit we have it in power. We need nothing else for spiritual light, we need nothing else for spiritual food, and we need nothing else for spiritual refreshing. In a word, it is the light, life, soul, sustenance, fountain and fullness of the ransomed universe. And surely we can well understand it to be all this, seeing it is the perfect expression of all that God is in His approach to men—Himself revealed in Jesus, who is the living Word.

"Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders,

and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will?" (Heb. 2. 1-4). It was the Father's commandment that was spoken by the Son, and it was eternal life to all who heard it with the hearing of faith; and therefore "blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it" (Luke 11. 28).

The responsibility of hearing that Word is great, and the consequences of rejecting it fearful to contemplate. "See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused Him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven: whose voice then shook the earth: but now He hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things that cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore we receiving a kingdom that cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12. 25-29).

Let us who love that sacred Name,
With heart and soul divinely stirred,
With holy boldness share the shame
Allotted to the Living Word.

The night is cold, the darkness dense,
The preaching impotent has grown,
Feeble and faithless the defence
Of that which we have heard and known.

And yet with pride of heart we cry,
We are the temple of the Lord!
And leave the sin-sick soul to die
Without the life-imparting Word.

Saviour Divine, we bow the knee
Low at Thy footstool and confess
That oft we ask ourselves, Are we
Exculpate of Blood-guiltiness?

O may we hold and spread abroad
That Word of wonder-working grace
Until the City of our God
We enter, and behold Thy face.

Answers to Correspondents.

The World in Revolt.

GATESHEAD.—In the May number of *Scripture Truth*, page 101, Mr. Cross makes a statement which surprises me: "From this it appears that Adam was sent into a world already in revolt." Can you explain who and what was in revolt?

Answer by Mr. Cross.

Genesis 1. 28.—As regards Adam's being sent into a world already in revolt, it is no more surprising than that Christ came into a world in revolt, and that He will "reconcile all things" to God: and Adam is a type of Christ (Rom. 5. 14). Eliphaz tells us that "the heavens are not clean in His sight" (Job 15. 15), and we know that the heavenlies are peopled with wicked spirits (Eph. 6. 12), and that the prince of the power of the air

now works in the sons of disobedience (Eph. 2. 2).

Evidently there were fallen beings long before man was made (Jude 6.; Ezek. 28. 14, 15); while the rugged surface of the earth formed largely by volcanic eruption, and the tempest by land and sea betoken physical forces that must be included in the "all things" that are put under the feet of Adam's Son" (Ps. 8.; 1 Cor. 15.; Mat. 28. 18).

But the word itself settles it beyond all doubt. The Hebrew *Kabash* equals (1) to tread, trample under feet (Zech. 9. 15; Micah 7. 19); (2) to subject, subdue to oneself (Gen. 1. 28), enemies, slaves, a hostile country (Num. 32, 22, 29; 2 Chron. 28. 10; Jer. 34. 11; Neh. 5. 5). (Gesenius).

E. C.

From a Far Country.

(The following is an interesting extract from a letter from the South Sea Islands.)

"MR. GIBBINS recently brought us two boys from South Malayta, who would not promise to remain longer than three months; they came from heathen villages, and of course knew nothing of Christ. After hearing the story of the Cross, one of them came to me again and again in the evening, saying: 'Tell me again about Jesus Who hung on the Cross,' and he never seemed tired of listening. I told him more about the Lord, but he always came back to Calvary. Both these boys left with Mr. Gibbins two weeks ago, and assured me that when they had told their people about the Lord, they intended to return. Please pray for these two lads, Holopaina and Houawa; their relatives may try to draw them away from their newly-found Master, and they are such babes in Christ, one of them scarcely knowing the way of salvation yet.

again, the great need, I might say just now the special need for more workers. The people are so ready to receive the gospel, that no preliminary work leading up to the preaching of the Word is required. It is not necessary here to gain an entrance through medical work, or to start educational work first, all one's strength can be spent in making known the love of Christ. Of course there is much serving of tables to be done especially in a school, and one needs great patience with the new-comers, but we are here to lead these people to Christ and to build up the young Christians.

"As one hears from time to time of the unhealthy spiritual atmosphere at home, the lack of interest on the part of the unsaved, and the apathy of the church, one thanks God more and more for the privilege of being allowed to have a share in this work. People write to us and speak of sacrifice; it is not a sacrifice, but a joy."

"Before I close I must put before you

The Dove and the Olive Branch.

1. "BUT THE DOVE FOUND NO REST FOR THE SOLE OF HER FOOT . . . FOR THE WATERS WERE ON THE FACE OF THE WHOLE EARTH."
2. "AND THE DOVE CAME; . . . AND, LO, IN HER MOUTH WAS AN OLIVE LEAF [OR BRANCH] PLUCKED OFF."
3. "HE . . . SENT FORTH THE DOVE; WHICH RETURNED NOT AGAIN" (Genesis 8. 9-12).

IN allegorical language the olive branch tells of peace and blessing, and the dove of quietness and rest. In the Scriptures they teach us exactly this, only the dove being figurative of the Spirit of God makes the olive branch that He brings tell of a peace that is permanent and eternal. Is the peace that the world has been celebrating of this character? It is not, and thankful as all must be for it, we must not deceive ourselves as to it; it is but temporary and partial.

The sword has been returned to its scabbard for a while; but the sea and the waves of unrest continue their roaring—class against class, if not nation against nation.

We may be looked upon as gloomy pessimists; be it so, we follow the Word of God, and it will not lead us astray or deceive us. And following the Word, we were preserved from the folly of those who before the war believed and taught that humanity was making God-like strides towards a perfect culture and universal brotherhood, Germany leading the way. And when the war shattered these vain dreams, following that same Word, we were preserved from the folly of those who proclaimed that this war would end all war, that it would bind the classes and nations together by the bonds of one common sacrifice; and a better world, purged and purified, would come forth from the awful crucible into which it had been thrown. Those who thus prophesied left human nature out of their calculations, and deceived themselves by dreams and visions. But "hope springs eternal in the human breast"—would

that the hopes were centred in the right Person—and men are still seeing visions and dreaming dreams; they may do so, but they will not see the kingdom of God unless they are born again, for so declared the Son of God, and for us His solemn words are recorded in John 3. 1-7.

The red horse and his rider, filling the earth with misery and death, follows closely in the track of schemes acclaimed as calculated to set the world free; and it is when peace and safety are celebrated with the greatest satisfaction and gaiety that sudden destruction is at hand. Meanwhile "the Name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it and are safe."

Peace, true and lasting, can only be where the heavenly dove can abide; and He can only abide where sin is not, or where it has been cleansed and righteousness established, and neither are true of the world as it is.

The Dove's First Visit—No Rest for the Sole of its Foot.

But what lessons would the story of the dove from the ark teach us? Let us consider it and see. When first it was let loose from the ark it found no rest on the earth overwhelmed by the waters of death. Here we read in allegory the condition of the world before Christ came into it. Mankind, in whom God would have delighted, had they been subject to His holy will, had rebelled against Him; and "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed

upon all men, for that all have sinned." Moral and spiritual death had submerged the whole race.

In the earliest ages of the earth's history, when it was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, the Spirit of God brooded upon the face of the waters. So when sin like a shroud of death wrapped mankind about, the Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men to see if there were any that did understand and seek after God (Ps. 14). His Spirit strove with men, but there was no place where He could rest; God could not find His pleasure in mankind, so there was no peace according to God; for the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked (Isa. 57. 21).

We are not overlooking the fact that God in His great mercy rescued some from the universal death, and sent His Spirit to visit them on special occasions; they were but the exceptions that proved the rule, and the rule was that moral darkness covered the earth and lay most heavily upon the people. But the Scriptures were ever full of hope, and those who were lifted out of the surrounding moral death looked onwards by faith as directed by the Scriptures to a time and a state of things when the Spirit of God, the heavenly dove, would find rest in the earth made habitable for Him. There is one passage in particular that must have been full of blessed promise for those who felt the awful chaos of a world without God, It is in Micah 5. 2-5. "BUT THOU. BETHLEHEM EPHRATAH, THOUGH THOU BE LITTLE AMONG THE THOUSANDS OF JUDAH, YET OUT OF THEE SHALL HE COME FORTH UNTO ME THAT IS TO BE RULER IN ISRAEL; WHOSE GOINGS FORTH HAVE BEEN FROM OF OLD, FROM EVERLASTING. . . . AND THIS MAN SHALL BE THE PEACE."

The Second Visit—Rest in the Olive Tree.

Seven centuries waited for the fulfilment of this prophetic word, but they did not wait in vain. The due time arrived at last, and the Angel of God announced the blessed fact to the shepherds of Bethlehem saying: "Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. . . . And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, PEACE ON EARTH, goodwill toward men." This Man shall be the peace, for He is more than man. His goings forth were of old, from everlasting. He belonged to eternity, He was its very centre. The Father's bosom was His undisturbed abode, and He brought the peace of that sinless and unchanging Eternity into a storm-tossed and peaceless world. "*This Man shall be the peace,*" for in Him God intervened to bring light into the world's darkness and to establish peace.

Thirty years passed by, years of secret testing and triumph, from which this blessed Man emerged into public witness for God. John, a man sent of God, carried out his mission on the banks of Jordan, and many who heard him speak went down with him beneath the waters, owning thereby that death was the just judgment of their sins. To these, the excellent of the earth, Jesus joined Himself, and though sinless, identified Himself with them in this act of righteousness. Then the heavens opened and the heavenly dove, the Spirit of God, came forth again, not this time to seek a resting place on earth in vain, but to alight upon Him and there to abide, and the Father's voice was heard, speaking from the open heavens, and saying, "THIS IS MY BELOVED SON, IN WHOM I AM WELL PLEASED."

The dove from heaven and the olive tree growing up upon earth were in perfect accord, for Christ was the "green olive tree in the house of God" (Ps. 52. 8), the tender plant growing up before Him (Isa. 53. 1), whose fatness honoured God and man (Judges 9. 9). Upon Him the Spirit of God could rest with perfect complacency, for in Him, the Man of God's purpose and prophetic word, God found His good pleasure.

He shone in the darkness as the light of the world, the way of life and peace; but, alas, the darkness comprehended not the shining of the light, nor the meaning of it; and men hated the light and loved the darkness because their deeds were evil. And especially was this the case in the city of Jerusalem, which name means the city of peace, but how false to her name has that city been hitherto, so that we read, "When He was come near He beheld the city, AND WEPT OVER IT, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, THE THINGS WHICH BELONG TO THY PEACE! but now they are hid from thine eyes" (Luke 19. 42).

The Olive Branch Plucked Off.

The "light of the world" was cast out and the Man who shall be the peace was rejected. More than five hundred years before this event, Daniel the prophet was interceding with God on behalf of Israel, when Gabriel was sent to him to tell him that this would be so, in these words. "And after three score and two weeks SHALL MESSIAH BE CUT OFF, AND SHALL HAVE NOTHING" (Dan. 9. 26, marg.). The Messiah was the olive tree, but He was cut off. He ceased to grow in the midst of Israel, for they would not have Him. "Away with Him," was their cry, when he was presented to them as their King. So that from that time until He returns in power to claim all that is His as David's Son, He is "*the olive branch plucked off.*"

What wide-spreading desolation and death covered the whole race of man when Christ lay in death, for "WE THUS JUDGE THAT IF ONE DIED FOR ALL THEN WERE ALL DEAD." But on the resurrection morning He appeared above the waters of death—the olive branch, the pledge of peace to all who seek peace. But this peace was now to be associated with heaven and not with earth, for He was received there after being cast out here.

The Dove with the Olive Branch in his Mouth.

But God has not abandoned His purpose to bring men into peace, and the Holy Ghost has come from heaven as a witness of this. He came direct from the coronation of Jesus in heaven to bear witness to Him on earth, and of peace through Him. He came to fulfil the Lord's words: "*But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of me*" (John 15. 26).

He has come with His mouth full of Christ, for the gospel which is preached to men—the gospel of God—is concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, and there can be no peace with God apart from Him. But what infinite grace is this, that the Christ whom men slew is now presented to them as God's olive branch, His offer of peace to the uttermost part of the earth! We learn from this that the cross of Christ, which on the one hand made manifest the hatred of man against God, declared on the other God's love to man, and that that which was the crowning act of man's sin became the means by which God could establish peace on the firm basis of divine righteousness.

The witness of the Holy Ghost, the heavenly dove, to Christ—the olive branch—has resulted in the establish-

ment of God's Kingdom on the earth. It commenced at Pentecost and it continues to this day, for it is a kingdom that cannot be moved. Empires and thrones rise up, decline and fall, but this abides for ever. It is in the world but not of it; it draws no supplies either of wisdom or power from the world, and derives no benefit from man's philosophy or religion, for the "KINGDOM OF GOD IS NOT MEAT AND DRINK; BUT RIGHTEOUSNESS, PEACE AND JOY IN THE HOLY GHOST" (Rom. 14. 17).

The question for us all is, how have we treated the witness to Christ that the Holy Ghost has brought? Have we believed His witness? If so then are we in the Kingdom of God, of which Christ is the Royal Head. He is King; and our delight will be to do homage to Him. He is the new "Leader and Commander," the Prince and Lord of a new race. And the exceeding wonder is that the same Holy Ghost that came upon Him who was so absolutely suited to be His habitation now indwells every individual member of that new race.

All who have believed the gospel of our salvation are sealed by this same Spirit. This does not mean that they are free from sin, for the flesh is still within them; but they are now "*in Christ*" (Rom. 8. 1), and of Him, for "He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren" (Heb. 2.). The life of Christ—eternal life—is theirs, and one with Him, through infinite mercy on the ground of that once-for-all and perfect sacrifice made at Calvary, they are holy brethren, and have entered the Kingdom of God; thus the Holy Ghost indwells them, and that kingdom is a kingdom of peace.

But the very preaching of this kingdom proves that it is all over with man's kingdoms. They will exist for a while but will finally make way for Christ's kingdom. It also proves that all the

schemes for reconstruction are vain. The presence of the Holy Ghost for His great mission of bearing witness to Christ, rejected by the world, demonstrates what the world is; for "when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father, and ye see Me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." (John 16. 8-11).

Yet the Christian must not be indifferent to the wants and needs of men. He must do good unto all, and show the grace that belongs to the kingdom of which he is a happy subject to the most unworthy and unthankful.

The Heavenly Dove's third visit : the earth full of the knowledge of the Lord.

The Holy Ghost will not always abide in this world bearing witness to Christ, and offering peace with God through Him. Indeed, everything points to the speedy close of His wonderful mission. He will return to heaven, quickening the mortal bodies of those in whom He dwells (Rom. 8), when the Lord rises from His throne to receive those whom the Holy Ghost has gathered out of this world for His name, Then when the day of judgment has come and is passed, and the earth has been purged and cleansed from its defilement and revolt against God, and all nations acknowledge Christ as King; the earth shall be a habitable place for the heavenly dove, and God's Spirit shall be poured forth on all flesh (Joel 2. 28). He will come to abide on earth as a place in which righteousness reigns.

The Dove and the Branch will not be divided in that glorious day; for the Branch will be the King who shall reign in righteousness, and the effect of it shall be peace. "For there shall come forth

a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and A BRANCH SHALL GROW OUT OF HIS ROOTS; AND THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD SHALL REST UPON HIM, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the suckling child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put

his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious " (Isa. 11. 1-10).

"And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it " (Micah 4. 2-4).

J. T. MAWSON.

Blessing through Trial.

"IF we pass through trial without the sympathy of Christ we get no good from it; self-occupation is increased. It is well to see that it is not pressure nor sorrow of itself that softens, but really the sympathy of Christ."

"The children of God are not exempt from the sorrow; often it seems as though they had more than those who are in the world. The difference between them and us is this: we are through grace acquainted with the divine love, and they are not. Even the afflictions through which we pass we may view as the fruit of that love, for it is said, 'Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.' The world may look upon affliction as accidental, or,

even worse, as the sign of the displeasure of God; we know that it is that which He allows for the good of His own." He withdraws us from that which would naturally occupy us in the world, that in secret He may teach us our need of Himself. He shows us the fleeting character of all that is here, and how unsatisfactory everything is outside His own will; but at the same time He shows us the greatness of His love, and all the wonderful treasures which lie in it. The sympathy of Christ also comes in to sustain us. He knows what sorrow is, and has now passed through the heavens, and there is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. It is a wonderful thing to be in circumstances where we may be sustained by the love and sympathy of Christ."

“The True Grace of God Wherein Ye Stand.”

There can be no progress, power or perseverance in spiritual life unless the soul is established in grace. We have read no paper in which grace is set forth so clearly and blessedly as it is in this one. We commend it specially to the notice of those of our readers who have not seen it, assured that it cannot fail to help them.

GOD IS MADE KNOWN TO US AS THE “GOD OF ALL GRACE,” and the position in which we are set is that of “*tasting that He is gracious.*” How hard it is for us to believe this, that the Lord is gracious.

The natural feeling of our hearts is, “I know that thou art an austere man”; there is the want in all of us naturally of the understanding of the grace of God.

There is sometimes the thought that grace implies God’s passing over sin, but no, grace supposes sin to be so horribly bad a thing that God cannot tolerate it.

The very fact of the Lord’s being gracious shows sin to be so evil a thing that, man being a sinner, his state is utterly ruined and hopeless, and nothing but free grace will do for him—can meet his need.

Were it in the power of man, after being unrighteous and evil, to patch up his ways, and mend himself so as to stand before God, there would be no need of grace.

We must learn what God is to us, not by our own thoughts, but by what He has revealed Himself to be, and that is, “The God of all grace.” The moment I understand that I am a sinful man, and yet that it was because the Lord knew the full extent of my sin, and what its hatefulness was, that He came to me, I understand what grace is.

FAITH MAKES ME SEE THAT GOD IS GREATER THAN MY SIN, AND NOT THAT MY SIN IS GREATER THAN GOD. . . .

The Lord that I have known as laying down His life for me is the same Lord I have to do with every day of my life, and all His dealings with me are on the same principles of grace.

THE GREAT SECRET OF GROWTH IS, THE LOOKING UP TO THE LORD AS GRACIOUS.

How precious, how strengthening it is to know that Jesus is at this moment feeling and exercising the same love towards me as when He died on the cross for me. This is a truth that should be used by us in the most common everyday circumstances of life.

Suppose, for instance, I find an evil temper in myself, which I feel it difficult to overcome; let me bring it to Jesus as my Friend, virtue goes out of Him for my need.

Faith should be ever thus in exercise against temptations, and not simply my own effort; my own effort against it will never be sufficient.

THE SOURCE OF REAL STRENGTH IS IN THE SENSE THAT THE LORD IS GRACIOUS.

The natural man in us always disbelieves Christ as the only source of strength and of every blessing.

Suppose my soul is out of communion, the natural heart says, “I must correct the cause of this before I can come to Christ,” **BUT HE IS GRACIOUS; AND KNOWING THIS, THE WAY IS TO RETURN TO HIM AT ONCE, JUST AS WE ARE, AND THEN HUMBLE OURSELVES DEEPLY BEFORE HIM.** It is only

in Him and from Him that we shall find that which will restore our souls. Humbleness in His presence is the only real humbleness.

IF WE OWN OURSELVES IN HIS PRESENCE TO BE JUST WHAT WE ARE, WE SHALL FIND THAT HE WILL SHOW US NOTHING BUT GRACE. . . .

It is Jesus who gives abiding rest to our souls, and not what our thought about ourselves may be. Faith never thinks about that which is in ourselves as its ground of rest; it receives, loves and apprehends what God has revealed, and what are God's thoughts about Jesus in whom is His rest.

Knowing Jesus to be precious to our souls, and our eyes and our hearts being occupied with Him, we shall be effectually prevented from being taken up with the vanity and sin around; and this too will be our strength against the sin and corruption of our own hearts.

WHATEVER I SEE IN MYSELF THAT IS NOT IN HIM IS SIN, but then it is not thinking of my own sins, and my own vileness, and being occupied with them, that will humble me, but thinking of the Lord Jesus, dwelling upon the excellency in Him.

IT IS WELL TO BE DONE WITH OURSELVES, AND TO BE TAKEN UP WITH JESUS. WE ARE ENTITLED TO FORGET OURSELVES, WE ARE ENTITLED TO FORGET OUR SINS, WE ARE ENTITLED TO FORGET ALL BUT JESUS.

There is nothing so hard for our hearts as to abide in the sense of grace, to continue practically conscious that we are not under law but under grace. It is by grace that the heart is "established," but then there is nothing more difficult for us really to comprehend than the fullness of grace, that "grace of God wherein we stand," and to walk in the power and consciousness of it. . . . It is only in the presence of God

that we can know it, and there it is our privilege to be.

The moment we get away from the presence of God, there will always be certain workings of our own thoughts within us, and our own thoughts can never reach up to the thoughts of *God* about us, to the "grace of God."

Anything that I had the smallest possible right to expect could not be pure, free grace—could not be the "grace of God."

It is alone when in communion with Him that we are able to measure everything according to His grace. . . .

It is impossible, when we are abiding in the sense of God's presence, for anything, be what it may—even the state of the church—to shake us, for we count on God, and then all things become a sphere and scene for the operation of His grace.

THE HAVING VERY SIMPLE THOUGHTS OF GRACE IS THE TRUE SOURCE OF OUR STRENGTH AS CHRISTIANS; AND THE ABIDING IN THE SENSE OF GRACE, IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD, IS THE SECRET OF ALL HOLINESS, PEACE, AND QUIETNESS OF SPIRIT.

The "grace of God" is so unlimited, so full, so perfect, that if we get for a moment out of the presence of God, we cannot have the true consciousness of it, we have no strength to apprehend it; and if we attempt to know it out of His presence, we shall only turn it to licentiousness.

If we look at the simple fact of what grace is, it has no limits, no bounds.

BE WE WHAT WE MAY (AND WE CANNOT BE WORSE THAN WE ARE), IN SPITE OF ALL THAT, WHAT GOD IS TOWARDS US IS LOVE.

Neither our joy nor our peace is dependent on what we are to God, but on what He is to us, and this is grace.

GRACE SUPPOSES ALL THE SIN AND EVIL THAT IS IN US, AND IS THE BLESSED REVELATION THAT, THROUGH JESUS ALL THIS SIN AND EVIL HAS BEEN PUT AWAY.

A single sin is more horrible to God than a thousand sins—nay, than all the sins in the world are to us; and yet, with the fullest consciousness of what we are, all that God is pleased to be towards us is love.

In Romans 7. the state described is that of a person quickened, but whose whole set of reasonings centre in himself . . . he stops short of grace, of the simple fact that, whatever be his state, let him be as bad as he may, God is love, and only love towards him. Instead of looking at God, it is all "I," "I," "I."

Faith looks at God, as He has revealed Himself in grace. . . . Let me ask you, "Am I—or is my state the object of faith?" No, faith never makes what is in my heart its object, but God's revelation of Himself in grace. . . .

GRACE HAS REFERENCE TO WHAT GOD IS, AND NOT TO WHAT WE ARE, EXCEPT INDEED THAT THE VERY GREATNESS OF OUR SINS DOES BUT MAGNIFY THE EXTENT OF THE "GRACE OF GOD." At the same time, we must remember that the object and necessary effect of grace is to bring our souls into communion with God—to sanctify us, by bringing the soul to know God, and to love Him; therefore the knowledge of grace is the true source of sanctification.

THE TRIUMPH OF GRACE IS SEEN IN THIS, THAT WHEN MAN'S ENMITY HAD CAST OUT JESUS FROM THE EARTH, GOD'S LOVE HAD BROUGHT IN SALVATION BY THAT VERY ACT—CAME IN TO ATONE FOR THE SIN OF THOSE WHO HAD REJECTED HIM.

In the view of the fullest development of man's sin, faith sees the fullest development of God's grace. . . .

I have got away from grace if I have the slightest doubt or hesitation about God's love. I shall then be saying, "I am unhappy because I am not what I should like to be"; that is not the question. The real question is, whether God is what we should like Him to be, whether Jesus is all we could wish.

If the consciousness of what we are—of what we find in ourselves, has any other effect than, while it humbles us, to increase our adoration of what God is, we are off the ground of pure grace. . . . Is there distress and distrust in your minds? See if it be not because you are still saying "I," "I," and losing sight of God's grace.

IT IS BETTER TO BE THINKING OF WHAT GOD IS THAN OF WHAT WE ARE. This looking at ourselves, at the bottom is really pride, a want of the thorough consciousness that we are good for nothing. Till we see this we never look quite away from self to God.

In looking to Christ, it is our privilege to forget ourselves. True humility does not so much consist in thinking badly of ourselves, as in not thinking of ourselves at all. I am too bad to be worth thinking about. What I want is, to forget myself and to look at God, who is indeed worth all my thoughts. Is there need of being humbled about ourselves? We may be quite sure that will do it.

Beloved, if we can say as in Romans 7., "In me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing" we have thought quite long enough about ourselves; let us then think about Him who thought about us with thoughts of good and not of evil long before we had thought of ourselves at all. Let us see what His thoughts of grace about us are, and take up the words of faith "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

J. N. DABY.

Jerusalem and its Royal Owner. No. 2.

Jerusalem's Glory.

‘Come, Lord, and reign o’er all supreme,
Lord Jesus, come.’

When the time arrives for the fulfilment of God’s promises concerning the city, it will be said to her, “Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. . . . Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended” (Isa. 60. 1, 20). John was allowed to see her glory, according to God’s Word which is settled in heaven; and “there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars” (Rev. 12. 1). That day, however, is not yet come, and a higher and greater work of God is proceeding on the earth; the assembly is being called out by the preaching of Christ; and is being built up by the teaching of Christ; and in divine love the assembly is growing up to Christ, Who is its glorified Head, and shall soon be translated to heaven, to shine as the heavenly Jerusalem, having the glory of God, with the throne of God and the Lamb in her midst. Meanwhile, the earthly city is still desolate, and not yet returned to the possession of her Royal Owner, and to her regal splendour.

He is not, however, indifferent as to her condition. He says, “I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy, and I am very sore displeased with the nations that are at ease; for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction” (Zech. 1. 14, 15). Overturnings amongst the nations have in view the restoration of this city and the return of her Messiah. God will not be indifferent to those who treat her well; it is said,

“He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of His eye” (2. 8). If the Jerusalem which is above be the bride, the Lamb’s wife, nevertheless the earthly city is very precious to Him. He set His heart upon her for His earthly metropolis. He created her, chose her and exalted her. True, she fell very low; but that becomes the occasion to manifest the unchangeableness of His love for her. He will save her, deliver her, redeem and restore her to greater glory than in the days of Solomon; coming Himself to dwell within her walls and to be the “glory in the midst of her” (2. 5).

All will be changed for her then. It is with this in view that the *second division* of Zechariah is given,—the two centre chapters, 7. and 8. Just like the central division of Isaiah (chaps. 36. to 39.), this is also based on an historical incident. Messengers come from Babylon to pray, and to inquire concerning a certain fast. The answer shows that they were not fasting to the Lord (7. 5); nevertheless, the days shall come when Jerusalem shall be a city of truth (8. 3); the people shall be saved; brought to dwell in the midst of the city; and the Lord says,—“They shall be My people, and I will be their God in truth and in righteousness” (8. 8). Their fasts shall be to them “joy and gladness, and cheerful feasts” (19). Many people and strong nations shall then come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem (22); and “in those days ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you” (8. 23). What a change! Both city and people will then have been cleansed by God’s mercy through the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ; and have been clothed with His beauty. They reject Him now: they will have repented and returned to Him in that day.

The *third and last division* of Zechariah gives the history of this. In the first of these final six chapters the prophet foretells the first coming of the King to His city (9. 9), and passes right on to the time of Jerusalem's blessing, for he omits in chapters 9. and 10. His rejection. This is often the way even with a single verse in the prophets. For instance, Isaiah 9. 6: "*a Child is born*"—that speaks of Christ's first coming: "*the government*" on His shoulder—that speaks of His second coming; not a word is said about His rejection, which has lasted for nearly twenty centuries. It is the same in Zechariah 9. and 10., "The King comes; His dominion is from sea to sea; they say, How great is His goodness, and how great is His beauty! He is the Lord their God."

In chapters 11., 12. and 13., however, His rejection is plainly stated. He is sold for the price of a slave—for thirty pieces of silver (11. 12; Exod. 21. 32). The city refuses her true Lover, her royal Lord: He is pierced and wounded. Trouble then comes upon her. She is a cup of trembling and a burdensome stone to all peoples. They gather together against her, and this calls out the unchanging love of her Lord. He seeks "to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem" (12. 9). He saves Judah first, then the house of David, and Jerusalem (7). Their eyes are opened, and they look upon Him whom they pierced. They mourn for Him. They are in bitterness for Him. "What are these wounds in thine hands" (13. 6)? they ask. They had been inflicted by His friends, by those of the royal city. They learn, however, a deeper lesson, as we see in the next verse. For their salvation He had received at Calvary the smitings of the sword of divine justice. Through *human injustice* He suffered: also by *divine justice*; and He, Jehovah's equal, had suffered in this latter way for them, that they might be blessed. His suffer-

ings from *man* could not have secured this.

Like Thomas, when they see the wounds they will believe. Like Him, too, they will say, "The Lord, my God" (13. 9). Like him also, they miss the present and more precious portion, even as the Lord indicated, when He said, "Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." The Jews will not be converted by the preaching of to-day, which speaks to faith and not to sight: they will repent and turn to the Lord when He *shows* Himself to them again—when they *see*. We cannot enough praise the grace that has called us to trust in Him now; which has given us a place in the assembly, of which He is the unseen Head in heavenly glory at God's right hand.

It is nevertheless a great joy to our hearts to know, our beloved Lord shall yet be owned by Israel; and that He will yet be the glory of the earthly city. Who else can claim Jerusalem? Is David's Son the appointed heir? As the Offspring of David then the honour is His. Has David's Lord the prior claim? He is David's Root as well as his Offspring, his Lord as well as his Son; therefore the glory falls to Him thus also. Yea, it is Jehovah Himself who is speaking when it is said, "They weighed for My price thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said unto Me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prized at of them!" and again, "They shall look upon Me whom they pierced." This brings them to own Him as their Lord and God. He is the Royal Owner of the city; and here lies the explanation of that wonderful verse in the last chapter of Zechariah: "The Lord shall be King over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and His Name one" (9). Jerusalem will be His royal city, and all nations will do homage to Him there.

Then indeed will be fulfilled that

word of His, *I will be the glory in the midst of her* (2. 5). Christ is the glory of Jerusalem. Who else could be? He created her, cared for her, saved her from her sins, redeemed her when she fell, delivered her from all her foes, restored her to a higher position than she had lost, and established her throne. He alone can be her glory! for He is her Creator, her Protector, her Saviour, her Redeemer, her Deliverer, her Restorer, her King, her Priest, her Lord, her God—her all.

They may well say, "How great is His goodness, and how great is His beauty!" (9. 17). His Name shall then be named upon her, as Jeremiah shows:

"This is the Name whereby *He* shall be called, JEHOVAH-TSIDKENU" (23. 6); and "this is the Name wherewith *she* shall be called, JEHOVAH-TSIDKENU" (33. 16).

What a welcome awaits Him inside those gates, outside of which they once put Him to death. With what joy and triumph shall He enter, where He was once led out in sorrow and shame. He shall be her glory then. "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord of Hosts, He is *THE KING OF GLORY*."

H. J. VINE.

Remarks on Paul's Gospel. No. 5.

EPHESIANS 1. 8. We come now to Ephesians. This epistle may be regarded as characteristically the epistle of the mysteries. It is perhaps the climax of the Apostle's ministry. For height, certainly; for scope perhaps the Epistle to the Colossians takes precedence. The one carries us "far above all heavens," and to "all generations of the age of ages"; the other embraces "the all things, both in the heavens and on earth," as it sets forth the redemption glory of Christ in the universe reconciled to God, who created it by, or in the power or virtue of Christ, thus stamping it with this character as so created for His eternal pleasure.

If Romans gives us "the gospel of God," Ephesians gives us "the mystery of the gospel," a subject beyond the conception of man's mind, unknown to him and past his knowledge until it was revealed, demanding in its superlative stretch the unrestricted power of the Spirit not only to set it forth objectively, but also the same power in us subjectively to apprehend it. For "what man knows the things of a man save the spirit of the man that is in him?" So the deep things of God are known

only to the Spirit of God, who not only reveals them to us but gives us the capacity also to receive them (1 Cor. 2. 6-16). This is the great burden of the Apostle's prayer (Eph. 3. 14-19).

As to the part the Spirit plays in giving character to this epistle, we may remark as follows: we have—

Ch. 1. 3: "Spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ."

1. 13: We are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.

1. 17: We have the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him.

2. 18: Access by one Spirit to the Father,

2. 22: a habitation of God in the Spirit,

3. 5: revelation to the apostles and prophets by the Spirit,

3. 16: strengthened with power by His Spirit in the inner man,

4. 3: the unity of the Spirit, formed by the

4. 4: one all-pervading Spirit,

4. 23: man's mind grown old and corrupt is renewed thereby.
4. 30: Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God whereby we are sealed for the day of redemption.
5. 9: The fruit of the Spirit (A.V.) should read "the fruit of the light."
5. 19: We are exhorted to be filled with the Spirit expressing itself in joyfulness of conduct and demeanour as the result of occupation with those glorious things which are our common and our heavenly inheritance as we enter now into the foretaste of them by the Spirit.
6. 12: Against these spiritual blessings, fruits of a garden more beautiful than Eden, as of old so now the arch enemy is plotting destruction all he can with the spiritual powers of wickedness in the heavenlies. For the tremendous struggle we need the panoply of God, all the armour complete, that we may be able to stand in the evil day—the day of peace is not yet—and having done all to hold the ground entrusted to our keeping.
6. 17: For this we need among other things the sword of the Spirit which is the spoken Word of God, *i.e.* spoken directly to us, as Moses said to Israel, "Ye heard the voice of the words" (Deut. 4. 12–33), and David says (Ps. 17. 4), "By the word of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer." It is not enough to know the Bible as the literature of spiritual things; we need to hear it from His lips and have it livingly imprinted in our souls.
6. 18: Moreover, prayer and supplication must be in the Spirit; it must have that character and competency. The mere use of words however orthodox, and even rightly meant, is not sufficient to stay the mighty force of evil, uniting craft and violence against us. As all the hosts of evil in "the world-rulers of this

darkness" are arrayed against the testimony of Christ, it needs the mightier power of God by His Spirit to support us in our helplessness to stand in this evil day, and having done all to stand.

Such is the position in which the Apostle places the assembly, pleading in the Spirit for all saints and for himself that he might have boldness to make known the mystery of the gospel for which he was an ambassador in bonds. What was it that urged him thus to pray for boldness in the utterance of these things? One would have thought that he was bold enough for anything; a bold and fearless man. Was it only the power of the Roman empire he had before his mind—the mouth of the lion? or had he also the opposition of the the human heart under the power of Satan, wherever found, against the testimony of Christ that would displace the man after the flesh in favour of another man after another order? Whatever he had to fear from those "outside," he had among those "inside" not only open enemies but "false friends," of whom he had to experience that "confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth and a foot out of joint" (Prov. 25. 19). Of his Master it is written, "Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled" (Matt. 26. 56.) Fie upon us! So of the servant: "This thou knowest, that all who are in Asia have turned away from me" (2 Tim. 1. 15). Nevertheless, the Lord stood by him and delivered him from the very jaws of death.

Great man and true! If we have not grace and faith to follow thee, the pattern of thy faithfulness is still given to us to contemplate and admire.

To return from this digression we have:

Ephesians 1. 9. "The mystery of His will." Of old "He made known His ways unto Moses, His acts unto the

children of Israel" (Ps. 103. 7). To us He has made known the mystery of His will. This is a vast subject, as it sweeps down to us through the ages from before the world's foundation (ver. 4) bearing in its breath "the glory of His grace" in associating us with the Christ in "the administration of the fulness of times" (ver. 10), when "the all things" will be headed up in the Christ, both the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth, when the confusion of this present time will give place to a universal order of harmony and beauty under the directing rule of the second Man and the heavenly saints whom He will associate with Himself in the subjecting of all things into obedience to the will of God.

This millennial reign of Christ, inducted and maintained in righteousness, with the saints associated with Him therein, will be, as it were, the prelude of a wider drama, the vestibule of a new creation both of the heavens and of the earth. It is temporal, as it says, "for the administration of the fulness of times." The latter is eternal, outside the span of time (Rev. 21. 2; 2 Pet. 3. 12, 13).

The object of the Apostle in this epistle is not so much to set out the scope of this administration, this belongs largely to John's apocalyptic visions, but rather the personal exaltation of Christ, the second Man (Ps. 8.), and "the riches of the grace" that associates us with Him there in the dignity and responsibility of such a calling, as says the Apostle, in—

Ephesians 3. 3. "The mystery that by revelation has been made known to me,"

Ephesians 3. 4. "... in which, in reading it, ye can understand my intelligence in the mystery of the Christ."

Thus the Apostle claims for himself to have received by direct revelation the knowledge of this mystery; and as it was revealed to him by the Spirit, so by the same Spirit he was empowered to make known fully, while writing "briefly," in few words, as he does in the preceding chapters 1. and 2., his intelligence therein.

Ephesians 3. 9. And this is stated more definitely still as being the special ministry confided to him, when he says, "To me . . . has this grace been given to announce among the nations the glad tidings of the Christ, and to enlighten all with the knowledge of what is the administration of the mystery, hidden throughout the ages in God, who has created all things, in order that now to the principalities and authorities in the heavenlies might be made known through the assembly the all various wisdom of God, according to the purpose of the ages, which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. .

Every member of this sentence is replete with wisdom to be found nowhere else outside the writings of the Apostle, and demands our most careful and prayerful consideration. It is the climax of the Apostle's ministry as regards the assembly for this present time, and as it sets her here according to the mind of God in the place assigned to her in His wisdom, so we may expect the determined and too successful efforts of the enemy to becloud the issue and so frustrate the purpose of God in respect of her in her testimony here. That this purpose will yet be accomplished in the ages to come does not affect the object of this ministry of the Apostle for the time being, or alter the responsibility of the assembly for the carrying out of it "now," or make her failure in not doing it the less.

EDWARD CROSS.

Duty inquires the least that CHRIST will take,
Writing her out a duly stamped receipt;
Love weeps to have no richer heart to break,
And pour upon His feet.

Studies in Preaching. No. 3.

The Apostolic Sermons.

The Preacher's Sphere.

THE last words that the disciples heard from the lips of their risen and ascending Lord were, "*Ye shall be witnesses unto Me . . .* **UNTO THE UTTERMOST PART OF THE EARTH.**" What amazement must have filled their Jewish hearts when, after the cloud of glory had received Him out of their sight, they began to realize the vastness of the sphere in which they were to witness for Him. They were eager to tell of His glory to Israel, for hitherto their hopes and affections had been confined within that narrow bound; but now in their hearts were to be enlarged at the coming of the Holy Ghost to embrace the world; they were to speak of the most blessed Person, exalted to the most glorious place, to the greatest possible number of men; for not a needy sinner beneath the sun had to be denied the favour of hearing the Word, and upon all had to be pressed the rightful claims of Christ.

What a rebuke are these last words of our Lord to our narrow, selfish and anti-missionary hearts! What a challenge they are to us and our indifference to all but a very confined circle, and the way we have of miserably limiting the Gospel and its preachers! Let us consider them afresh in the light of His ascension to heaven to be the centre of blessing for all; being the Lord's last words they ought to profoundly impress us. In them we learn the extent of the Lord's claims; His power for blessing; the immensity of the grace that is in Him, as well as its suitability to the needs of men even to the uttermost part of the earth. Here also we learn the breadth of the love of God, who gave His Only-begotten Son for the world,

and will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.

"Yes, the love of God is broader
Than the measure of man's mind;
And the heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind.
But we make His love too narrow
By false limits of our own,
And we magnify His strictness
With a zeal He will not own."

"*Unto the uttermost parts of the earth.*"

With this agrees the declaration of Ephesians 4. 8 that, when He ascended up on high, *He gave gifts unto men.*" Not to the assembly only, though they were not apart from that, certainly not any limited circle in the assembly, but to men.

The Preacher's Power.

The power that was to carry these witnesses for their wonderful Saviour to the uttermost part of the earth was the Holy Ghost; without Him they were not to move a step or speak a word. "*Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you.*" They were to receive POWER; but this power was inseparable from the person of the HOLY GHOST, and His coming was specially to enable them to WITNESS FOR CHRIST. A great many would like to have power that would give them a place amongst their fellows. In this the devil will help them, but not the Holy Ghost; He has come solely and only in the name of Christ and for His glory.

Being God, the power of the Holy Ghost is the same to-day as then; the growing corruption of Christendom may make it impossible for Him to give the same manifestation of His presence as He did at Pentecost, nevertheless there is no other power for God on earth. All

the vast organizations and the machinery that men have created, who depend upon the arm of flesh, and upon the wisdom of the schools, and upon money gathered from any quarter, tainted or otherwise, for the carrying on of so-called religious work, are a hindrance to God's work and no help. They make more show and noise as they build their wood, hay and stubble, and outstrip the world in self-advertisement and self-laudation; but the Holy Ghost is not in it, and when the trial by fire comes the work will not stand. Happy is the servant of Christ who has no confidence in the carnal weapons; who in faithfulness to his Master will stand apart from that which does not glorify Him; who pursues his true mission of witness for Christ, and places himself at the disposal of his Lord to be filled with the Holy Ghost to this end.

The Preacher's Mission.

It is necessary in these days in which even true servants of Christ make the blessing of men and their uplifting the primary matter to insist that **WITNESS TO CHRIST IS THE PREACHER'S MISSION**. Blessing to men will follow this as effect follows cause, but "*Ye shall be witnesses to Me*" is the commission, and it is for this that the Holy Ghost gives power. A man may talk of the blessing of men with great eloquence and leave them still self-centred and consequently unblest, but if he bears witness to Christ all who are affected by it will change their centre; they will turn from self to Christ and "magnify God" This is the work of the Holy Ghost.

What a glorious witness it was that they had to bear. They had seen their Lord nailed upon a cross as a common malefactor, thieves on either side; hatred and mockery around; and darkness above from whence they expected that succour would come to Him. It

was a sight of most awful dreadfulness to them; it had filled them with unspeakable sorrow; it had broken their hearts, shaken their faith, and scattered them like sheep attacked by wolves. But His resurrection had gathered them, removed their sorrow and stabilized their faith; and now the Holy Ghost had come to fully instruct them in the meaning and necessity of that cross, and to tell them that it had been exchanged for the throne; that their Lord had been crowned with heavenly glory and honour; that God had "highly exalted Him and given Him a name above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of thing sin heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

The Holy Spirit came upon them directly from the enthronement and coronation of their Lord, from the scene of exultation in heaven at His triumph and the Father's delight in Him; and, filling them as He did, they bore witness as though their very eyes had beheld it all, for the Spirit's witness to them as to it, made it real to faith's vision. Thus they spake, and this was their theme, and this still is the true theme of the preacher. Sad that those who have so glorious a subject should be so caught by the spirit of the world that they find other themes more congenial, and spend their energies upon many schemes for the betterment of the world, instead of uplifting Christ as the great magnet who draws men out of it to Himself. But the Holy Ghost will not depart from His mission no matter how the servants of the Lord may fail, and none shall seek His help in vain whose purpose is to bear witness unto Christ.

The Result of the Witness.

To those who believed the witness of the apostles the Holy Ghost was given.

This was part of Peter's message in his first recorded sermon. "Repent," he said unto them, "and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and YE SHALL RECEIVE THE GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST." Two things at least were involved in this. Firstly, when the Holy Ghost came upon any one it meant that the Lord was thereby taking possession of that which was His by right of purchase. The Lord's rights were involved in it. We must give a greater place to this in our preaching. So often we dwell upon what men will get; but what will the Lord get? He will get all who believe the gospel concerning Himself, and He takes possession of them as His own when the Spirit seals them. The Spirit comes to make good the Lord's claims in those who believe. Secondly, the gift of the Holy Ghost gives to those who receive it the power and capacity to enter into a sphere of blessing entirely outside the range of the natural man; for the natural man receiveth not the things of God, they are spiritually discerned. Our preaching is poor in this respect, we dwell largely upon what men will be delivered from—their sins will be forgiven, and they will be saved from the judgment those sins deserved; all very true, but all negative. But the gospel brings what is most blessedly positive; it opens the door to the things of God, gives these things to the saints as their inheritance, gives the Holy Ghost so that those who believe might have a present knowledge and enjoyment of these things, and a well of water within them fully satisfying the deepest yearnings of the soul; a power transforming every part of the life; a capacity for entering into communion with God. The gift of the Holy Ghost meant the translation from a world, disappointing, bankrupt and condemned, into the Kingdom of God, the head and centre of which is the victorious Lord and Saviour, and the power of which is the Holy Ghost thus received, and the joy of which is God Himself.

Questions and Answers.

Tongues of Fire.

We often hear of TONGUES OF FIRE, but Scripture says, "like as of fire," which I understand to mean that the appearance was of forked or cleft flames. I should like a word of explanation.—H. A. M.

THE TONGUE is the instrument by which the word is made known. "How shall they hear without a preacher"; and thus it was that the Holy Ghost appeared. He had come from heaven to bear witness to the world, to bring the testimony of God to men, and these men whom He filled, and upon whom He sat, were to be His vessels. This is the prominent thought at Pentecost, and not the baptism of believers into one body, though that of course took place, but was not the first thing in the mind of God at the moment. THESE TONGUES WERE NOT ONE BUT WERE AS FORKED FLAME. The testimony of the Holy Spirit was not to be confined to one nation as was the law; it was to be universal, toward the whole world. The will of God was that all men must hear the word in their own tongue, thence the statement, "The Word is nigh thee, even in thy heart and in thy mouth, that is the word of faith which we preach" (Rom. 10.). The Romish system denies this when it insists upon its services being rendered in one tongue only, and that, one that the multitudes do not understand.

THE FORKED TONGUES WERE AS OF FLAME. It was in human words that the truth was to be spoken, but the truth was God's truth, and "our God is a consuming fire." The message was a message of grace, a glad evangel suited to the needs of a world, sinful, miserable and lost, but it came only as a result of God's righteous judgment of sin having been borne by the Holy Sin-bearer. The words were pure words—"the word of righteousness." God pro-

claims the forgiveness of sins, but He does not tolerate sin; His gospel makes it exceeding sinful, so that those who heard that gospel and believed it did not think that sin was nothing, or at the worst something to be excused and winked at, but they were brought to deep repentance because of it. Like a flame of fire the word drove its way down into their consciences until in their horror of their own sin and with a sense of God's holiness they cried, "What shall we do?" This is the meaning of the tongues of flame.

It is this that is so sadly lacking in modern preaching, thence the shallowness of the results, and probably one reason, and perhaps the chief reason, is that those who preach the word are not themselves under its searching power.

The Pouring Out of the Spirit.

"This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel" (ver. 16). Does this mean that a complete fulfilment of the prophecy occurred? If so, in what sense could it be said that the Spirit was poured out on all flesh?

"All flesh" in this passage stands in contrast, we judge, to Israel only. And Peter's heart at the moment must have been full of this. The last words he had heard from the Lord's lips as He ascended to heaven were "to the uttermost parts of the earth." He was filled with the Holy Ghost, who had come to bear witness to the world; and filled, gifted and inspired by the Holy Ghost the apostles spoke, not the language of the Jew only, but with many diverse tongues; the blessing was for all, for WHOSOEVER shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." The passage stands on the same plane as John 12. 32, where "all men," in contrast to Jews only, are to be drawn to the uplifted Son of Man. All flesh does not necessarily mean every individual, but that all nations are in view.

It is plain that the Spirit is only given

to those who have turned in repentance to God, and have believed His testimony as to Christ; as in the type the oil (figurative of the Spirit) was only put upon the blood (redemption) (Lev. 9. 14). Acts 2. gives the character of the outpouring and not the completion of it; this will take place as in the days which Joel describes and which will follow the judgments which he foretells in chap. 3, when nations will turn in repentance to God. The church will have been translated to heaven before this final fulfilment of the prophecy.

The Gift of Tongues.

Why is the gift of tongues connected with the baptism of the Holy Ghost?—H. S.

The gift of tongues, which was inseparable from the coming of the Holy Ghost (see also chaps. 10. 46; 19. 6) indicated the universality of the witness that He brought and the urgency of the message. It was exercised in the assemblies also, for they were composed of men of many languages, but the chief use of it seems to have been to spread the word intelligently and immediately amongst all nations. It was a sign gift, and passed away when the faith was established in the earth.

How Shall They Preach, Except They be Sent?

I should like to ask what constitutes being "sent."—E. B.

Our correspondent deplors the ineffectiveness of much of the preaching, and the consequent indifference of the multitudes to the gospel, and the lack of interest even in those who come to the regular services, many doing so merely because it is customary, and evidently not expecting to hear a living message.

This widespread condition of things should produce great exercise in the

preachers. It is impossible to move men according to God unless the preacher comes from God. To be SENT is of first importance; to have to do with God about the message and those who are to hear it is surely the *sine qua non* of successful preaching. Those who have affected others have always been men who sought audiences with God. John the Baptist came from God before moving the multitudes of Israel. The apostles spent ten days in prayer before Pentecostal blessing broke on them and through them; and if there comes a revival of prayer, of spending more time with God about the message than in delivering it, we may yet hope to see the state of things which our correspondent deplors give place to earnest interest on the part of those who come together to hear the gospel. Not all are called to preach, or sent of the Lord to do it, though He has given

to every servant his work; each should know, as a result of communion with his Master, what that work is, and carry it out with fervency of spirit in dependence upon Him. The preacher may be tempted to cast the blame of the dead state of things upon others, or upon the general indifference to the things of God which marks these difficult times; but let him remember that God's message is a living message—the POWER OF GOD unto salvation, and seek to so preach it that many may believe. Better not preach at all than give those who gather together the impression that "the wonderful works of God" are of small importance. No light, heat, or power can be obtained from the electric power station without contact therewith, and no preacher, no matter what his gifts, has power with men for God, unless he is in contact with God.

EDITOR.

The Song of Songs. Canticle VI.

Chapter 8. 5-14.

The Triumph of Love.

The Daughters of Jerusalem.

Ch. 8. 5. Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?

THE previous canticle closed with the desire of the Bride to express her love for the Bridegroom before all the world without being despised. In this canticle her desire is gratified. The Bride is seen coming out of the wilderness leaning upon the arm of her Beloved, and the daughters of Jerusalem enquire, "Who is this?" In the fourth canticle the Bride had sought and found the Bridegroom; in the fifth canticle she had held sweet and secret communion with him; but now, at last, she is displayed before the world in company *with him*, but in dependence *upon him*. Wilderness wanderings are left behind, the glory shines before her.

Thus will it be with Israel, the earthly bride. Jehovah will allure her and bring her into the wilderness; there will He speak to her heart, and there, when restored, the Lord says, "I will betroth thee unto me for ever" (Hos. 2. 14-23).

So too, when the wilderness journey of the church is past and the marriage of the Lamb is come, she will be displayed in association with Christ in glory, as a bride adorned for her husband, as we delight to sing:

"O day of wondrous promise!
The Bridegroom and the Bride
Are seen in glory ever;
And love is satisfied."

Nor is it otherwise that the Lord acts towards restored saints. We wander and fall, but grace brings us up out of our wanderings leaning upon Christ,

just as the Bride is seen "leaning upon her beloved." We fall, like Peter, through leaning upon our love to Christ, but in tender grace He lifts us up and brings us to lean upon His great love to us. This was the happy experience of John, of whom we read in John 13. 23, "There was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved." How slow we are in learning this lesson of dependence. Pride makes it hard to own our nothingness and His fullness, our weakness and His strength, and thus to find all our resources in Him. It was no easy task to learn as sinners that we must come bringing *nothing to Christ*, and we are equally slow as saints to learn that we must draw *everything from Christ*, according to the Lord's own words, "Without Me ye can do nothing." "Leaning" is weakness clinging to strength: "leaning on Jesus' bosom" is leaning on the love of One in whom all fullness dwells.

The Bridegroom.

*I awoke thee under the apple tree;
There thy mother brought thee forth;
There she brought thee forth (that) bore thee.*

Brought to happy dependence on the Bridegroom's love, the Bride is reminded that all the blessings that are hers, from the moment when she was brought forth in weakness, she owes to the Beloved. Never must we forget that we are debtors to grace for all we have and are. Whether it be a backsliding saint restored to communion and public service, or backsliding Israel restored to earthly glory, or a ruined and scattered church displayed in perfection in heavenly glory, all will owe their position to the sovereign grace of the Lord that awakened us, brought us forth out of our degradation and associated us with Himself.

The Bride.

6. *Set me as a seal upon thy heart,
As a seal upon thine arm;*

Leaning upon her Beloved, realizing the grace to which she owes her origin,

and that never again can she rest in her love to the Beloved, she exclaims, "Set me as a seal upon *thy* heart, as a seal upon *thine* arm." She does not doubt his love, but she realizes that all her blessing depends upon his love, not hers. Therefore she seeks evermore a place in his affections, for ever to be upheld by his strong arm. He indeed has a place in her heart, but her confidence is that she has a place in his heart. So the restored soul delights to say of Christ, "My confidence is that my name is upon His heart—I have a place in His affections; my name is upon His arm—I have the protection and support of His strong arm." We can trust His heart, and His arm, though we cannot trust our own. We cannot exhaust the love of His heart, and we cannot limit the power of His arm.

*For love is strong as death;
Jealousy is cruel as the grave:*

The Bridegroom's love is the ground of the Bride's confidence, as the love of Christ is the ground of our confidence. This is a love that has been proved, and found to be strong as death. Death holds men in its strong grip. Death makes sport of all man's puny strength. From the fall onwards men and death have been in mortal combat, but death has triumphed all along the lines, until at last love—love divine—went down into the dark valley and entered into combat with death. At the Cross love came into conflict with death and love triumphed. Death could not hold back the love of Christ; death could not vanquish the love of Christ. Death took away His life but death could not take away His love. Love prevailed, for love yielded to death in order that love might triumph over death. "Death stung itself to death when it killed Him."

Jealousy is cruel as the grave. How pitilessly cruel is the grave. It swallows up the young, the loved, the fairest, and the brightest. It knows no pity, and so jealousy would deal without pity against all that would come between the Bridegroom and His Bride. Christ must be

supreme: "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of Me," and therefore the Lord can say, "If any man come to Me, and *hate* not his father, and mother, and wife and children, and sister, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." To "hate" has the sound of cruelty, but it is the cruelty of jealous love that brooks no rival. Almost universally men speak of jealousy in an evil sense, Scripture hardly ever so. It speaks even of a "godly jealousy." The Apostle can say of believers, "I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy" for, says he, "I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ" (2 Cor. 11. 2). His love to Christ, and his love to the saints made him jealous lest anyone, or anything, should come between them and Christ. He had no pity for any who, by false doctrines, would beguile the saints from Christ. If an apostle or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel let him be accursed. This was the cruelty of jealous love.

Love strong as death, and jealousy cruel as the grave are found together. One is the outcome of the other. Love and jealousy may be found in measure in all men. But it is only love strong as death that calls forth jealousy cruel as the grave.

*The flashes thereof are flashes of fire,
Flames of Jah.*

There is heat and consuming fire in love. Do we not see a flash of this consuming fire in the love of the Lord, that could brook no dishonour to the Father, when He drove the money-changers from the Temple, so that the disciples remembered that it was written of Him, "The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up"? We see too the vehement flame of love carrying Paul through that marvellous life, spending and being spent for the saints, leaving home and ease, facing hunger and thirst, cold and nakedness, perils, persecutions and death, constrained by the love of Christ. We see this holy zeal burning like a

vehement flame in the long roll of martyrs and persecuted saints. The flame of love that glowed in their hearts triumphed over the flame of the faggots that burned their bodies.

*7. Many waters cannot quench love,
Neither can the floods drown it:*

Nothing can quench divine love. The Lord Jesus faced the "many waters," but they could not quench His love. He faced the "floods," but they could not drown His love. At the cross "the floods lifted up their voice," only to find that love divine is mightier than the noise of many waters. There the sorrows of death encompassed Him, and the floods of the ungodly made Him afraid, but they could not make Him yield up His love (Ps. 18. 4). He could say, "The waters are come into my soul" (Ps. 69. 1), but they could not drown the love that was in His heart. All the billows and waves of God passed over Him (Jonah 1. 3), but His love never passed from Him. The "many waters" could not quench His love for His bride, and the floods could not drown it. His love has triumphed and His love abides. Well may we sing, "Unto Him that loves us, and has washed us from our sins in His own blood . . . ; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.

*If a man gave all the substance of his house
for love,
It would utterly be contemned.*

Love cannot be bought. It is true Christ gave up, as it were, the "substance of His house"; He gave up kingdoms and thrones and crowns, but He gave more, He "gave Himself," and in giving Himself He proved His love, for "greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." And in response to this great love He looks for love. Nothing but love from our hearts will satisfy the love of His heart. We may offer the labour of our hands, our silver and our gold, our works of charity and our bodies to be burned, but if there is no love it will utterly be contemned.

HAMILTON SMITH.

Correspondence.

A Letter on Higher Criticism.

DEAR MR. EDITOR,—It is difficult, in a short letter, to deal with the subtleties and crudities of the Higher Critical School. The difficulty arises from the fact that the disciples of this school are so notoriously one-sided in their reading. They will read the works of their masters, but it is rare to meet with one who has made himself acquainted with the very strong case made out for orthodoxy by the opponents of the Critical School.

Professor Huxley, an eminent Darwinian, was "too chivalrous not to allude to the facts which confront Darwinism with unyielding opposition." To his honour be this said. But the Higher Critic writers of to-day have no such chivalry. They repeat their theories, their inferences, their distortions of history, their fanciful suppositions, their insinuations of literary dishonesty, without giving their readers so much as a hint that these things have been dealt with in an able and scholarly way by men whose claim to learning is at least as great as their own.

Has your young University friend ever read the Bible? A fearless, original, continued study of the Book itself, with prayer to God for His help and guidance,

is the best antidote to the poison of German theology.

If perplexed by the cunning arguments of his professors he should read not mere snippets from pamphlets, but good, solid works dealing with the subject. From an archaeological point of view, the eight volumes of Urquhart's "New Biblical Guide" cannot well be surpassed. His four supplementary volumes "The Bible and How to Read It" deal more with questions of a literary nature, and are of great value.

Many of the questions turn largely on the nature of the evidence pro and con. As to this, one accustomed to weigh evidence may claim priority over mere theological professors, often unduly biassed. It is this fact which gives exceptional value to the works of the late Sir Robert Anderson K.C.B., LL.D. Three of his books especially, "Pseudo-Criticism," "The Bible and Modern Criticism," and "Daniel in the Critic's Den" should be not only read, but mastered, by any man who has only heard the other side of the matter, and who desires to know THE TRUTH.

Yours faithfully in Christ,
HAROLD P. BARKER.

Christ or Mohammed?

Has a Mohammedan not as much reason to believe that his religion will take him to heaven as the Christian has that his will? He believes that the Koran is the word of God and follows it to the best of his ability; how could you convince him that it is not God's word.

A. M. M.

Mohammedanism offers no Saviour for helpless and guilty sinners; it can give no relief to a conscience convicted of and burdened with guilt. The Bible offers both. Christ Himself came, offering Himself as the Saviour, the rest-giver, the great Deliverer, and, blessed be His name, He laid down His life in order to be these to us in perfect and eternal

righteousness. Only of Him could such words as Isaiah 53. 5, 6 be said; and only He could say, with all that is meant by it, "I am the Good Shepherd, the good shepherd giveth His life for the sheep. . . . 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.). The Lord Jesus was the holy sinless Son of God, sent into the world to be the Saviour of it. Mohammed was a grossly sensual man, and his alleged revelations and doctrines are well suited to such as he was.

We append a few notes from a friend who has himself been converted from Mohammed to Christ.

DEAR MR. EDITOR,—Mohammedanism, as a system of the most monotheistic religion in the world, is built upon two great factors :

(1) Mohammed the Founder.

(2) The Koran, containing the whole code of Islam.

The devotion to the former and belief in the latter, with the fanatical zeal to carry out the propaganda of Islam are considered to be the only means to ensure an abundant entrance into heaven.

(1). Mohammed claimed to be the greatest and the last of the prophets. A study into his life, character and teachings will reveal at once that he was no more than a man of genius, a legislator, a poet.

Mohammed had no credentials to prove that he was a prophet, and much less a Saviour. He made no pretence to *mediatorial* and vicarious work, on the other hand he indicated that he was a sinner and prayed for his *sins*. Nowhere

in the Koran does he call himself a *Saviour*.

(2). The Koran contains a series of visions or so called revelations from God which Mohammed had while in solitude. It contains the whole code of Mohammedanism which governs all that a Moslem does. But it does not provide a way of salvation for man.

But it teaches that salvation depends upon our good works or meritorious acts and rigid observance of prescribed outward requirements of religion. It sets forth repentance, prayers, fastings, alms and pilgrimages as the infallible means of obtaining salvation, with God's mercy to supply any possible deficiency in our life.

Experience records that the *faith* of a Mohammedan is powerless to save a man from his sins. Religion has no bearing whatever upon man's life. Morality is divorced from religion.

Mohammedanism has no message of Hope and Salvation to a lost sinner. It says to him your destiny is marked. It is the will of God that you should die in your sins.

S. ELVIN AZIZ.

Answers to Correspondents.

Wrestling against Principalities and Powers.

H.A.M.—*What is the nature of the wrestling of Ephesians 6. 12 ? Give an instance of this wrestling in daily life.*

There are several conflicts described in the New Testament, such as the struggle against the power of indwelling sin in Roman 7.; the striving of the flesh against the Spirit (Gal. 5. 17); and the fight of the servant against all that would hinder him personally in his onward course. The character of the wrestling in Ephesians 6, differs from these, in that it is not to obtain, but to maintain, not to acquire possession but to stand fast in that which is possessed already by the grace of God. It occurs in the epistle which sets forth the highest Christian privileges, but it is a conflict which belongs to the whole church of God. The youngest believer is enlisted

in God's army, although he may not yet have realized the greatness of his place in Christ, nor the immensity of the issue, neither have put on the armour in which alone he will be able to stand against the wiles of the devil, who, unable to hinder his eternal blessing, will use every artifice to seduce him from allegiance to Christ.

The conflict is not with flesh and blood, that is with men as such, for then it might be possible to meet intellect with intellect, argument and reasoning might avail; but seeing it is with spiritual forces using men as their tools, it is necessary to be strong in the Lord and the power of His might.

There are rebellious principalities and powers which rule the darkness of this world, for the world having rejected the light of life in crucifying the Lord of glory has fallen under the power of these wicked spirits, who deceive men, and hold them in the darkness of unbelief. The seat of their power is in the heavens, that is, they exercise a spiritual influence in a religious ascendancy over the mind and conscience, leading away from the truth many of God's children and using others who have but an outward profession of Christianity as instruments to corrupt the faith.

The effect of this may be seen throughout the church's history, and especially in these last days in many departing from the faith and giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils. These evil principalities are the source of the many and much advertised forms of religious deception which are abroad. The Christian has to wrestle against this power to hold inviolate the word of God, and to withstand the foe in the confession of Christ, in spite of all and at whatever cost, and to be found standing victor when the evil day is over, and

every opposing force is silenced for ever. Satanic forces are arrayed against the Christian, using great subtlety, to make him false to his heavenly calling; while he on his part is to stand, clad in panoply of God, and maintain the testimony to a glorified Christ incorrupt and pure.

An instance of this conflict may be seen in the way Paul withstood the assault upon the faith in Galatia. He detected the wile of the enemy which caused even Peter to dissimulate, he saw the Corinthian danger which would have undermined the truth of the cross; and exposed the Colossian snare, exhorting them to remember the place in which the triumph of Christ over principalities and powers had set them, and therefore to give no place to *ritualism*, *rationalism* or *spiritualism* (Col. 2. 15).

Spiritual forces can only be met by spiritual means, hence the great need of fervent prayer for all saints and true servants, and for the practical personal maintenance of the character of Christ, for this is God's armour, that so we may be found earnestly contending for the faith once delivered to the saints.

JAMES GREEN

What is Righteousness?

M.—A thing very difficult to define if before us as an abstract quality. Take it up, however, in a concrete shape, and an answer is easier. A righteous man is one who is RIGHT in all his relations with God, and consequently with his fellow-men also. It may be asked, "What about the expression 'the righteousness of God'?" found in the epistle to the Romans? It stands in sharpest contrast to man's sin. It would seem indeed that if sin had not invaded creation God's righteousness

would hardly have been drawn out into display, it would have remained latent in Himself. Holiness on God's part is absolute. It is His nature; what He is irrespective of all creation outside Himself. Righteousness on His part is *relative*; it is the quality stamped on all His activities, what He is in every dealing and relation with others. Sin is the infringement of rights, His own rights. Righteousness is the maintenance of rights, His own and all others.

F. B. H.

The Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19).

BRIXHAM.—Please say who those are who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb. Does this refer to the Bride?

The wife of the Lamb is referred to in verses 7, 8; verse 9 evidently refers to another company; to those who are invited to share in the joy of the great feast as the friends of the Bridegroom. We believe that the saints of God of Old

Testament times will have this honour and blessedness, for they will be in heaven, though not part of the Bride. John the Baptist, the last of them, spoke for all in John 3. 27-30.

A Great Multitude before the Lamb (Rev. 7. 9-17).

BRIXHAM.—*Is this great multitude the church?*

No. They are those who of the nations have passed through the great tribulation, which will come upon the whole earth (ver. 14), and they have a place of nearness to God *on earth*, for they serve Him in His temple (ver. 15). There will be no temple in heaven, or in the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21. 22). And their blessings are earthly blessings and not

heavenly as verses 16 and 17 imply. Tears wiped away, we believe, has also reference to earth (see Isa. 25. 8, and Rev. 21. 4, the latter passage referring, of course, to the new earth). This multitude are probably the same as the sheep that shall stand on the right hand of the Son of Man when He sits upon the throne of His glory to judge the nations (Matt. 25.).

The Epistles of Christ (2 Cor. 3.).

ROTHES.—*How are the Corinthians called "the epistles of Christ" when going on so badly?*

The assembly of God, and each individual Christian, are the epistle of Christ in the world, His letter of commendation to men. Normally they are the living exponents in the world of what Christ is, and apart from them there is no witness for Christ, and this because Christ has been written in their hearts, *i.e.* they love Him, and love carries obedience with it. The word is not, ye ought to be, but "ye are." If the conduct of a Christian or Christians is bad,

the world gets a bad impression of Christ. Nothing could have been more calculated than the statement of such a fact to make these saints at Corinth consider their ways and to impress upon their consciences and hearts the high dignity and responsibility that was theirs. May we all take it to heart. Paul did not say this to them in the first epistle however, but in the second, when by their obedience to his first Epistle they had proved that they were not reprobates.

The Last Day (John 6.). The Day (Hebrews 10. 25).

What is the meaning of "the last day" in John 6. 39, 40, 44, 54—and "the day" in Hebrews 10. 25?

The "last day" is evidently the day of resurrection, in this sense it is God's day. Man's day cannot be the last, or everything would end in confusion and decay, but God will have something to say and do when man has done his best and his worst; and what God does is permanent, for it is all established in resurrection. Happy are all those who are assured of being raised up on that day, for none can follow to overturn what is done then, it is the last. May not the last day, the great day of the feast, which was the eighth day—which number stands for resurrection—carry a similar thought (John 7. 37). On that day, when in figure man had had his week and failed to benefit himself and his

fellows, Jesus stood and cried, offering the Spirit to all who believed on Him; but this was connected with resurrection, His resurrection and glory. The believer has the Spirit that belongs to the resurrection world already, the earnest pledge that he himself is to be actually raised up (Rom. 8. 11).

Of "the Day" in Hebrews 10, J. N. D. says: The day spoken of here is not the catching up of the church, but the appearing. It is the day of testing. Our responsibility as being here for Christ is connected with that day (see 2 Tim. 4. 1, 8). In perilous times of apostasy and unfaithfulness we must keep the day before us.

The Promise of the Father.

THE greatest gift conferred by God upon the believer is that of the Holy Spirit. But the Love that gave the Son *for* us has found no difficulty in giving the Holy Spirit *to* us. Before ever the arena was entered on our behalf, it was well known to infinite Love all that would be required to effect our deliverance. But nothing has been more than Love could give, and nothing has been more than Love could do. All that God could do was needful, and all that He could do He has done.

"Love that no suffering stayed,
We'll praise, true love divine;
Love that for us atonement made,
Love that has made us Thine."

The Holy Spirit is that seal of God upon us, marking us off as His own. And this gift we receive on believing the gospel of our salvation. It is by this means that God takes possession of us for Himself. Whatever, therefore, we may have to pass through on our heavenward journey, we may boastfully say: "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Tribulation may seem to darken our pathway, but the love of God is ever the light and warmth and comfort of our hearts, and therefore shall we fear no evil. It is not a question of our ability to keep ourselves; this we could not do, no—not for a moment: We "are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Peter 1.).

The Holy Spirit is also the "Anointing," or "Unction," on account of which we can be said to "know all things" (1 John 2.). By Him the love of God has been shed abroad in our hearts (Rom. 5.). By Him we know that we are children of God, and by Him we can cry, Abba, Father (Rom. 8.). By Him we know that the Son is in the Father, and we in Him, and He in us (John 14. 20). By Him we are able to apprehend the things that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard—the things that God prepared before the

world for the glory of them that love Him (1 Cor. 2.). By Him we have access to the Father, and in His power worship, pray, and serve (Eph. 2. 18; Jude 20.; Luke 24. 49). By Him we are able to mortify the deeds of the body, and live to God, and the fact that He dwells in our bodies gives us the assurance of their quickening at the coming of our Lord (Rom. 8.). By Him also we have been baptised into one body, of which Christ is the glorious head (1 Cor. 12.). He is also the earnest of the inheritance, the pledge that we shall one day come into possession of all that is ours in Christ (Eph. 1.). He inspires us with the utmost confidence in the God in whom we have put our trust, that He has not only purposed to bring us home to glory, but that He is well able to accomplish all that He undertakes. We can tread the desert sands with the boast rising continually from our rejoicing hearts: "Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of Thine inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which Thou hast made for Thee to dwell in; in the sanctuary, O Lord, which Thy hands have established" (Ex. 15. 17).

We cannot rightly touch the things of God in this dispensation except by the Spirit of God. The tabernacle set up by Moses in the wilderness was sprinkled with blood and anointed with oil. And this was but a figure of the tabernacle pitched by the Lord. Everything is set up on the ground of redemption. This is set forth in the blood. And everything in connection with the service of God is in the power of the Spirit. This is set forth in the anointing of everything with oil. The service of God cannot be engaged in except in the energy of God's Spirit. The day of carnal ordinances has passed forever. The preaching of the gospel is in the Spirit's power (1 Peter 1. 12), as is every other service in connection with the true tabernacle.

Sell Your Garment and Buy a Sword.

AN ABSENT LORD AND A SUPPER OF REMEMBRANCE.
A LIFE OF WITNESS AND A PERFECT PATTERN.
A SUBTLE FOE AND A CEASELESS INTERCESSOR.
A LIFE OF CONFLICT AND A GREAT COMPENSATION.

LET our thoughts dwell upon the farewell supper and last talk that the Lord had with His disciples before He went into death for them. He had exercised His rights as the Messiah for the last time, and sent them to demand on His behalf an upper chamber in which He could eat the passover feast with them, and pour out His heart in a last farewell before He suffered; and at that supper He clearly showed them what their position in the world during His absence would be, and what resources they would have (Luke 22.).

They loved Him, but He loved them more; and it was His desire, not theirs, that had brought them together for that sacred occasion. The passover feast commemorated the deliverance of Israel from Egypt; the lamb roast with fire upon which they fed year by year turned the eye of faith forward to His coming. And now He had come, and there He sat to share with them that meal which spoke so eloquently of what He would do ere once more the sun sank down over the western sea.

It was at the passover feast that He instituted the supper, which we know and love as THE LORD'S SUPPER, (1 Cor. 11.); and this He did entirely in view of His absence from them. One of the chief features of this period in which they and we are called to witness for Him is that He is absent from this world; they were to serve, and we are to serve, an absent Lord.

AN ABSENT LORD AND A SUPPER OF REMEMBRANCE.

He was to be no more with them, and they would miss His blessed company; and the measure in which they would

miss Him would show the measure of their love to Him. And so it is now; the Lord is not here, He has no place in the world; its politics, social circles, pleasures, and schemes of reconstruction have no room for Him; are we conscious of His absence, and of this? If we love Him we shall miss Him and shall long for the time when He shall come to take us to His Father's house, that where He is we may be also.

Christ is not here. What other than this is the meaning of those words we prize so highly, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them"? If He were here, why gather in His Name? But why is He not here? There are two reasons: *The world hated Him and slew Him;* and *He loved us and died for us.* These are the two sides of the Lord's exit from this world by death.

The world is so seductive and can put on so fair an exterior that we soon forget that the Cross of Christ is the witness of its awful hatred of Him, and that whoso will be a friend of the world is an enemy of God; we little realize that when all things are normal and right with us the cross of Christ is our only glory, and that by it the world is crucified to us, and we to it.

The Lord's Supper brings before us the fact that He is not here—we show the death of our Lord until He returns—and one reason why He is not here is, the world cast Him out. This that was written had to be accomplished in Him: "And He was reckoned among the transgressors." His name was blotted out from David's royal line and inscribed on the criminal roll of Jerusalem. Yes, if the criminal roll of that proud

city for that eventful year could be discovered the name of Jesus of Nazareth would be found along with the names of thieves and murderers. We remember our Lord in death in the Lord's Supper, and from the world's side that is how He died.

But He died for us. He made us His own for ever by a love that gave Himself for us. How easily we forget this. If He stood in our midst and showed us His wounded hands and side, as He did to His disciples on the resurrection day, His love would without doubt be a great reality to us; but "out of sight" is so liable to be "out of mind," so fickle are we; and knowing this He instituted His Supper, which should be a constant and perpetual reminder to us of a love that is stronger than death.

How necessary it is that we should have this eucharistic feast, this supper of love, which expresses so blessedly to us what our Lord is, and our fellowship together—the fellowship of the Lord's death—the one only true fellowship of the many members of one body! What a joy to recall Him whose love many waters could not quench! With the storm gathering thickly about Him His thoughts spanned the whole of the time of His absence and He then and there gave us a supper of remembrance until He comes again!

A LIFE OF WITNESS AND A PERFECT PATTERN.

Those disciples were to witness for Him, and we are to witness for Him during His absence; we are to be His letter of commendation before the world; to shine as lights. But how unlike Him we are by nature, just like those disciples indeed who, even at that supper table, with these farewell words of the Lord sounding in their ears, were quarrelling as to who should be the greatest amongst them. They needed, and we need, to have set before us a perfect pattern if we are to understand what our witnessing must be.

He set Himself before them; they were not to be like the Gentiles but like Him; they were not to exercise lordship over one another, but to follow His example and serve one another in love. Let us incline our ears to hear His words. He said to them, "*I am among you as he that serveth.*" Consider what these words mean! When they awoke in the morning He had been awake before them and prepared their breakfast; they never needed a servant if He was near; His love made Him watch for opportunities to labour on their behalf, and if there was one task more menial than another that was the task He undertook. He, the Lord of glory, was the servant of those rude, unlettered fishermen; His love bound Him with unbreakable fetters to a life of service. He is our pattern, and our witnessing for Him must be after that pattern. He who loves most serves most, and He who would be most like his Lord must take the lowest place amongst his brethren, that he might serve all.

THERE IS A TIRELESS FOE, BUT AN ALL-PREVAILING INTERCESSOR.

Now if we are to witness for Christ, there will be opposed to us a sleepless and subtle foe; and the greater our determination to witness faithfully for Him, the more we shall be challenged and attacked. "Simon, Simon," said the Lord, "behold, Satan hath desired to have YOU that he may sift you [all the disciples] as wheat."

What could Simon do in the presence of Satan—poor, impetuous, self-confident Simon? And what can we do who are as foolish and weak as he? Satan's effort was and is to separate the souls of those whom Jesus loves from Him to destroy them; and what easy prey he would have if it were not for the blessed fact that we have an Intercessor, whose ceaseless and blessed activities on our behalf are all-prevailing. He has died to make us His own; He ever liveth to maintain our faith

in witness for Himself during His absence.

How cheering are the words, "*I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.*" He had anticipated that fierce trial through which Simon was to pass; He had gauged the power of the foe and the weakness of His well-meaning disciples; and He had spoken to God, His Father, about it all, and secured for Simon all the grace that was needed. Simon failed; he was allowed to do so, for he had lessons to learn; but his faith did not fail, and he came out of the distress and the dishonour to strengthen his brethren, and to storm the devil's stronghold at Jerusalem and take captive for Christ thousands who hitherto had been Satan's lawful captives.

The intercession of our Lord is not less effectual for us; He is even at the right hand of God for this purpose. There, amid the glory of the throne, He pleads for us so that we may be more than conquerors through Him that loves us (Rom. 8. 34, 39).

A LIFE OF LABOUR WITH A BLESSED RECOMPENSE.

But these disciples of the Lord had to learn also of what sort their lives would be as witnesses of Christ in the midst of a world that hated Him. Hitherto it had been an easy matter to serve Him, for He had exercised His authority as Messiah on their behalf, and they had gone forth without purse or scrip, or shoes or staves, and they had lacked nothing. Their feet did not weary, and wherever they went their needs were most abundantly met; but now all was to be changed; He was to be rejected; to be cast out as a malefactor, and they were henceforward to be identified with that Name, which was dishonoured by man though honoured of God in heaven. Theirs was to be a life of toil and conflict.

They had to sell their garments and buy a sword. The garment spoke of ease

and comfort and the sword of hardship and conflict. They had to exchange the one for the other.

It has been thought that the Lord spoke here of an actual sword; indeed so thought these disciples, for they said, "Lord, behold, here are two swords." And He said unto them, "It is enough." But if He had meant an actual sword, He would not have said, "It is enough." He would have said, "It is not enough, you will want one each." The fact is, they did not understand then the spiritual significance of His words. But Paul understood them afterwards when he described the Christian life, not in the language of the drawing-room or couch of ease, but in the language of the battlefield. Mark well how he speaks of "the good fight," of "enduring hardness as a good soldier," of "wrestling not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." We are told by him "to watch and be sober," to "put on the whole armour of God"; to withstand and to stand.

How we shrink from this hardship and the sacrifice that witnessing for Christ involves! We labour to save our own lives often, for we so little appreciate the love of Christ that made Him die for us; and it is only as that love of His constrains us, that we shall do any other; but when that love takes full possession we sell the garment and buy the sword, and go forth to witness for our Lord regardless of the consequences to ourselves. In this there is compensation; the compensation of the Lord's company in this present time, and in the future to reign with Him, for if we suffer with Him we shall also reign with Him (2 Tim. 2.). "I appoint unto you a kingdom," said the Lord to these men, who afterwards sealed their testimony for Him with their blood, these true martyrs of our Lord. May we be like them through His grace.

Jerusalem and its Royal Owner. No. 3.

The King Worshipped at Jerusalem.

THE return of our Lord Jesus Christ to Jerusalem will effect vast changes, not only for the city, for Judah, and for Israel, but for all the nations and peoples of the earth. His first coming and the teachings He left behind have wrought great moral results in some parts of the world, but Scripture never said that the whole world would be converted through these. It is at His second coming that the foretold world-wide changes will take place. He will first deal with Jerusalem, and from that centre blessing and order will radiate throughout the earth, and all nations will own the King whose throne will be established there.

In the very city, where, at His first coming, He suffered so much indignity, honour and glory shall be rendered unto Him. In the place where they mocked Him, there shall His praise resound. At Jerusalem, where He was the song of the drunkard and the scoff of the scholar, there shall He be revered and esteemed. Yea, where they scourged Him, smote Him, spat upon Him, plucked the hair from his cheek, and cried, "Away with Him! Crucify Him! crucify Him!" there shall they render obedience, service, thanksgiving and homage to Him; while they cry, "Blessed be His holy name for ever and ever!" Where once they condemned Him to death, they shall say, "Let the King live for ever!" Where they delivered Him to the nations to crucify, there shall all nations come to worship Him. Once despised and rejected, then glorified and acclaimed by all.

The last chapter of Zechariah vividly depicts the return of the Lord Jesus in power and majesty, naming the very

spot where His feet will first touch the earth again—"the Mount of Olives," the place they last stood upon, when He was about to leave the world nearly two thousand years ago. As we pointed out—chapter 9.—the first chapter of the last division of this prophecy presents the King as coming to Jerusalem, linking the first and second comings together, without speaking of Christ's sufferings and rejection. This He does in chapters 11., 12., 13., as we have seen.

The coming of the King rises before his vision in chapter 9. 9; and he calls for great rejoicings, saying, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." Both the first and second comings of Christ are in this verse; and the next verse passes right on to the results: "He shall speak peace to the nations: and His dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth." Matthew, who was used to give us the gospel of "*the King*," cites part of this passage (21. 5), when the Lord rode from Mount Olives into Jerusalem, as Zechariah foretold. He omits the words "having salvation"; so also does John 12. 15; for, although indeed "salvation" was alone with Him for the nation, yet He must come in power and majesty to bring it to pass for Israel, as Zechariah 14. shows.

Matthew, however, tells us the spirit of this gracious and lowly King—so different from that of the great ones of the world—he says, *He is meek!* What did a proud, hard, pharisaic set of religious politicians want with such a King? A strong, haughty monarch was the man they desired, indeed, a sort of super-man! When in Babylon they submitted

to the mighty Nebuchadnezzar's yoke; and it was God's mind that they should do so; but here was One different from others. He was meek and lowly; and though He invited men to take His yoke upon them, yet He proposed something they were unaccustomed to. The leaders could not very well be ignorant of the fact that He was the lineal descendant of David, and the heir to Israel's throne; but He spoke in quite the opposite way to another of David's sons, who said: "My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke." Now they heard Christ saying, "*My yoke is easy, and my burden is light!*" What was the meaning of this? What reason can be given for this easy yoke? The answer is found in Himself. The reason lies in the fact that He is different in Himself from the best, if we may so speak, of the sons of fallen Adam; for His own words explain the matter, when He makes known not only what characterizes His spirit, but also what He is in heart, as He said: "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and *lowly in heart*; and ye shall find rest for your souls."

Those who belong to the assembly, which He loved and gave Himself for, learn to-day, before Israel turns to Him as King, not only the lowliness of His heart, but also its deep love. They are taught by the Spirit the preciousness of the love of Christ, which passes knowledge. He devotes Himself to the assembly. He gave Himself for it; and now He is building it, nourishing it, and caring for it continually. Soon He will present it to Himself all glorious, to be His bride in heavenly splendour. He is not spoken of as King of the assembly. He is Bridegroom and Head; but by Israel and the nations He will be owned as King. The assembly is not national, but is called out of the nations: she will doubtless delight to see Him owned as King, as a true wife rejoices to see due honour shown to her husband. What deep joy it will give

to the assembly to see her own Bridegroom honoured as King, and worshipped by all the earth at Jerusalem.

Then it must be remembered that He is just, as well as meek and lowly and loving, as Zechariah says: "He is just, and having salvation." When He returns to bring that salvation to the city which once despised and rejected Him; when He comes to deliver her from the raging nations that seek her destruction; when He hastens to overthrow those who would swallow her up; we are told: "In righteousness doth He judge and make war," for "*He is just.*" Men are wise who now submit to His easy yoke: they are fools who refuse to do so. Well is it said, "Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him."

The apostate nations, who gather against Jerusalem after the assembly has been taken to heaven, will fall under His just judgment. A terrible plague will smite them (Zech. 14. 3, 12); and when the feet of our Lord Jesus Christ again touch the Mount of Olives, it will cleave asunder; all His saints shall be with Him (5); the light shall continue to serve Him even at eventide on that day of days (7.); living waters shall flow out from Jerusalem then, carrying healing, health and refreshment to east and west (8); the very land itself, for the new earthly city, is lifted up; there are changes in the land, changes in the people; changes in the mountain and in the valley; changes in the sea and in the sky, when the Lord of glory comes again to Jerusalem, "the city of the great King." "And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to **WORSHIP THE KING, THE LORD OF HOSTS**, and to keep the feast of tabernacles" (16).

! This verse shows the divine glory of

the King. He is none less than Jehovah of hosts Himself. Chapter 6. 12, 13, speaking of His human perfection, tells us that "the Man," the **BRANCH**, shall sit upon the throne. It has been pointed out that the gospel of *Luke* presents this perfect man. Chapter 3. 8 shows Him in the *Mark* character, "My servant the **BRANCH**. In Jeremiah 23. 5 we have the King as *Matthew* traces Him, raised up "unto David a righteous **BRANCH**"; while in Isaiah 4. we see Him more in the *John* character; "the **BRANCH** of Jehovah shall be beautiful and glorious." How suitable is the fivefold Name given to this glorious King, who shall be rightly honoured in the royal city; for "the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Neither pen nor tongue can tell all the vast and varied glories that centre in Him; but the hearts of those who know His love can worship and adore Him.

When He fills the throne of the earthly city, and the righteousness, peace and joy of God's kingdom spread over the earth; when He orders and establishes that throne with judgment and with justice; when He shall have delivered the needy and the poor, and brought them satisfaction; when the city flourishes as the grass, and men are blessed in its gracious King; then "all kings shall fall down before Him: all nations shall serve Him." Jerusalem will be the place to which they then go up from year to year to worship its Royal Owner, "the King of all the

Earth." It will be the divinely appointed and sanctified place of worship. There is no such place now, as John 4. 20-24 and Acts 17. 24, 25 instructs us. The true worshippers worship "THE FATHER" now "in spirit and in truth." Then the very bells on the horses will be as holy to the Lord as the high priests garments (Zec. 14. 20 and Ex. 28. 36); "Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts": there shall He be worshipped by all nations.

The carrying out of this divinely arranged order will secure for the different countries the fruitful rains that water the earth; but if any fail to do so, then "even upon them shall be no rain" (17). This will be a serious matter for a nation. Christ reigns as a King then, in righteousness; and the homage due to Him *must* be rendered. Although worship in the assembly to-day partakes of a different character, and is a response to the great love of God; yet, the principle that worship secures the outpouring of showers of blessing abides. Many seek the showers in the wrong way. Malachi 3. 10 confirms the truth; bring in, and He will pour out! Yea, He will "pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it." Let our worship flow to Him, then blessing will flow from Him. There are many withholding the rain, for they are withholding their worship. Let there be a deeper appreciation of divine grace and love and glory in our hearts, then the worship will flow freely, and the showers of blessing will flow freely also.

H. J. VINE.

The vital truth of our Lord's atonement must be preached clearly and with emphasis, those who leave this out of

their preaching have not correctly learned Christ, neither can they successfully teach Him.

Remarks on Paul's Gospel. No. 6.

EPHESIANS 5. 32. "A great mystery . . . Christ and the church."

This is the opening type in Scripture (Gen. 2. 21-24), the frontispiece and miniature of all the purposes of God for the day of glory wherewith He has proposed to light up the universe with the nuptial joys of His beloved Son. This is the climax of His good pleasure, wherein is unfolded all the hidden treasures of wisdom and knowledge, the divine skill, the matchless art, the perfect workmanship that has evolved according to His eternal purpose, the vessel of His supreme delight. It will be the day of Christ's espousals truly, when He shall present her to Himself "without spot or wrinkle or any such thing," when she will be "all fair and without blemish," the answer to His heart, the counterpart of Himself, a helpmeet for Him, whom He loved so long in thought, for whom He gave Himself in fact, for her who is priceless among His treasures, the pearl of beauty, the reward of all His pains, His own, His chiefest joy and nearest to His heart among all the trophies of His grace. What a scene to contemplate! what a review of grandeur! what a luxury of love! what a home in which to dwell with Him, known even here now in measure by the earnest of the Spirit, among all the tangled scenes of confusion through which we pass in this lower world, and what an incentive to a conduct here governed by such hopes in the light of a revelation that makes bare the secrets of this great mystery.

The Lord said to Job, "Behold now Behemoth . . . he is the chief of the ways of God" (Job 40. 19); and may we not say of this great mystery that it is among the chiefest of all that God has been pleased to reveal? It is the first and fundamental type in Scripture, the central hub, the dynamo, as we

might say, of vital force and direction of the vast system of order and beauty in which the universe is built up, filled as it will be with the glory of God. It is the breath of the Spirit that, since the day that God created Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden runs through the whole of Scripture, involving the same purpose, inculcating the same truth around which all else gathers, as it emanates from the eternal mind—Christ and the Church. This is the focal light in the heavens which will illuminate the whole world, shining upon all the relationships of life, the centre and pattern of every excellency that will beautify a universe of surpassing bliss. The heavens will be filled with the glory of God through it. The nations on earth will walk in the light of it. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart, what God hath prepared for those that love Him." There will be seen the reciprocity of the love and devotedness of the Bridegroom and the willing obedience of the Bride in a harmony of life in which are blended the common interests of both in one. The mystery truly is a great one. It is the pivot on which the universe revolves; the instrument of the glory of God through all ages, world without end (Eph. 3. 21).

Who can this wondrous mystery unfold
That filled the mind of God in Christ of old,
Embracing all the glories of the Son,
The triumphs that his wondrous work has
won,
To fill the ages with the light of God
And turn the tide of evil into good?

O God, before this mystery we bend,
As age succeeding ages without end
Tell of Thy holy love and light combined,
Where grace and truth and majesty en-
twined
Form the bright crown of Thy beloved
Son,
The Bridegroom of the Bride that He has
won.

And she, as erst before her lord she stood,
'Bone of his bones,' as given to him of God,
Will stand before Him as His royal Bride,
In whom His heart doth now for aye con-
fide.

Faithful to her His love has ever been ;
Faithful to Him she will at length be seen.

His interests will be hers for evermore ;
Her needs be more than met from His great
store

Of love and might, resources all His own,
With which the story of His pain to crown.
He shall be hers through heaven's eternal
day ;

She shall be His, the guerdon of His Cross
For aye.

"This mystery is great, but I speak concerning Christ and the church." There are those who will have Christ without the church. That is mere individualism. There are those who will have the church without Christ. That is pure sectarianism. Each professes a right thing, and is wrong in the pursuit of it. "But," says the Apostle, "I (emphatic) speak as concerning Christ, and as concerning the church."

Ephesians 6. 19. "The mystery of the gospel."

Paul was the great evangelist. At his conversion he was marked out as such. The Lord said of him, "He is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel" (Acts 9. 15). The world was his parish; men of every class and clime his audience; God's gospel his subject; the mystery of it his theme. Whatever he said, and wherever he preached this last was ever before his mind. "The mystery of the gospel" coloured all his thoughts. The rest was subsidiary, as means to an end. It was to this he bent his whole soul; his energies to men; his knees to God. This was God's purpose before the world's foundation. This was Paul's commission to fulfil. As earnest as he was in the gospel his soul was bent on the mystery of it. The salvation of souls, however blessed and important

—nay, necessary in itself, was not the goal of his ministry. The character of their salvation and the end for which they were saved were of still higher importance in the fulfilment of the will of God, and to this he refers in that remarkable scripture, Rom. 16. 25-27.

From this we learn that the mystery "formed no part of what was unfolded in those ages in which God developed His plans in creation; it was a purpose before, a subject outside their history. It had been eternally hidden; it was not in reckoned time." (Note in New Trans., J. N. D.)

And in the Epistle to the Ephesians, where this subject is fully developed, he awakens the interest of the saints to earnest prayer on his behalf, that utterance might be given him, that he might open his mouth and make known with boldness the mystery of the glad tidings, for which he was an ambassador in bonds, that he might be bold in it as he ought to speak (chap. 6. 19).

All this exercise of soul in the Apostle was quickly forgotten in the ages that immediately succeeded his ministry. Even already in his lifetime, spite of all his burning zeal, his testimony was either ignored or opposed; and history but repeats itself as we see now, within the last century, these great truths, having been in the mercy and purpose of God recovered, by a ministry that retains something still of its freshness, they are but lightly esteemed and at a discount in exchange for what is not the pure and incorruptible seed of the word of God, pregnant with the great issues of the mystery of the gospel. Hence in great measure the failure of the preaching to produce adequate results in separation from the world, according to the testimony of our Lord Jesus Christ and the mystery now made known in Paul's writings unto all nations for obedience to His name.

From Sorrow to Song.

Mourning (Ch. 1.).

HABAKKUK, who has been called the Old Testament Paul, is introduced to us as a MOURNER, not because of his own trials but because of the condition of God's people and the state of the world. These things filled him with perplexity and sorrow. We have a deeper cause for mourning in our day than he had in his; and if we have hearts that feel with God as to things below, we too shall be mourners, as was Paul when he wrote to the Corinthians on account of the "strife and contention" which existed in that assembly, and when he wrote to the Philippians of some who had adopted the Christian profession and yet were conforming to the world, and who were enemies of that which he had learned to love, namely, the cross of Christ, causing him to weep and compelling him to say, "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ."

Listening (Ch. 2.).

Habakkuk's sorrow turned him to God, and becoming a listener he learned that the Lord was coming and that He would put things right. *Patience* would be needed, but in spite of everything that would oppose it "*the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.*" It is the listener, who hardens not his heart, but hears the voice of the Lord, who learns that, in spite of all appearances, "*yet a little while, and He that shall come will come and will not tarry.*" Hebrews 10. 37.

This will be the day of recompense, the day when every wrong shall be righted and every question answered.

Supplicating (Ch. 3.).

But the expectant Christian, whose heart is set at rest by the knowledge of the certain coming of the Lord, will not be indifferent to the condition of things in which he must for a while abide. He will seek that God's Name may be glorified and His work prosper, and so he will pray the prayer of Habakkuk: "*O Lord, I have heard Thy speech . . . O LORD, REVIVE THY WORK.*"

Yet even if such a revival comes not, and every cause for joy below fails, knowing God, not with an intellectual knowledge, but with that heart knowledge that gives the one who has it a changed view of this life and the next, of time and of eternity, we possess that that made Habakkuk rejoice.

Rejoicing (Ch. 4.).

This is the test for us, as to whether we have this true knowledge of God, that makes us restful at all times, and makes us find our joy, not in circumstances, but in the God who is above them all. We shall not *mourn* less at the failure and ruin around, nor *listen* with less keen ears to the voice of God in His Word, or cease to *supplicate* Him for the prosperity of His work below, but in and through all these exercises we shall *rejoice* in the Lord alway, and again rejoice.

Let Habakkuk's triumph song cheer us and stir us to emulate his faith.

"Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The Lord is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places. To the chief singer on my stringed instruments" (Habakkuk 3. 17-19).

The Song of Songs. Canticle VI.

Chapter 8. 8-14.

The Triumph of Love (*continued*).

THE love of Christ begets love. We love Him because He first loved us.

Such is the love wherewith we are loved.

A love that has given us a place in the heart of Christ.

A love that has put us under the shelter of his strong arm.

A love that is strong as death.

A love that is jealous with a godly jealousy.

A love that burns with a vehement flame

A love that cannot be quenched, and

A love that cannot be bought.

*Ch. 8. 8. We have a little sister,
And she hath no breasts:
What shall we do for our sister
In the day when she shall be spoken for?*

Restored and happy in the love of the Bridegroom, the Bride is free to think of the blessing of others. If, in the strict interpretation of the Song, the Bride represents God's earthly people—the Jews—restored and brought into blessing under Christ, the "little sister" will probably represent Ephraim, or the ten tribes. They will, we know, be brought into blessing, but not through the experiences of the Jews in connection with Christ. Their affections for Christ will not have been developed by the exercises and experiences through which the Jew has passed and will yet pass. But the day of opportunity is coming for Ephraim—the day when she shall be spoken for. And what shall be done for her in that day?

The Bridegroom.

9. *If she be a wall,
We will build upon her a turret of silver;
And if she be a door,
We will enclose her with boards of cedar.*

Here we have the answer. When Israel is again established on a firm

foundation like a wall, then will she be a monument of redeeming grace: "We will build upon her a turret of silver." When she becomes a door—when her heart is opened to Christ—she will come under His protection and care: "We will enclose her with boards of cedar."

While the strict interpretation points to Ephraim, can we not apply the principle to that large class who truly make a confession of Christ, and yet, like Ephraim, whose affections for Christ have never been developed by the experiences through which they have passed. How many, alas, are like the "little sister" of the Song! Their lives may be outwardly correct. No grave dereliction from the straight path can be laid to their door. They have never wandered like the Bride; they have never been smitten by the watchmen of the city; their veils have never been torn from them by the keepers of the walls; they have been into no dark valley to learn their own hearts, and they have never climbed the mountain heights of Amanah or Hermon to learn the love that is in the heart of Christ. Their affections have not been developed by any deep experimental acquaintance with Christ. What shall be done for them? What they need is to become firmly established in their relations to Christ—to become a wall. And to have their hearts opened to Christ—to become a door. Then indeed they would become a witness of His redeeming grace to others, and their hearts an enclosure devoted to Christ.

The Bride.

10. *I am a wall, and my breasts like towers;
Then was I in his eyes as one that findeth peace.*

By grace the Bride can say, "I am a wall." Established in her relationships

to the Bridegroom, her affection is the secret of her strength and the measure of her witness before others. A tower is a place of security as well as a landmark to others. The saint whose affections are drawn out to Christ is one indeed who has found peace in the eyes of Christ. Mary, whose affections brought her to rest at the feet of Christ, was one who, in His sight, had found peace, and a peace that He will not have disturbed. "Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her."

11. *Solomon had a vineyard at Baal-hamon :
He let out the vineyard unto keepers ;
Every one for the fruit thereof was to bring
a thousand silver-pieces.*

The meaning of Baal-hamon is "Master of a multitude." The passage looks on to the time when Christ—the true Solomon—will reign over all the nations of the earth. The whole earth will become a fruitful vineyard. There will be kings of the earth—the keepers of the vineyard—and they will enjoy the fruits of the earth, but they will be subject to Christ. They will pay tribute. They will bring, as it were, a thousand silver-pieces.

12. *My vineyard, which is mine, is before me :
Thou, Solomon, shalt have the thousand,
And the keepers of its fruit two hundred.*

But the Bride has her own vineyard. Restored Israel will have her special place, and she, too, will gladly own her subjection to Christ. But when she owns all to be His, others will get the blessing. If Solomon gets the thousand pieces of silver, others will get two hundred. Mary's box of ointment, very costly, was wholly expended upon Christ, but others also received a benefit, for "the house was filled with the odour of the ointment."

Thus at last the soul who has experienced the dark valleys and the mountain heights, city wanderings and garden delights, is brought to rest in the eternal love of Christ (ver. 5) ; in all its breadth, and length, and depth, and height (6, 7) ; to think of others (8, 9) ; to gladly own that Christ will have universal sway

(10, 11) ; and in the meantime to hold every possession at His disposal (12). *Such is the triumph of the love of Christ.*

The Bridegroom.

13. *Thou that dwellest in the gardens,
The companions hearken to thy voice ;
Let me hear it.*

The Bridegroom is heard for the last time. He delights to own what his love has accomplished. The wanderings of the Bride are over: love has brought her to dwell in the gardens. How happy for us when drawn by the constraining love of Christ we find our portion outside this poor world in the company of His people—in the gardens of the Lord. Only from that happy place of fellowship can we bear a true witness to others. But the Lord is not content that others should hear our voice in the way of *witness*, He himself would fain hear our voice in the way of *worship*, and response to His voice. Immediately the Bride responds:

14. *Haste, my beloved,
And be thou like a gazelle or young hart
Upon the mountain of spices.*

The reply of the Bride expresses the longing of her heart for the Bridegroom. His desire is gratified, he hears her voice as she says, "Haste, my beloved," words that fall upon his ear with great delight, for they tell him that love has accomplished its work in the heart of the Bride. A love fills her heart that will not be satisfied apart from him, that can only be gratified by his return. So in our day love has taken us in hand, patiently bears with us in all our wanderings, restores our souls, and revives our drooping affections, brings us into the company of Christ in the garden of the Lord, and there unfolds to us all the treasures of love, and tells us our Beloved is coming for us. And love has accomplished its work in our hearts, when in response to His word, "Surely I come quickly," He hears the voice of His people sending back the response:

"AMEN, EVEN SO, COME, LORD
JESUS."

HAMILTON SMITH.

From Mohammed to Christ.

NEARLY thirty-five years ago it pleased God to call and to reveal Himself to me in love as my personal living Saviour.

I was born and brought up in a strictly religious Mohammedan home, where I had every opportunity of learning the doctrines and beliefs of that faith.

Before tracing the steps which led me to the acceptance of Christ as my Lord and Saviour, it will be necessary to give an outline of what *Mohammedanism* is.

Mohammedanism is based upon two great foundations.

1. Mohammed, and 2. The Koran.

Mohammed, as its founder, claimed to be the last and the greatest of all prophets, and as such said to have superseded Christ and abrogated the Gospel (Anajils).

The Koran is a collection and compilation of the revelations which the prophet claimed to have received from God piecemeal from time to time through the medium of the angel (Jibrail) Gabriel.

Mohammedanism is a great missionary religion, and its propaganda is actively carried on with a fanatical zeal. Its great rallying cry is summed up in the well-known *Creed* called "the Kalima." "There is no God but one and Mohammed is His prophet."

It enjoins as binding upon every Mohammedan the following duties:

1. *Namaz*. Islamic prayers to be offered five times a day.

2. *Rozā*. Fastings. One whole month of Ramzan is set apart for fasting.

3. *Hajj*. Pilgrimage to Mecca.

4. *Zakath*. Alms.

5. The repetition of the *Creed*.

Mohammedanism teaches endless purifications and washings and meritorious acts to obtain salvation.

Regarding *mediation* it is stated that Mohammed would intercede on behalf of his followers before God, Who out of *mercy* and consideration for him will grant forgiveness of sins.

Such are some of the outstanding features of Mohammedanism.

My father, being desirous of giving me an English education, sent me to a Mission High School. Education now fully occupied my mind, to the exclusion of religion and everything else. In spite of my firm belief in the truth of my religion, and deep-seated prejudice against Christianity, when I began to read the New Testament I was very much attracted by, and impressed greatly with, what I read in it. It forced upon me two great facts.

1. I was a sinner, and as such I was lost.

2. That in Christ full provision was made for my salvation.

This was my *first awakening* as to the real state of my heart before God. But I was held in high estimation for my moral conduct, and considered very religious by others, for the simple reason that I carefully observed all the rites and ceremonials of that religion. All these I did because others did them.

As the days went by I felt more and more concerned about the state of my soul. My condemnation and ruin became more alarmingly real than before. I tried to shake off these impressions by engaging myself in worldly amusements and pleasures, but could not. The question of my being a lost

sinner was again and again brought to my mind and it troubled me more and more. The Holy Spirit, who had begun His work, did not leave me. Such was the unhappy state of my heart. In my extremity, I turned to the study of the *Koran* and the teachings of *Mohammed*, with a view to find peace and salvation, which I desired so much.

To my utter perplexity and surprise I found that there was no hope for me in Mohammedanism, and it offered no salvation or deliverance from the power and the effects of sin.

The following are the conclusions which I arrived at as a result of my careful study and investigation of the so-called sacred literature of Mohammedanism.

1. That the *Koran* does not provide a way of salvation, but it teaches that our salvation depends upon (a) the mysteries of that religion; (b) in observing the appointed times of prayers (Sura 4. 8-18); (c) in giving alms and performing good works (Sura 2. 1-4).

2. Mohammed himself could not save me, as he himself prayed for the forgiveness of his own sins. *Mohammed* did not claim to be a *Saviour*; "one soul cannot make intercession for another" (see Sura 2. 45).

Thus finding myself devoid of all hope in the religion of my forefathers, my faith was greatly undermined in *Mohammed* and his *Koran*. But the Holy Spirit continued to work in my soul, not only convicting me of sin, but presenting Christ as the only *Hope* of my soul. I was greatly distressed in my mind. To accept Jesus as my Saviour and His love to me would entail persecution and sufferings at the hands of my co-religionists. My father proposed that I should study and practise the *Sufi* philosophy as the only means to get rid of sins.

This philosophy is held in great estimation among Mohammedans and is the supreme occupation of many.

The following are the leading theories of the *Sufi* system:

1. God and man are one in substance and being.

2. A profound and deep-seated conviction that this place of ceaseless change, this life of misery, of unhappiness, of ignorance cannot be real. It is all vanity, unreality, empty nothing.

3. The ultimate end of man is that his mind and his will must not only be blended but lost in God.

4. That this state of mind and experience is attained by a process of contemplation of the deeds of the body.

After giving a fair trial to this scheme I found to my sad disappointment it did not work. It did not help to break off the fetters of sin. If sin was suppressed and put down in one form it made its appearance in another way.

Thus I was plunged in deep despair and there was no peace or rest to my soul. I was distressed in the extreme, but did not wish any one to know this state of my heart. Oh, the days of my search for the Lord of Life!

I now reached a point in my experience which did more to make me feel my own weakness and nothingness than anything else up to that time.

Then the Spirit showed me in a forcible manner the statement in Romans 4. 4, 5, which says, "not to him that worketh . . ." Work, work—do, do, was my principle, while all the doing had been done. The man who *comes to Jesus* and takes Him at His word, and not the man who *worketh* is the one whom God justifies. So I stopped all working and took Jesus to be my *Saviour*. Oh, how the word became illuminated and living! Christ of Calvary loomed in my dark horizon. My sky which had no sun became luminous with the Sun of Righteousness. It was a happy moment in my life. He who never yet turned away a soul

attracted to Him had mercy upon me, and rolled the burden of my sin away. Sorrowing and sighing fled from my bosom. All things were changed. The old things had passed away and all things become new. In one word I might say my whole life underwent a sudden change. Jesus became to me at once a supreme object of love and worship.

It is now some years since I fled to Christ at Calvary's Cross, where He was sacrificed as our Passover. I depend upon His Blood, which is my only shelter. Oh, what peace stole in my heart! What joy possessed my soul! It was all so new, so unlike everything I ever heard or experienced before that I could not say a word, except, "Lord, Thy love has overcome me! Thy work on the Cross is complete and adequate to meet all my needs."

When my father knew what had taken place He was greatly enraged and upset. He cursed me and disowned me. Of course this was a matter of great grief and disgrace to my parents. So the situation became very critical. Persecution of a bitter type followed. Dangers of my life became great. To

continue to remain under my parental roof became wellnigh impossible. There was nothing left but to leave my dear homestead and the dear ones at home; though the path before me looked thorny and rough and the prospect very gloomy. But the ONE into whose arms I had fled was going before me and saying to me, "This is the way, walk thou in it."

Persecution fierce broke over my head from time to time. Time and again I had to escape for life from my enemies. Sometimes found hiding in mountain fastnesses; Often beaten and left for dead.

Amidst all these scenes my one testimony has been that He never faileth—and ever remains my satisfying portion. Bless His name! There has never been a single moment in which I have regretted the step I have taken.

My one, deepest, and unutterable longing desire is to get into closest possible intimacy with the Lord Jesus Christ and to know His eternal counsels and purpose; and also that my fellow-countrymen would come to Him and see what a kind, loving, and gracious Lord He is.

S. ELVIN AZIZ.

Seraiah, the Man of Rest.

"THE word which Jeremiah the prophet commanded Seraiah the son of Neriah, the son of Maaseiah, when he went with (*or, on the behalf of, marg.*) Zedekiah the king of Judah into Babylon in the fourth year of his reign. And this Seraiah was a quiet prince. So Jeremiah wrote in a book all the evil that should come upon Babylon, even all these words that are written against Babylon. And Jeremiah said to Seraiah, When thou comest to Babylon, and shalt see, and shalt read all these words; then thou shalt say, O Lord, Thou hast spoken against this place, to cut it off, that none shall remain in it, neither

man nor beast, but it shall be desolate for ever. And it shall be, when thou hast made an end of reading this book, that thou shalt bind a stone to it, and cast it into the midst of Euphrates: and thou shalt say, Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall rise no more from the evil that I will bring upon her: and they shall be weary. Thus far are the words of Jeremiah" (Jer. 51. 59-64).

Seraiah, if not the same personage under another or secondary name, was, at any rate, brother to Baruch, as Jeremiah 32. 12 clearly indicates ("Baruch the son of Neriah, the son of Maaseiah").

He accompanied, or was sent on behalf of, Zedekiah to Babylon. It was probably the latter, as there is no scripture record of Zedekiah himself having gone to the Chaldean capital at this time; and Calvin translates, "when he went in behalf of Zedekiah." It is supposed that he was sent on this embassy by his master to allay or quiet the suspicions of Nebuchadnezzar when that prince was already treacherously plotting against his authority, in collusion with the kings of Edom, and Moab, and Ammon, and Tyrus and Sidon (see Jer. 27.).

This Seraiah was a quiet prince, we are told, or "a man of rest" (cf. 1 Chron. 22. 9). "I find no rest," was the conclusion of Baruch's complaint (Jer. 45. 3). How many to-day are like him. "Ye shall find rest unto your souls," is the promise of that adorable Master whose yoke is easy and whose burden is light. So few find rest because they refuse or fail to take His yoke of submission upon them and learn of Him those lessons of self-abnegation and disinterested service with which His unique and holy life abounded.

A close study of the story of the mission of Seraiah to Babylon will, we believe, reveal to us the secret of his restfulness of spirit; and it will at the same time disclose the reason why so many among the children of God to-day find their prototype in Baruch, who found no rest, rather than in the man of rest, Seraiah. The clue to the situation is found wrapped up in the command of Jeremiah to the Hebrew envoy; in it, we believe, is contained the source or foundation of Seraiah's rest. For so the words of the prophet to him are described—it is termed a *command*. "When thou comest to Babylon, and shalt see, and shalt read all these words," he says. He was going, duly accredited, to the gay, brilliant court of the mightiest monarch on earth. As a prince he would be

accorded all the privileges and distinctions due his rank. And accustomed as he was to the almost rustic simplicity of his own master's court, he would be in great danger of being captivated by great Babylon's pomp and magnificence. It would very naturally appeal strongly to him; and the surest safeguard against being bewitched or influenced in the least by it was in obeying the command of God by the prophet to him. On his arrival at the gay capital, when he saw its dazzling magnificence, and read its doom in the book he carried with him, he was to confess his intelligence as to its certain and soon destruction by saying, "O Lord, Thou hast spoken against this place, to cut it off, that none shall remain in it, neither man nor beast, but that it shall be desolate forever." And then, to make the prophecy the more vivid, he was ordered to bind a stone to the book and cast it into the river Euphrates; and there, standing by the waters' brink, as both stone and roll sank beneath the swirl of its rushing tide, he was commanded to proclaim, "Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her." And appended to this graphic prediction of the great city's fall are the five strikingly significant words, "*And they shall be weary!*" They form a fitting finale to the prophet's testimony, the last word concerning great Babylon's vaunted wealth and glory and power.

How instructive all this is to our own souls here and now, living as we do in the midst of a Babylon greater and more bewitching by far than that builded by Nebuchadnezzar of old. The world about us is all a-glitter with a glory and possessed of a charm that even the Christian, if not on his guard, is apt to be influenced by, if not entirely carried away with it. He sees spread before him, like Seraiah at the Chaldean court, the "lust of the eye," and the "pride of life"; and the flesh within him, though crucified with its affections and lusts, is not actually dead; Eyegate is

still an avenue by which the enemy of Man-soul would enter. But we, like Seraiah, have placed in our hands a *Book*; and in this Book, "God's Word written," we have told us distinctly and repeatedly this great world-Babylon's doom. "Reserved unto fire," we see everywhere written across its most treasured possessions and over its most attractive allurements. We read its doom long since pronounced by Him for whom it has no place, "Now is the judgment of this world." This breaks the spell of its witchery for faith. Knowing the certainty of its destruction, the Christian is kept from harbouring in his heart its love. Like Seraiah he is sent into it with a message; he is commissioned to declare its doom; his business here is to be a witness against it; but more, he is what Seraiah could not be, an "ambassador for Christ" to proclaim pardon to its dwellers, on condition of their repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.

And doing this his heart has rest; it is immune from the burning fevers of its lusts, its crazy pleasures, its mad ambitions, its wild dreams, its groundless hopes of better days to come. He is, like Baruch's princely brother, "a man of rest." "I find no rest," was Baruch's complaint; and he found no rest because he sought something for himself in a land that was devoted to destruction (Jeremiah 45. 5). Seraiah was "a man of rest," because he bowed to the judgment of God concerning the city to which he was sent. "They shall be weary," God had said, and Seraiah knew it to be so.

Christian reader, are you "a man of rest"? Have you found "rest unto your soul"? The vast majority of believers in Christ have not; and why? why their disquietude, their lack of a settled calm in the midst of trying circumstances, sickness, loss of property, want of success in business, and the thousand and one things of life that harrow the heart, and torment the soul,

and from which none may hope to escape—for none are promised immunity? The answer is simple—it is wrapped in allegorical form in the story of these brothers, Baruch and Seraiah. Most Christians have a mind fashioned more after the pattern of Baruch than that of Seraiah; they are ambitious, they hope for something in life apart from, or in addition to, Christ. They do not in their hearts really submit to the judgment of God pronounced in His word against this world; and they consequently seek something here in this scene of sin, either for themselves or for their children. And these things are not always *evil* in themselves; nor is the mere possession of them wrong or inconsistent in a child of God; it is in the *seeking* of them that the evil lies. "One thing have I desired of the Lord, *that* will I seek after," confessed the psalmist. This was not anything of earth, but that he might dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of his life (not just to go to heaven when he died), to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple (Ps. 27. 4). It was a purely spiritual ambition, he coveted earnestly what it is lawful for us all to long for. And this brings rest, this maintains the soul in quiet and unbroken calm in the midst of a groaning, toiling, restive world, never satisfied, and altogether unbelieving concerning the judgment hanging over its head, or the suppressed volcano boiling for vent beneath it.

The conclusion of the prophet's pronouncement against great Babylon and her inhabitants is this: "So that the peoples will have laboured in vain, and the nations for the fire: and they shall be weary" (Jer. 52. 58, N.T.). And this is just the poor mad world's occupation and condition to-day—they are labouring in vain, their dreams of universal, permanent peace and disarmament, their enjoyment of a golden age without Christ and conversion, are only dreams, and destined never to be realized. Their statesmen, their re-

formers, their social workers, their builders, all are but labouring for the fire, and weariness, utter weariness, and disappointment is their predicted portion. And knowing this, how can the Christian enter into the spirit of it and allow himself to share its groundless hopes and unhallowed (because unscriptural) aspirations?

to be like the man of rest, Seraiah, happy in the knowledge of a portion above, with Christ; and satisfied with this, to labour, not for the fire nor yet in vain, for we know that our labour is not in vain in the Lord (1 Cor. 15. 58). Strangers here, and envoys of the Almighty to a world whose sins cry loudly for vengeance, may we be kept from every ambition but to please Him.

The Lord in His grace give us all

C. KNAPP.

The Morning Star.

A WAKE, my soul, nor slumber,
 Though daylight tarries yet,
 Though still proud men, be-nighted,
 The Lord of all forget ;
 For when the hours are darkest
 A light shines out afar
 In solitary splendour—
 The welcome Morning Star.

The watchers' eyes are straining
 To see the sign of day ;
 The night, storm-worn and troubled,
 Retains its cheerless sway,
 Obscuring the horizon,
 As though from sight to bar
 The harbinger of dawning—
 The bright and Morning Star.

Its early beauty, beaming,
 Joy to the watchman brings ;
 Glad herald ere the radiance
 Of daybreak spreads its wings,
 When tempests' roar and thunder
 Are stilled, with furious war,
 And peace attendant follows
 Jesus, the Morning Star.

For Thee we wait, Lord Jesus,
 Thy voice we long to hear ;
 Our Hope, our Life, our Saviour,
 Thy coming must be near ;
 The watch is nearly ended,
 Our hearts expectant are !
 Oh, let Thy lustre cheer us,
 Thou glorious Morning Star.

H. J. VINE.

The Glad Tidings of God. No. 6.

Life.

IN THE WORD OF GOD there are two great principles, or lines, of truth that run throughout the dealings of God with men, right from his creation until the judgment of the great white throne, and they are the line of *responsibility* and the line of *life*. By the former is meant, the responsibility of the creature to maintain himself in the place of blessing in which he has been set by his Maker, and that by the fulfilment of his obligations; and on these terms Adam was set in the very beginning of his history. This principle was represented in the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This tree was reserved by God for Himself: Adam was not to eat of it: every other tree was free for his use.

Man was to remain in the state and circumstances in which an all-wise and beneficent Creator had placed him, for they were absolutely perfect. He was just to remain as he was, rejoicing in the good things with which he was surrounded, and giving thanks to the Giver of all good. He was not to think that by any act of his he could increase the wealth of blessing that had been so bountifully lavished upon him.

A SERIOUS QUESTION, that of good and evil, was in the universe, how long before man came upon the scene we are not told, but Adam was to let it alone. What had he to do with it? Why mix himself up with a question, of the nature of which he knew nothing? His place was outside everything pertaining to it, and he had better remain there. True, he could easily open the door of access into that fearful arena, and, as far as that particular matter went, rival his Maker, but at what a fearful cost! But the wily adversary hid from him the cost, and dangled before him the supposed gain. He grasped at divinity, and fell under death.

But there was not only the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the garden, there was also the tree of *life*. As long as man fulfilled the rightful obligations imposed upon him by his Maker access to the tree of life was open to him; when he failed he was cut off from it. There was no second chance given to him. To have given him another trial would have been to admit the first trial to be insufficient. The cherubim and the flaming sword, placed to guard it against any attempt to reach it, left him to the ravages of disease, decay, and death.

THE LAW GIVEN TO ISRAEL raised this question afresh, and again we have, in the dispensation introduced by Moses, that which was represented by the two trees—responsibility and life. Let a man fulfil his responsibilities, and life is assured to him; but let him break one commandment, and his title to be preserved alive is gone for ever. Therefore the law that was ordained to life, became an instrument of death. It confirmed the judgment that already lay upon man on account of sin.

The question raised by the tree of responsibility must have a perfect answer before the tree of life can be reached. The fact that we have failed to fulfil our obligations cannot be ignored by the righteous Judge. He cannot act towards us as though sin did not exist, or as though we had not sinned wilfully and wickedly. Men will act without respect to righteousness and will force their way through many a legitimate barrier to reach the end they have in view, for they have little respect to moral rectitude. But one cannot expect the moral Governor of the universe to act thus. The great principles of righteousness have had their origin in the attributes of His own being, and they are the principles that bind and give

character to all His activities, and they cannot be sinned against with impunity.

GOD MAY HAVE LONG PATIENCE with a world of rebels against His authority such as this is, but it is unthinkable that He should continue its existence indefinitely, or that He should leave it without a distinct testimony regarding its end. Life in an unfettered and sinful condition cannot be immortalized. A deathless world of God-defying sinners would be a blot on the escutcheon of the King eternal, and we may rest perfectly assured no such blot nor any other shall be there. God will reach the end He has in view in the most perfect consistency with His own nature and character. No attribute of His Being shall be damaged. And this is really the security and confidence of the believer in Jesus. What security or rest of heart could any intelligent creature have, were he to find his Maker as indifferent to truth and righteousness as he knows himself and his fellows to be? The thought were blasphemy—and yet how common the thought is—that the affections of the Creator are as fickle, faithless, fantastical, and lawless, as are the affections of the creature. The safety and the peace of mind possessed by the saint of God flow from the fact that not the smallest claim of a single Divine attribute has, through the exercise of the mercy that has saved his soul, been ignored. Where the word of righteousness is understood the feet are planted upon a rock that is unshakable.

The life derived from Adam—the life of flesh—cannot be continued. It must be brought to an end: “On the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Gen. 2. 17), and “Death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (Rom. 5. 12). As long as man lives in the flesh, so long shall he be dominated by sin (Rom. 8. 8), and because of this God is compelled to put an end to such a sinful existence. It is clear that such a state of existence could not be, by a

righteous and beneficent Creator, allowed to continue for ever.

But the judgment pronounced upon Adam on account of his transgression, and which came upon all his descendants, because all were sinners, does not seem to have included anything but the death of the body. What was to be the consequences of a life of rebellion against God does not seem to be taken in here. We have to come to other scriptures for that: “It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Heb. 9. 27). And when that judgment has come, we read: “Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (Rev. 20. 15).

LIFE ACCORDING TO GOD—life in which the soul lives to God—is only to be found in Christ: “He is the true God, and eternal life” (1 John 5. 20). No one can live to God in the life of Adam. It is a corrupt life, and in its nature hostile to God. To live to God man must have a new life, a life that Adam in his innocent condition did not possess any more than in his fallen state. The life that he had in his innocent state was as pure and perfect in the eyes of God as could be. But once fallen, there is no mending of it, nor can man be recovered for God in that life. Until the question of his responsibilities has been raised, and has had a perfect answer, living for ever is an impossibility.

I do not mean to convey the idea that the life of man as a responsible living being ceases to exist, but that the judgment of death lies upon him in his life of flesh and blood here on earth, and that he has never been able to give God a ransom for his soul, so that he might live for ever, and his flesh not see corruption (Ps. 49. 7-9). But death is not by any means annihilation. It is the break up of the earthly structure, by means of which man has his practical existence down here, and where he lives his life of God-forgetfulness. His body goes to the dust, out of which it was

formed, and his spirit to God who gave it. Thus his life of flesh and blood is ended.

But the life lived by man in the flesh is moral death, for it is a career of practical separation from God. He is alive to sin, and to the things that belong to this world, but dead toward God—dead in trespasses and sins. His affections are set upon the things that minister to his carnal appetite, and he cares nothing for the Word of God, nor for the companionship of His people. All this is moral death. There is no love to God in the natural heart, and where the soul loves God there and there only is life. Because God is love there is no possibility of living to Him or of knowing Him, apart from loving Him. To live to Him who is love, love must be begotten in the heart, and this can only be by the gospel, which sets forth the love of God to man; and when this is believed, the Holy Spirit is given, who sheds abroad in the believer's heart that love, so that "we love Him because He first loved us," but apart from this all is moral death.

THE SEPARATION THAT EXISTS BETWEEN MAN AND GOD was brought in by sin. The love and the confidence that were natural to him in his innocent state were displaced by the fear and distrust that took possession of his heart in consequence of the transgression of which he was guilty; and that fear and distrust of his Maker dominate and shape the lives of every one of his descendants. And it is not that wholesome and reverential fear that has its congenial habitation in the heart of every intelligent being who is in right relations with God, but it is that terror that is born of the sin of which his conscience tells him he is guilty, and which prevents him from looking at God in any other light than that of a merciless Judge, and this is so wrought upon by his viperous enemy, the devil, that even the overtures of his Creator's unfathomable grace are utterly disbelieved and refused.

Two words describe the natural condition of fallen man, and they are *dead* and *lost*. Alive—fully alive—to this godless world, to its pleasures, to its pride, to its lust, to its vices, and to everything that will minister a momentary gratification to his insatiable desires; but dead to God by the enmity of his apostate condition, and by the darkness in which he has found his God-forsaken home; but a darkness that is loved, because he thinks it hides from view the deeds of which he feels he ought to be ashamed.

And *lost*, because in him there is neither power nor desire for recovery. He can invent no remedy for his fallen condition. He is sin's servant, and his lusts like a whirlwind carry him away in the path of destruction. He can neither retrace his footsteps nor moderate the rapidity of his headlong career. Therefore he will banish the thought of God from his mind altogether, for every such thought only increases his misery.

The carnal mind is enmity against God. The thought of God is hateful to the flesh. The gospel has no charm for the natural ear. The judgment to come is treated as a baseless priestly invention. God is a hard Master, a compassionless tyrant, who has no respect for the work of His hands; that is, if He exists at all, which some men think may be very rightly questioned. Therefore the only thing to do is to act as though He did not exist, and by "fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind" make themselves as happy and as comfortable as they can in the land of the vagabond.

THE LIFE OF THE LAST ADAM is the only life in which a man can be made to live to God; and this life the believer in Jesus possesses. He is the living bread come down from heaven, to give life, not only to the Jewish nation, but to the world; and "if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" (John 6. 51). By faith this

bread is to be appropriated. His flesh is to be eaten, and His blood is to be drunk; a dead Christ is to be appropriated by faith. I am to claim that death as mine. That death is the judgment of all that I am as a child of Adam, and in the life of Christ, and in that life only, I live to God. I am quickened out of my death in sin by the communication of the life of the risen Saviour. I have parted company with my old sinful life, and am partaker of the life given to me by God in the power of the Holy Spirit, "and this life is in His Son" (1 John 5. 11).

Nothing can be more important for us than to realize that we have this new eternal life, that it is our own proper life, that in that life we are in relationship with God, that it is the life in which we live to Him, that it is the life that is in the Son, that it is stainless, incorruptible, deathless, the life by the possession of which we have fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ (1 John 1.). It is ours by eternal counsel (Titus 1. 2), by the gift of God (Rom. 6. 23), by His quickening power (John 5. 25), in the witness of the Spirit (Gal. 4. 6), and through faith in the gospel: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life" (John 5. 24).

The fact that God hath given to us this eternal life, and that this life is in His Son, is supported by three mighty witnesses—the Spirit, the water, and the blood. The water and the blood came out of the side of Christ when He hung dead upon the cross. The death of Christ has made a complete end of our

sins. They exist no longer, and to this the blood bears witness. The death of the One who bore the judgment of them has put them away for ever. The water bears witness that through that death we have moral purification, for in that death the man that committed the sins is in the judgment of God gone out of existence. The Spirit has come down to us from an ascended Christ, and is the witness to us that life is only in Him. These three bear witness to the one blessed truth: "That God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son" (1 John 5. 11). Therefore, he that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life. Our sins are gone, and our unclean nature also, in the judgment of the cross, and as born of God we are in new and eternal relationships with one another and with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

EVERYTHING THAT WAS CONTRARY TO GOD in us and about us was brought under the judgment of the cross, and there made an end of, and therefore we have a right and title to view ourselves only as partakers of that new life and nature that is ours by the quickening power of God, whatever we may actually find in ourselves that may be contrary to all this. The flesh in us is not mended, and we find it ever ready to assert itself, but it has been ended *judicially*, and when our Saviour comes and changes our bodies into the fashion of His own it will have *actually* passed away for ever. Meantime we can rejoice with joy unspeakable that

"That precious stream of water and of blood,
Which from his wounded side so freely
flowed,
Has put away our sins of scarlet dye,
Washed us from every stain, and brought
us nigh."

JAMES BOYD.

"Take thou our hearts, and let them be
For ever closed to all but Thee;
Thy willing servants, may we wear
The seal of love for ever there."

A Letter on Prayer.

DEAR Brother or Sister,—You are not indifferent to the interests of Christ. The matter before me is a united crying to God. I venture to bring it before you.

One cannot but be struck with the wide disproportion of numbers between the gatherings of the Lord's Day morning and those for prayer.

From Acts 2. 42 we learn that in the early days of the church the attendance on "breaking of bread and in prayers" was the same, and the words "with one accord" expressed the practice of those days.

It behoves us, then, to inquire why it would have to be written now, as regards gatherings for prayer, not "with one accord," but "*from twelve to twenty per cent were together.*" All will admit that one in five is a small proportion indeed to show the desire to wait on God in prayer; and again I would say, let us ask ourselves why.

If you, dear brother or sister, are seldom or ever at the meeting for prayer, let me ask you to ponder the reason.

As I have said, I cannot suppose you are indifferent to the interests of Christ, whether in the assemblies, affecting your own circle or the world at large.

Is it that you have let go the truth that you are a joint of supply in the body (Eph. 4. 16), and are *needful for the fulfilment of its activities*?

There must be distinct loss to all when you are not present.

I can easily imagine your saying, "I never thought of it in that light."

Sisters in particular may not have realized this truth, because unable to express themselves audibly in the meeting; but each sister is also a joint of *supply* in the body. Besides the fact that she can swell the volume of united intercession, and add her "Amen" to

the petitions of others, her own desires for Christ's glory known to the Holy Ghost, are sure to find expression through other lips, and thus the scope of the supplications, or, as it may be, thanksgivings, is enlarged by that sister's presence.

How great must be the loss to any brother or sister who absent themselves from the gathering for prayer!

Nor should any excuse themselves lightly. The attendance on the ministry of a gifted brother is often in marked contrast to the gathering for the exercise of the highest Christian privilege next to worship.

It is a wonderful thing that we—nothing in ourselves, and once far from God—should have the high privilege of drawing nigh to God as holy priests, to bring before Him, in the added relationship of His children, and in the incense of the name of Jesus, the petitions which the Holy Ghost frames in our hearts and minds from day to day, as He brings before our souls the interests of Christ and the claims of God, both in respect of His saints and the objects of His long-suffering grace in the world.

With regard to the meetings for prayer themselves, I might be permitted to mention what may help to increase and sustain general interest.

It need hardly be remarked that exercise of soul is needful to earnest and effectual prayer. It is those things that burden us from day to day, as to the good of saints or the needs of sinners in relation to the glory of God through Christ, which find expression when unitedly we bow before God.

But in order that we may agree as touching that which we shall ask, it is often most helpful to mention special things before we bend the knee together.

Indeed, this is the first thing I would mention as helpful, *i.e.* DEFINITE-

NESS OF PETITION, and next, BREVITY OF PRAYER.

"Friend, lend me three loaves," was both definite and brief (Luke 9. 5).

The prayer, or manner of prayer, which the Lord taught the disciples was a model of definiteness and briefness.

Long, roundabout prayers are wearisome, and have a deadening effect on the meeting.

Even a brother praying in the power of the Spirit had better pray twice or oftener, than for a long time at once.

While posture is a minor thing, it undoubtedly counts.

Kneeling is *always* the posture indicated in the New Testament, exemplified by the Lord Jesus Himself. The Jewish posture was, apparently, standing. Let us ponder this matter, and act as we believe the Lord would wish us to.

It has often been said that the gathering for prayer is the pulse of the assembly—the measure of its desire and power.

Once again, then, "let us lift up the hands which hang down." Let us bestir ourselves afresh to wait upon God unitedly—sisters as well as brothers—and He has said that they that wait on Him shall renew their strength, mount up with wings as eagles, run and not be weary, and walk and not faint. Moreover, it is written, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son."

Let gravity (but not formality), simplicity, which always accompanies reality, lowliness of spirit, definiteness, largeness of petition and expectation, with watchfulness, characterize our gatherings for prayer. Nor let us forget thanksgiving for answers vouchsafed.

Let it be said of the assembly you are identified with, and of mine, as was written of those in Acts 1. 14: "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication." Then who shall measure the resulting glory to God, and blessing to men?

F. L. HARRIS.

Barabbas.

PILATE asks the Jewish crowd, "Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas or Jesus which is called Christ?" They reply unanimously, "Barabbas." The frenzied mob would hear of no excuse, no explanation, no reasoning. They reiterate urgently, "Let him be crucified" (Matt. 27. 17-23). Later, Peter drives home to their hearts their master-crime. He tells them that they have desired a murderer and killed the Prince (Greek *archegos*—author or originator) of life (Acts 3. 14, 15).

Barabbas and Jesus! What an utter contrast! They are farther apart than the two poles. The one is a robber (John 18. 40), the other the supreme

Giver (John 10. 8-11). The one is an insurrectionist (Mark 15. 7), the other the Peacemaker (Luke 2. 14; Col. 1. 20). The one is a murderer, the other is the Author of life. Barabbas means "son of the father." Veritably, he is the son of his father the Devil, a murderer from the beginning (John 8. 44 and 1 John 3. 10). Our Lord is the Son of the Father-God. Yet man prefers the inflicter of death above the Giver of life, the son of the Devil above the Son of God. This is ever his way. Is the world better now? No, in no wise. And if any have chosen Christ it is by His grace we are what we are. May *we* who know Him cleave to Him who is our life with purpose of heart.

BA HAN.

The House of the Lord.

“One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life to behold the beauty of the Lord” (Ps. 27. 4).

NOT built with hands is that fair radiant chamber
Of God's untroubled rest—
Where Christ awaits to lay his weary-hearted
In stillness on His breast.

Not built on sands of time or place to perish,
When tempests roar—
But on the mighty Rock of Ages founded,
It stands for evermore.

Not only in the day of distant dawning
When past are desert years,
**BUT NOW, AMIDST THE TURMOIL AND THE BATTLE,
THE MOCKING AND THE TEARS.**

The chamber still and stately waits us ever,
That sacred pure retreat—
That rest in Arms of tenderest enfoldings,
That welcome, passing sweet.

**O HOME OF GOD MY FATHER'S JOY AND GLADNESS,
O RIVEN VEIL WHEREBY I ENTER IN!
THERE CAN MY SOUL FORGET THE GRAVE, THE WEEPING,
THE WEARINESS AND SIN.**

O Chamber, all thine agate windows opened
To face the radiant east—
O holy Temple, where the saints are surging,
Where Jesus is the Priest.

Illumined with the everlasting glory,
Still with the peace of God's eternal Now,
**THOU, GOD, MY REST, MY REFUGE, AND MY TOWER—
MY HOME ART THOU.**

From "Hymns of Ter Steegen and others." Francis Bevan. Nisbet.

“And the two disciples heard Him speak, and they followed Jesus. Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto Him, Rabbi (which is to say, being interpreted, Master), where dwellest thou? He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where He dwelt, and abode with Him that day: for it was about the tenth hour” (John 1. 37, 38, 39).

“Fear Not Ye.”

“Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees came together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first. Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can. So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting the watch” (Matt. 27. 62-66).

STONE and seal and soldiers held the lonely sepulchre in the garden where the body of Jesus lay. The subtilty of Jewish priests and the authority of Rome combined to make the place secure. “*Make it,*” said Pilate, “*as sure as ye can.*” They did their utmost, and may have gone to their beds assured that they would meet the hated Nazarene no more. What orders were issued to the Roman guard as they went to their unwonted watch? Were they told, I wonder, how to treat the expected raid upon that tomb by a mob of Galilean fishermen? It is more than likely that they were, but they certainly were not instructed how to deal with an earthquake and an angel of the Lord, whose countenance was like lightning and whose raiment was white as snow. And the Galilean fishermen came not, but the earthquake and the angel did.

What a moment was that when the earth trembled and rocked, and the Imperial seal was torn asunder and the stone was rolled away from the mouth of that tomb by angelic hands. Glittering spears and shining armour were useless to withstand this display of heavenly power; the courage of the coarse defenders of that tomb failed utterly, and they fell down flat as dead men.

There was every reason why that guard should shake and fall with fear, for it represented a world determined to be rid of Jesus, and which thought it had realized its determination. Now He was risen from the dead, and His resurrection was His triumph and their defeat. It was the declaration on the

part of God that He had seen and disapproved their awful act at Calvary; and that Christ was the righteous One before whose throne all men must stand.

But close at hand in that memorable hour were two weak women, and to them the angel turned with words of cheer. There was nothing in the power of God to make them afraid; there was every reason why they should rejoice. They represented, not the world that hated Jesus, but those whom He had chosen out of it, and who loved Him because He first loved them. So the angel said to them,

“FEAR NOT YE.”

It seemed strange that such words should be said to these weak women, when Roman veterans fell as dead for fear; but the reason is at once declared. “I know,” said the angel, “that

YE SEEK JESUS.”

That was the reason. He was the object of their hearts’ truest affection. The world was a dreary desert without Him; they could not keep away from that sepulchre where they supposed that He was lying. All their hopes were centred in Him; and though their faith, through ignorance, had been sorely shaken, their love for Him remained. He was their Beloved and their Friend, and in this, though they knew it not, their hearts were in fellowship with the heart of God. And we come together as those who cannot do without Him. As those women sought Him because they loved Him, so do we seek His presence, for He has won *our* hearts’ affections, and

in His company we find our fullest joy. He has become our gathering centre, our great attraction, our bond of fellowship; that which bound those women as one in their search for Him unites us also; we are one if we love our Lord Jesus Christ. We are not of the world that hates Him, but of God and of one another, because of our common devotion to Him.

"It is Himself that bindeth heart to heart.
In one eternal love."

But why did they seek Him? And why do we seek Him? The angel supplied the answer, "Ye seek Jesus," he said,

"WHICH WAS CRUCIFIED."

That is why. We should never have sought Him if He had not been crucified. His crucifixion was the expression and the measure of His love to us. When He was despised and rejected by men,

"Stripped and scourged by hands ungentle,
Mocked by tongues untamed,"

then He suffered, the Just for us the unjust, to bring us to God. "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed" (Isa. 53). He "loved the church and gave Himself for it." It is love that passes knowledge, and yet we know it, for *He bore our sins*, and has put them all away, having borne the righteous judgment that was due to us for them. *He died for us*.

"We know the way, the glorious way He made

Through death's dark sea.

O Lamb of God, we bless the love that laid

Our sins on Thee."

But if the angel could have said no more of Him, it would have been useless for any of us to have sought Him, or still to seek Him. He would have been of no use to us, nor could be. If He is a dead Christ we are hopeless, for "if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins" (1 Cor. 15. 17). But a glad triumph swells through the

angel's words, as he proclaims, "He is not here, for

HE IS RISEN."

His work upon the cross has been accepted; the price He paid there for us is enough. Death has met his conqueror; the grave has been robbed of its terrors, and the devil's power has been broken for ever. The Father's approval of His life and death has been made manifest, His own personal greatness and glory has been declared, and eternal redemption secured for us beyond recall. We can understand how every fear and dark foreboding in these women's hearts would be changed to confidence and joy. His resurrection proved that He had not deceived them; that every hope that He had raised within their breasts would be fulfilled. And it was this that the angel urged upon them when he said "He is risen

AS HE SAID."

He had told them that He would rise again; that He had done so was the confirmation of all His words, and proved that He was fully worthy of their fullest confidence. We, too, may give to the winds our fears, and renew our confidence in Him, as we read His words, which tell us that not one jot or tittle of His word shall fail. He is risen, that is the pledge. Death mocks at men's assertions and brings to naught their words and works, but our Saviour lives as Victor over death to give complete effect to all that the prophets have spoken concerning Him and all that He has spoken concerning us.

"COME, SEE THE PLACE WHERE
THE LORD LAY."

They were to be witnesses to the disciples of this great event, and so must view the empty tomb with their own eyes, and this they did at the invitation of the angel of the Lord. It was presumptuously stated by one whose blasphemies have been closed by death that the Lord did not actually rise from the dead; that His remains are still lying somewhere near to Calvary. If

this is so the Christian faith is a delusion and a snare, and all those who have fallen asleep in the joy of it have perished. "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept" (1 Cor. 15. 20).

See how the glorious worth of our Lord comes out in the angel's words.

1. YE SEEK JESUS=His personal preciousness.
2. WHICH WAS CRUCIFIED=His matchless love.
3. HE IS RISEN=His glorious power.
4. AS HE SAID=His absolute trustworthiness.

But there is more in this wonderful story; the risen Lord had not forgotten His disciples, they were His first thought. So that the angel continued,

**"GO QUICKLY, AND TELL HIS
DISCIPLES**

that He is risen from the dead, and goeth before you into Galilee; there ye shall see Him, lo, I have told you. And they departed quickly with fear and great joy and did run to bring His disciples word." . . . Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee

**INTO A MOUNTAIN WHERE JESUS
HAD APPOINTED THEM."**

He appointed a place where He could meet with them, and, blessed fact, He has appointed a place for us, where He can meet with us. It is in this same gospel that His precious words are recorded for us: "*Where two or three are gathered together in My name there am I in the midst of them*" (chap. 18. 20). It is not the place that we choose; we may not please ourselves in this matter; the place is His appointment; it is our responsibility as well as our joy to obey His word and keep this appointment with Him.

The place that He appointed them was outside the temple and away from Jerusalem. We must remember that in Matthew's gospel He had been presented to Israel as their Messiah,

and they had rejected Him, so that the temple, their house, and their city were to be desolated, and the faithful remnant was to be led out of both and gathered to Himself. His name instead of the temple and the city was to be their rallying centre. And so to-day not a sensuous religion, an ornate service, or a massive temple is that which satisfies His heart or the hearts of those who love Him. To meet His own is His wish, and to be in His presence without distraction or the intrusion of that which pleases nature is the wish of those who keep His word and do not deny His Name.

**"AND WHEN THEY SAW HIM
THEY WORSHIPPED HIM."**

Could they do other, when He stood before them who had died for them, bearing in His risen body the marks of His suffering and death? A sight of Him was all that was needed to prostrate them in holy adoration at His feet. And so it will be with us if without distraction we realise His presence in the place that He has appointed us.

There is more in the chapter, but here I close, as my wish is to bring and keep before you the Person of the Lord and the blessed fact that we may have the joy of His presence, for He has appointed a place where He will meet with us, and He cannot deny His own word, nor will He disappoint those who believe it. We are often so self-occupied, or busy interfering with our brethren, or taken up with our service, that we think little of this that means so much to Him, and yet to faith and by the Holy Spirit's power His presence may be as real to us as it was to His disciples when they met Him on that mountain in Galilee.

"Jesus, Thou alone art worthy
Ceaseless praises to receive,
For Thy love and grace and goodness
Rise o'er all our hearts conceive.

Praise Him, praise Him, praise the Saviour,
Saints aloud your voices raise.
Praise Him, praise Him, till in heaven
Perfected we'll sing His praise."

J. T. MAWSON.

Correspondence.

The Lack of Zeal on the Part of Christian Young Men.

In our August issue the following question appeared :—"What is the cause of so much want of zeal on the part of many who have passed safely through the dangers of the past five years? I have in my mind a few whose lethargy, or 'fed-upness' (the words one used in regard to meetings, etc., were, 'I'm fed up') with reference to the Lord's things and service is to-day, most disappointing."—E. W.

Of this a young soldier quartered on the Mount of Olives writes: "If such a state of things exists it should cause much anxiety and exercise; it gave me some deep heart-searchings. I think that by rules and regulations Christianity is often made a burden to the young, while the Word of God teaches the truth in such a way that the Lord becomes endeared to the heart, and one's life is bright, and there's no lethargy or 'fed-upness' then. After my conversion two things were my whole concern, namely—truth and morality. After ardent and constant searching I congratulated myself that I was advancing in the knowledge of the truth, and I certainly improved morally. Yet after all I was disappointed, I felt outside living Christianity. I wanted a real understanding, and this led me to more prayer and eager searchings in the truth of God. Quite casually an old book came my way, and one statement in it cleared up things for me. It was, '*Christianity is not mere belief in truth, or even the practice of morality, but fellowship with the Father and the Son.*'" The companionship of the Father and the Son is our portion (John 14.); this has been my joy and support; when this is known Christianity proves not a burden, but a necessity to life." J. D.

There are possibly two sides to the question raised by E. W., one finding its answer in the young men themselves, and the other in those who are older and remained at home. In times of trial and danger it is easy to cleave to the Lord, especially when it is felt that only this can keep one from being swept away on a tide of evil; this was the experience of many young men in army life, and they were kept in a measure of separation from evil things and of brightness in the Lord; but now that the tension is relaxed, and things are easier, the tendency is to settle down and drop into indifference to the

claims of the Lord. If these young men could enter into that which our soldier friend in Palestine has realized it would make all the difference to them.

It may be with other young men that they have neglected to hold faith and a good conscience with the tenacity that the circumstances demanded, and so have not warred a good warfare and are now ill at ease. How blessed it is to know that the Lord whose grace restored Simon when he fell is just the same to-day for them.

But there is the other side. Have those who remained at home, and were able to live at home quietly and at peace, enjoying all the privileges of fellowship and ministry through the mercy of God and the going forth of these young men—have they fulfilled their responsibility towards them? They were doubtless prayed for while away; were they welcomed on their return with sufficient warmth? Did they find in the fellowship and the meetings that love, righteousness, peace and joy that they looked for and that should mark those who walk in the Spirit, who own the Lord, and are one in Him? If they found coldness, dissension, a sectarian spirit, an unscriptural narrowness, no wonder they have lost heart, and perhaps have begun to question whether these things are real after all.

Young men of the world were welcomed back with merriment and feasting, definite interest has been shown in their welfare; in a fuller, truer, and a godly way should the children of God have welcomed their younger brethren, and should still care for them and pray for them, so that they might feel that the fellowship of the saints is better than the fellowship of the world, and the bond that binds us together in the Lord is stronger and more blessed than any other bond can be. But our hope in every difficulty and in all our failure is in the Lord; we may turn to Him as to this, as in all others. ED.

The Gift of the Spirit.

Why was the gift of the Holy Spirit made so prominent in the early preaching?

THE question raised is an important one. Prominence was necessarily given to the gift of the Spirit at the beginning, for that had been the subject of prophecy, and godly souls rightly expected this outpouring; and when at Pentecost some mocked because of the stirring scenes and marvellous manifestations connected with the Spirit's presence, and others amazed and in perplexity asked what it all meant, Peter stood up with the eleven and explained. It was just the sort of thing the prophet Joel had foretold (Acts 2. 12-17). It was not, however, till later, as we shall see, that the truth of the Spirit forming the saints of the present time into one body was unfolded. The full fulfilment of Joel 2. 28-32 is yet future, when God will take up Israel again.

Before ascending to the right hand of God the Lord Jesus also spoke of the coming of the Spirit, and, in a special way, as giving power for witness.

At the beginning the Holy Spirit came upon about one hundred and twenty from Christ glorified, and the effects of His presence were wonderfully manifested, as we have said. Passing over the present period when the assembly is being builded by the rejected Son of Man, the Spirit will be given in the abundance of blessing indicated by the prophets; and "the powers" of that "age to come," which accompanied the Lord and His apostles (Heb. 2. 4; 6. 5), shall publicly obtain in that glorious time. Meanwhile, those who have believed on Christ are indwelt by the Spirit of God, and are thus vitally united one to another and to their glorified Head in heaven, "for by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." Moreover, it is important to remember, the body of each individual who has received the Spirit is the temple of the

Holy Ghost; therefore it is to be used in sanctification, and for God's glory (1 Cor. 6. 19, 20).

Promise had been made that the gift of the Spirit should take place; but, as long as the Lord Jesus was on earth, that promise remained unfulfilled, for redemption had not been secured; and we are told, "the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified" (John 7. 39); but it was said, the *Father* would send Him; also the *Son* would send Him; and, He would *Himself* come (John 14. 26; 15. 26; 16. 13). Thus the Trinity was immediately concerned in that great event, which was fulfilled at Pentecost, when the hundred and twenty were "baptized with the Holy Spirit," when they received "the promise of the Father" of which Christ had spoken. Correctly speaking, that was the gift of the Spirit. He was given to believing *Jews* at that time. The gift was afterwards extended to believing *Samaritans*, who were a mixed people (Acts 8. 12-17), and then to pure *Gentiles* (10. 44). This extension is explained by Peter in chapter 11. 15: "The Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning"; and again, "God gave them the like gift as He did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ" (17). It was not a fresh baptism of the Spirit, but the extension of it through Peter's ministry; whereas, the baptism at Pentecost was direct, without any man's ministry.

There are contrasts which should be noticed in these three cases. They show that there is no rule to be laid down. The one hundred and twenty had evidently been baptized with water during the Lord's life on earth, long before they received the Spirit. The Samaritans heard the gospel through Philip and were baptized, but not till Peter and John visited them did they receive the Spirit.

On the other hand, He came upon the Gentiles, in the house of Cornelius, while Peter was preaching before they were baptized.

An exceptional instance during the early transitional period is recorded in Acts 19. 1-7. Paul found about twelve men who had heard and been baptized with John the Baptist's baptism—the baptism of repentance. The Apostle spoke to them, and baptized them to the name of the Lord Jesus. The Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. They were previously quite ignorant of the gift of the Spirit, for when Paul asked them, "Did ye receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed?" They replied, "We did not even hear if the Holy Spirit was come." There is no ground in this case for saying that there are true believers on Christ to-day who have not received the Spirit at all; for it is Christ who is preached now, and not the baptism of John; that is, where the gospel is really preached.

The above cases are all special, but we are told in Ephesians 1. 13, what is the normal way to-day. The word of truth, the gospel of salvation is preached, and those who hear and believe in Christ are sealed by the Spirit. Immediately there is faith in Christ thus presented the Spirit seals the believer in Him. The reading should be, not "*after that ye believed,*" but simply "*having believed.*" It is important to see this. The believer who receives the Spirit now is consequently made a vital member of the assembly of which Christ is the Head. He is a member of His body, belonging not merely to a religious organization, but to a living organism—the body of Christ. "There is one body and one Spirit." The truth as to this was given of God later, through the Apostle to the Gentiles. We do well to understand and respond to this inclusive truth.

The Lord Jesus, however, foretold the normal character of His mission in John 14. 15 and 16. He should be for

us that other Comforter, the Spirit of Truth during the absence of the Son; He should bear witness to Christ; and, whilst on the one hand He brings demonstration of sin, righteousness and judgment; on the other, He guides believers into all truth, not speaking from Himself, but glorifying the Son, and showing us those things of which the Son is the Centre.

The Holy Ghost is still here. His infinite power and energy are unabated. He indwells each individual who is redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. He glorifies the Son of God, not speaking from Himself, He still uses the preaching of our Lord Jesus Christ. Men, women and children who are reached are born of water—the word—and the Spirit. Repentance has been granted to them unto life eternal. Salvation and forgiveness are theirs through our Lord Jesus Christ; and, if rightly directed and instructed, they will grow in grace and deepen in the knowledge of Himself; progressing in the understanding of the blessings and the acceptance which is theirs in Him; realizing in a positive way their oneness with *all* saints—"for by one Spirit are we *all* baptized into one body"; rejoicing, in spite of defective preaching and wrong teaching, that they are complete in Christ, who is above all; boasting in Him, notwithstanding all ecclesiastical pride, tyranny, or failure, for He is the Head of the assembly, the body which includes every true believer. He gave Himself for the assembly. He is coming to present it to Himself all glorious; and, while we long to see Him, and the Spirit and the bride say, Come—may there be an overflowing Spirit-given testimony to a needy world, saying, "Whosoever will let him take the water of life freely!" The word of the Son of God abides still: "He that believeth on ME, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow **RIVERS** of living water. This He spake of **THE SPIRIT.**"

Conditions of Blessing.

"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (Mal 3, 10).

THIS is only part of a very comprehensive and very precious promise which Jehovah made to His people, a promise that was calculated to recall their wandering hearts to Himself. It comes when and where we might expect a message not of grace but of judgment. This short book which closes the Old Testament deals with the lamentable condition of those whom God loved, for whom He cared, and from whom He was entitled to expect much.

Alas! They had strayed so far that they were unconscious of His love; they spoke slightly of His Table; they offered Him that which their governor would not accept; they robbed Him; and they were utterly insensible as to the seriousness of their condition. Is it possible to find a parallel to this among the people of God to-day? We think it is. The close of Revelation 3. seems to indicate a period in the history of the Church, similar to that in the history of God's ancient people, with which Malachi deals. The Laodiceans were in a sad plight; going on with religious routine, boasting of their riches and possessions, yet all the time Christ was outside. The sad feature was that, like Israel, they were insensible as to their true state. That such a state of matters is characteristic of the professing Church to-day must be apparent to all. The question we desire to raise is: To what extent have those who compose the true Church been affected by the Laodicean spirit? To return to Malachi, do the conditions that are described there apply in any way to us to-day? Let us ask ourselves one or two questions. (1) Do our hearts truly delight in the sense of the Lord's love? We do not mean expressing as a pious senti-

ment that we are loved by Him; but is it a living, bright reality to our hearts? If it is, what will be the result? First, we will love *all* saints. And as love cannot be satisfied with anything less than the company of the loved ones, we shall labour for one another's good; be ready to serve all, so that together we may enjoy Christian privileges, and delight in the one blessed Object of our affections—our Lord Jesus Christ. Next, we will go out in all the compassions of Christ to the lost and the perishing. His love filling and thrilling our hearts, we will think of those for whom He died; and we will consider one hour per week hopelessly inadequate to get souls under the sound of such a gospel, and to tell dying sinners such a marvellous story of a living Saviour at God's right hand. Judged in this way we have to inquire—to what extent do we realize and enjoy the love of the Lord? (2) They spoke slightly of His Table. We do not suggest that any of us have done this with our lips, but what about our lives and our actions? Is it not possible that in this way we have brought it into contempt? If our personal walk is not in keeping with that Table; if we patronize those things and places invented and erected for the carnal pleasure of a world that does not love our Lord; if we treat His Table carelessly, are we not slightlying His Table? May we not in this way bring it into contempt? (3) Do we offer that which is unacceptable? Is it not frequently just what time we can spare that we offer to Him? The cry to-day is "business," "we are too busy," etc. When Lord's Day comes we are worn out; for week-night meetings we have not time. We make our houses comfortable to a degree; we are inlif-

ferent as to the sort of place in which we carry on the Lord's work; we make our business known by legitimate efforts; how often we expect people by some miraculous means to come to the preachings, putting forth no effort, and making little or no personal sacrifice, and if they do not come, we say it is because they will not come where the gospel is faithfully preached.

We are rightly concerned if after a year's business the balance is on the wrong side; we are seemingly unconcerned if after a year's preaching we can show no conversions. Do not misunderstand us; business must be carefully attended to, we must not be slothful in it. We must, however, recognize that the Lord's claims are paramount, that the essence of Christianity is sacrifice; and that we will not lose in *our* business by attending to *His*. He is worthy of our best service; of our greatest effort to get souls to hear His Gospel; of the time we spend in prayer for the blessing of souls. We know a brother who in pre-war days got home from business on Saturdays at midnight, and who waited on the Lord till three o'clock on the Lord's Day morning, praying for blessing on his labours next day, *and he got it.* (4) Do we rob God? If any of the aforesaid suggestions are true, do we not rob Him of the glory that belongs to Him, and dishonour Him by giving to Him and to His service that which is all but valueless to us? (5) Is there a remedy? Thank God there is. *IF* we bring the tithes into the storehouse that there may be meat in His house: in other words, *IF* we acknowledge His supremacy; *IF* we own His claim; *IF* we give Him His portion; then we may prove Him, and He *will* open the window of Heaven, and pour out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

We have often prayed for this, and adopted these very words. Have we seen it? If not, why not? If not, is it not

because we have not fulfilled the conditions? Is it possible to-day? It is, because He Who speaks says: "I am the Lord, I change not" (Mal. 3. 6). Shall we seek to answer to the condition, and *then* prove Him? Thank God in that day there were those to whom His Name was sacred (ten times in this short book His Name is mentioned), and their remembrance of Him, and loyalty to Him, were exceedingly grateful to His heart. At the end of that long dark night which ended with the first coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, there was still a few. Simeon waited for Him, and Anna "spoke of Him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem" (Luke 2. 25-38). To revert to Revelation 3. we have reason to believe that at the close of the long, dark night of our Lord's absence, which may end at any moment by His coming for us, there will be those to whom His Word will be precious and to whom His name will be dear. We believe it is open to every saint of God to seek to be found here so that *He* may be able to say: "Thou hast a little strength, and hast kept My Word, and hast not denied My name." To such He says, "Behold I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" (Rev. 3. 8-11). Shall we go in for it?

We are persuaded that we are just at the close of the night of His absence. Darkness abounds, difficulties increase, the road becomes more rough, and the path becomes more narrow; at any moment we may expect to hear His welcome voice. Shall we not seek then to give Him *HIS* time; to put in every ounce of the strength that He has given us; and by devotedness to His Person, His Name, His Word and His interests, give joy to His heart, bring cheer to "His own," and carry the message of salvation to the lost and perishing, while waiting and watching for His coming, who is "the Bright and Morning Star."

The Glad Tidings of God. No. 7.

Deliverance.

JUST as by nature we were in the life of the first Adam, so by faith and the quickening power of God are we in the life of the last Adam. The old Adam life and the sins committed while we were in that life have been made an end of in the judgment of the cross. The old order is gone judicially, though not yet actually, for we have still the flesh in us, though we are not in it. Death—the death of Him who in love to us died in our room and stead—has been the judicial end of all that we were in Adam, the first and fallen head of the race. The flesh forms no part of us in our vital relations with God. It does not come in there at all. We are not in the flesh (Rom. 8. 9): it is a past condition for us who are Christ's. We are not in the standing and responsibilities of the first man. We surely have our responsibilities—every intelligent being has—but it was not by the fulfilment of our responsibilities we gained righteousness, peace, and favour with God; neither is it by our own efforts that we are maintained in the place of blessing that we now occupy. It was grace that saved us, and that without the slightest co-operation on our part; and it is grace that keeps us, and will keep us to the end, until we shall have reached the glory of God, of which we rejoice in hope. To Him be all the praise.

God has brought us to Himself in Christ, and there is *new creation* (2 Cor. 5. 17). Here there is not one element of the old order: "Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." Old responsibilities, old nature, old relationships, old affections: *in Christ* all these are gone, and in their stead have come to pass new nature, new responsibilities, new relationships, new affections; *a new man*, in whom we may well glory, for *He* is the masterpiece of eternal love.

Before this work of God took place we were what our head was—fallen, sinful, under death, and on account of our sins amenable to a judgment, that would have been to us eternal banishment from the presence of God. But now we are what Christ, our heavenly Head is: His place, His relationship to God, and His acceptance, determine ours. What He is we are in the account of God. All we require in order to be with Him in the Father's house is to have our bodies changed and fashioned like His, and this will be effected at His coming again (Phil. 3. 21).

And for this we wait. Except for the necessity of having our bodies changed we are as fit to be the companions of Christ in glory as God can make us (Col. 1. 12). The work of Christ *for* us on the cross, and the work of the Spirit *in* us, give us confidence as to our fitness for heaven. A change of body will complete the redemption that is ours in Christ (1 John 1. 7; Eph. 1. 7; John 13. 10; Titus 3. 5-7; Phil. 3. 21). But we are not always taken to heaven the moment we are fit for it, but in the ways of God with us we are left here upon earth with sin all about us and an evil nature within us, and we are no sooner converted to God than we begin to feel

THE NEED OF DELIVERANCE FROM SIN'S DOMINION,

for slaves of sin we were in our unconverted state. It is not only that we have committed sins innumerable, but we are sin's bondservants. It rules us as a tyrant rules a slave, and we are compelled to serve it with every member of our body. In our unrenewed state in the flesh we suppose that we can as easily become servants to God as a servant can change one master for another. But when, through a work of God's Spirit in us, we seek to carry out His will in our practical everyday life

we feel how terrible are the bars of steel by which we are held in the service of unrighteousness. We are willing enough to recognize our own responsibilities, but the attempt to fulfil them makes us conscious of the law in our members that is too strong for the desires of our renewed minds.

Our desires are all right. We are resolved to do good—to fulfil our obligations, the measure of which is clearly set before us in the law of Moses. We will sin no more. We will for the future tread a path pleasing to God. All that the Lord has said we will do, and be obedient. We have got forgiveness for the past, or at least we hope we have, and the future will not find us debtors.

Now the struggle has begun. We are determined to walk righteously, but we find that we are lame on both our feet. Our determination is to have nothing more to do with sin, but there is something in us that cries out for it with more powerful voice than that which deprecates the committal of it. The good that we would do we do not, and the evil that we abhor we do. There is an evil principle in our members at war with all the good desires of the mind, and it is more powerful than they. We now learn that, however good our intentions may be, we have no power to bring them to pass. We are captive to a power of evil that lives in the members of our body. Sin has the mastery over us, and with every member are we compelled to serve it. Our state is wretched in the extreme, and our good desires only make us all the more miserable. We would like to pursue the path of righteousness, but a terrific force of evil drives us in the opposite direction.

And by the law that we acknowledge as holy, just, and good, we see ourselves condemned as sinners. We admit that the law is no exorbitant demand, but is the exact expression of our natural obligations. By keeping it we would bring forth fruit for the

approval of God, so that we should be accepted by Him, and that our souls should live. But in this struggle between right desires and the evil disposition of the flesh, we learn that not till the Ethiopian can change his skin, or the leopard his spots, can the man that is accustomed to do evil begin to do good (Jer. 13. 23).

We may be able to distinguish between the right desires of our renewed minds, and the perverse nature of the flesh; and we may also be able to identify ourselves with the former, and refuse to identify ourselves with the latter, and this is a great advance in the knowledge of ourselves in the mixed condition in which saints are in this world. But that knowledge does not drive away our misery, nor help us to overcome the evil power that works in our members, and brings forth fruit unto death. Because we can say when we sin: "It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me" (Rom. 7. 17), we cannot say that our doing evil is no matter, nor can we escape the condemnation of the law, under which we feel ourselves to be. We cannot come to such unworthy conclusions, as that God would condone our sins, and hold our neighbour accountable for his. What can we do? and to whom shall we look for relief?

We can do nothing but fall down on our faces before God, groan out our wretchedness, and cry out for a deliverer. "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" The realization of our utterly *lost* condition stares us in the face. It is not only that we were sinners needing forgiveness, our fallen Adam nature was sinful and incapable of betterment. We have learned that in our flesh good does not dwell (Rom. 7. 18), and that "the carnal mind is enmity against God"; that "it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8. 7). The struggle is ended. We look away from ourselves for a deliverer.

It has been said that man's extremity is God's opportunity, and in this case the saying is abundantly verified. God has intervened for us in two marvellous ways: by means of the cross, and by the gift to us of His Holy Spirit. The law could not enable us to overcome the evil tendencies of our Adam nature. It rather provoked it to transgress, for it drew attention to the evil by the very prohibition against it, and cursed us for our disregard of its authority. It could not justify us. It could not give us power against the evil. It had no sympathy with our helpless condition. Its authority had to be maintained, for it was the expression of the righteous requirements of God, and to set aside its authority would have been to reduce the creation of God to a state of anarchy and rebellion against Himself, and to give the government of the universe into the hands of Satan and his subordinates.

But God has intervened, and that in infinite grace and mercy. By the cross He has made an end of our whole sinful condition. He has maintained the authority of the law, and manifested His utter abhorrence of sin that had dominated us. Sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and putting Him in the place of the sinner, He dealt with sin as sin deserved, and thus brought to an end in the judgment of that cross our whole condition as in the flesh, thus ending our history as before Him whether as lawless Gentiles or legal Jews, so that we are no longer on the ground of a responsibility that holds us to the fulfilment of our obligations as a means of entering into life, but rather, as having died out of that carnal order, we are privileged now to reckon ourselves as alive to God in the life of the risen Saviour: we are dead to sin, and alive to God in Him (Rom. 6. 11).

We have also His Spirit as the power of that life, so that we may be able truly to confess to His everlasting praise

that "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8. 2), and to show this by fulfilling the righteous requirement of the law, having abandoned every attempt to subject the flesh to its rightful authority, for we are not under the law, but under grace. And because of this, sin shall not have dominion over us, for we get all the help we require from God. It is an old, trite, but true saying, "The flesh is in us, but we are not in the flesh." We are not in the standing and responsibility of children of Adam. We are in the Spirit, for the Spirit of God dwells in us, and the Spirit is not given to us to help the flesh, but to enable us to keep the flesh in the place of death, where it has been placed in the judgment of the cross.

I need scarcely say that the life which is ours in Christ is a life of continual dependence upon God. If anyone thinks that deliverance means that we are brought into a certain state of soul in which there is no longer need for watchfulness against the subtilty and the power of sin, and that the rest of the believer's journey is plain and peaceful sailing, and that all conflict is at an end for ever, he is greatly mistaken, and in very real and imminent danger of a dreadful fall. We require to be continually on the watch against that power that once dominated us, and we need to be instant in prayer to God lest we yield to the enticements of the world, fail to reckon ourselves dead to sin, allow the will of the flesh to become dominant, and wander out of the pathway of righteousness. We need to keep our body under, to bring it to subjection, to mortify its deeds, to present it a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, to bear about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, and these things are not done without continual prayer to God, for, as I have said, our life is a dependent one.

The whole redeemed creation is being set up on a new principle, that of

resurrection, and in the power of God, for the creature has no might of his own. The creature has miserably failed in connection with everything that was committed to his responsibility. And at this we need not be astonished, for surely all power belongs to God. But in Christ God has intervened to place everything rescued from the ruin of this world in His own power, exhibited in the resurrection of Christ from the dead.

I desire that we might better understand that by the gospel God is transferring all who believe from the footing of creature responsibility to the rock of resurrection, and that, as I have said before, is where His almighty power has come to light. Christ is risen, and the believer is in Him, as partaker of His life and Spirit. Here can come no failure, no death, no condemnation; and His Spirit dwelling in us is the pledge of the quickening of our mortal bodies (Rom. 8. 11). Knowing this, we are made conscious of our absolute dependence upon Him, and this dependence is expressed in continual prayer, for we know that we cannot get on rightly one moment without Him. Thank God, He is ever accessible, and His power ever available for those that seek it with their whole heart.

At this present time *deliverance* is not so much talked of as it used to be in days gone by, and I have wondered why this is so. It cannot be because it is not so much needed as formerly, when it used to be the most usual subject taken up by believers met together for edification. It certainly must be learned and experienced if one is to be victor over the world, the flesh, and the power of the devil. And yet how little one hears it referred to!

Can it be that our practical state of soul is so low that we are unaware how greatly we are dominated by the will of the flesh? Has the upward way to heaven become so hidden from our eyes that we imagine that we are making progress in that direction when we are

calmly drifting downward and away from it in the current of a Christless world? Are we so sound asleep that we feel not the fetters that bind us in the service of sin? Are we absolutely certain that there are any sins except murder and theft? Now, when everyone is grasping after his neighbour's goods, are we quite sure that covetousness is a breach of the commandment of God, that the man who covets has no inheritance in the kingdom of God, and that because of such sins the wrath of God comes upon the children of disobedience? (Eph. 5. 6). Are we in continual exercise to be found walking in the pathway of the will of God, or are we content to go on with a fair show of morality and religion, our own will being the spring of all our activities? We might hesitate to enter the theatre, but consider it a prejudice to be overcome; the political arena, the concert, we look upon as more necessary things. The world must be governed, and we must not shirk our obligations, for we cannot leave everything in the hands of the devil. Thus we reason, and this world and its things get all our attention, and the Father's world recedes from our view.

If we have thus lived and walked at a measurable distance from God, it is not surprising that we have felt no need of deliverance from sin and the elements of the world. The cry for forgiveness of sins is heard occasionally, though not so often as we would wish, but the cry for deliverance: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" is heard at very rare intervals to-day. There is a possibility of forgetting that we have been brought to God out of the bondage of sin, that we might be before Him in the conscious enjoyment of His great love, and in the determination to walk by His grace in the pathway of His revealed will. Like Him who came from heaven, not to do His own will, but the will of Him who sent Him.

The Place of Rest.

"At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in Thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of My Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him. Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light" (Matt. 11. 25-30).

There was no rest for the blessed Lord either in His circumstances or His service in this world. As to His circumstances, He had not where to lay His head; and as to His service, the cities where most of His mighty works were done had rejected Him. But, notwithstanding this, He had rest of the most blessed character. But *where* was that rest found? Entirely outside this world of sin.

It is wonderful to think of those divine affections, unknown to men, in which the Son as a Man in this world dwelt with the Father. He had known those affections from eternity—they had flowed out to Him "before the foundation of the world" where only divine blessedness was known—and He carried the secret joy of them in His heart through all the labour and sorrow of His lowly pathway of suffering and rejection here. He was able to retire from the circumstances of that pathway, and even from the sorrow—which He so keenly felt—of fruitless service, and of seeing men reject the all-blessing grace of God, into the joy of His own relationship with the Father, and of a circle of divine love, the secret of which none knew but Himself.

Presenting Himself to us in the rest of the Father's love, He says, "COME UNTO ME, ALL YE THAT LABOUR AND ARE HEAVY LADEN, AND I WILL GIVE YOU REST." He had a

few around Him that were bound to Him in affection. They were already sharers of His circumstances, for they had left all to follow Him; they were also, by His grace, partners in His service, but, as yet, they knew not His rest. They, were, no doubt, faithful in their discipleship and devoted in their service, but they knew not the secret of rest. Their fidelity and devotedness had filled their hands with the burden of a service which, blessed as it was, could not yield rest to the heart. But He who knew the secret of rest said, "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest."

He invites His loved ones to come to Him as the Object of the Father's love, that He may impart to them the consciousness of that love, and thus give them rest. In coming to Him we come into that circle of divine affections of which He is the blessed Centre and Object. And here there is rest. We get it in another scripture in the words, "I have declared unto them Thy Name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them" (John 17. 26).

In coming to the Son as the Object of the Father's love we travel outside all the circumstances, sorrows, and service which may be found in our pathway here, and we come into a circle where there is absolute rest. His rest was in those affections of which He was the worthy and divine Object, but He has become Man that He might make them known to His brethren, and impart to a few "babes" taught by the Father.

Are we prepared to respond to this wondrous invitation? Are we prepared to become "babes," to surrender all our importance here, that we may come to the Son as the Object of the Father's love and learn the secret of rest? I only know one crucible in which all the pride and conceit and importance of our

Hearts can be melted down, and that is the crucible of divine love. As we come under the influence of that love it makes nothing of us, but it makes everything of the Father as the Source of infinite and eternal blessings, and it makes everything of the Son as the One who has brought those blessings, and all the love from which they flow, to us. *"A babe" is nothing but the subject of love; it contributes nothing; it cannot do great works; its true distinction and*

importance is that it is the subject of love. Are we prepared to be simply this? How attractive it is! And how infinitely blessed!

In the gospel of Luke we read that "in that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit" (10. 21). It was a joy to Him to have a few "babes" to whom He could make known the secrets of the Father's love. Nor is it otherwise to-day. He rejoices to lead the hearts of His own into that circle of rest.

Righteousness.

THE word "righteousness" occurs thirty-eight times in the Epistle to the Romans. Its primary meaning is, the proper conduct or action between two or more parties in the relationship in which those parties stand to each other. In the case of God's righteous action in relation to man, there must be involved perfect consistency with His own nature and attributes. In all His actions He must maintain perfect harmony and balance between all that He is as "light" and "love," and uphold, without question, the holiness, majesty, justice, truth and supremacy of His throne. Consequently man having failed in his relationship to his Creator by disobedience, the only proper conduct for God is to judge him for his sin; the righteousness of God requires the wrath of God against all ungodliness of men (Rom. 1. 17, 18). But God being also "love," none can question His right to redeem, if He can do so consistently with all that He is. It is here that love steps in to answer the light; it is the necessity of the cross, the "must" of John 3. 14. Love devises the means (John 3. 16), by which God can be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus (Rom. 3. 26).

Now on the part of man, repentance and faith must have their place, in order that God may apply to him this provision of grace which reigns through

righteousness. The sinner must submit himself to the righteousness of God by confessing his sin and trusting alone to the Saviour's atoning blood for salvation (Rom. 10. 3 and 9). God then sets the believer before Himself in righteousness, without the contradiction of any of His holy attributes, in love and light; in the words of Scripture, righteousness is imputed to him. At the same time he is brought through Christ's death and resurrection into justification of life (Rom. 5. 18), that is, a life is imparted to him before God to which sin does not attach.

Being thus cleared from all charge of guilt, the Holy Spirit is given to be the power of the new life, in order that the righteous requirement of the law, "love," may be produced towards God and man (Rom. 8. 4). Still further, the believer finds himself in a kingdom which is founded on righteousness and marked thereby, for God has formed on earth a circle of justified persons owning His authority (Rom. 14. 17). And these He will presently translate to heaven, that there they may be in Christ the expression and display of His perfect consistency with Himself, His righteousness. For He 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).

Gathering Together according to the Word.

WHAT a blessed thing it is to have had our hearts enlightened by the grace of God, to know our Lord Jesus Christ and what He is both to God and to us. Also to have learned by the Spirit given to us that there is now on earth the one body which is the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12. 13-31; Eph. 1. 23; Eph. 4. 4; Col. 1. 18).

This precious truth delivers us, as He intends it should, from all bondage of the sectarian spirit, and "isms" of every kind, for we learn from the Scriptures that the one body is not an organization formed by the wit of men, but a living organism formed and indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God. Christ is the living Head of it (Col. 1. 18), and as the wisdom and life of the head of any body is made manifest in the body of which it is the head, so is the body of Christ for the manifestation of His life and wisdom; this the Epistle to the Colossians strikingly unfolds. The truth of the one body was lost sight of early in the history of the church, but the Lord has been pleased to bring it into prominence again by a very definite work of the Spirit of God, and with it two other great truths:

(1) The proper character of the Lord's Supper.

(2) The Lord's coming for His people.

Every believer on the Lord Jesus is a member of His body, which is thus composed of sinners saved by grace, and who stand *now* before God accepted in the Beloved (Eph. 1. 6). Hence, as we learn by the Word of God, they are free from religious rites and ceremonies, keeping of laws, and observing of days and seasons, which are not for the Christian (Gal. 4. 9-14; Col. 2. 18-23). They were for Israel, and all of them spoke of Christ and His work; they were the shadows, He is the substance, and He having come, the shadows pass away.

The Lord Jesus Christ has been hated by men, rejected, despised and crucified by them, but He is now ascended into glory and seated on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens (Heb. 1. 3), and the Holy Spirit of God has come in invisible form and for the glory of the Lord Jesus. He takes up and maintains here the members of the body of Christ. The purpose of this body is, as mentioned above, to manifest the life of Christ, for He is in His members (Col. 1. 27), and had the church been faithful in testimony, and were it so to-day, the effect upon men would be the same as that produced by the Lord, i.e. to compel belief or to bring down upon it the hatred and malice of the world. Alas! how different is the case!

Whilst having freed us from religious rites and ceremonies, the Lord has expressed His desire for His own in His absence, and that is that they should come together to remember *Him*. On the night of His betrayal, the Lord Jesus very lovingly and blessedly gave expression to His desire regarding the breaking of bread and the drinking of the cup (Luke 22. 19-20), afterwards confirming it from the glory through the Apostle Paul (1 Cor. 11. 23-24).

It is sweet to see that when the apostles were assembled on that first day of the week, the day of His resurrection, and also the eighth day after (again the first day of the week), how lovingly the Lord Himself appeared in their midst and how great was their joy in seeing Him (John 20. 19-26). Acts 20. 7 shows us that the early brethren made the first day of the week the special time for coming together for the breaking of bread, thus carrying out the expressed wish of the Lord. And 1 Corinthians 11. 20-34 shows us the importance of such gatherings. The Lord still delights to take His place in the midst of His own when they are

gathered together (Matt. 18. 20). He then, as the leader in the assembly, sings praises to God (Heb. 2. 12), in which His brethren can join; and in the power of the Holy Spirit worship, thanksgiving and praise overflow from the hearts of His own to the Father and the Son.

The assembling together of those whom He is not ashamed to call His brethren (Heb. 2. 11) is not for a formal or arranged service, but the Holy Spirit is the impelling force, and all who are there in truth are there *responsive to the love of the Lord Jesus*. It is nothing legal, but a response to the wish of our Lord, and the more *His love* is known, the greater will be the desire to be there, where the Lord reveals His presence in the midst of His own. Whoever is there merely because there is a meeting is altogether wrong and without understanding. For this reason, therefore, it should be clear that it is not a meeting to which any general invitation could be given. It is entirely a question of heart response to the Lord's clearly expressed wish; of His delight in the company of His own, and of their delight in His. All who truly love Him will say "That is the place for me," and in so saying they will be right.

The Character of the Meeting.

In the assembly, as presented to us in the world, unlike the organizations of men, there is no one-man ministry or leadership, no arranged programme to be gone through, and no social distinctions. There are gifts and there are differences in spiritual understanding; all are not in the same spiritual condition, but each member of the body is directly responsible to the Head. It might happen that a brother might be a man of wealth or influence among men, but he ceases to be such in the assembly, and it would be wrong of the saints to give him any position as such in the

assembly (Jas. 2. 2, 3). There may be a brother in a very humble station of life, and yet he may be the one whom the Spirit of God can take up to be the mouthpiece of the praises in the assembly, and to be a help to all; he may have the greatest spiritual understanding of any in the meeting. The flesh, whether high or low, has no place in the assembly. The death of Christ has brought all that to naught, for if as men in the flesh we have all died with Him, then that puts out of sight all that we were as such, and we meet on resurrection ground where old things have passed away and all things have become new.

So if we keep the Word of the Lord, we come together to eat the Lord's Supper as brethren redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, and made meet and fit to sit in His presence; for we come to meet the Lord Jesus and to render Him the worship and homage that is His due; not necessarily only for what He has done for us, but for what He is in Himself. Oh, the greatness of the honour—we come to meet the Son of God! We come also solely dependent upon the Spirit of God. He it is who, if He has His way, will keep all in subjection to the Lord. To one He gives a song of praise, to another giving of thanks, or a word of ministry, but the Supper should be the chief and first thought, and where the Lord is allowed His way all will be made harmonious in the Spirit; all will be done decently and in order, and for the edification of all. Any ministry, however, on such an occasion especially, will be to bring *Him* more and more before us. But to all who are there in spirit and in truth there is the consciousness of being in the presence of the Lord and before our God and Father, in blessed association with Him, to worship and to praise. This is the whole joy of the meeting—in fact, there is no meeting according to His heart if He is not there.

Studies in Preaching. No. 4.

The Apostolic Sermons. (Acts 3.)

IT will be noticed in Paul's first sermons that, having powerfully pressed upon his hearers the truth as to Christ's Person, and His resurrection and exaltation to God's right hand in heaven, he called upon them to repent; he did more, his call was a command in the name of Christ, on whose behalf he spoke, to yield themselves to God's righteousness in this way, and by so doing pass into blessing by the only possible door.

We believe that all who are truly exercised as to the work of God in the world must feel that this is a note that is sadly lacking in modern preaching. Hence the poverty of the results of the preaching, and the shallowness of that which is seen.

"God now commandeth all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17.). And no good and faithful servant of God will leave this solemn command out of his preaching. Peter pressed it in the beginning of Acts in addressing the Jews. Paul pressed upon both Jews and Greeks "repentance towards God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (chap. 20. 21). Wherever he went it was his clarion call to men, as he testified before Agrippa: "I shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout the coasts of Judæa, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance" (chap. 26. 20). There is no good and honest heart in which the word of God can take root apart from this; no foundation in the soul upon which the truth can be built.

But this involves more than the reiteration of the word Repent. It is necessary, if men are to be brought to repentance, to press upon them God's claims which they have ignored; to open their eyes to their guilt and to

show them faithfully the consequences of their sins. These things the preacher must know, not as matters of doctrine, but as great and solemn verities, and only those know them in this way to whom God is a reality.

The preacher must live before God rather than men; in his measure he must be sent "from God" if he is to do this real work, as John the Baptist was, and the Apostles. But the pressing of God's claims must be done in tenderness and compassion; for the God who commands all men everywhere to repent is the same God who commends His love to all; the same Lord whose terrors should be known to all who serve Him is the One who by these same servants beseeches men to be reconciled to Him. The goodness of God leads men to repentance. No preacher will be successful in bringing men to repentance who has not in his soul a deep sense of the grace and compassion of God.

"I was preaching to my hearers the terrors of the Lord last night," said a preacher to a friend.

"I hope you did it with tears," was the wise reply.

Peter's second sermon was addressed, not so much to the individual conscience; but to the nation, and the offer made to them on their repentance and conversion was of national and earthly blessing. In response to their repentance God would send Jesus Christ to bring in the times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord.

Advantage has been taken of the term "the times of restitution of all things" by the enemies of the truth to deny eternal punishment and to teach the final salvation of all men. It will be found, we believe invariably, that those who quote Scripture to support

error, quote part texts. The devil did this when quoting the Word to the Lord—so in this case; but this term, which has been so much abused, is qualified by the full sentence—"the times of restitution of all things, *which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.*" Here again the Old Testament Scriptures, rejected by the false "spirit of the age," are definitely declared to be God's Word, and if we are to know what is involved in Peter's words we must study these Scriptures. The all things are limited by what God had spoken as recorded in these Scriptures.

What a suitable vessel for the flowing

forth of the grace of God was Peter, having tasted it so sweetly and fully himself! How his heart must have glowed as he closed his sermon to these very people who had denied and crucified the Lord, with this glorious announcement: "*Unto you first God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.*" Here was the proclamation of repentance and remission of sins which was to go out to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. God is the source of all blessing. Jesus is the One by whom it reaches men, and the effect of it is to turn men from their iniquities.

EDITOR

The Appendix to the Book of Acts.

NOT the least remarkable feature of the Book of Acts is its incomplete character. There is no beautiful doxology nor gracious commendation such as wind up the Epistles. The Book is much more than merely a record of the devoted service of those who had been ordained by the Lord to go forth into all the world to bear witness to His name. In it we have a continuation of the Lord's work through the medium of the Holy Spirit dwelling in His people. The literal meaning of the title of the Book is "The Practices of the Sent Ones," and consequently these acts or "practices" cannot cease until the Lord comes and snatches up His redeemed to be forever with Him. Our privilege to-day as Christians is to realize our commission as "sent ones."

"Christ the Son of God has sent me
Through the midnight lands,
Mine the mighty ordination
Of his pierced hands."

We are sent into the world to practise Christ, to show forth His virtues, to do

things in the authority of His name, and in the energy of the Holy Spirit. We shall thus be found buying up for ourselves opportunities, and according to the ability which God has given us adding our page to the appendix of the Book of Acts.

An appendix to a book does not contain any new subject but is simply an amplification of something already treated of in the body of the book. Similarly, our life and service do not present different features from those obtaining in the first century of Christianity. Christian activity has never ceased through the succeeding centuries, although more pronounced at one time than another. The appendix to the Book of Acts will not be read until the Judgment Seat of Christ.

We should not be concerned about present-day commendation; we should look forward to the revelation of the story of Christian service as seen by One whose judgment is unerring.

T. OLIVER.

The Uttermost Part of the Earth.

THE last words that fell from the lips of the Lord before He ascended to heaven were "*unto the uttermost part of the earth.*" They come down even to us with all His authority, and with that peculiar force that His last words must have for us if we love Him. They describe for us the far-flung sphere in which His Name had to be preached for man's blessing, the sphere in which the energy of His servants had to find expression. To be indifferent to the work of the Lord then in distant lands most clearly indicates indifference to His word and His work everywhere, for His work is one. But genuine, enlightened interest in the Lord's work will not be confined only to the conversion of sinners, whether in heathen lands or at home, but it will also show itself in the desire to see those who are converted standing "perfect and complete in all the will of God."

The great majority of our readers are restricted in their activities to the districts where they live; it would not be God's will for them to move out, though it may be that the Lord is waiting for others to say to Him, "Lord, here am I, send me," but all, whether they stay

at home or go abroad, should be interested in, and have the privilege of sharing in the work by supplication, prayer, and intercession with thanksgiving; we desire to interest our readers in one spot which is truly the uttermost part of the earth—the Solomon Islands in the South Seas. Here former cannibals now gather in holy fellowship together in the Name of the Lord, and while the work spreads the difficulties are many, and some of these difficulties are explained to us in DR. NORTHCOTE DECK'S latest circular, which he entitles "HOLDING FAST THE FAITHFUL WORD." We venture to reproduce one part of this circular, so that our readers, informed as to some of the difficulties that arise in these assemblies, may have matter for prayer.

Another thing—in being interested in and praying for these "fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God," who were once in the very lowest degradation and darkness, we are able to give some expression to the great and blessed truth that "there is one body," the members of which "should have the same care for one another."

"Holding Fast the Faithful Word."

IN this work for God in the Solomons, the very success of the mission is becoming one of its gravest dangers. On a large scale God has begun "to do and teach," so that about three thousand have become reconciled to God. Yet the chiefest peril for the future spread of the gospel lies in these same God-given converts. When a babe is born the mother's work is but beginning, not ending. And remembering the perils, the divisions, the heresies of the early Church, in spite of Pentecost, in spite of the manifested power of the Spirit, in spite of apostolic prayers and guidance, it is demonstrated that even when large numbers are truly converted, the Evil One is merely foiled. He may apparently

depart "for a season," but it is merely to return with fresh devices, subtler seductions and temptations, if he may deceive even the elect.

One of the most impressive lessons one learns in the mission field is the diversity of his operations, the resources of his attacks, and, humanly speaking, one's heart would fail with the cry: "Who is sufficient for these things?" Thank God He has laid help upon One Who is mighty. Yet if in any way these infant churches become side-tracked, and thereby lose their first love, their present powerful witness to the heathen will be quickly limited, and the further progress of the Gospel impeded.

For upon them depends the evangelisation of the islands; we missionaries are largely pastors, preparing young teachers in the training schools of Onepusu and Baunani, and seeking to guide, instruct and inspire the bands of believers which form the one hundred and forty Christian villages now established in the islands.

And in a young and growing work such as this we need continual prayer, that these infant churches may be guided aright and kept from departing from the faith. Their very eagerness to keep their converts true and bright is sometimes one of the chief dangers of the native teachers. We have seen several very instructive instances of this lately, and how any departure from God's revealed plan (however well intentioned), or lack of balance of truth, leads inevitably to wrong conceptions of God and hindrance to the work.

(1) We have had, for instance, a good deal of difficulty in one district in regard to the cause and origin of sickness. Now to a heathen sickness has but one cause and origin. It is evidence that he has done wrong and offended his Akalo (the supposed spirit of his departed ancestor), whom he worships and who has thus punished him with sickness. Now we know that God at times *does* speak to His own and convict them of sin through sickness, yet on the other hand it is not punitive but disciplinary in many cases.

One of our most faithful teachers in the early days, very limited in knowledge, yet very fervent in faith, on beginning his work for God in the islands, laid it down as a law for his district that all sickness is the result of and punishment for previous sin, which must therefore be publicly confessed before the sickness may abate. Thus was instituted a ceremony called "rofelao" or the "searching," in which (instead of a man examining himself after apostolic precept) the sick man was examined by a number of the Christians and exhorted to confess his sin. And in this way certainly, sins unsuspected before *were* brought to light, and it was partly for the sake of this supposed beneficent result that the Christians clung to the practice, in spite of the missionary's advice.

But another reason why the practice was hard to eradicate was, that it was in

reality a heathen instinct, born with the people, which had held sway for generations, and was thus unconsciously being grafted on to the Christian faith. And history tells us that it was in precisely the same way that pagan practices were adapted and added to the worship of the early church, especially in the days of Constantine. Happily, this "rofelao" has not been established in any other district in the mission, nor is it likely to spread further.

A good deal of prayer has been made about the matter, and we have sought to show how one-sided a view of truth such a tenet gives. I remember once the dear man who was its author saying to me: "Yes, Doctor, I know all about Job, and about Paul's thorn in the flesh. But only one thing, God been show me this thing for myself. When I come to the islands to teach, I never have the chance to learn very good. I not read the Bible well like many teachers now. So God show me this thing for myself, He teach it to me, and now this is the law for this place." So unconsciously, the dear man was claiming a higher revelation than the inspired Word of God, a thing which has been the starting place for many false views of truth.

Yet unknown to us, God was working toward a cure, and the net result of such teaching began to show itself, for some began to fear God rather than to love Him, to dread His dealings rather than to have confidence in Him as a loving Father. As an extreme instance, one good man became afflicted with "yaws," a severe island disease, with much suffering, which often lasts two years. Not finding any other suitable sin as a cause, he traced the origin of the disease back to the fact that, years before, he had absented himself from the Lord's Supper, that he might go and meet a ship returning recruits, from whom he hoped to get a present.

In the providence of God, the climax came one day when there was to be a dedication service for a number of babies, when some of the newer converts from the heathen refused to bring their children into the church to dedicate them: "Suppose we bring our children and give them to God, He might take away our children, and they die."

This brought the elders and older Christians up with a round turn: it

shocked them and made them realise to some extent the tendency of the "rofelaa." They had learned to love and trust God years before, and not realising how pernicious the practice might become, had sanctioned it mainly because they thought the fear of confession would hinder the weaker falling into sin. But as it was generally agreed at the time, some of the newer converts were looking upon God more like an "akalo" to be feared, than as a loving Father to be trusted, who was slow to anger and plenteous in mercy.

There were, as they agreed at a meeting, many among them, as it were like lumps of iron, won indeed from the mine, but not fashioned and sharpened, and therefore comparatively useless for God's work. Whereas God evidently wished to fashion them as razors are fashioned by putting them into the fire of affliction or sickness, and so tempering and moulding them as to make them sharp-cutting instruments. A number of the elders then and there agreed not to allow the "rofelaa" in their branch schools, and to do all in their power to discourage the practice, while several of the elders with children of suitable age brought them to be dedicated to God to encourage the newer comers to trust Him in a similar way.

Here, then, is a most instructive demonstration of how any departure from God's balance of truth, or pretensions to revelations beyond the scope of His inspired Word, though apparently with beneficent object, carried out with a zeal for His house, must yet result in distorted views of our loving Father, and thus hinder the truest communion with Him. The practice of "rofelaa" is probably not yet stamped out; it is too natural an instinct easily to be eradicated, and it will take time and much prayer before the harm done by this devoted man's well-meant error is undone. But it is a great gain that the elders should realise afresh that God's Word, which is indeed the law of their life, may not be departed from in any particular without disaster.

It all brings home again to us the absolute urgency of "holding fast the faithful word," and the urgent need of men who have been *well* taught, "able by sound doctrine both to exhort and convince the gainsayers." Again we would

ask and urge special prayer, that this flock God has given may be adequately shepherded. And that can only be done, as with a larger staff we shall be able to give our teachers, by God's grace, a deeper, fuller grasp of the deep things of God. Again one would urge that God desires these babes in Christ to develop into sons, not dwarfs. He desires that each might come "unto a perfect (full-grown) man," and "may grow up into Him in all things." This can only be done as we take our teachers further than they have been taught in the past.

(2) Another case of a teacher equally well-intentioned, yet mistaken, occurred recently in the Langa Langa lagoon. Mr. Gibbons had been speaking in the church to a number of new-comers, showing how the way of salvation was by faith alone and those who were born again, and had thus become children of God, could not become unborn. Acting as interpreter, the teacher Simon, a most faithful man, put the matter somewhat differently, and Mr. Gibbons was able to follow enough of the language to perceive it. In substance, Simon said: "Suppose you heathen men leave the akalos, and the way of the wicked, and come to Jesus and give your hearts to Him, then you must school strong and hold fast. Then suppose you not fall into sin and fall back to the wicked, but you hold fast and not sin, and then you die, you go along heaven."

Mr. Gibbons stopped him and again put the way of salvation clearly, and emphasized the fact that having become children of God by faith, none could pluck us out of the Father's hand, and insisted upon Simon translating it literally. Taxing him afterwards with having changed the message, ingenious Simon explained earnestly: "I been think, 'No good we say that Christian man suppose he fall into sin or fall back along wicked, he still child of God. Suppose we speak straight like that, then some Christian man not frightened of sinning. He might say, Oh! no matter we sin, we go along Heaven all the same. So that man fall down easy into sin. We want to make all Christian men fright along sin.'"

Later Simon came aboard the "Evan-gel," and when shown how he had been changing the way of salvation, and making it a doctrine of works rather than of

faith, his eyes filled with tears, and he protested: "Oh, Doctor, I not mean to spoil the way of God. I not want to change His message. But I been think it much better way to make all men frightened of sin, and so I make mistake. I am *too* shamed now about it. Me not want to give our people crooked words. My heart sorry *too* much. Me not speak any more like that."

Again the mistake had been made, not with any conscious knowledge that the

plan of God was being changed, but in very zeal and desire to keep the converts bright and keen. Yet how long it takes many of us, who have so much more light, to learn, that we cannot better God's message and way of salvation.

It all brings home to us the need of constant and continual watchful shepherding of these infant flocks, lest through Satan's devices there should come a departure from the faith.

A Bible in Every Hand.

VISITING one of the newer Christian villages one day, the teacher came to me with a very serious face and said: "Doctor, twelve fellow-men, they stop, no good." Expecting to hear of some delinquency on their part, I said: "What is the matter? What they do?" "Oh, they not do anything wrong, but when we have our meeting, and every man open his Sankey book to sing, there is no book in the hands of those twelve fellow-men; their hands are empty and their mouth is shut. Which way they going to sing praises to God from their hearts when no book in their hands? So their hearts are heavy when we sing. And when we want to give the Word of God to the people and show them His message, every man open his Bible to mark that word, but those twelve fellow-men, they have no Bible, their hands are empty. How they going to get that Word of God strong in their heart when they never see it with their eyes? They feel no good. Please, Doctor, you gave me twelve fellow Bibles and twelve Sankey books."

Such a request is repeated in substance in station after station, as we travel round—six here, eight in another, perhaps fifteen in another, and so, long before the ship's voyage is ended, the books are ended, dole them out as we may. The mission supplies both Bibles and Sankeys in hundreds, but "what are they among so many!" Yet we cannot have spiritual children without feeding them with spiritual food, and the ambition of our hearts is, a Bible in every hand and the

Word in every heart. Here is the only foundation of future and permanent blessing.

A gentleman was present in one of our home meetings, when the Lord too had been present, as the work had been described, and after the service he came up to me saying: "Come down to my office and I will do anything I can to help you." "Give us some books for our people" was one's instant thought. Would that there were others who would do the same. Bibles are bought best and cheapest through the Bible Society, that we may choose the most suitable edition for natives.

It is significant that it is regarded as a sign of luke-warmness in a school, for the Bibles and Sankeys to be tucked away in the thatch of the roof after the service is over. "Which way man like that, get blessing and food for his heart, when he leave his. Bible and Sankey behind in the church? That man must take them along to his house, then he cau sing praise to God, and read that lesson again in his Bible, that he may catch it strong and get blessing. That man, where he only hear the Word of God in church, soon he lose that lesson; he only play with the Word of God. That way is no good. No matter man wear out his Bible, he must carry it all the time, and use it strong." And many a canoe I have seen paddled along, while around every man's neck was his precious bag of books.

From the Solomon Islands.

Governments and God.

IN Daniel 4. we see the manifestation of human pride ; the king glories in the work of his hands, as though he had created his own greatness. This pride brings the judgment of God upon him. The powerful king is reduced to the condition of the beasts that know not God, and are devoid of man's understanding.

The only true privilege of man, that which ennobles him, is that he can look up to God and acknowledge Him. Without this he looks downward; he cannot suffice to himself; he is degraded. Dependence upon God is His glory, for it sets him before God, gives him to know God; and his mind, associated with God, receives from Him its measure and its knowledge.

Pride and independence separate man from God; he becomes a beast, devoid of real intelligence. Now this condition depicts that of the great world-kingdoms of which the prophet speaks in this chapter (looked at as a whole before God, and represented by the head estab-

lished by God, Nebuchadnezzar). Seven times or years pass over the head of Nebuchadnezzar deprived of his reason. He had exalted himself; he had been humbled.

The times of the Gentiles are characterized by the absence of all such understanding as would put governmental power in connection with God. To make idols, to build Babylon, and not to know God ; such were the moral characteristics of a power God had established in place of His own throne at Jerusalem. Such is the moral capacity of man in possession of that power which has been committed to him.

Although it is not (as in Israel) His throne upon earth, God watches over all, and judges that to which He has committed authority. He does not rule immediately ; but He holds responsible those to whom He has entrusted the rule, in order that they might own the authority of God as supreme in this world.

J. N. DARBY.

Answers to Correspondents.

"Work Out Your Own Salvation."

ANON.—Salvation is threefold : it has reference to the past, present, and future. 1 Peter 1. 9 refers to that side of salvation which cannot be more complete than it is—the salvation of the soul. 1 Corinthians 15. 2 ; Ephesians 2. 5 ; Titus 3. 5, also speak of salvation as an accomplished fact. But in its future aspect we wait for it—for instance, "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed" (Rom. 13. 11-12) ; this has reference to our being taken bodily out of the place where sin and Satan's power are at the coming of the Lord. Ephesians 1. 14 ; Philippians 3. 20-21 presents this side of the truth. Many other passages, of which is Philippians 2. 12, refer to present salvation—a present and continual salvation from the power of sin and the wiles of Satan. We need not say that Christ is the only Saviour, whether from the PENALTY OF

SIN in all its completeness ; or from the present POWER OF SIN, for He ever liveth with this in view ; or from the PRESENCE OF SIN at His coming again.

The Christian works out his own salvation by being obedient to the will of God as expressed in the Word ; thus he saves himself from the snares and pitfalls of Satan, and discerns the evil tendencies of the evil flesh within him. But it is God that works in him the willing and doing of His good pleasure ; he acts in subjection to God. There is no question of working to obtain the salvation of the soul (this is not of works as Ephesians 2. 8 declares) but of persevering in the Christian life in spite of every opposing force : for this, simple constant obedience to the will of God in all that is necessary on our part.

The Deity of Our Lord.

IT is asserted by some who hate the truth that Jesus is the Son in the Godhead, that the Gospel of John alone declares it. This is false; the fact is stated very definitely in the other Gospels, but what is even more arresting and equally convincing is that it is woven into the very texture of them all. Just as the gold was woven with the blue and purple and scarlet and fine twined linen into the ephod of the High Priest (Ex. 28.), and could not be separated from it without destroying the whole fabric, so the Gospels must be reduced to torn and meaningless shreds if there is taken out of them the words and works in which the Deity of Jesus shows itself. To take this away is to tear the sun from the heavens, and to take away His true humanity is to rob us of the atmosphere by which the light of the sun reaches us.

The Gospel of Matthew opens with—"Jesus Christ the Son of David, the Son of Abraham," but before we reach the end of the chapter we read, "His Name shall be called EMMANUEL, which being interpreted is, GOD WITH US" (ver. 32).

"Thou shalt call His Name JESUS," said the angel of the Lord to Joseph when explaining to him that the child that Mary would bring forth was conceived of the Holy Ghost. And this name is of infinite preciousness to us because it is His personal, human name; the name which tells us of His grace and tenderness, His lowly life, His sorrow, and His death; but this name also carries with it divine glory, for it signifies JEHOVAH THE SAVIOUR. Yes, the very name of His humiliation, that which was written in derision on His cross, declares to us the greatness of His person and the love of His heart; He is Jehovah the Saviour.

This name of eternal sweetness to all who believe was given to Him

because He would "save His people from their sins." They were "His people." The great I AM THAT I AM who spoke to Moses out of the burning bush and sent him to deliver Israel, His people, from Egyptian slavery, had appeared Himself to deliver them from a greater bondage. He had come to lead them into a more glorious liberty with an outstretched arm of power; but He had come in this lowly form so that they might not be afraid of Him; He had come to be the Lamb of God; the Son of Man lifted up; to suffer for their sins; and finally to take from their hearts that strange perversity that made them hug their chains and prefer their misery and bondage to God's mercy and care. He must be wilfully blind who does not see that He must be Divine and yet a man, a man who must Himself be sinless if He was to save others from their sins, a Divine Person having life in Himself if He was to impart life to others and bring them out of the bondage of death.

The wise men came saying, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen His star in the east, and are come to worship Him." Did ever a star in the heavens flame forth at the birth of a child either before or since? These princes brought their gifts, gifts such as nobles from afar would bring to a king, but "when they saw the young child with Mary His mother," they recognised first His divine glory and they "*fell down and worshipped Him.*" Then they acknowledged His kingship and brought out their gifts: gold and frankincense and myrrh. They worshipped God and gave gifts to the King. How great is this mystery of love! The One "WHOSE GOINGS FORTH HAVE BEEN FROM OF OLD, FROM EVERLASTING," who was "TO BE RULER IN ISRAEL," had come forth out of Bethlehem Ephratah (Micah 5. 2), but in such

meek and lowly form that the world passed heedlessly by, yet to the anointed eye His glory shone; the glory of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

In the Holy Ghost inspired record "the young child" always has the precedence of His mother. Five times in chapter 2. we read of "the young child and His mother," in striking contrast to that blasphemous system, Rome, which paints her pictures of "Madonna and Child." But had He not been greater than the mother that bare Him, the Spirit of God would not have thus given Him the precedence, for He it was who founded the law which said, "Honour thy father and mother"; and it may be here remarked, though this belongs to Luke's gospel and not Matthew's, that when the aged Simeon came into the temple and took "the child Jesus" in his arms, recognizing in Him "God's salvation," he blessed Joseph and His mother, not the child Jesus (Luke 2. 34). Had Jesus been as those other children gathered in the temple that day, what more natural than that Simeon should have blessed Him? But this could not be, for the lesser cannot thus bless the greater.

It will be noticed that whenever the angel of the Lord addresses Joseph, who, being the husband of Mary, was the young child's legal guardian, he never makes the mistake of calling Jesus "thy son." The people make this mistake, and their mistake is recorded for us in Luke 4., but the Scriptures guard this matter with the utmost care, and in this connection the prophetic word is quoted regarding the sojourn in Egypt: "Out of Egypt have I called MY SON." Turning aside to Luke's Gospel again, it is important to notice that when Mary, only dimly recognizing who He was, or forgetting it for the moment, seemed to question His loyalty and obedience to Joseph and to her, saying, "*Thy father* and I have sought

thee sorrowing," He replied at once, "Wist ye not that I must be about MY FATHER'S business" (Luke 2. 49).

It has been said by some who will seek out any subterfuge to break down the truth that Jesus is not of the first man, who came out of the dust, and sinned, and goes back to the dust again from which he came, but is the Second Man, the Lord out of heaven, that He did not realize His Sonship to the Father until His baptism. This passage exposes that falsehood, and shows us clearly that as He emerged into a responsible age the Lord knew who He was, from whom He came, and what His business was. The fact that He was the Son of the Father was publicly declared from heaven by the Father's voice at His baptism (chap. 3. 17), where for the first time the truth of the Trinity appears.

The prophets of old had come before the people with "Thus saith the Lord" on their lips, for in times past and in divers manners God spoke to the fathers thus; but in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus stood forth and said, "I SAY UNTO YOU," and those who heard Him were astonished at His doctrine, for He taught them AS HAVING AUTHORITY (chap. 7. 28). This authority was the authority of the Lord, for this He declares Himself to be, having power to exclude from the kingdom of heaven all those who do not do the will of His Father which is in heaven. See how intimately He connects the kingdom of heaven with Himself. Some whose lips had owned Him, but whose hearts had not yielded to His Father's will, will desire to enter that kingdom; He will say to them, "Depart from ME"; and He will say this, as being able to look behind the profession and all that is external, and read the heart, which none but God can do (chap. 7. 21).

Later on in the Gospel He stretches

out His hands to mankind and cries, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest" (11. 28). He knew the miseries, the burdens, the toilings, and the sins of the world; every groan and sigh and tear He noticed, and knowing all, He proposed to relieve all. What man, however mighty in influence, great in intellect, or broad in his sympathies, would dare to make such an appeal as that to men? But Jesus made it, and still makes it; and a countless host of ransomed saints will bear eternal witness to the fact that His deed is as good as His word. The Speaker is the Son, eternal, infinite, omnipotent; the mighty Creator who opens His hand and satisfies the needs of every living thing; the fountain of life and of mercy, whose compassions fail not; hence He is able, being in Himself sufficient for the whole creation and every man within it, to remove every burden from every human soul and satisfy every craving within every one of them.

He is the Son into whose hands the Father hath delivered all things, whom only the Father knows, and who knows the Father and reveals Him to whomsoever He will (chap. 11. 27). He showed Himself to be the Master of the elements when He rebuked the winds and the waves and hushed their raging to a great calm (chap. 9. 26); He had power on earth to forgive sins, which is God's prerogative (chap. 9. 6). He claimed the absolute allegiance of the hearts of His disciples, before father or mother or son or daughter, which only God can claim (chap. 10. 37). He declared Himself to be the Lord of the Sabbath (chap. 12. 8), plainly indicating that though the Son of Man He was the One who had ordained the Sabbath for His people. As Creator of the abundance of earth and sea He multiplied the five loaves and two fishes so that a multitude were fed to satisfaction and twelve basketfuls remained (chap. 14. 15-21). He walked triumphantly upon the heaving waves at midnight, and by his

power enabled His servant Peter to do the same (chap. 14. 25-31). He unmasked the Pharisees by the question of all questions. "*What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is He?*" "The Son of David," was their ready reply. Then He quoted the Scriptures which they knew so well. "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand till I make Thine enemies Thy footstool." He asked, "IF DAVID, THEN, CALL HIM LORD, HOW IS HE HIS SON?" They were silenced, for they had no answer to this great mystery. The whole Gospel of Matthew is the answer to the question; and we glory in the knowledge of this great mystery; the Son of David and Son of Man is the Son of God, and though His enemies refused His rights as David's Son, He has been raised up and made Lord of all. He sits at the right hand of God on God's very throne, and none but God could do that; and He is coming back again to the very place where His enemies cast Him out of His inheritance. He is coming back as the **ROOT AND OFFSPRING OF DAVID**, David's Lord and David's Son.

The Gospel closes with His place in the Godhead fully declared, for all nations are to be baptised in the Name [not "the names," the word is in the singular] of **THE FATHER AND THE SON AND THE HOLY GHOST**.

Finally, when the dispensations of time have served their purpose and run their course, and God shall dwell with men in a redeemed creation, every intelligent creature will rejoice in a Triune God fully revealed—

as **FATHER**, the source of all blessing
for men;
and **SON**, the One who brought the
blessing to men;
and **HOLY GHOST**, who by His power
makes the blessing good in men;

"**THAT GOD MAY BE ALL IN ALL.**"

Renewal.

"Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind."—Rom. 12. 2.

HOW encouraging for the weary, how cheering for the weak, how heartening for the heavily burdened, for those who faint by the way, to know that they may renew their spiritual energy and strength. Many a man whose health and physical strength are gone would give much to be sure of such a renewal. It is of great importance for the children of God to understand God's way of renewal for themselves.

The praising psalmist sang, "Bless the Lord, O my soul: . . . thy youth is renewed like the eagle's!" He experienced the reality of it. Again he sang, "Bless the Lord, O my soul. O Lord my God, Thou art very great. Thou renewest the face of the earth." Creation experiences it likewise. When, however, we think of the new creation to which we belong, we may well ask, "Is renewal to be known there too?" Certainly, for we are told in Colossians 3. 10, we "have put on the new man, which is renewed" also.

In the early part of Romans we are taught how God has wrought in and through our Lord Jesus Christ for our everlasting welfare. In righteousness and love He has secured our justification and reconciliation, having predestinated us to be conformed to the image of His Son, and, setting our hearts at rest as to these things, giving us liberty in the power of the Spirit to walk so as to please Him. We are then instructed how to respond to His great compassion toward us (Rom. 12. 1, 2). We are to yield our bodies to Him and be transformed by the renewing of our mind. The body being presented to God, and the mind rightly renewed, we prove for ourselves "what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

Progress in being "transformed by the renewing of the mind" can only be

ours when we are at peace with God through the work of Christ, being reconciled to Him through the death of His Son. Where doubts still cloud the mind, how can there be advance in the knowledge of divine things? The exhortation, or rather beseeching, to thus respond follows the teaching which gives us this divine assurance. At the very start, when God began His work in us—the work which He will carry on and complete—a renewing of an eternal character took place with us. That was done once, and done for ever. In the only place it is named in Scripture it is said to have taken place in *the spirit* of the mind (Eph. 4. 23), and a different word is used for renewing, *ananeō*, for it is new in an abiding sense. In Romans 12. 2 it is *anakainōsis*, to be renewed in a fresh way. In the former scripture three things are stated concerning us: (1) We have "put off the old man"; (2) "Being renewed in the spirit of the mind"; (3) "Having put on the new man" (see New Trans.). These things have taken place; but the renewal according to Romans 12. 2, 2 Corinthians 4. 16, and Colossians 3. 10 still goes on. This word is used five times, the other two being Titus 3. 5 and Hebrew 6. 6.

This renewal of the Holy Spirit spoken of in Titus 3. 5 is still going on; but if a man professed the faith of Christ and apostatised, we are told in Hebrews 6. 6, it is impossible to renew him again to repentance after he has outwardly partaken of the great benefits spoken of in verses 4 and 5. The fact is he was never a true believer at all, and his own course proves it. Those, however, who are true children of God are to make progress in the direction which the Word of God indicates by the renewing of their minds. The Apostle Paul tells us that notwithstanding all the labours

and afflictions which were his, he experienced a daily renewal. "Though our outward man perish," he writes, "yet the inward man is renewed day by day" (2 Cor. 4. 16); and what he says immediately after gives us the secret of this: "We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." The latter engrossed his attention, for Christ is the Centre of them all.

In bringing these remarks to a close we must turn to Colossians 3. 10, where we have the divine Objective of this great work of renewal, the Objective too which is to be before the hearts of all those who are the happy subjects of the renewing of the present time. Again, as in Ephesians 4., it is said of such, "They have put off the old man and have put on the new"; but it is added as to the new man, "*Which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him*: where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond or free: but **CHRIST IS EVERYTHING, AND IN ALL.**" There it is! Our renewing is according to the image of Christ. No lower standard is put before us. He Himself is the image of God. Notice again how this renewing is connected with the mind. The reading should be "renewed into full knowledge." How

important it is, then, that our thinking should be in the divinely indicated direction. How many allow their thoughts to go far astray. The Apostle warns us of those who "*mind earthly things*"; and he fears lest by any means, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craft, so our *thoughts* should be corrupted from simplicity *as to CHRIST*, for it is to Him we are espoused by divine grace (2 Cor. 11. 2, 3).

Our renewal, therefore, has in view Christ being "everything and in all"—the One who loved us and made us His own eternally through His sufferings and death; the One whose moral glory shines so perfectly in His lowly pathway, making God Himself known in His love and holiness; His grace and righteousness; His compassion, kindness and longsuffering; in His justice and mercy; telling out the "great love" wherewith He loved us at Calvary, when He became the propitiation for our sins. It is *now* that He is everything and in all in the new man, but *soon* the purpose of God shall be brought to its counselled perfection, and amidst the splendours of the glory of God all the saints shall shine in radiance divine, fully conformed to the image of God's son, with Himself the Centre of all, the joy of every heart, the praise of every mouth—"THE FIRSTBORN AMONG MANY BRETHREN." Lord, hasten that day, for Thy name's sake. Amen.

H. J. VINE.

Shameless Prayer.

A CLASSIC instance of shameless prayer is given us in Luke 11. 5-9. A man knocks at the door of a friend at midnight, and says: "Friend, lend me three loaves." His sense of need is expressed in definite terms. He asks for three loaves. The occasion is exceptional. The visit of a friend in his journey demands hospitality. So he asks another friend loaves of bread to be set before the belated guest. His appeal for friendship's sake does not avail. He is persistent. He takes no refusal. He achieves his wish. The one who will not give him as

a friend meets his entire need because of his importunity. The Greek word translated as "importunity" literally means "impudence" or "shamelessness."

Jacob laid hold of God, and said: "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me" (Gen. 32. 26). What commendable shamelessness this! May we in like manner persist in prayer shamelessly (Eph. 6. 18). "He shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that has no helper" (Ps. 72. 12).

BA HAN.

The Use of Hymns at the Lord's Supper.

"Jesus took bread and blessed, and brake it, and gave it to them, and said, Take, eat: this is My body. And He took the cup, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them: and they all drank of it. . . . And when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives" (Mark 14. 22-26).

THE above passage of Scripture can hardly be quoted as authorizing the use of hymns at the Lord's Supper. It only tells us that, after the disciples had eaten the bread and drunk of the cup, a hymn—one single hymn—was sung before they left the room where they were gathered.

Still, if one hymn was sung, perhaps there is no reason why two should not be. And if two, some one may ask, then why not three, or four, or more? And it may be argued that, because a hymn was sung at the close of the meeting, when the Supper was instituted, therefore it is permissible nowadays to *begin* the meeting with one, when disciples come together to break bread. Such arguments may be legitimate: as to this the writer expresses no opinion. It is certain that "psalms" were sung in the gatherings of the assembly at Corinth (1 Cor. 14. 26), though we may infer, from the Apostle's way of speaking, that they were not always to edification.

Taking for granted, however, that hymns are right and desirable things to have (in moderation) at the Lord's Supper, the question arises, What kind of hymns are suitable for such occasions?

Let us consider what the real object of the Supper is. It is not a celebration of our own blessing, nor a service of thanksgiving to God for His goodness. It is not for the remembrance of how we have been saved from destruction and brought to the Lord that we come together. The object is plainly stated in 1 Corinthians 11. 24: "This do *in remembrance of Me*." The Supper was instituted, then, that those who owe everything to the Lord Jesus might in this simple way show that they do not

forget Him. Love cannot bear to be forgotten by its objects, and the intensity of the love of Christ to His own is witnessed by the fact that He desires their continual remembrance of Himself.

Hymns, therefore, if used at the Lord's Supper, should be in accordance with this object. They should be full of Christ, leading the soul to a fresh remembrance of Himself and of His self-sacrifice in giving Himself for us. The ideal hymn would be one into which no thought of "we," "us," and "our" intrude; much less anything that savours of "me" and "mine." For an example of this, take the following:

"Every mark of dark dishonour,
Heaped upon the thorn-crowned brow,
All the depths of Thy heart's sorrow
Told in answering glory now.

On that cross alone, forsaken,
Where no pitying eye was found;
Now to God's right hand exalted,
With Thy praise the heavens resound."

And again:

"Faithful amidst unfaithfulness,
Mid darkness only light,
Thou didst Thy Father's name confess,
And in His will delight.

Unmoved by Satan's subtle wiles,
Or suffering, shame or loss,
Thy path uncheered by earthly smiles,
Led only to the cross."

Such verses as these, full of Christ and of the love that expressed itself in suffering, have a power to touch our hearts and lead them out, in self-forgetfulness and in adoration, to Himself.

But, after all, it is *we* who are gathered for this remembrance of the Lord, and we cannot very well remember and praise Him without saying, "*We* remember" and "*We* praise." To

bring in this word "we" in this way is not really to sing about ourselves or our blessings, and does not detract from the value of verses sung at the Lord's Supper. We may therefore take, as among the most suitable, the opening verses of the hymns already quoted:

"Gazing on Thee, Lord, in glory,
While our hearts in worship bow;
There we read the wondrous story,
Of the cross, its shame and woe."

And:

"O Lord, when we the path retrace
Which Thou on earth hast trod,
To man Thy wondrous love and grace,
Thy faithfulness to God."

But in expressing thus in song the desires and affections of the heart as we remember our blessed Lord, we cannot forget why it was that He suffered in love for us. It was our sins that made the cross and all its woe a necessity. And this thought may be rightly introduced into a hymn of praise, not so much as expressing what the bearing of our sins upon the cross has meant *for us*, but rather what it meant *for the holy Sufferer Himself*. We think of our sins as entailing added anguish for Him. And thus we can sing:

"Thou Countenance transcendent!
Thou life-creating Sun
To worlds on Thee dependent,
Yet bruised and spit upon:
O Lord, what Thee tormented
Was our sins' heavy load,
We had the debt augmented
Which Thou didst pay in blood."

Or we may sing:

"Lord, e'en to death Thy love could go,
A death of shame and loss,
To vanquish for us every foe,
And break the strong man's force.
Oh! what a load was Thine to bear
Alone in that dark hour,
Our sins in all their terror there,
God's wrath and Satan's power."

Such verses as these are most suitable vehicles for giving expression to the feelings which the remembrance of our blessed Lord awakens, by the Spirit of God, within us.

If a brother feels led to give out a hymn at the Lord's Supper, he should

see to it that the one chosen is suitable to the occasion. We have known meetings utterly spoiled by a hymn being given out which leads the soul to dwell upon its own blessing rather than to remember the Lord Himself.

We would like to hear *every* brother present at the Lord's Supper, as far as time permits, take part in praise and worship. He can do it briefly and simply, if the Lord so leads him, but always as being the mouthpiece of those assembled *for the remembrance of the Lord*. But before a brother permits himself to give out a hymn, he should be acquainted with the whole of the hymn and be satisfied that it would help, and not hinder, the remembrance of the Lord.

To read a hymn through, in the middle of a meeting, is a help *if the power of the Spirit of God accompanies the reading*. More often, it is a hindrance and a waste of time. To a sensitive ear, the bad reading of a hymn is a sore affliction, and it needs an effort of the soul, and the help of the Lord, to enter into the spirit of the hymn after such a reading. The *habit* of reading hymns right through is a mere survival of the days when comparatively few could read, and even those who could did not all possess hymn-books. It is, generally speaking, a *bad* habit.

As we gather together in the Name of the Lord, He Himself is in our midst, according to Matthew 18. 20. His presence with us, as thus gathered for the breaking of bread, is a great and precious reality. As our souls get into touch with Himself, as we remember Him, and our hearts are touched afresh with thoughts of His love, we find that He leads us in spirit and affection to the Father, Himself taking His place with us in singing praise to Him. This is something on the line of Hebrews 2. 12, where the Lord says that in the midst of the assembly *He* will sing praise unto God,

If we are to sing praise, as thus taught and led by Christ, we must look

for hymns that will suit the purpose, not hymns that praise God for His goodness to *us* so much as hymns that enable us to praise Him for what Christ Himself would praise for. This will be readily understood if we enter into the joy of that relationship in which we are set, *as sons along with Him*, before the Father; and knowing *the love that rests upon Him* in all its fullness as resting also upon us; His portion and place, ours.

With all this in mind we may sing:

"We joy in Thee, Thy holy love
Our endless portion is,
Like Thine own Son, with Him above,
In brightest heavenly bliss."

Or again:

"Brought to know Thy Well-Belovéd,
Drawn to Him in boundless grace,
Thy effulgence, love and glory
Shining in His blessed face;
We adore Thee, God and Father,
May Thy name exalted be!
Praise and worship we would render
Now, as in eternity."

For many hymns of this nature we are greatly indebted to the pen of the late J. N. Darby. His hymns and spiritual songs are published in a separate book, but many of the choicest among them are to be found in various collections. In his own words, a hymn suitable for singing in a gathering of Christians should be one "which sets the soul in communion with Christ and rises even to the Father, and yet this in such sort that it is not mere individual experience, which for assembly-worship is out of place. In a word, the Father's love, and Christ developed in the soul's affections, rising in praise back again to its source."

May the Lord help us more and more, if we sing hymns, to "sing with the Spirit" and to "sing with the understanding also" (1 Cor. 14. 15).

H. P. BARKER.

The Servant's Work.

IT is not the man that sees defects, and does no more than talk of them, though we should see them, and feel them, but the man who, like Nehemiah, removes them who is doing the Lord's

work. One might expose and descant upon the prodigal ways long enough, but the work of the servant was to put the best robe upon him, and rejoice in the Father's grace that welcomed him.

Adding.

THERE is a great difference between knowledge of the Word and the Word dwelling richly in us. When it is the latter one finds it ready to bud. It is not stationary knowledge, it is grow-

ing. Hence the truth I know in my heart best is the one I long to know more about, and the one I feel I know so little of, though ever enjoying it. "Adding" is a mark of life.

The Son of Man.

HE came seeking, saving, forgiving; opening the way of life by His death, to the guilty, lost and dead. He came near to the sinful and needy, and when they saw that "the Son of Man came eating and drinking," they said, "Behold a man gluttonous,

and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners" (Matt. 11. 19). Grace, delivering grace is in the Son of Man; this, the self-righteous could not understand; "but wisdom is justified of her children." It is indeed a tale of grace.

Moral Elevation.

RESURRECTION was everything to Him. It was His relief amid the sorrows of life (John 11.); it was His object amid the prospect and promises of the world as in chapter 12. It gave His soul a calm sunshine when dark and heavy clouds had gathered over Bethany; it moderated and separated His affections when the brilliant glare of a festive day was lighting up the way from thence to Jerusalem; the thought of the resurrection then stayed His mind amid the griefs and enjoyments around Him. It made Him a perfect exemplar of that fine principle: "let him that weepeth be as though he wept not, and he that rejoiceth as though he rejoiced not" (1 Cor. 7. 30). How little of this elevation, above the conditions and circumstances of life, the hearts of some of us are acquainted with" (*J. G. B. on the Gospel of John*, p. 86).

All true and beautiful, but it is surely a moral elevation we earnestly seek to reach. A mind stayed on God—the God of resurrection—is the secret of perfect peace to those whose barques are tossed on the surface of life's stormy sea.

The picture of a calmly sleeping Christ, when the vessel in which He was sailing was thus storm-tossed, is exceedingly lovely. What perfect tranquillity rested on Him at the moment when His fishermen-disciples were in deepest fear! What caused this repose? It was the result of a mind absolutely stayed on God and of a will completely subject to His. This is perfect peace. It is not blind submission to Fate, nor is it a form of cold, senseless stoicism that shuts its eyes to facts and folds its lazy hands to duty.

No, that is not the principle by which the man of God lives. Times there are when faith may be passive, when it has to "stand still and see the salvation of God," when it has to encounter difficulties far beyond itself. Then it waits

on God. But more frequently it is called on to put forth all its energy, and to exhibit, in a thousand ways, its active, living confidence in the God of resurrection and of infinite power. In each case, however, the man of faith is marked by a spirit of calm superiority, of dignity, of mental balance, and of that elevation over conditions and circumstances which can only be, but which surely are, produced by very close dealing with God. He is careful for nothing, because he is most careful to expose everything to the eye and ear of that God, who is a "very present help in trouble."

"We are not careful," said the three Jewish children—Daniel's faithful fellows—"to answer thee in this matter," as they stood before the infuriated King of Babylon, and listened to his threat of a merciless death in the event of disobedience. "Not careful!" What elevation!

A burning, fiery furnace had no terror for them, the name of their God was at stake. Its honour had been entrusted to their care. They felt that the glory of God was in their keeping. All else—their lives and all—was of no moment. "Our God," they said, "is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace . . . and He will . . . but if not!"

No matter. There they stood, three men of faith, calm, dauntless, unflinching in view of all the power of Babylon and Satan.

What a picture of moral elevation! There may have been many such displays of repose in view of the threatening of the adversary. We read not a few of them in Hebrew 11. and in other well-known records of martyr-suffering. God has led His witnesses through fire and flood, through anguish and agony, and has imparted to them that spirit of divine superiority that made their persecutors astonished, or that kept

them in perfect peace in disaster, in perplexity, in death itself. They had the answer of every convulsion in themselves; they were calm, peaceful, victorious. Think not that this moral elevation of heart and mind, over the various circumstances of life, is wholly impossible. Nay, it is clearly within the range of simple but energetic faith in God, and should, in measure, make itself visible in the daily life of each of His children. "I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me" is the calm soliloquy of the traveller through the valley of the shadow of death, be that valley where it may. Evil he need not fear since God is his companion.

"Fear hath torment," and few are the hearts which are not thus tormented, but there is a blessed remedy even for this. "Perfect love," we read, "casteth out fear." The two cannot co-exist in the same bosom. If you have one you cannot have the other. But it is God's perfect love, possessed, realized, and enjoyed, by child-like faith in the Father, that dissipates the fear and that prevents the torment.

Then what remains? Only the rich elevation of mind and spirit which was always seen in the ways of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ.

J. WILSON SMITH.

Righteousness, Peace, and Joy.

THE moral principles of the kingdom of God are unchanging in every generation. To most people their definition in the 17th verse of the 14th chapter of Romans is obscure. We have first, the negative proposition, the kingdom of God is not meat and drink. It is not concerned about mere externals nor does it appeal to the natural senses in any way,

If Christians merely talk and sing of the coming of the Lord and other precious truths, and are not following after the things which make for peace, and what will edify one another (Rom. 14. 19), they are controverting the positive, active principles of the kingdom of God. In their case, the expressions of precious truths are but beautiful sentiments, in other words, they are "meat and drink" to suit the mental tastes of mankind.

But the definition has a positive as well as a negative side. There are three prominent principles which are characteristic of God's kingdom: (1) Righteousness, (2) Peace, (3) Joy, and these are all enshrined in the Holy Ghost.

These principles remind us of the first four Psalms. Psalm 1 sets forth the

moral beauty of God's man, and Psalm 2 shows his ideal in power or strength. There were two pillars in the temple—Jachin and Boaz—beauty and strength. (Read 1 Kings 7).

So there are two great essentials or pillars in righteousness according to God's rule, and these are beauty and strength. In human righteousness strength is too often exaggerated out of proportion to beauty, and so in the name of right deeds of great harshness are perpetrated. But God's righteousness is always beautiful as well as strong. Thus, if we act in accordance with the principles which govern God's kingdom, we shall not allow our good to be evil spoken of, by insisting on the strength of our cause, to the exclusion of what is beautiful and comely in God's sight. For it is only in that way we can serve Christ and be found well pleasing to God. Otherwise for meat or self-gratification we are destroying or rendering of no effect the work of God.

Psalm 3. sets forth the second principle—peace. The peace of God which keeps sentinel over the heart is not peace of circumstances; when our property is safe, our business prosperous, our health good, and our relation-

ships with our associates happy, we are apt to think that we are enjoying the peace of God. But when we nestle down in the nest of circumstances it is necessary for our soul's prosperity that God should stir up the nest and dispel our fancied peace. No, this is a peace that passeth all understanding—a peace which flows from unquestioning confidence in God and submission to His holy will.

Psalms 4. speaks of the third principle—joy—*i.e.* the music on the stringed instrument (Neginoth). In response to the cry "Lord, lift up the light of Thy countenance upon us," the Psalmist had the thrill in his inmost being, for the Lord had put gladness in his heart in the days of adversity more than when his cup overflowed with prosperity.

Similarly Habakkuk begins his concluding prayer on Shigionoth—a selection of variable tunes on the wind instrument, *i.e.* much effort with little music. How often our prayers are like that; but if they lead us to the result

which he reached, our joy will indeed be full. No one could imagine less congenial conditions than those pictured by Habakkuk, yet he would rejoice in the Lord and as a result he would be caused to walk on high places. His feet would scarcely touch the ground so great would be his joy. That is music on the stringed instrument.

Paul and Silas were at Lydia's prayer meeting, but they did not touch the top note of praise until with feet in stocks and bleeding backs they sang praises to God in the darkness of the Philippian dungeon. They had graduated from Shigionoth to Neginoth, from performers on the wind instrument to experts on the stringed instrument. Years later, the Apostle writing to believers in Philippi could counsel them to rejoice in the Lord always.

May we know something more of the process which will lead us to be competent players on the stringed instrument, making melody in our hearts to the Lord.

T. OLIVER.

Useless.

THERE is a strange old tower upon the Rhine which carries, near the top, a large clock face without any hands to show the hour. The clock is still good and sound. It is regularly wound up every week, and has been going for centuries: but, from some ancient superstition connected with it or prophecy regarding it, the hands on the outside of the dial were long ago removed, and

have never been replaced. So, there it stands, a clock with no outward sign whatever of its being so, a thing that might be a blessing to all the town, but absolutely a useless thing that does good to none! How many Christian souls, with the grace of God really within them, show nothing of that grace to any outside eye! The clock is there, and the clock face too; but there are no hands!

(KNIGHT.)

To those that Fear the Lord.

LACK of confidence and distrust may be all about us; dearth and death may mark the profession of religion; but let those who fear the Lord get together, and commune much upon HIS NAME, upon what He is; remembering that all fullness dwells in the Head of the assembly, the Firstborn from among the dead; and, that, in contrast to what is around, we are "light in the Lord"; also that not

only is the fear of the Lord the beginning of wisdom, but it "*is wisdom*" (Job. 28. 28); likewise "in the fear of the Lord is *strong confidence*" (Prov. 14. 26); also it is "*a fountain of life* to depart from the snares of death" (ver. 27). How good and wholesome then is the word of Proverbs 23. 17, "Be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long."

H. J. VINE.

The Church.

What Is It? Whence Is It? Where Is It? Whither Bound?

"The assembly of God which He has purchased with the blood of His own."

(Acts 22. 28, New Trans.)

THERE is something at once arresting in the above remarkable words uttered by the beloved Apostle of the Gentiles. Remarkable because the two epistles in which the great truth of the Mystery is presented had not yet been written, and, so far as we know, the grand secret of eternity was still undisclosed.

True it is that in our reading of the New Testament we have encountered passages which seemed to suggest the setting up of something the like of which had not previously existed. Thus, e.g., in Matthew 16. 18 we read the words of the Lord Jesus, consequent upon Peter's confession of Him as the Son of the living God, "Thou art Peter, and on this rock" (not Peter, who was a bit of rock, but Christ Who is the Rock) "I will build My Assembly, and Hades' gates shall not prevail against it" (New Trans.). Here we have a hint of a work which—when He spoke—was still future, and which would produce a company of called out ones (the *ecclesia*) which would be proof against all the legions of Hell. From Acts 2. 47 we learn when and how that work commenced, and was being carried on "daily" with ceaseless and tireless activity; for we read that "the Lord added to the Assembly daily those that were to be saved" (New Trans.). In Acts 15. 14 the Apostle James, speaking by the Holy Ghost, gave utterance to the truth when he showed how "God first visited to *take out of the nations* a people for His Name." Had he known that it was the church he would no doubt have said so; as it was he recognised that it was something altogether new, and in his own words actually gave it the name by which Christ had spoken of it in Matthew 16. James said it has

a people "*taken out*"; the Lord Jesus said it is "*My Assembly*."

When Paul speaks of it in the words which head this paper we are immediately impressed with the fact that the Assembly is something that is very precious to God. It is "The Assembly of God." He claims it as His very own. He has purchased it "with the blood of His Own." A greater price He could not have paid; and therefore a more valuable treasure He could not possess. This being so, it behoves us surely to learn from His Word, and as taught by the Holy Spirit, that which He has been pleased to reveal regarding the Assembly and to seek to be found in the current of His mind. If then we inquire—

I

What Is It? we find that it is something the like of which did not exist prior to the day of Pentecost, which, being bounded by the limits of Pentecost on the one hand and the rapture of the saints on the other hand, is peculiar to this parenthesis in God's dealings with Israel and with the world.

It is that (a) in which God finds His present dwelling place, hence it is "the House of God"; (b) in which also His glory is to be displayed, and so it is "the Temple of God"; (c) through which Christ has to be expressed down here, and in this connection it is spoken of as "the Body of Christ"; (d) looking forward to the future, and to God's dealings in government, as "the City." All these characteristics are merely alluded to in Ephesians 2. 14-22, and are developed in various portions of the Epistles and in the Revelation. It is also spoken of as the Bride of Christ. How our hearts are touched—are they

not?—as we meditate upon this! How endearing is the word! How close the intimacy! How deep the affection! How real the nearness! The Bride is, and ever shall be, the object of His quenchless love; and shall be for the admiration of His eye, and the ineffable delight of His heart, throughout eternal ages. She will also be the complement of Christ, the sharer of all that is His in that day when everything will be headed up in Him (Eph. 1. 10-14). We are left in no doubt as to who compose the Assembly. Ephesians 1. 7 and Colossians 1. 14 each speak of "redemption" and "forgiveness." It may be argued that both these blessings were known in Old Testament times. In a sense that is true. Israel was "redeemed out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh King of Egypt" (Deut. 7. 8); and there was in their case the "passing by" of sins (Rom. 3. 26, New Trans.); but they did not know either of these as they may be known by the saints of God now. Nor did they know anything of that which forms the solution to the second question which we have set out to answer.

II

Whence Is It? When we ask this, we find ourselves entering upon a region that it will require eternity to explore. Before the world was, God the Father gave the Assembly to Christ His well-beloved Son. Chosen by Him because He loved His Son and desired to present Him with a gift which should adequately express how deeply He loved Him. Chosen in order that through that Assembly "principalities and authorities in the heavenlies might learn the all-various wisdom of God" (Eph. 3. 10, New Trans.). Chosen in order that in coming ages that Assembly might be the vessel through which "the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus" should be displayed (Eph. 2. 7, New Trans.). The answer to the question, as will be clearly seen, is that the Assembly is heavenly. it was chosen in heaven; it was called

from heaven; it is set apart for heaven; and it is dependent upon heaven for all that it requires to maintain it in its heavenly character, preserve it from the defiling influences of this polluting world, and to enable it to answer to God's mind for it. Shall we linger here for a moment and ask ourselves how far this truth commands our lives as individuals?

"We have heard with our ears, our fathers have told us" how mightily the saints of God were affected when He graciously recovered it to them at the beginning of last century! The present generation has been severely tested during the last five years. Have we been true to our calling? Was there not the tendency during the War to put patriotism before Christ? Did not Christians who were chosen in heaven and called from heaven, who belong to heaven and are bound for heaven, drop down into the spirit of the world? If this be so, our failure has not altered the truth, and it may be that just before He comes, the Lord is seeking to exercise our hearts, so that as a result first of a deepening sense of His love for us, and next of a reviving in our hearts of affection for Him, there may be the practical outcome of a better realisation of the fact that we belong to heaven.

III

Where Is It? It is in this world. Called out of the world, it is left in, or shall we say it has been sent back to, this world in order that the life of Christ may still be manifested in the world, and so the light of the knowledge of God still shines in the darkness. If asked to point out where the Assembly is in a particular locality, we could not do so. Nor could we direct attention to any company of Christians and say, "That represents the Assembly," or "That acts for the Assembly."

If a letter had been addressed "to the Assembly of God in Corinth" long centuries ago, it would have been de-

livered without difficulty. If a letter were addressed now "to the Assembly of God in London" it would be returned to the "dead letter" office, for no company dare claim it. This, however, does not alter the fact that the Assembly is in the world, and every person born again, washed in the blood of Christ, and indwelt by the Holy Spirit forms part, not of a section of it, but of the whole. Those who ally themselves with a section deny the truth of the whole; and those who seek to go on with the truth of the whole will refuse to have anything to do with any section. Strange as it may seem, this may involve their finding themselves in a narrow and outwardly lonely path. Our privilege, as well as our responsibility, is to go on with the truth whether we find others doing so or not; in that path we shall have the company of our blessed Lord, and we shall also find those who desire to be true and loyal to Him. Our desire is to impress upon ourselves and upon our fellow-believers the great fact that the Assembly is in the world; it is here to represent Christ, and it requires every one who composes it so to do. So that we are all dependent one upon the other, and together we are dependent upon Him, our glorious Head, from whom we derive everything requisite for our sojourn here.

Wherever we go in this favoured land in which we live, or travel over the world, those are to be found who belong to this one Assembly. As Christ surveys this world, He looks upon that in it which He calls "My Assembly." He loved it and gave Himself for it; He loves it, and is constant and unwearied in His activities on its behalf. The apple of His eye, the treasure of His heart, the love gift of His Father, He lavishes upon it all His affection and His care, nor will He cease until that with which our last question deals is realized.

IV

[*Whither Bound?* Chosen in heaven,

called *from* heaven, and belonging to heaven, the Assembly is bound for heaven. He will present "the Assembly to Himself glorious, having no spot, or wrinkle, or any of such things" (Eph. 5. 27, New Trans.). As such He had it before His eye and in His heart in the council chamber of eternity; as such He had it before Him when He addressed the wonderful words to Peter already quoted from Matthew 16.; as such He has it before Him to-day, and as such, after twenty centuries' ruthless attack and battering by the enemy, He will present it to Himself in that day. What a triumph will that be for Him! What exceeding joy that will be to His heart! And what delight it will bring to the heart of God. As our first text shows, the Assembly is His; He has purchased it with the blood of His own that He might give it to His own. Now Christ claims it as His own, and the acme of His joy will be when He presents it to Himself, and brings it forth in company with Himself, that through it He may be glorified and admired, and the surpassing riches of God's grace may be displayed.

As we close may we be permitted a word of practical application? What we have written is doubtless familiar to the majority of, if not to all, our readers; but let us ask ourselves, do we hold the truth or does it hold us? If the latter, ours will be a path of separation from all that is contrary to it. We shall not be joined to or support any organisation which has been built up by the world for its own aggrandisement. We will seek only to get through it, to "live a quiet and peaceable life," and to be used by the Holy Spirit as, and when, and where, and how He will, to express Christ in it, and thus shine as lights for Him.

We had better not know the truth at all than hold it in mere academic fashion. God's desire is that it should form us, become part and parcel of our being; and that just as the world was obliged to take notice of the presence in

its midst of a heavenly Stranger when Christ was here, so it may be compelled to take cognizance of the fact that there is a heavenly company in its midst to-day whose only business is to get through it, and while passing through it to continue the testimony of Him whom it has refused, and shed abroad the fragrance of His Name and the warmth of divine love while waiting the moment of translation to its home whither it is bound. The truth is of surpassing grandeur and exquisite beauty, and the more we apprehend it,

the more are we constrained to "bow 'our' knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" and thank Him again and again that it is our privilege to live in this dispensation, and for the grace that has called us to this wonderful place. Shall we seek that in the brief moment that may remain ere He claims us and calls us hence, we may rise to the height and the dignity of our calling, and may be enabled in the power of His spirit to "walk worthy of the calling wherewith we have been called" (Eph. 4. 1, New Trans.).

W. BRAMWELL DICK.

Christ and the Church.

HAPPY are those who are awakened to enquire into this simple but blessed truth as to Christ and the church, and to receive the revelation of it in their souls. They will not be long without feeling that it contains everything; that it is the fulness of Him, who, without having had a beginning, was pleased to be born, and who, having no end, is pleased to accomplish eternally in us that infinite joy, the realization of which will even render us capable of enjoying it in a measure always increasing. We shall have great lessons to learn in glory with

Christ, the Lamb, in whom the Father is fully revealed. The life we have received gives us even now a right and title to all these blessings as ours.

When Christ shall be revealed in His power and glory, then will the church be manifested as His bride, His companion, in the same glory with Himself; and all things will be blessed through it. For it will be the sphere and means of the display of the glory and blessing of Christ.

J. N. D.

The Lord's Supper.

THE Christian can have no higher privilege than that of eating the Lord's Supper according to His desire. The way to be up to the privilege is to live near to the Lord all the week. Proving what it is to be dead with Him to sin and the world, and alive with Him from the dead; then the communion of the Lord's death will be a blessed reality as we eat the Lord's Supper.

We do this until He shall come again, as I Corinthians II. states. Blessed,

wondrous hope of every loyal heart, and the more we appreciate the love that told itself out in death for us, that which we recall in the Supper, the more earnestly shall we long for His coming.

Out of that meeting others flow as the Word indicates, we shall delight to come together for *prayer*, and the ministry of the Word, for we are not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together.

J. F. ENGLISH.

On Eternal Punishment.

IN publishing the following paper we wish to make our own position clear as to the truth of eternal punishment, and to emphasize the way in which God has revealed Himself in the Holy Scriptures. Not that this wholesome truth needs any apology, but it has often been preached and taught in an unbalanced way, and we wish to hold the balance of the truth.

The objectors say, "You preach a God who has no mercy, and who consigns His creatures without pity to eternal pain." No, we do not; on the contrary, we preach a God who at His own cost has provided a way of escape for all from this terrible doom—Who "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): "Who will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2. 4): Who "commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5. 8): Who beseeches men through His ambassadors to be reconciled to Him (2 Cor. 5. 20): Whose long-suffering with men holds back the long-predicted judgment, because He is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3. 9).

The gospel of God, which is concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom. 1. 1, 3) is: "the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth" (ver. 16). It is conceived in absolute and eternal righteousness, so that through it He can be just and yet justify everyone that believes in Jesus (Rom. 3. 26). It begins with the solemn fact that "all have sinned," and declares that none can obtain righteousness by works; but it offers to all more

than they have forfeited by their sins, or could gain by their works, even though their works were perfect; and it offers all that it has to give freely. All this many of those who cavil at the truth ignore, as though it had never been written in the Word of God, or preached in the world by the servants of God.

The cross of Christ, on which He gave Himself a ransom for all, is the great proof of God's love for men and the length He would go to save them; He could not have done more; but it is also the great proof that God cannot pass by the sins of men, as though they were nothing at all. He would not be a God of holiness and truth if He did; hence the gospel which proclaims His love and grace also reveals His wrath against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness (Rom. 1. 18). Eternal punishment will be the portion of those who have refused to repent of their sins to God, and who have treated with indifference or disdain His proffered mercy. It is for those "who know not God and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. 1. 8). Thus we believe and teach; to do other we must abandon the plainest possible statements of the Bible and adopt instead of them the reasonings of the human mind. We accept that Word of God as it stands; the only other honest course is to reject it altogether.

If our readers consider the solemn truth in the light of the gospel of God's grace, we are sure that they will not fail to bless His name for the love that has provided a way of escape for all, nor refuse to acknowledge the justice of the condemnation of those who refuse the One who is the way, the truth, and the life. (*Ed.*)

OUR belief in eternal punishment is based on the Scriptures alone; it is the bed-rock foundation of our faith for

this as for all other doctrine connected with our glorious Christianity—"the faith which was once for all delivered

unto the saints." In the words of Mr. F. W. Grant, in his well-known work, *Facts and Theories as to a Future State*, page 451: "It is the judgment of many that the ethical question should precede the exegetical, which seems as much as to say, that we must first decide what Scripture *ought* to say, before we ascertain what it *does*. We should certainly treat no other writings after such a fashion; and the claim of these to be divine does not affect their claim to be intelligible also. If God has spoken He is as well able to make Himself understood as another, and is as ready to assume the responsibility of His utterances. If it be God, we need not fear lest His word should be immoral, or that it will not approve itself to the consciences of men, His creatures. Judge Him too they will, no doubt: but He will be justified in His sayings, and clear when He is judged."

To this we do most heartily and unreservedly agree. It is our very first business to learn what Scripture says on this, as on every other spiritual question; and having ascertained what "God's word written" says, it is our bounden duty to believe, whether or not we understand it, and regardless altogether whether our natural conscience approves of it or not. "There is little doubt," the above quoted writer says, "that the attempt to decide on moral grounds what Scripture *must* have said upon the subject before us (endless punishment) has destroyed with many all certainty of what it *does* say." Natural conscience is no safe guide at all in such matters, for we are fallen creatures, our God-given intelligence is impaired by sin, and our moral sense greatly blunted after almost two hundred generations of rebellion and alienation from God. So men who fear God and tremble at His word have wisely, and to their soul's settled rest, allowed the Holy Scriptures to speak; and on its unimpeachable testimony they have held firmly to their verdict on this most stupendous subject of eternal punishment.

And if these Scriptures — these "oracles of God," teach anything clearly, it is that the doom of the finally impenitent is conscious and endless punishment in outer darkness and banishment from God, beginning immediately after death. This has been proven over and over again, both from the common Authorized Version and by the closest scrutiny of the original languages, and that by men of deepest learning and amplest competence for such a task. We quote in this connection the weighty words of J. B. Remensnyder, D.D., author of *Doom Eternal*: "We have searched the Scriptures in their pure original; we have hearkened to the words which fell from the divine Teacher Himself; and to settle indisputable the force of their language, we have summoned to our aid the critical authority of the most eminent philologists and lexicographers. We have cited individual confessions presented to the Roman emperors; we have called in review those ecumenical creeds whose universal authority is still the sublimest monument of Christian antiquity; we have had recourse to the particularistic creeds of the Reformation era (Protestant, Roman and Oriental); we have presented as witnesses the beliefs of the various branches of Christendom in the present day; we have sought out the light which Reason and Natural Religion cast upon the problem; and all concur in the one, unanimous, accordant, unequivocal testimony that the eternity of Future Punishment is a vital doctrine of the Bible, a tenant universally held and confessed by the evangelical church, and an article fundamental to the integrity of the Christian Faith." And to the above testimony we add the no less weighty, if less eloquent, words of B. B. Warfield, D.D., LL.D., Professor of Systematic Theology in Princeton Theological Seminary, N. Jersey: "What God purposes to do with the incorrigible sinner He alone knows: and we are wholly shut up to what He tells us for our knowledge of His purpose. And

speaking in His Son God tells us with perfect explicitness that He purposes that such sinners shall depart from Him to the quenchless fire and the undying worm—into eternal punishment—into the eternal fire ‘prepared for the devil and his angels.’ It is a terrible doom only to be explained by the terrible wickedness of sin.”

But while all this is true, it is also and equally true that the orthodox doctrine of endless punishment is fully sustained by man’s judicial sense of the oughtness of things, and can be maintained on moral grounds, as well as by appeal to Scripture ; in other words, it should be no strain on man’s natural conscience, nor should it shock his moral sense to believe the doctrine of future and unending retribution as taught in the book commonly called the Bible.

And it is absolutely false what an objector to this truth asserts, when he says: “The missionary tells the unbeliever what kind of God the God of the Christian is, in order to convert the unbeliever to the faith. Can we wonder that the answer of the heathen to our message should be, ‘We cannot, and we will not, believe in a God of whom you affirm such outrageous wrong.’ . . . We ask the human heart for its verdict. We say that judged by human judgment, and that the judgment of believers and unbelievers alike, the punishment which the theory of Augustine supposes (the orthodox view) that God will inflict is *infinitely* too great, and we are therefore to reject it as untrue, because wholly unworthy, not merely of a merciful Father, but a just God.” (Constable in *Duration and Nature of Future Punishment*.) To this Mr. Grant has tersely and convincingly replied: “We happen to know, however, that where the gospel has made its largest and most permanent conquests, the doctrine of endless punishment has been held and put forth. Nay, in Christendom itself it must, according to Mr. Constable, have conquered the whole ground, and that in the teeth of the moral sense, where this had certainly

no self-interest to seduce it from the so much milder truth which had first possession of the field. How strange a reflection that what the heathen have moral sense to reject, Christendom should have almost universally accepted; But the gospel can scarcely be shown to have won its way by the aid of annihilation doctrine, or its history will have to be rewritten.” It does indeed seem strange that the enlightened nations of Christendom, foremost in rank of intelligence, wealth, power, and benevolence, and who almost universally hold the doctrine of eternal punishment, in theory, at least, should be less capable of judging moral questions than the heathen, who for long ages have been sunk in the deepest degradation of idolatry and most abject superstition, and whose ethical code is notoriously deficient and scarcely above that of Sodom and Gomorrah!

Yes, we assert with fullest confidence that this now much-debated doctrine of endless retribution is quite capable of standing the most rigid test to which the moral faculties of man may put it. We are quite ready to apply to it the principle proposed by the Unitarian, Dr. Bellows, who says: “If we continue to claim the name of Christians, we must continue to believe that the testimony of the records of our faith is not contradictory of the evidence of the moral reason. If it were proved such we should be compelled to abandon Christianity, so far as it claims to be founded on the New Testament. We believe the general testimony of the New Testament to be in full accord with the testimony of man’s moral nature, in regard to the issues of divine government.”¹ So, too, do we, only with this necessary proviso, that a man’s moral judgment may be (and in point of fact, is) warped by sin, and that inasmuch as he is the culprit in the dock, it is hardly to be expected that he would give a wholly unbiassed verdict as to what his punishment should be. It is never asked an offender in court what castigation he thinks his

offence deserves, though when sentence is pronounced his conscience will doubtless tell him that his punishment is just.

And having said this much let us proceed to the proofs, that the doctrine of endless punishment is not only established by the written Word of God, but must also be assented to by man's moral perceptions, his conscience, in other words.

PART II

The precise nature of the future punishment of the wicked we do not here attempt to define. The figures used to describe it, quenchless fire and an undying worm, are in themselves fearful enough; whether they are to be taken in a strictly literal sense, or only symbolically, is not at all material to the discussion in hand. All that we insist upon is that it is ever enduring as to time, and no less terrible in its effects than the figures used imply.² That there must be future punishment of some kind every thinking man must admit. The wicked do not in this life receive the just deserts their sins require. The psalmist speaks of "the ungodly who prosper in the world." This is a common case. Then, too, how often does the robber of widows and orphans, the murderer, the seducer of innocence escape wholly in this life the punishment their crimes deserve. If there is no retribution in the life to come, what becomes of God's character of righteousness, His moral government of His universe, His violated law, His threats against transgressors found everywhere throughout His written Word? That He must punish sin, who will deny? and since in the vast majority of cases man's wickedness receives no apparent recompense in this world, it is evident that he must be punished in the life to come.³ "In all ages," writes L. B. Hartman, in *Divine Penology*, "goodness and holiness have been persecuted, while sensuality and tyranny have rolled in ease and revelled in debauchery and crime unmolested.

Many a pious Lazarus has died at the gates of Dives, unmourned and unburied. This state of things we cannot harmonize with our own sense of justice and right. We both know and feel that it is all wrong, and things are woefully out of balance, and, in the nature of things, call for and demand a future judgment, where wrong shall be righted, innocence avenged, truth and justice vindicated, and the books of eternal equity balanced. And as God cannot but be just and true, it follows that such a day must come, as the necessity of His moral government."

Do any question God's right or obligation to punish sin? Look at man himself—does he not make laws regulating human conduct? and does he not attach penalties, often exceedingly severe, to the violation of these laws? And who but the criminal or the anarchist denies his right to do this, or questions the necessity and justice of a criminal code, or the maintenance of ordered government? And will man be more just than God, a mortal more righteous than his Maker? "Where is the nation or tribe, ancient or modern, heathen or Christian, that has not in its own way held men responsible for their wilful deeds, and punished the transgressor of its laws?" one asks. How soon would all order and security on earth cease were there no law to bring to the bar of justice the offender and punish the guilty? "Suppose for illustration," the above quoted writer says, "that all penalties affixed to human laws were set aside, and men were told that the only punishment they could fear was the natural sequence of their evil deeds; would there be any human government? Verily not." And another, Prof. E. J. Wolf, says, "Nothing is regarded so detrimental to the common welfare, and so destructive to society, as the escape of the evil-doer unwhipped of justice. The inextinguishable moral sense within us cannot endure the thought of his crime going unpunished."

And, since such is the demand of the public conscience, and the requirement of the well-being of ordered society, that the evil-doer be punished, how much more does the individual moral sense require that God, the Almighty and unalterably just Ruler of the universe, punish in man His creature, either here on earth now, or in eternity by and by? And as it is patent to all that men do not in any adequate degree receive here "the due reward of their deeds," it requires and follows that they be punished in the life to come. Concerning this, some one has said: "But for the conviction that penalty is only delayed to the proper day, and that retribution is absolutely certain, despair must settle down upon the moral universe, the forces of our moral nature suffer a total wreck, and society experience inevitable disolution."

Pursuing the same line of argument, L. B. Hartman says: "Offences which involve the will, the conscience, the thoughts, the purposes, desires, affections, etc., offences which the courts cannot reach; and yet withal, offences which our innate sense of responsibility feels and acknowledges, here then, a new problem confronts us. What shall be done with these unknown and uncanceled remainders ever lingering in the deep sea of human consciousness? We both feel and know that they do exist, and we cannot deny them, nor yet dare we ignore them, because they are the very echoes of our own consciousness; neither can we in our heart of hearts respect a tribunal, or a government, that ignores them; we know they do exist, and that they call for adjustment, in our deepest convictions of justice and honour. They cannot be passed by, even by God Himself, if He would hold the respect, and command the reverence of men and an intelligent universe. They must be met and balanced, in the very nature of things. What then shall be done with them? Self-evidently, we are driven to the conclusion that the same law of human

responsibility which, as we have seen, demands and necessitates a civil tribunal, or court, controlling civil conduct and destiny, also demands and necessitates a moral tribunal, or judgment seat, to meet this deeper demand of moral conduct and destiny." No less true are the words of Charnock, in his *Divine Attributes*: "God is good; but without being just He could not be good; every sin is an evil, and for God not to punish evil would be a want of goodness to Himself. It would neither be prudence nor goodness, but folly and vice, to let law which was made to promote virtue be broken with impunity. Thus the very goodness of God demands the execution of His law and the punishment of evil-doers." And to this we adduce the testimony of Max Muller, the great scientist and professor of Sanscrit in the University of Oxford. He says: "For any evil deed to go unpunished would be to destroy the moral order of the universe. . . . The world would fall to pieces without eternal punishment, which coming from God must be eternal correction and eternal reward."

Thus we see from human testimony of the very highest order that sin against God is an affair inseparably connected with His government, it is "an infraction of the moral order of the universe," it is "a thrust at the infinite majesty of the moral law," an "impeachment of the honour of God's throne"; and on account of its intrinsic demerit, if for no other reason, calls for punishment such as only God, "the Judge of all," knows how to adequately apportion. And though man may not, in himself, understand the extent or degree of this punishment, it is enough for the purpose of our argument to know that he has within himself the consciousness of guilt and carries with him the conviction that a God of holiness and truth cannot do otherwise than mete out punishment to him for his sin. So then it is not so much a question of whether God will punish sin in the

future, but the moral certainty that He *must*.

But it may be objected that the testimony thus far taken has been from men whose thoughts have been more or less influenced by contact with Christianity, and who would, therefore, have a bias (though perhaps unconscious of it) in that direction. Granted; and to meet this we shall summon witnesses who lived before the Christian age, or who cannot in any sense be said to have been influenced by Scripture testimony.

Leland writes: "Aristotle, cited by Plutarch, speaking of the happiness of men after their departure out of this life, represents it as the most ancient opinion, so old that no man knows when it began, or who was the author of it; that it hath been handed down to us by tradition from infinite ages. The pagans never profess that the idea was reached by them by the aid of reason; but they always refer to it as a very ancient tradition which they endeavoured to confirm by reason." And further, "Lord Bolingbroke, whose interest in the matter would have lain the other way, acknowledges that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, and a state of future rewards and punishments, began to be taught before we have any light into antiquity; and when we begin to have any, we find it established that it was strongly inculcated from time immemorial, and as early as the most ancient nations appear to us." Socrates expressed the same thought thus: "It may be that God will forgive wilful sin, but I cannot see how He can, because I cannot see that He ought to." This heathen philosopher knew nothing of the Atonement as revealed in Scripture, hence could not be expected to understand or see how the one supreme God, Creator and Ruler of the universe, could forgive a sinner's sin.

Hartman says: "The countless hecatombs that smoked upon the altars of Greek and Roman deities; the pilgrimages of whole armies or devotees

to the shrine of their idolatry; the self-tortures inflicted with the hope of propitiation; and above all, the human blood shed to glut the rapacity of sanguinary deities, are all but so many forms in which unassisted man expresses his conscious obligation to justice and his heart-felt need of expiatory blood: nothing but this could prompt the poor devotee to cut his flesh with knives, and to scorch his limbs with fire." And to this the same eloquent writer adds: "The learned as well as the ignorant and barbarous, set the seal of their convictions to this fact and developed it in actual effort, even unto self-immolation. It was in vain for philosophy to seek to remove this conviction from the popular mind; the logic of mere reason could not withstand the unrestrained flow of man's universal intuitive conscious wants. Account for it as you please, there is a mysterious something in man that ever tells him sin is an infinite debt which calls for reparation—for satisfaction to the injured majesty of law violated—for atonement; to deny this is to deny the universal consciousness of the race. Thus every man's conscience carries within itself the unmistakable prophecy of future punishment in all cases where reparation has not been made, and due satisfaction given."

Ovid taught: "According to the state of a man's conscience, so do hope and fear, on account of his deeds, arise in his mind." Plato quaintly expresses himself, on the same subject, thus: "In nature there is no forgiveness of sin. Sin and punishment walk this world with their heads tied together; and the rivet that binds their iron link is a rivet of adamant." And to this we add the convincing words of Dr. R. W. Hamilton: "Traverse the earth; enter the gorgeous cities of idolatry, or accept the hospitality of its wandering tribes; go where will-worship is most fantastic, and superstition most gross; and you will find in man 'a fearful looking-for of judgment.' Their mythology or their

Nemesis may vary; their Elysium and Tartarus may be differently depicted; the metempsychosis may be the passage of bliss and woe; still the fact is only confirmed by the diversity of the forms in which it is presented."

Thus we see that the very heathen themselves, long and far removed from any influence, direct or indirect, of Christianity, have universally implanted deeply in their consciousness the conviction that God must punish sin, that, as the Bible puts it, "He will by no means clear the guilty." And the same Scriptures, in this very line of testimony, state that, "the expectation of the wicked is wrath" (Prov. 11. 23).

PART III.

Another evidence outside Scripture altogether that a belief in future punishment is not only rational, but a moral necessity of God's government, is the disastrous consequences that inevitably follow wherever this all but universal intuition in man is either weakened or destroyed. Dr. Mayor says that "wherever the doctrine of retribution in a life to come is not believed, a licentiousness of manners is sure to prevail, and the only pursuit will be that of pleasure." And do we not see an exhibition of the truth of this statement on every hand to-day? "Lovers of pleasures" is one of the most marked characteristics of the times. Büchner, the infidel historian, says: "The principles of infidelity found their outward expression in the great French Revolution." And to this, a writer pertinently adds: "This needs no comment here. Its scenes of rapine, cruelty, carnage, speak for themselves. Whenever infidelity denies or ignores the testimony and conscious facts of consciousness bearing on moral obligation and future punishment, it commits suicide; a fact which its greatest apostles are compelled to confess, if not in words, then none the less assuredly in actions!" "It is often said by

Cicero and others," writes Dr. Knapp, "that all philosophers, both Greek and Roman, are agreed in this; that the gods do not punish. But as soon as this opinion began to prevail among the people, it produced, according to the testimony of all Roman writers, the most disastrous consequences, which lasted for centuries. It resulted in the deplorable degeneracy of the Roman Empire. Truth and faith ceased, chastity became contemptible, and perjury was practised without shame. To this corruption no philosophy was able to oppose any effectual resistance; until at length its course was arrested by Christianity."⁴

It is related that that blatant champion of American infidelity, Col. Robt. G. Ingersoll, was once, during the Garfield presidential campaign, addressing a political meeting; he was seeking to convince and persuade his hearers that the platform of the opposition party was dangerous and would result in calamity to the country. And to enforce his appeal, he used the following words: "Fellow citizens: If you will sustain such measures and vote for such principles, you will have to give an account for it in the great day of final judgment"; then turning round, he whispered to those sitting about him on the platform, "*If there is such a day.*" Dr. Hartman, commenting on this, says: "He knew full well that his appeal was lighter than a 'puff of empty air' unless he nailed the sense of responsibility in the hearts of his hearers, somewhere, to some tribunal of final appeal. This he boldly did, by nailing it to the pillar of eternal justice and oughtness which brought the forebodings of future accountability and punishment face to face with an on-coming judgment day. . . . Ingersoll knew full well that without a tribunal of final appeal, without a day of future judgment where every man shall be judged according to his deeds, he could not possibly carry the consciences of his audience by argument, nor by his

eloquence constrain them to act, without a sense of responsibility."

Having established, as we believe, the fact of a needs-be future retribution on purely ethical grounds, it remains only to inquire if this punishment is necessarily eternal. And here a proper conception of the *nature* of future punishment will enable us to understand better the question of its *duration*.

First, then this punishment is not *remedial* in its design, it is not synonymous with which is in its nature *corrective*. This, as has been said, always looks man-ward, while the punishment of sin, on the other hand, is purely penal, and looks God-ward; it contains no remedial element whatever. Punishment has been defined as "executed penalty." Webster says: "Punishment is designed to uphold law by the infliction of penalty; while chastisement is intended by kind correction to prevent the repetition of faults, and to reclaim the offender." And another has said: "All chastisements are remedial afflictions; but punishment is judicial retribution." Our prisons are intended to serve the double purpose, both of punishing the violator of the law and his correction with the view to his reform. Hence they are sometimes called *penitentiaries*. But in the case of a man serving a life-sentence the imprisonment is not for the purpose of his correction at all, but solely as a punishment in vindication of the violated law.

Second: the above being true, how can punishment for sin in a future life be anything less than eternal in its duration? For since the infliction of punishment is but the penalty imposed by the law, and that law "cannot be broken," it follows that since the sinner has broken the law he must suffer its penalty, in the natural course of things, forever.

"That the law of God must be honoured is the united testimony of the universe," Dr. Hartman says; "all things are leagued in loyal confederacy to secure and enforce this end. This

may be done in two ways: by obedience to its precept on the one hand, or by suffering its penalty on the other; and the values of the obedience and the penalty must be in perfect equipoise, as the equal and correlative functions of its honour. If a man refuses to honour the law by obedience, he must honour it by enduring its penalty. The honour he renders to the law in this case is precisely equal in value to that which his obedience would have rendered; and it makes not the slightest difference, so far as the law is concerned, whether men will obey it or not; in either case it secures and maintains the integrity of its majesty and honour. Nature is a familiar illustration of this principle. Her laws command your regard, and it matters not in this respect, whether you obey or choose to violate them, you will withal give them equal honour, either by your obedience, or by enduring their penalties." And further: "Sin is a debt, an infinite obligation to injured justice and violated law: and the guilt of sin is just equal to the degree of obligation; and as guilt implies liability to punishment the penalty must be equal to the obligation; and since obligation is infinite, the penalty must be infinite; and this necessitates eternal punishment because the sinner is finite. Penalty is necessarily infinite and eternal in duration."

So it is not a question of how long or in what measure God will punish sin; if He punishes at all it must of necessity be forever. It has been truly and aptly said that "if He punishes sin in moral agents anywhere He will also do so everywhere and forever."

Nor will it help the objector to say that God will punish man's sin in another world, though not forever, but only for a time, as in the purgatory of the Romanist, or the "age-lasting" hades of the Restorationist; for why should He punish sin at all if He punishes only for a time? If it were an arbitrary act and not founded on the eternal principles of justice, we might well ask, "Why does

He, a God of love and goodness, punish man at all?" But since it is done by the requirement of His holy character as Judge, and thus leaving Him no choice (and we say it with all awe and reverence) He cannot do otherwise than make the punishment continue so long as the existence of the soul and its sin.

We cannot do better in concluding our discussion than to quote the impressive words of one to whom we have frequently referred before in these pages—Dr. L. B. Hartman: "The doctrine of a future hell needs no other argument to sustain it. Silence all the pulpits in the land, burn all the Bibles in the world,

wipe Christianity from the face of the earth, and this immutable principle, as the eternal law of well-being, still remains enthroned in its imperial authority as before. It is the voice of the nature of things, the voice of science, and the voice of self-evident, axiomatic, intuitive, eternal truth—truth which Christ reduced to a single sentence—'YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN' " (John 3. 3). And we add: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3. 14, 15).

C. KNAPP.

¹ Doctor Theodore Parker, notorious for his extravagantly liberal views, writes as follows: "To me it is quite certain that Jesus Christ taught the doctrine of eternal damnation, if the Evangelists—the first three, I mean—are to be treated as inspired. I can understand His language in no other way. I think there is not in the Old Testament or the New, a single word which tells this blessed truth, that penitence hereafter will do any good." So this down-grade divine, like his fellow, Henry Ward Beecher, chooses rather to question the inspiration of the Synoptic Gospels than believe their explicit teaching concerning "eternal damnation." What daring—and what folly!

² "Jesus Christ and His apostles used the strongest words to measure the quality and duration of personal, conscious sufferings of the lost. (See Matt. 25. 41, 46; John 5. 29; 2 Thess. 1. 7-9; Rev. 21. 8.)"—Bishop W. F. Mallalieu.

"These terrible symbols are employed manifestly because they express the truth better than any others that could be chosen."—Dr. R. S. MacArthur.

"Hell is undoubtedly a real place whose dreadfulness is only imperfectly indicated by the frightful figures which are employed by the Scriptures to describe it."—Dr. P. S. Henson.

"But if the term is merely figurative then the reality must be as much greater, as substance is greater than shadow."—Dr. Hartman.

³ "The inequalities of the punishments suffered in this life render future retribution necessary to establish justice. It is inconceivable that a just God should deal with man in a manner totally at variance with the character of an impartial judge. Man's consciousness of subjection to law involves the idea of penalty for its violation."—Dr. D. M. Evans.

"We challenge the world to prove," writes Dr. Hodge, "that mankind are destitute of the idea of 'right,' of 'oughtness,' or of 'justice'; the idea of moral obligation is ultimate and independent, and therefore it is intrinsically supreme and absolute."

Max Muller says, in *The London Christian World*: "I have always held that it would be a miserable universe without eternal punishment. Every act, good or evil, must carry its consequences, and the fact that our punishment must go on forever seems to me a proof of the everlasting love of God. For an evil deed to go unpunished would be to destroy the moral order of the universe. . . . Without eternal punishment we should have no touch with God, the world would be Godless, God-forsaken."

"Forebodings of the wrath to come are as instinctive and as universal among men as the belief in God and the immortality of the soul."—H. J. Van Dyke, D.D., Brooklyn, N.Y.

Montesquieu says: "The idea of a place of future rewards and punishment necessarily imports that there is such a place of future rewards and punishments, and that where the people hope for the one without fear of the other, civil laws have no force."

Another leading infidel, Bolingbroke, wrote: "The doctrine of future rewards and punishments has a great tendency to enforce civil laws and restrain the vices of men."

Another, Hume, says: "Disbelief in futurity lessens in a great measure the ties of morality, and may be supposed for that reason, to be pernicious to civil society." To the above the Christian adds triumphantly, "Our enemies themselves being judges!"

The Lord hath met my longing with word of golden tone,
That I shall serve for ever Himself, Himself alone.

Shall serve Him, and for ever; O hope most sure, most fair!
The perfect love outpouring in perfect service there.