

# SCRIPTURE TRUTH

VOLUME XII. 1920

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“Do not My words do good  
to him that walketh up-  
rightly?”—*Micah 2. 7.*

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THE CENTRAL BIBLE TRUTH DEPOT  
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# Scripture Truth.

Vol. XII.

“Speaking the truth in love” (Eph. 4. 15).

No. 1.

## EDITORIAL NOTES.

Hark ! ten thousand voices crying,  
“Lamb of God” ! with one accord ;  
Thousand thousand saints replying,  
Wake at once the echoing chord.

“Praise the Lamb,” the chorus waking,  
All in heaven together throng ;  
Loud and far each tongue partaking  
Rolls around the endless song.

Grateful incense this, ascending  
Ever to the Father’s throne ;  
**EVERY KNEE TO JESUS BENDING,**  
**ALL THE MIND IN HEAVEN IS ONE.**

All the Father’s counsels claiming  
Equal honours to the Son,  
All the Son’s effulgence beaming,  
Makes the Father’s glory known.

By the Spirit all pervading,  
Hosts unnumber’d round the Lamb,  
Crown’d with light and joy unfading,  
Hail Him as the great “I AM.”

(J.N.D.)

**WE** commence this first page of “Scripture Truth” for 1920 on a note that we know will find response in every heart that knows the love of Christ. We have a purpose in view which we hope clearly to develop, and that it may be in measure realized, we appeal to the hearts and not to the heads of our readers. “Knowledge puffs up

but love edifies” is a divinely inspired word ; and God effects His purposes through the hearts of men and not through their heads. His priceless treasures of love which are displayed in Christ are hid from the wise and prudent and revealed unto babes ; to those whose affections are free to be attached to Christ.

Every heart thus divinely enlightened will thrill with holy pleasure at the thought that the day is coming when "hosts unnumbered" shall surround the Lamb in the glory of God; when every mind throughout that glory shall be one mind; and not a voice shall be still as in heavenly notes the song of praise swells like the sound of many waters to the utmost bounds of the wide creation.

THE FIRST THOUGHT that affects the heart in the contemplation of this scene of glory is that the Lamb is the theme of that harmonious song; the Father's counsels that set Him to be the life-giving, joy-creating Centre of all things, are fulfilled in this; and He is *the Lamb that was slain*. There is this indissoluble link between the cross and the throne. We remember the scourging, smiting, spitting, and shame; the hatred and insults; the cross, the darkness, and the cry of anguish; death and the riven side. We think of Him despising the shame and enduring the cross, coming down to the lowest point in death to redeem us to God by His blood, and we rejoice with joy unspeakable that the Father, by the wisdom and power of His Spirit, has produced this scene of glory, of which Christ is the living and worthy Centre, and has filled it with these "hosts unnumbered" from the very world where He was crucified; and every one amongst them must praise the Lamb, for not one of them would have been there but for His redeeming blood.

*"Thou wast slain and hast redeemed to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."*

THE SECOND THOUGHT that yields satisfaction to the heart is the blessed unity that exists in that expanse of glory, the harmony and oneness of mind that pervades the whole realm of it. It is expressed most sweetly in those two lines in our song of praise:

"Ev'ry knee to Jesus bending,  
All the mind in heaven is one."

Here are two things for which our renewed nature yearns: First, that Jesus should be fully glorified, and so He shall be when every knee bends before Him; and second, the manifested unity of the saints of God, oneness of mind in those that are begotten of Him. The second is secured in the first; here it is in spite of all Satan's efforts to thwart it; but it could not be apart from the exaltation of Christ.

THE REASON WHY the desire for unity exists in every heart that is going on with God—is because unity is of God. We speak now of practical unity; there is a unity which can never be dissolved, and cannot be more perfect than it is, for "there is one body" formed by the Holy Ghost, Christ in heaven is the Head of it, and every believer, whether he knows it or not, is part of it. Practical and manifested unity is according to this; it is simple consistency on the part of the members of Christ's body with the truth. Unity is part of God's very nature; it is seen in all His works and is mani-

fested in the full sum of His attributes. Discord, division and decay came by the will of man, they find their origin in sin and the devil, but we who have received Christ were born, not of the will of man, or of sin, or the devil, but of God (John 1. 13). Hence desires for oneness of mind are inherent in us as being born of God, and to suppress them is to suppress what is of God.

THERE IS A GROWING CONCERN, we believe, in many hearts in this regard, and we thank God for it, for surely it indicates to us that the Spirit of God is awakening the saints to join in that cry which will rise as music to the waiting Bridegroom's ear, "*The Spirit and the Bride say, Come.*" Efforts are put forth in various directions to remove the things that divide, and to secure the desired oneness of thought; and we would not stand coldly by and criticise, but turn to God in prayer and intercession, that the energy might come from God and be rightly directed by His Spirit, and that the springs, and methods, and results may be of Him. But we would keep before our readers that scene of glory which our hymn of praise describes. Oneness of mind is there, but by what means has it been secured? "Every knee to Jesus bending," answers the question. He is the life-giving Head of that vast expanse of glory, and the result of the life that He gives in all those who receive it, is oneness of mind to acclaim His worth. They own His supremacy; He is their eternal Centre and continual joy.

"Hosts unnumbered," yet not a

wayward thought or jarring note! The work of God completed, and the prayer of the Lord at last fulfilled. "*The glory which Thou hast given Me I have given them; that they may be one: I in them and Thou in Me, that they may be perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me*" (John 17. 23).

This is Christian unity; it is seen in its perfection there, but it cannot be of a different nature now. It depends upon the acknowledged supremacy of Christ in the glory, and is maintained in the life that He has given from thence by the power of the Holy Ghost.

THERE WILL BE ONENESS OF MIND ON EARTH for Israel, when the Lord comes to them in redeeming power in His kingdom; for we read: "Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion. Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the Lord hath comforted His people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem" (Isa. 52. 8, 9). That will be a blessed oneness, and when it is accomplished all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God. But this oneness—Christian unity—is greater, for it is not earthly but heavenly. Its character and power are heavenly, and no earthly power or ecclesiastical regulations can produce or control it.

A NEW QUARTERLY MAGAZINE has been sent to us, the special

object of which is to promote this of which we write—the unity of the saints. In the first article it is stated that “Christian unity is founded not upon the birth of Christ as man, or as the Son of David, but on His death as the Saviour of the world, and on His resurrection in life-giving power.” We desire to point out to the respected editor of the magazine that the writer of the paper does not go far enough; and that Christian unity is the product of the glory. It is true that it could never have been but for those two tremendous facts of the Gospel, the death and resurrection of Christ, but unity carries us beyond the Gospel, into the “*mystery of the Gospel*” (Eph. 6. 19), and that brings us to **THE MAN IN THE GLORY OF GOD**, and the Christian united to Him. This could not have been apart from His incarnation for we could have no part in Deity; but it is not as Man upon earth that we are united to Him, for, “except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.” He must be raised from the dead, but He must also ascend to the glory, for we could not be united to Him upon earth as His words to Mary, “Touch Me not, for I am not yet ascended to My Father,” indicate.

A glorified Christ in heaven was the starting-point of the Holy Spirit in His great mission of forming the one body of Christ on earth. We who form that body are to endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit, but we shall not know it, much less be able to keep it, unless we start with

and cleave to Christ triumphant in the glory of God. There is a special reason for this.

**CHRISTIAN UNITY CENTRES IN CHRIST AND IS HEAVENLY IN CHARACTER.** It can have no practical expression except as saints are separate from the world and enter into their new and true life, which Christ is. It is perfect in heaven, because there the saints are fully and eternally sanctified; they are apart from the world, and the flesh, and sin. We long for a fuller consciousness of the unity, which now, thank God, is a secured fact in Christ, by the Holy Ghost’s power: we shall know it just in that measure that that heavenly sanctification is realized in our souls.

We turn to the 17th of John and take up the Lord’s words, “*that they all might be one*”; but we must not overlook the fact that before He reached that part of His prayer, He said, “*They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth. . . . For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.*” These are wonderful words; they tell us that the Lord has set Himself apart from the world, and from all that is of man in it, that we might be sanctified; that our hearts might be also carried away from the world where He is not, into that glory into which He has gone. Christ in glory and the Father’s word brought in power to our soul by the Holy Ghost, produce practical sanctification in our lives,

and oneness of mind follows this. Such are they who form this divinely-created oneness, and the more truly sanctified we are, the more we are consciously and practically in this divine unity.

IT WAS REALIZED IN PENTECOSTAL DAYS when "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul" (Acts 4. 32), "and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied" (9. 13). It ceased to be realized when saints forgot their high calling and sank down into carnality, self-will, and proud sectarianism. Then the apostle wrote: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you: but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1. 10). It will be realized afresh as the eyes of the saints are turned to the glory in eager expectation of the coming Lord; knowing that "when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in Him, purifieth himself even as He is pure" (1 John 3. 2, 3). This purifying, sanctifying work within cannot be divorced from the enjoyment of "one mind in the Lord."

WE HAVE HEARD the truth that the saints are not of this world ridiculed by those who ought to have known better; but it is the truth—the cross of Christ proclaims

it, that cross by which, if we enter into the truth of it, we say, "the world is crucified to me and I to the world." Are we then without place or status? No, we are not. The One who brought our guilty history to a close in the cross, bearing for us all the terrible liabilities that attached to it, has given us His place and His status. Shall we despise this unmeasured grace, or make light of the fact that we are heavenly, as He is? God forbid. Rather let us seek the Spirit's power in order to enter into it and answer to it. It is here and here alone that oneness of mind and heart according to God is found. This is the secret of it. We have a new life which is heavenly life; we are indwelt by the Spirit from heaven, who brings us into subjection to Christ, who is there as our Head, and "ev'ry knee to Jesus bending," results in oneness of mind.

LET IT NOT BE SUPPOSED that this is for advanced Christians only, that they only may know the joy of it. It comes at the very start of the Christian life; it is the initial thing, though surely all should increase in the knowledge of it. How well the writer of these notes remembers that Sunday night when, burdened with sin, he found relief at the Saviour's feet and could joyfully sing:—

"Happy day, happy day,  
When Jesus washed my sins away."

He did not want the world on Monday morning: his knee to Jesus was bending, and his heart had found an object in Him. With what result? This: with a great

longing he longed for the evening, that he might bow in prayer together with others who loved the Lord. He knows that heaven will be better than that prayer-meeting was, for to be with Christ is "far better," but he also knows that there, in oneness of mind and heart with those who loved the Lord, he found joy unspeakable and full of glory. Christ had become supreme in his life, and oneness of mind with those who loved Him was the concomitant.

It is the world and self-will that make these things difficult to understand, and that bring in the discord, division, and confusion. But we must not fight on the side of man's will and the world, to maintain the havoc they have made amongst the saints. Instead it is our privilege and responsibility to know Christ as our sanctification and to seek conformity to Him, and then to labour, "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come, in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4. 12, 13). We shall not see the unity of the church in visible manifestation on earth, but we shall see it in heaven; and being set in the very centre there, that oneness of which it will be the pattern to the universe will spread out to the utmost limits of it, until it will be true that—

"Joyful now the wide creation  
Rests in undisturbed repose,

Blest in Jesu's full salvation,  
Sorrow now nor thralldom knows.

Hark! the heavenly notes again!  
Loudly swells the song of praise;  
Through creation's vault, Amen!  
Amen! responsive joy doth raise."

For says John: "And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands: saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever" (Rev. 5. 11, 12, 13, 14).

These notes on this great subject are necessarily brief, and we confess very feeble, but we press the subject upon our readers; we desire to awaken their interest in it. It is dealt with in greater detail in the Quarterly Supplement, the first number of which is entitled, "Christ and His Assembly," and can now be obtained. And if further help is sought we commend this to their notice.

## The Message from the Lord. (1 Kings xvii. 1.)

IT was the darkest day in Israel's history when Elijah—the prophet of the living God—entered upon his public ministry. The special work of the prophet is to arouse the consciences, and comfort the hearts of God's people in a day of ruin. First to awaken the failing people of God to their responsibilities by applying the word of God to their consciences, and second, to encourage the faithful by lifting their thoughts above the ruin in which they find themselves, and comforting their hearts with the glories yet to come.

It must be manifest that such ministry is eminently suited to a day of ruin. When all is in order amongst God's people there is neither need nor scope for the prophetic gift. It has been pointed out that in the day of Solomon's glory there was no occasion for the prophet. All was in order; the king administered justice from the throne; the priests and Levites waited upon their service, and the people dwelt in peace. But when, through the failure and disobedience of God's people, all has fallen into disorder, then, in the mercy of God, the prophet is brought upon the scene. The evil of God's people must call forth His judgment, for God will be true to Himself and vindicate the glory of His name. But, as another has said, "Whatever their iniquity may be, God does not smite a people who have forsaken His ways, until He has sent them a testimony. He may chastise them previously, but will not definitely execute His judgment upon them." Hence it is the very mercy of God that raises up the prophet in a day of ruin.

Nor is it otherwise in the ways of God to-day. In the minds of many, the prophetic gift has been limited to foretelling future events, and thus it has been concluded that the gift of

prophecy has been withdrawn. It is true that the revelation of God is complete, and apart from the Word of God, none but an imposter would profess to unfold the future with a "Thus saith the Lord," but it is very far from true that the prophetic gift has ceased. It is evident from the New Testament that this gift holds a very high place in the estimation of God. In 1 Cor. 14. we read: "Follow after love and desire spiritual gifts, *but rather that ye may prophesy,*" for "he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation and comfort." What more important in this day of ruin, of weakness and of failure, among the people of God, than to arouse the consciences of believers to their low spiritual condition, to comfort their hearts by unfolding the coming glories, and to engage their affections with the coming One. He will be a true prophet who can thus speak "unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort."

Elijah in his day was a true prophet of the Lord. Never before had the condition of God's people sunk to such depths of degradation. Fifty-eight years had passed since the kingdom had been rent in twain upon the death of King Solomon. During this period seven kings had reigned, all, without exception, wicked men. Jeroboam had made Israel to sin with the golden calves. Nadab, his son, "did evil in the sight of the Lord and walked in the way of his father." Baasha was a murderer; Elah his son was a drunkard, Zimri was a traitor and murderer. Omri was a military adventurer who seized the throne and did worse than all that were before him. Ahab, his son, did worse than his father: he married the vile and idolatrous Jezebel and became the leader in apostasy. In his day all trace of the public worship of Jehovah vanished from the

land. Idolatry was universal. The golden calves were worshipped at Bethel and Dan; the house of Baal was in Samaria; groves of Baal were on every side, and prophets of Baal publicly conducted their idolatrous rites. Apparently Baal lived and Jehovah had ceased to be.

In the midst of this scene of darkness and moral degradation, there appears upon the scene, with dramatic suddenness, a solitary but striking witness to the living God. Elijah the Tishbite publicly confronts the king with a message of coming judgment: "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word." The first words of the prophet inform the king that he has to do with the living God, and moreover he is faced by a man who has no fear of him, king though he be. Elijah is called to deliver a most obnoxious message to the most powerful man in the land. Standing consciously before the living God, he is delivered from all fear when standing before the apostate king.

Long years before Jehovah had said to Israel by the mouth of Moses, "Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside and serve other gods, and worship them, and then the Lord's wrath be kindled against you, and *He shut up the heavens, that there be no rain*" (Deut. 11. 16, 17). This solemn warning was unheeded. Idolatry had been almost continuous from the time of Moses, now at length it had become universal. God had borne long, but at last the idolatry of the land provoked "the Lord God of Israel to anger" (1 Kings 16. 33), and the judgment long foretold was about to fall. There should be no "dew nor rain" but according to the word of the prophet. God will thus vindicate His word, maintain His glory, bring idolatry into contempt, and honour the man who witnesses to Him.

We may well enquire, What was the

secret of Elijah's boldness in the presence of the king—the assurance with which he foretells the coming judgment, and his confident assertion that all will take place according to his word?

First, to him Jehovah was the *living God*. On all hands the public recognition of God had entirely ceased. So far as appearances went, there was not a soul in the land that believed in the existence of Jehovah. But in this day of universal declension, Elijah stands boldly forward as one who believed, and publicly avowed, that God lived.

Moreover, he can say of Jehovah that he is One "before whom I stand." Not only he believed in the living God, but, in all that he said and did, he was conscious of being *in the presence of God*. In result he is delivered from the fear of man, he is kept in perfect calm in the midst of terrible circumstances, and he is conscious of the support of God.

Furthermore, in the New Testament we learn another truth concerning Elijah. James brings the prophet forward as an illustration of the mighty things that can be accomplished by the earnest prayer of one righteous man. *Prayer in private* was another great secret of his power in public. He could stand before the wicked king because he had knelt before the living God. And his was no mere formal prayer that avails nothing, but an earnest prayer that availeth much. A prayer that had the glory of God in view as well as the blessing of the people, and therefore, "he prayed earnestly that it might not rain." A terrible prayer to have to put up to the living God about the people of God! And yet as Elijah surveyed the condition of the people, and could see no recognition of God throughout the breadth and length of the land, he realized it was better for them to suffer the years of drought, if this would turn them to God, than to enjoy prosperity in defiance of God and pass on to a worse judgment. Zeal for

God and love for the people were behind this solemn prayer.

Moreover James reminds us that Elijah was "subject to like passions as we are." Like ourselves he was encompassed with human weaknesses and human infirmities. What a comforting lesson this fact may teach us!

We too, like him, can be men of power, if we, in spite of the evil around us, walk in the consciousness that God is the living God, if we seek more constantly to move and speak and act in His presence as standing before Him, and if we are more often found before Him in earnest Spirit-led prayer.

## NOTES FOR PREACHERS.

### ACTS 3. 4.

The apostles "fastened" their eyes on the lame man. In this they showed the spirit of their Master, who fastens His eyes on the afflicted and suffering. ART standing on the brow of Olivet would have fixed its gaze on the grandeur of Jerusalem; the Lord fixed His eyes upon the guilty inhabitants and wept over them. ART going into the temple would have fixed its gaze upon "the gate called Beautiful," but the servants of the Lord fixed their eyes upon the cripple. Science searches for the secrets of nature; art looks for its beauties; but those who know the love of Christ search for the poor, the maimed, the halt and the blind, and the sorrow-burdened and the suffering, and compel them to the Gospel feast.

### ACTS 4. 13.

If I live and walk with the world, I get the impress of the world; if I live and walk with my trials and sorrows, I bear the impress of them; if I dwell with my failures I shall be manifestly a failure; if I walk with Christ I shall bear His impress, and the world will take knowledge of me that I have been with Him.

### ONE SOUL.

If there were but one Christian on earth at this moment, and he were the means of converting one soul every year, and if every convert made did the same, thirty years would multiply the number to more than thirteen hundred millions.

### THEY TOOK KNOWLEDGE OF THEM.

They recognized that Peter and John had been with Jesus; it was this that impressed their enemies the most. Their conduct must have been consistent with their words; lip and life in perfect harmony; for Jesus said, "I am altogether what I said unto you." The servant of the Lord must be like his Lord in this, and to be like Him he must be with Him. He will do little good who has the voice of Jacob but the hands of Esau. The priest in the tabernacle had to have on his robes bells and pomegranates; the one a figure of sound doctrine and the other of a fruitful life; and a minister of Christ should have his tongue, and his heart, and his hand, agree.

### "SANCTIFIED AND MEET FOR THE MASTER'S USE."

Holiness in the servant of the Lord is at once his chief necessity and his goodliest ornament. Mere moral excellency is not enough; a consistent character there must be, but there must be the anointing with the sacred consecrating oil, or that which makes him most fragrant to God, and most useful to man, will be wanting. An unsanctified preacher of the Gospel is like that dead Amasa, who, lying in the way, stops the people of the Lord, that they cannot go on cheerfully in their spiritual warfare.

# THE MYSTERY OF THE GOSPEL. No. 1. (JAMES BOYD.)

(Eph. vi. 19.)

HAVING sought, by the help of the Divine Spirit, to refer the attention of the readers of "Scripture Truth" to the glad tidings of God, I do not feel satisfied to close the subject without some reference to that which the apostle to the Gentiles calls "The *Mystery* of the Gospel." Something would indeed be felt lacking were no hint given of such a glorious subject.

That the Gospel, as far as relates to deliverance from sin, is concerned, can be viewed as complete without mention of this wondrous mystery is evident, for it is fully set before us in the first eight chapters of Romans, and there is no hint of anything of the kind, though the Gospel, as taught in that epistle, paves the way for its unfolding as it is found in the Ephesian Epistle. And this must be evident to anyone with even a very limited acquaintance with these two epistles.

In Romans we have the utterly undone condition of both Jew and Gentile placed beyond the reach of honest criticism, the "no difference doctrine" thoroughly established, and the whole world subject to the judgment of God. Next, we have both Jew and Gentile justified on the one principle, that of faith, standing in grace, and rejoicing in hope of the glory of God. We have also both dead to sin and to the law, indwelt by one Spirit, in Christ, having the Spirit of adoption, able to call God Father, the Spirit witnessing with the spirit of both that they are children of God, and all predestinated to be conformed to the image of God's Son, to the satisfaction of that love from which there is no separation. How this bears upon the mystery will, if God permit, come to light as we proceed.

But in order to show clearly that the Gospel, even as preached by Paul, is not the *same thing* as the mystery, I will refer to a few passages of the

Word of God. The latter is said to have been "kept secret since the world began" until made manifest "by the scriptures of the prophets" (Rom. 16. 25, 26). That these are the prophets of the present dispensation Ephesians 3. makes quite clear, for there we read: "Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit." "NOW revealed" could have no reference to Old Testament prophets, who were all dead. And in verse 9 we read: "Which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ." It was the secret of the Creator, and never divulged until this present dispensation had been for some time running its course.

But the Gospel, to which Paul says he was separated, had been "promised afore by His prophets in the Holy Scriptures" (Rom. 1. 2). The Gospel, then, was not a secret hidden in the heart of the Creator, but borne witness to by the prophets in the Holy Scriptures, right from the beginning of the fall of man until the end of Malachi. These Scriptures make a decided distinction between the Gospel and the mystery—the former borne witness to during the whole probation of man, and the latter the secret of God while that probation lasted.

Another great difference between the two is this: the Gospel is the setting forth of the intervention of God on behalf of His lost creature, with a view to his recovery from sin's slavery, that he may be free to present his body a living sacrifice, wholly given up to the will of God, and by it the love of God is carried to the whole world, by those who preach the Word in the power of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. Repentance and remission of sins is preached among

all nations, and the man that believes is justified from all things. The Gospel refers to the meeting of the need of the sinner by the fathomless grace of a Saviour God, and conformity to the Son of God in glory is the climax of everything, and the goal placed before the soul (Rom. 8. 29, 30). Therefore when the apostle gets to that in Romans, there is nothing more to be added, except to show how all this can be reconciled with the promises made to the Jewish people.

But what has the body of Christ got to do with my salvation? Could I not have been saved without being brought into such a close and blessed relationship to Him who is my Saviour? Sinners in other dispensations have been, and shall be, in glory, without being members of the mystical body of Christ; and if this could be true of them, why could it not be true of us?

The question is not hard to answer. The truth of the body of Christ does not lie on the line of the mercy of God to His fallen and rebellious creature, but on the line of divine purpose. To rightly understand this mystery we must get off the line of His compassions to sinners under judgment, and get back in the thought of our minds to before the foundation of the world, where, untrammelled by the intricacies of a fallen creation we may, in the unbroken calm and holy love of a sinless atmosphere, contemplate the eternal counsels of the Father, who for His own glory and the glory of His beloved Son invented, arranged, and ordered in infinite wisdom the blessing of all His creatures. Our place in relationship with the Father and the Son was all settled before the world's foundation. And the centre of those eternal counsels was the Son of the Father's love. All the great thoughts of God centre around the Man, Christ Jesus. He is the Firstborn of all creation, Head of all principality and power, Head of the body, the Church; Firstborn among many

brethren, and Centre supreme of the whole vast universe of blessing.

It is on this line of divine counsel that we find the Assembly of the living God, the mystery, the body of Christ, and indeed the various families of the redeemed, when we contemplate them according to the rank in which they are for ever placed on the ground of redemption. I doubt not that each family of the redeemed will occupy its own peculiar place with relation to its living Head, the place given to it in eternal counsel. But this is not the same thing as the revelation of the compassions of God to ruined sinners, though before God begins with any individual sinner, He has in view the goal to which that soul shall be brought when his work has been completed. It surely is true of every individual taken up by Him in grace: "Whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified" (Rom. 8. 30). But the love of God, which is now, and ever shall be, the great joy of our hearts, has its manifestation, not in the height of the blessing to which we have been brought, but the depths into which the Son of God descended when He laid down His life for us (Rom. 5. 5-8; 1 John 4. 9, 10). The love of God has been manifested in meeting our deep need as sinners, not in bringing to pass the counsels of that love. Let us never forget this.

The administration of this mystery was committed to Paul, and only to him, though not to him only was the revelation of it made. He says: "It is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit" (Eph. 3. 5). To the other writers of the New Testament the Spirit of God revealed this mystery as well as to Paul, though none of them make the slightest reference to it in any of their writings which have been preserved by God for the enlightenment of our souls. I have no doubt the apostles were all

equally instructed in the truth of God, but to each was given his own special line of service. But it does not follow that because John sets forth eternal life in the Son of God, and subsequently in us, therefore he understood these things better than Paul or Peter. Neither would it be right to assume that because the administration of the mystery was committed to Paul, therefore it was better understood by him than by the others. Enough for us to know that he through whom the revelation has come to us Gentiles had perfect knowledge in the mystery of Christ.

The revelation of this mystery seems to have been given by the Lord subsequent to the conversion of Paul. Indeed it seems as though an indication of its existence was conveyed to him in the words that fell upon his ear when he lay prone upon the earth on the highway to Damascus. "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." I do not at all question that these words could have been rightly addressed by our Lord to Saul, apart altogether from the fact that those persecuted saints were members of His body, for who had Saul in his madness risen up against, if not the Lord of glory? He says before King Agrippa: "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth" (Acts 26. 9). But as Jesus was personally beyond his reach, and His members near at hand, his wrath fell upon them. It was Jesus, and Jesus only, against whom the storm of his insane fury was spending its puny and impotent force.

Nevertheless one cannot easily banish from the mind the impression that, seeing the close relationship that exists between the head and the body, the Lord was intimating to that ravening wolf how nearly related and how dear to His heart those suffering saints were, who were being so ruthlessly put to death, nor that those

never-to-be-forgotten words would most surely return to his soul in living power, when he would learn that those lowly men against whom he was so furious were the members of the body of the risen and glorified Christ. No wonder that he never forgave himself this awful wickedness. Though morally head and shoulders taller than anyone else, he calls himself the chief of sinners; though on his shoulders and heart lay the care of all the churches, he speaks of himself as less than the least of all saints; and though labouring more abundantly than all the others, he counts himself the least of all the apostles, one not worthy to be called an apostle, because he persecuted the Church of God (1 Tim. 1. 15; Eph. 3. 8; 1 Cor. 15. 9). To this man the stewardship of the mystery was committed.

And with this mystery, how beautifully the Gospel that he preached harmonizes! However important and infinitely precious are the teachings of Peter and John (and who but the God from whom they emanated could rightly estimate their worth), they do not lend themselves so readily to the inclusion of this mystery, for both seem to keep up a semblance of distinction between Jew and Gentile nowhere found in Paul's writings (Pet. 2. 10-12; 3 John 7), for Paul speaks of a "*new man*," in whom the distinction between Jew and Gentile has no existence, but Christ is everything and in all (Col. 3. 11).

I trust the reader will not for one instant suppose that there is the slightest want of harmony between the writings of these men of God. A careful study of the Word makes manifest the most perfect concord. But, as I have already indicated, to each one was given the happy service of setting forth a certain aspect or character of the revelation of God, and because of this we are better able to get acquainted with it, until in the end, perhaps, we contemplate it in its own divine and incomparable unity.

Colossians and Ephesians are the two epistles that more than others speak of this great mystery. In the former epistle the greatness of the Head is the subject; in the latter the wondrous privileges of the members of the body. The better we know the Head, the easier it will be for us to understand the truth of the body, for the body derives from the Head. It is the Head that gives grace and dignity to the body. It is not by getting acquainted with the body that we gain the knowledge of the Head: the reverse of this is the truth. Therefore, if we are to understand the Ephesian epistle, we must not neglect that to the Colossians.

In Colossians we have the Creator in His own creation, not speaking to it as one outside it, using angels or prophets to declare His will, but come into it Himself, taking part in it, supreme in every department of it. the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in Him, all that God is in His approach to man residing in the body of Jesus. He it is who is Head of this mystical body. In the measure in which we can enter into the greatness of such a Head, in that measure only can we appreciate the dignity of the body.

When we come to the Ephesian epistle we are at once in the contemplation of counsels that were before the world was, and which have nothing to do with this world, whether in innocence or in guilt. We are not here occupied with a remedy for ruined sinners, but with the vast scheme of divine counsel, and with the putting forth of almighty power for the fulfilment of those counsels. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ, and this in agreement with His eternal purpose, "that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise

of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved."

Here we have the height of our calling set before us. It is not our union with Christ, but our relation to His God and Father that we are first of all occupied with. And to get hold of this truth is of the utmost importance, for were this not true of us, union with Christ would be impossible. No one can be united to Him who is not of His order. We are His brethren. His Father is our Father, and His God is our God. Eve was bone of Adam's bone, and flesh of his flesh. Isaac's wife must be of his kindred (Gen. 2. 23; 24. 4). If we are to be His body we must be of His order. No foreign element can find entrance into that marvellous organism. Therefore it is *in Him* we have our relations with His God and Father. The Firstborn among many brethren, and the brethren that surround Him are "*all of one*" (Heb. 2. 11). This, our highest blessing, is the first thing the Holy Spirit occupies us with, in this epistle.

He has also taken us into His confidence, and made known to us the mystery of His will, that in the coming age He is going to gather everything in heaven and upon earth under Christ. To us the heavens seem far away, and things are apparently greatly scattered throughout the universe. But in the dispensation of the fulness of times he will unite the whole universe under one Head. He will bring together, govern, control, and direct the whole creation. He who could say: "The foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head" will have the pre-eminence in every department of the heavens and of the earth. *The dispensation of the fulness of times* is the culmination of all the ways of God with His rebellious creatures. In that day everything that was foreshadowed by men lifted by God into a position of prominence from Adam downward, and who failed, every one

of them, in the trust committed to them, will be found centred in Christ, who maintained and shall maintain all to the glory and praise of God.

In Him we have obtained an inheritance, for whatever He inherits we inherit along with Him, and with Him we are joint-heirs. And this "according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will." It is not given to us in answer to any request or desire on our part. He has acted from Himself in His infinite wisdom and eternal love. We have not been consulted about this, nor about any blessing that He has bestowed upon us. And it is well for us that He has thus acted, for had He left the deciding of our blessings to ourselves, hired servants and not sons would have been our eternal portion.

In chapter 2,\* we have the putting forth of His power usward, for the accomplishing of those purposes spoken of in chapter 1. And the condition in

which we are said to be found is quite in keeping with the character of the epistle. Death has closed up the whole scene as far as its relations toward God is concerned. We are not here viewed as in Romans active in hostility against God, but dead in trespasses and sins; life nowhere but in the living God. And however appalling it be to contemplate such a scene of moral death, it but furnishes the occasion for God to fulfil the purposes of His eternal love.

And this power of God which in chapter 2. is seen to be active toward us, is first of all witnessed in the resurrection of Christ from the dead. It is spoken of as "the exceeding greatness of His power to usward." That power has raised Christ from the dead, and set Him at God's right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name named, not only in this age, but in that to come.

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## SOME LAST WORDS OF A SERVANT OF THE LORD.

(W. T.)

"AS I may not be able to express myself distinctly by and bye, I wish now to say that I am in perfect peace, resting alone on the blood of Christ, the *precious* blood of God's Son, which cleanseth from all sin. I find this amply sufficient to enter the presence of God with; 'when I see the blood I *will* pass over.' Oh the *precious, precious* blood of Christ!

"I desire my friends and fellow-labourers to know that I find the foundations stand fast, the ground beneath my feet is firm and the prospect brighter than ever. I wish them, too, to know that I give God unfeigned thanks for the path of separation in which He has led me these last twenty-three years, and that, though it has been attended with much failure, I

have not once had a doubt that it is the right one. The nearer I draw to the close, and view things calmly in the light of Him whose presence I am about to enter, the more assured am I this is so, and that it is the path He blesses and delights in. . . . I wish my brethren to know that at a moment like the present I am perfectly at peace as to the past, and feel more strongly than ever that there can be no neutrality in questions touching the person of our blessed Lord—or communion where there is indifference to His name and power. Firm, decided action in separation is the only course. . . . Love and tenderness *with* faithfulness is to be sought after. If the Lord tarry, I have a conviction that fresh and deep blessing is at hand for His people."

# ARE YOU A SOUL-WINNER?

(H. P. BARKER.)

WHEN Saul, who lived with his father in a quiet country place in the land of the Benjamites, started forth one day in quest of some straying asses, he little thought what a wonderful *reception* and still more wonderful *revelation* awaited him.

On reaching Ramah, he was received in a royal manner by Samuel, who gave him the most honoured place among thirty specially invited guests. And the revelation was made to him that he, a plain country youth, was destined to wear the crown and reign over the land of Israel.

To us also a marvellous reception has been accorded. God Himself has received us (Rom. 14. 3). Christ has received us (Rom. 15. 7). Well we remember the warmth of that reception, when the Father ran to welcome us in all our wretchedness, printed the kiss of His eternal forgiveness on our brow, and brought us to His house of feasting and song.

And to us an amazing revelation has been given. We have been made to know that long before we received being, *God wanted us*, and that His gracious determination was not only to forgive us, but to make us His own sons, co-heirs with His beloved Son of His great and heavenly inheritance. Truly an astonishing disclosure of divine purpose and love!

Now in the story of Saul and Samuel, the thing that followed the unexpected reception was the season of house-top COMMUNION. Wonderful things were to take place, but this preceded them all. Read the narrative in 1 Sam. 9, and refer to verse 25.

Communion with God our Father, and with the Lord Jesus Christ, is what He has had in view in receiving us so graciously, and revealing Himself in eternal love to our souls. If we miss this, we miss the very cream of Christianity and become mere skim-milk Christians.

Now communion is more than prayer; more than thanksgiving. It is intercourse with God as to His own great and wonderful things. Yet it is to be feared that many, in their relations with God, never get much beyond prayer and thanksgiving.

Let me ask every parent who reads these lines: What would you think if your dearly-loved children never had anything to say to you save when they wanted something and came to ask you for it, and then, having received it, thanked you? Would it not cut you to the heart that your children did not care to talk with you further than this? And what must our God and Father think of His beloved children whose approach to Him is for prayer and thanksgiving only, and who seem to have no desire for seasons of sweet and secret communion with Himself?

We have dwelt thus on the subject of communion with God, because it lies at the root of all real and effectual service. Service, to be acceptable to the Lord, must be the outcome of communion with Himself behind the scenes. But if there can be no true service without communion, there can be no true communion unless one is ready to obey and serve our blessed Master as He shall Himself direct.

That He *does* thus direct us to serve, by winning others to faith in Him, there can be no manner of doubt. We find a good illustration of this in the case of the young Egyptian, so kindly received and rescued by David. The story is given in 1 Sam. xxx.

Perishing of hunger and thirst, the young man is brought to David, and supplied not only with bread and water, but with a cake of figs and two clusters of raisins. After receiving this unexpected kindness, he frankly confesses how, in the service of his cruel Amalekite master, he had wronged David by helping to burn his city with fire. But the sin was already

forgiven, and David asks him : " Canst thou bring me down to this company ? "

It is as if he said : " Until three days ago you were one of that evil band of marauders. You know their ways and their whereabouts. You have tasted of my goodness ; will you now be *my* servant ? Will you be my instrument for winning a victory over the enemy ? "

And does not our blessed Master speak to us, even to us, after the same manner ? Does He not put the lips of His love down against the door of our hearts and say :—

" Not long ago you were in the ranks of My enemies. Now you belong to Me. I have redeemed you, and you have drunk of My grace deep draughts. Will you be My servant ? Will you give yourself to Me that I may use you as I please ? Will you place yourself without reserve in My hands that by you I may win victories ? "

What shall be our response ? Do we not find our souls stirred with earnest desire to be instruments of victory for our Lord ? Oh, the luxury and the joy of being the means of " bringing Him down " even if only to *one* of the great company " spread abroad upon all the earth, eating and drinking, and dancing," careless of their souls and thoughtless as to their future ? We see them on every hand, " multitudes, multitudes, in the valley of decision." Does not the sight make us echo the burning desire of the apostle : " If by any means I . . . might save some of them " ? (Rom. 11. 14). Can we not say, as he did, that it is one of the great God-given ambitions of our lives, " that I might by all means save some " ? (1 Cor. 9. 22). Does not the thought of the perishing multitudes send us again and again to our knees in prayer.

With some, the desire for the salvation of others becomes a positive agony. Their vision of what " the terror of the Lord " means for the

Christ-rejector makes them mighty in persuading men. Theirs are the long night-watches, when they wrestle in prayer with God, and travail in birth for souls.

But such are not to be met every day. Their number is few. Everywhere, alas, one meets with men and women who, themselves the subjects of redeeming love, have little thought for the salvation of others. *They are not soul-winners.* It is an awful thing, but one must say it, that there are Christians. *Christians*, CHRISTIANS who have never sought to bring a sinner to the Saviour, they have never sought to be used of Him to the conversion of a single man, woman, or child.

And the terrible thing is that *they are not concerned about it.* They do not fling themselves upon their faces and cry : " Give me children or I die." They are well content to go on day after day, knowing that they themselves are saved yet with little or no zeal for the salvation of others.

What will be their anguish and regret when their home-call comes and they have to go—*empty-handed* ! One such has left on record how he felt at such a moment :—

" Must I go, and empty-handed ?  
Thus my dear Redeemer meet ?  
Not one day of service give Him ?  
Lay no trophy at His feet ?  
" Must I go, and empty-handed ?  
Must I meet my Saviour so ?  
Not one soul with which to greet Him ?  
Must I empty-handed go ? "

But even those who *are* concerned about the souls of others, and long to see them tasting of the grace of God, are sometimes disappointed in their desires. They labour, but their toil seems fruitless. They cast their nets into the sea, and fish away, and lo ! they catch nothing. Why is this ?

Perhaps it is because they have yet to learn a lesson of the very highest importance, namely, that *Christ* is better than success in service. Hannah was one who prayed for a child. She mourned, and was in bitterness of

soul because she had none. Elkanah, her husband, noticed her grief, and asked as to its cause. "Why is thy heart grieved?" he says. "AM NOT I BETTER TO THEE THAN TEN SONS?" (1 Sam. 1. 8).

And so it is with us. *Christ* is better to us than answered prayers, better than armfuls of golden grain from the wide harvest-fields, better than ten, a hundred, a thousand, a million sons in the faith. He will withhold anything from us, however good or desirable, that would take His place in our hearts.

Let us say, as we look up into His blessed face: "Yea, Lord, it is even so. THOU art better to us than a host

of converts. But now, for Thy glory's sake, and for the satisfaction of Thine own heart, and not for my credit, make me Thy servant. Help me to toil for Thee. Make me a fisher of men, and not only a fisher, but *one who catches them.*"

The Lord can do this for us. He looks, however, that we should have the desire, and betake ourselves to Him in earnest prayer. Then He will train us, help us, and work through us. On our part let there be full consecration to Him, making His service our *first* consideration, and giving our own affairs a very secondary place.

What is there that the Lord cannot do, with a self-emptied, Spirit-filled vessel?

## THE PILGRIM PSALM.

					Verse
Perfect Security	-	The Lord is my Shepherd	-	-	1
Perfect Satisfaction	-	I shall not want	-	-	1
Perfect Rest	-	He maketh me to lie down	-	-	2
Perfect Quietness	-	He leadeth me beside the <i>still</i> waters	-	-	2
Perfect Health	-	He restoreth my soul	-	-	3
Perfect Guidance	-	He leadeth me	-	-	3
Perfect Confidence	-	I will fear no evil	-	-	4
Perfect Company	-	Thou art with me	-	-	4
Perfect Comfort	-	Thy rod and Thy staff	-	-	4
Perfect Provision	-	Thou preparest a table	-	-	5
Perfect Consecration	-	Thou anointest my head with oil	-	-	5
Perfect Joy	-	My cup runneth over	-	-	5
Perfect Care	-	Goodness and mercy shall follow me	-	-	6
Perfect Home	-	I will dwell . . . for ever	-	-	6

It is the love that is in God, not any loveliness in the sinner, that accounts for the extravagant liberality of his reception in Christ.

The way I come to see the immensity of my sin, is by learning the immensity of the grace that has met it.

The most important victory has often come when we have been most afraid of being beaten; the brightest songs when an evil day has forced us to lean upon God.

The time will come when all our sorrows will be over, *but our FRIEND will remain.* He is our tried and true Friend. He has entered into the deepest woes of our hearts, and will make us the sharers of His joy for ever.

## CROWNS.

(HENRY J. VINE.)

PERFECT is the grace and divine is the skill with which the Holy Spirit seeks to quicken the footsteps of those who are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. With heavenly wisdom He speaks of the crowns that await them, and cheers them onward and upward to where their Lord is already glorified, where crowns that never fade are reserved. He shows them to faith beforehand. The unnamed servant, honoured by Abraham with the mission of bringing Rebekah to his son Isaac, "brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment" for the damsel (Gen. 24.). He was blessed with success through the goodness of God, presenting a striking type of the present errand of the One who is here to lead us homeward to the Son of the Father's love. Our Lord Jesus Christ said, "When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself . . . He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine and shall show it unto you" (John 16. 13, 14).

The steps of the Apostle Paul hastened as he looked forward to the glory where the Son of God, who had loved him and given Himself for him, had gone; and he pressed forward as he saw the day when He should publicly reign and rule over all. Thoughts of distinctions in the present age detained him not. The best honours it could offer were not of abiding value in his eyes. Its crown was a fading one to him. Yea, it was "corruptible," he said, when contrasting the world's prize with the believer's. Thus he wrote: "Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now *they* do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but *we* an incorruptible." The reward of this age fades and perishes; like the leafy crown of the honoured Grecian athlete, it is corruptible; but, that, which those who are speeding on to where

Christ is shall receive shines in its untarnished brilliance and beauty for ever—it is incorruptible.

Four times in the Gospels mention is made of another crown. It was the crown worn by our Lord Jesus Christ—THE CROWN OF THORNS. How intensely significant! In a book which speaks so often of crowns this is the only one mentioned in the four Gospels. Does it not remind us, there could be no glory for us apart from the sufferings of Christ? "No cross, no crown" is true in a deeper sense than is often meant. He endured the cross. He bore our sins and the judgment which we deserved when hanging on the tree. He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. He glorified God about the whole question of sin and sins there; and now, on the throne at God's right hand, He is worthily crowned with glory and honour. Faith sees that crown of splendour upon His brow. In Him we have redemption through His blood; and there is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus; nothing can separate them from the love of God which is in Him; and the place which is His in the favour and glory of God is theirs also. The right understanding of this will not lead to laxity, or to being "at ease in Zion"; but rather to spiritual energy, as the apostle said, "We are always confident . . . wherefore we labour" (2 Cor. 5. 6, 9). In every way, as he hastens onward, the true soul seeks to be agreeable to the One who suffered for him, who wore the crown of thorns, but who now wears the crown of glory and honour.

There are crowns which are hereditary, and there are crowns that have been won. Our Lord Jesus Christ is rightly entitled to both. The state crown of Russia shows, in the place of the most valuable jewel which sparkled brightest amidst its numerous clusters, a small plate of gold inscribed with the name "*Kutusoff*." Kutusoff had served

his country so well, the Czar sent him the gem from the state crown, and elevated him to be prince of Smolensk ; as much as to say, He is the most brilliant jewel of the nation and has brought honour to its crown. Christ brings to the hereditary crowns (not only David's, but that which is His as "the King eternal") fresh glory through the work of redemption. For He who is God, becoming man—the Son of man, glorified God ; and though God has glorified Him in Himself, it shall ever be remembered amidst the everlasting rejoicings that God was glorified in Him, in the Son of man. What an answer of divine righteousness to the mockings of men, when He wore the crown of thorns ! In a certain sense that was rightly fallen man's hereditary crown, for thorns grew up as a result of man's sin, they were part of the curse, but not His to whom they gave it, for He was sinless. "Thou art then a King," said Pilate. Jesus replied, "Thou sayest that I am a King. I have been born for this, and for this I have come into the world, that I might bear witness to the truth. Every one that is of the truth hears My voice" (John 18. 37). And Pilate went out again to the Jews, saying to them, Lo, I bring Him out to you, that ye may know that I find in Him no fault whatever. Jesus therefore went forth without, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, and Pilate said, Behold the Man ! We have a law, said the Jews, and according to it He ought to die, because He made Himself Son of God. This raised a much deeper question. Pilate had felt himself in the presence of someone who was far above any others he had to do with. He had faced the question of His Kingship, and apparently admitted it ; but was He indeed Son of God ? Whence art Thou ? Pilate asked. From the moment he received the answer he sought to release Him ! He seemed to *know* that the crown of David was rightly His, but "he was the more afraid" when He heard of

His claim to divine glory. Nevertheless, he fell beneath the popular clamour for His crucifixion, when the chief priests said, We have no King but Cæsar ! Many were "astonished" at Jesus then in His humiliation, as Isaiah foretold (52. 14) ; but looking on to His coming again in glory and power, he added, "So shall He astonish many nations ; the kings shall shut their mouths at Him." Not earth's crown of thorns shall pierce His holy brow then, but the brightest diadems in the universe shall be honoured to shine there. Every eye shall see Him, the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the Ending. What a sight !

Nor will He be alone in His glory. Those who are spoken of as His co-heirs will be with Him. They were once lost and guilty sinners ; heirs of wrath by nature, even as others ; but they were born again, converted to God ; and as His children received the Spirit ; "and if children, then heirs ; heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ," whose love they have known. In this way, they also wear an hereditary crown. It is called "THE CROWN OF LIFE." James speaks of it as that which is promised to *all* that love Him (1. 12). All who are born of God do this, therefore it is hereditary, not through our first birth, but the second. In Rev. 2. 10 (during the days of martyrdom for Christ) the First and the Last, who Himself became dead and lived, spoke of that crown to encourage those who suffered ; saying, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give to thee the crown of life." He gives it to them Himself.

At the present time we may hear little of such extreme suffering for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, yet we are urged on to diligently care for His interests, for we are told in 1 Peter 5. 4, "THE CROWN OF GLORY" awaits those who do so. Shepherding the flock of God with ready and willing service, not in a lordly way as is so popular in Christendom, but as examples to our brethren in Christ ; then, Peter says,

“When the chief Shepherd is manifested ye shall receive the unfading crown of glory.” We have spoken of that time of manifestation, of His appearing when every eye shall see Him, and we are told also that all those who love His appearing shall receive “THE CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.” It is the Apostle Paul who mentions this crown, even as he named the first we spoke of, the incorruptible crown. James and John speak of the crown of life. Peter wrote of the third—the crown of glory. There are seven in all pertaining to the saints of God as we shall see. Paul, at the close of his course of service for Christ, looked forward with happy confidence to receiving from “the Lord, the righteous Judge,” the crown of righteousness. His time to be released from this world had come. The good fight he had fought successfully till the end! The race upon which he so earnestly entered he had run to the close, and the faith which meant so much to him he had kept to the finish! Now he looks away to that day when he shall receive from His well-loved Lord the crown which shall be rendered, he tells Timothy, “Not only to me, but also to all who love His appearing” (2 Tim. 4. 8).

The fifth crown is mentioned by John in Rev. 3. 11. The sixth and seventh by Paul in Phil. 4. 1, and 1 Thes. 2. 19. It is not easy to describe the fifth; and yet, we see its importance in the words: “I come quickly”—“hold fast”—“that no man take thy crown.” These words are addressed to those who bear the marks of Philadelphia; not to the overcomers. They are specially spoken to in the next verse. Therefore, with this qualification, we will abide by the word of the Spirit, who names it thus, “THY CROWN.” Is it yours? Is it mine? It is if we have the characteristics described in the earlier verses. The fact is, there is need of a great awakening. A man is not likely to hold this precious crown if he

sleeps. The Lord says, Hold fast! How can I do this if I am asleep? He says also, I come quickly! Is our path ordered in view of that moment? Is our service for the Lord ordered according to the revealed will of God? or is it governed by the mind of man? We are told, a man is “not crowned unless he strive lawfully” (2 Tim. 2. 5). God is not behind man. He has His own order for His work, and this He approves in those who conform to it. May we all have grace to see to our present ways in view of the soon coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

There is something exceedingly beautiful in the crown spoken of in Phil. 4. 1: “Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.” What wealth of love and joy, and hope sparkle in jasper, sapphire and emerald splendour here. These precious saints at Philippi, where he first preached the glad tidings in Europe, Paul speaks of as his joy and crown. We may call it THE APOSTLE’S CROWN. Not as excluding others entirely, for surely there are many who have been used in blessing to others, for whom they have in their measure the same Spirit-begotten desires. Such are their crown also. The seventh is very akin to this. It is called THE “CROWN OF REJOICING” (1 Thes. 2. 19). The apostle looks forward again to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; and to those Thessalonians, who had been converted through his preaching, being then before Him in His glory. They were His glory and joy now, and His crown then, in which He could rejoice or boast, for that is the sense of it. We may well ask ourselves, Can we look forward to the coming of Christ with similar gladness, in regard to any whose conversion we have been used to, being before Him in that day? If so, thanks be to God; and may their number be speedily increased for the glory of Him who redeemed us by His blood.

In all the Scriptures we have spoken of the ordinary word for crown is used,—it is *stephanos*. There is, however, another word—*Diadema*—used three times only by the Spirit (Rev. 12. 3; 13. 1; 19. 12). It was originally confined to designate true royalty and kingship; whereas, the other word often had a wider use. It is a very serious thought, that great dignity, whom even the archangel did not dare to bring a railing judgment against, in regard to a certain dispute, is spoken of in the first of these Scriptures as having seven diadems. When cast out of the heaven, he gives his authority, his throne and his power to the beast, the world's imperial head at that time, after the assembly is glorified with Christ. This power is said to have ten diadems. Both of them—Satan and the Gentile head—had originally genuine authority; but so far have they fallen, at the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, the one will be cast into the abyss (Rev. 20. 2), and the other into the lake of fire, along with the false prophet who collaborated with him.

As far as they are concerned, their diadems will be lost for ever, and the One whom they opposed and blasphemed shines forth in His longed-for glory—longed for by multitudes of the redeemed—and upon His head are seen "many diadems." No number is given. The diadems are many. This is the last mention of crowns or diadems in the Bible. They rest eternally upon the brow of Him who alone is worthy to wear them for the eternal glory of God. The heart of the saint says, Amen; and he delights to sing:—

*"Jesus, Thou alone art worthy."*

This is true, but we must remember that He desires for us an abundant entrance into His glory. He would have us diligent in regard to the crowns we have spoken of. Might that not make us selfish? asks someone. How can it be selfish to seek to please Him? Moreover, we are told that the saints around the throne of glory not only wear upon their heads "golden crowns" (Rev. 4. 4), but also that they worship Him and cast their crowns before the throne (10). And then, how they will rejoice that they have them to cast at His feet. Moreover, they have harps also (5. 8), to make the music of redemption ring out the worthiness of the One who shed His precious blood, as they sing a new song, saying, Thou art worthy! Thou hast redeemed to God by Thy blood! and made them kings and priests to our God; and they shall reign over the earth.

Until that time our path is onward and upward to where He is gone before; and we do well to remember that the crowns of this age are "corruptible," and that ours are "incorruptible." Even the wearers of imperial diadems apart from Christ will lose them. The unfading and abiding belong to Christ and those who are His. May we be wholehearted when we serve Him and sing praise to the One who loved us and gave Himself for us; to Him who wore the crown of thorns, but now is crowned with glory and honour at God's right hand; looking forward to the glad day which is nearer now than ever it was, when—

*Himself our hopes shall crown.*

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He that maintains any error from the Bible, bears false witness against God. He that abandons the truth of God, renounces the God of truth.

Living to God inwardly is the only possible means of living to Him outwardly. All outward activity not moved by this tends to make us do without Christ, and brings in self. I dread great activity without great communion.

A real workman, "a man of God," is a great treasure, the greatest treasure in the world.

## POWER FROM ON HIGH.

(T. OLIVER.)

THAT there is much room for improvement in Christian work is freely conceded by friend and foe alike. With this end in view, new methods and organizations are being devised to secure greater efficiency in the progress of what purports to be God's work on earth. Thus much effort is expended on new buildings, introduction of games, free meals, and anything calculated to attract people. But while churchmen are looking for better methods, God is looking for better men.

The Holy Ghost does not anoint methods but men, and these men are invariably men of prayer. In Acts 4., when the apostles had *prayed* they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and spake the word of God with boldness and liberty. If a preacher is not being used in the conversion of souls, then, or in accomplishing some work of God in his hearers, he is marring the message from God. He may rest assured that there is a plug in the golden pipe which is hindering the flow of the oil.

The early Christians were "live" men, and they moulded generations for God. Sardis, with all its orthodoxy, had a name to live, and yet was dead, the Spirit's scathing stricture thereon. "Dead" preachers preach "dead" sermons which kill. The preacher may have a rare grasp of divine principles, be scholarly and critical, eloquent and grammatical. On the other hand, he may be ignorant, crude in thought, insipid in expression, and yet both alike may only be preachers of the letter.

Letter preaching may be ornamental with seeming prayer as well as with sensation and genius, but costly mountings and beautiful flowers on the coffin do not improve the corpse. The preacher may busy himself about the style and impression of his sermon and yet have little desire to have his lips touched with the live coal from the

altar. His ministry may attach people to form and ceremony, but will never induce perishing souls to turn to God.

Theological schools train men to be proficient in the profession of prayer. Yet there is nothing chills the marrow of preaching like this practice. Preachers need to be in earnest. Highly-finished sentences may please an audience, but it is condition of soul, not composition of sentences, which counts with God.

Two hundred years ago David Brainerd, in the woods of America, literally poured out his soul to God for the perishing Indians around him. There was a man eminently fitted to fill the most cultured position in the theological world, yet he elected to spend his brief life in the wilds, struggling with a mortal disease, reaching the savages only through a bungling interpreter. But he ministered Christ; his soul was on fire, he was endowed with power from on high. Can we express wonder that there was a great turning to God from idols amongst the pagan Indians? A century later, the saintly McCheyne lived a similar brief space under different circumstances, but in the same cause. Both men died at the age of twenty-nine years.

The vital principle in the atmosphere is oxygen. Although oxygen is the supporter of life, if a man should breathe it undiluted for a little time he would become fevered and die. Brainerd and McCheyne took this business of soul-winning so seriously, that they lived in an atmosphere of spiritual oxygen, and it cannot be an object of wonder that their candles of life burned out so rapidly. But they realized that the world is passing, men are perishing, God is willing to save the lost. Brainerd spent whole days praying for the ingathering of souls in such agony that he was bathed in sweat.

Volumes have been written on the

structure of sermons so as to occupy minds of preachers with the scaffolding rather than with the building; thus rhetoric has replaced revelation, and brilliancy appears instead of grace.

Someone has said that a prayerless ministry is the "undertaker" for the truth and the church. A costly coffin and beautiful flowers may impress the eye but do not alter the fact that a funeral is in progress. Luther said: "If I fail to spend two hours in prayer each morning, the devil gets the victory." John Wesley spent two hours daily in prayer. It is said that Fletcher stained the walls of his room with the breath of prayer. Samuel Rutherford met God at three every morning in prayer. When McCheyne awoke through the night he took that as a signal to rise and pray. Sir Henry Havelock, throughout his strenuous life as a general, spent two hours with God before sunrise daily.

Dr. Judson said: "Arrange your affairs so as to devote three hours a day in communion with God." These men impressed thousands for Christ.

On the other hand, we must guard against prayer becoming the mere compliance with habit which results in a dull mechanical performance. We must remember that it was the golden age of Phariseeism which crucified Christ. There never were more apparent praying, lavish sacrifices, and lip service amongst the Jews than at that moment.

We may make preaching our business and have no real heart for the work. It is well to remember that although "Jesus wept" is the smallest verse in the Bible, in another sense it is the largest. He who goes forth weeping (not preaching eloquent sermons), bearing precious seed, shall come again rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.

## WHY SHOULD WE PRAY?

(J. WILSON SMITH)

[I]t is exceedingly interesting to notice in the four encouragements to prayer which the Lord stated in John 14., 15., and 16., that each presents a different thought to the other.

The encouragement is very great in them all.

First in John 14. 13, 14, He says: "And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in My name I will do it." Let us lay hold of the fact that "whatsoever" covers the whole range of our petitions, great or small, qualified only by the condition of His name.

That being fulfilled, He pledged Himself, in all the power of His present place in heaven, to accomplish it, and in order, He adds, "that the Father may be glorified in the Son."

He will do it for that end. The glory of the Father is bound up in the response by the Son to the poor feeble cry of His people. It is enhanced (wondrous to say) by the gracious way in which our "whatsoever" is acknowledged by the Son. What immense encouragement for prayer. "I will do it," He says, not for any object inferior to the glory of the Father. What a motive. Can we not urge such a plea in seeking from the Lord the doing of whatsoever we ask? No plea could be more effective. It means not the glory or relief of the suppliant, nor even the glory of the Lord Himself, but that of the Father.

Then, second, in chap. 15. 7, He says: "If ye abide in Me and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you." How large? In what respect, if any, does "what ye will" differ from

"whatsoever"? Only in that it expresses the will, the desire, the energy of heart and soul. In such a cry there is no formality, nothing stereotyped nor conventional. It is the triumphant heart-sob of the Syro-phenician mother, or the intelligent prayer of an Epaphras. "Ye shall ask what ye will." The will of the suppliant coincides and harmonizes with that of the Lord. He abides in the vine. The words of Christ abide in him. There is therefore unison of desire and of will. The purpose is one. Therefore "ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you." The answer is freely given on the part both of the Father and the Son. How great the result of thus abiding in the vine—thus walking with Christ.

Again, in verse 16 of the same chapter: "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My name, He may give it you."

"Go and bring forth fruit"—the great apostolic mission primarily, but, surely, beyond that. Service, however, is in question, and the fruit-bearing that glorifies the Father; and so, in this line of thought, our "whatsoever" of prayer is addressed to the Father, but necessarily in the name of the Son, for both Father and Son are engaged in the glorious testimony of the Gospel and in the edification of the saints.

"Whatsoever" covers this mission in all its precious details. It is the

one chief work of heaven to-day. And so the Apostles declared in Acts 6.: "We will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word."

May such an example encourage the oft-discouraged hearts of Christ's beloved servants, and also the fact that it is the Father, solicited by them in the name of the Son, Who is pleased to give the answer.

Finally, in chap. 16. 23, He added "Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father, in My name, he will give it you"—the same words as previously, but no mere repetition. Why? "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name: ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."

Here we have the wealth and prevailing power of the name of the Son.

Why the name? Because the Person is absent. That is always implied when you go in the name of any one; but, if you do so, you represent that one, be he never so great and yourself never so insignificant. The name is the title.

Oh! in our frequent use of the name of the Lord do we realize what it means to the Father? Is it a mere formula or the habitual rounding-off of a petition?

Did we only enter into its deep meaning, would not our prayers be more worthy, more expectant of an answer, and become an exercise of surpassing interest.

Our "joy would be full."

## THE POWER OF LOVE.

Sweeping away snow is long work; but if the sun shines out it is gone. The earth is covered a foot deep in a night, and millions of men could not remove it, but the sun can in a day. So when coldness and sadness settle down upon a soul, or upon a company, it is the warmth of God's love that is needed. "Keep yourselves in the love of God" is a specially needed exhortation in the present winter time of general departure from God.

When the heart is made full with the rich blessings of Christ, it will not turn back to gnaw upon itself.

## EDITORIAL NOTES.

### “HINDER ME NOT.”

IT will not be necessary to explain to the readers of “Scripture Truth” that the 24th chapter of Genesis is one of the most striking and beautiful typical chapters in the Old Testament. They know that Isaac—the beloved son of his father, who had in chapter 22. passed through death in figure—foreshadowed Christ, the risen heavenly Man; that Abraham’s purpose to secure a suitable wife for his son told out the Father’s purpose that Christ also should have a wife, made entirely suitable to Himself; that the nameless servant who journeyed afar in order to carry out his master’s will and bring Rebecca to his master’s son, set forth the mission of the Holy Ghost, who is now in the world, *gathering out of it* the bride of the Lamb. All this our readers know well; they and we have often gone over it; we would that the blessedness of the truth was as powerfully in our souls as it is plainly before our minds.

Everything in the chapter is beautiful, and Isaac is the centre and object of it all. Abraham loved him and gave him all that he had (verse 36); so also it is written, “*The Father loveth the Son and hath given all things into His hands*” (John 3. 35). The nameless servant who went forth to do Abraham’s will sought nothing for himself, nor spoke of himself; all he did was for Isaac; and it is said, “*Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come . . . He shall not speak of Himself . . . He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are Mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you*” (John 16. 13-15).

Rebecca, though she had not seen Isaac, was attracted to him, and went forth to be united to him, solely on the testimony that the servant carried from Isaac to her; and of the Christian it is stated: “*Jesus Christ: whom*

*having not seen ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory*” (1 Peter 1. 8).

Abraham’s purpose, the servant’s labour, and Rebecca’s love, were all for Isaac. It is a great day in the spiritual history of any Christian, when he wakes up to the fact that all the Father’s thoughts and purposes have Christ as their one and worthy object; and that the chief labour of the Holy Spirit who has come from the Father is to unfold the glories of Christ to him so that his heart becomes entranced with Him. The result is that nothing will satisfy the love thus awakened but union with the beloved, all-absorbing object of the heart, and willing subjection to Him. In this way are we drawn in our affections away from the world and its vanities to Christ where He is.

THE SERVANT’S MISSION WAS TO FIND A WIFE FOR HIS MASTER’S SON, and Abraham made him swear a solemn oath that he would not take Isaac back to the land out of which he had come, but, that *he would bring the wife out of the place where she was to Isaac where he was*. Nothing could be of greater importance than this, and we shall fail utterly to understand the truth as to Christ and His church, and the present work of the Holy Ghost on earth if we refuse this. Christ is the risen Man in heaven; and the Church, which is the bride, for whom the Holy Ghost has come into the world, must be conducted to Him where He is. Ignorance of this great truth has led many earnest Christians into foolish attempts to connect the name of Christ with great movements which have nothing beyond this present evil world in view, and others to connect Him with the circumstances of this life merely, as though the end of all

was that they should live lives free from burdens here.

DEAL KINDLY AND TRULY WITH MY MASTER, pleaded the servant. It is the appeal of the Holy Spirit to-day. No Christian who ignores the exclusive claims of Christ, deals kindly and truly with Him or with the Father. To deal kindly and truly in this matter is to follow the One who gave Himself for us to the place where He has gone, and we shall not follow Him unless He has become an object, brighter and better than the things that are here. The Christian who flirts with the world, forgets that the church is espoused to one husband, to be presented as a chaste virgin to Christ (2 Cor. 11. 2).

But it is not the world only that bids for the hearts that should be wholly Christ's; natural relationships intervene and would retain the heart and retard the feet from going after Christ. So Rebecca's mother and brother would have detained her from going to Isaac. There was no haste, they pleaded; let her abide with us a few days, at least ten. *Hinder me not* was the sharp response of the successful servant.

HINDER ME NOT. It seems to us that the Spirit's voice to us sounds out in these words; let us open our ears and hearts to them. If we grieve the Spirit we hinder Him, for He cannot take of the things of Christ and show them to us if we are indifferent and inattentive. His work is to bring us into unison with Himself so that with Him we may long for the marriage day; but if we love the world, and the things of the world He is hindered in His

labour, and that day is not hastened. There are two great reasons why the Spirit should not be hindered. One is, that this sin-sodden, Christ-hating world is no fit place for Him to abide in. We know that He does not dwell in the world apart from the saints; they are His temple, but they are in the world. The Holy Ghost belongs to heaven, He has come down from thence to serve the Lord, but it is certain that He does not desire to linger any longer here than is necessary for the fulfilment of His mission. May we yield ourselves up to His gracious work and not hinder Him as we consider this. Truly it is a serious consideration that we may be hinderers of the Holy Spirit in the completion of *His work in this world*.

But there is another reason, the satisfaction and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Spirit longs for the day of gladness, when the church shall be presented to Christ, a glorious church; when He shall find in her a full recompense for all His travail and woe. That will be the day of days in heaven, described by John in Revelation 19. 6, 7, 8: "*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. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.*" Shall we hinder the Spirit in preparing the bride for this day? God forbid. May we all yield ourselves unreservedly to the work of the Holy Ghost, and say with Rebecca, "I WILL GO" WITH THIS MAN.

Self-confidence is ruin. "Be not wise in thine own eyes." They do not see far who only see self. In occupation with Christ self is out of sight.

Not a single thing in which we shall serve Christ shall be forgotten; all shall come out that is real, and what is real is Christ in us, and this only.

## GRACE.

(EDWARD CROSS.)

Romans 3. 24.

THE Gospel of John opens with the announcement that "grace and truth came by Jesus Christ," and this great fact runs through the whole of the Gospel. It is a wonderful thing—grace. It begins all for us and will consummate all for us, and it will sustain us and maintain us all the way through.

"Grace, 'tis a charming sound,  
Harmonious to the ear;  
Heaven with the echo shall resound,  
And all the earth shall hear."

Grace! oh, the depths of it! oh, the heights of it! oh, the length and breadth of it! who can speak of it? It surpasses everything. We contemplate its greatness, its immensity; there it is! it is all grace! It was grace that taught our feet to tread the heavenly road, and grace it is that sustains us on it, and will right on to the end.

That is why I turn to this verse, Romans 3. 24. We have the gospel starting here when every mouth is stopped and all the world is brought in guilty before God; then grace comes out—the grace of God. "Justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Grace settles everything; not a spot left; not a stain, not a charge: "Justified freely by His grace." That word "freely" is a remarkable word. It means, for nothing at all—gratuitously—for nothing at all. It is the same word as is used John 15. 25, "They hated Me *without a cause*," freely. There was no cause for the hatred of man to Christ, and it is as though God said here, "There is no cause for My love to you." It is pure grace—we are justified *freely* by His grace! If you refer to Romans 5. 2 you will see the same grace again. We stand in it now. It first took us up and now we stand there, having free access into it by faith. It is like the poor man in Luke 10.: the Samaritan found him by the roadside

wounded, bruised, half dead. He pitied him and he undertook for him, and having bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, he set him on his own beast, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And there we are, having free access by faith into the grace of God in Christ; and there is our standing-place while we are waiting, until by-and-by we shall see His glory. If through sin we have lost much, we have by grace gained more—our present place and our future portion in the glory of God. But it is all grace.

I shall now turn to another scripture in Ephesians 1. 6. I would just refer to verses 4 and 5 as pickets on the road on which to hang that word "grace." Well, now that is the top of all, "*Ephesians* 1. 6." You cannot get beyond that. Not through the endless ages of eternity (compare chap. 2. 7); not in all the highest, brightest place in heaven; not in the innermost circle of divine blessing and favour; not for ever and for ever. But God can do this. It is to the glory of His grace to do it. "To the praise of the glory of His grace wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved."

The word "glory" I could not define. I never heard a definition I considered a full one. It is, I think, an indefinable word. What is glory? It is the top of everything: the tip-top. When you get to the summit of it, that is glory. When grace is capped, it is "the glory of the grace of God." And what is that? That we are "accepted in the Beloved." "He has predestinated us unto the adoption of children unto Himself by Jesus Christ." We have lost our standing in the first man through sin, and, thank God! the condemnation attached thereto; and we have found our place in the Second Man with the blessedness belonging thereto, and all "to the glory of His grace."

In verse 7 we have *the riches of His grace* when He speaks of the forgiveness of sins, and then we can well understand how in verse 12 He can bring us before Him to the praise of His glory—the glory of God. We shall be there to the praise of His glory. Surely we may say, "Grace, 'tis a charming sound."

"Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Truth is beautiful, blessed, we could not do without it; but I do not remember such an expression as "the glory of the *truth*," however precious and important the truth is. But it seems to me the Spirit delights to dwell in a special manner on "the glory of His *grace*." Grace is a wonderful thing, we can never come to the end of it. Love is what God is, His own essential, divine Being. Light is the character of God, but love is essentially His nature. God is light and God is love.

I shall now turn to 2 Timothy 2. 1. Here we are in different circumstances. The present times are described here and they are terribly trying times. One of the leading characteristic words of 2 Timothy is, I think, "suffering" and "suffering evil"; you get it in chapters 1. 8, 12; 2. 3, 9; 3. 11; 4. 5. In chapter 2. 3 "endure hardness" is really "suffer evil." Suffering evil, enduring hardness, hard times, is the character of 2 Timothy, and hard times tend to make men hard. Ah! but says the apostle, that must not make you hard. You have begun with grace and you must continue with grace. Therefore he says, "Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." What can keep us in such circumstances as these? You must "be strong in the *grace* that is in Christ Jesus." It is a sufficiency; it is enough. Paul could say he gloried in all that humbled him here, because grace was sufficient for him; so that in the place where otherwise what was of nature would come out, there the power of Christ might rest upon him, and there Christ was to be

glorified in him. And here as Timothy is in these circumstances, what is to support and sustain him? What is to give the servant of God strength needed for these difficult times? "Be strong in the *grace* that is in Christ Jesus." Remember what you were, a poor, guilty sinner, and how the grace of God took you up, and that same grace will take you to glory: and now in dealing with others, remember what God's dealings have been with you, and let these be before your mind. We need it, beloved brethren, and never more than to-day. We know what we are naturally, "Eye for eye, tooth for tooth." That is the law; but *He* says, "Resist not evil" (Matt. 5. 39). Grace shows itself in another way altogether. If we showed more of that kind of thing to our beloved brethren it would do them no harm, and would do us no harm either, and it would, I think, glorify God too. God grant that in these difficult times we may know more of "the grace that is in Christ Jesus."

One more verse, "*Revelation* 22. 21." Here again in the closing book of the Bible we find grace again. The subject is so beautiful, so full, that, once opened, the Spirit of God has never done with it.

*Revelation* 22. 20: "He that testifieth these things saith, Surely, I come quickly. Amen: even so, come, Lord Jesus." Then mark how it ends: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all." Three times His coming is mentioned in this chapter. In verse 7 it is connected with keeping the sayings of the prophecy of this book; but though he is pronounced "blessed" who has kept them, the coming of the Lord awakens no response. Again, verse 12, there is reward to every man according as his work shall be; but neither does that awaken a response: for when I think of my work—oh dear! my work!—I am inclined to say, "O Lord, don't come yet a while." But in verse 20 it is pure grace. The Lord Himself is

coming, and our hearts at once respond, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." It is neither keeping His sayings, nor reward for works, but Christ Himself who is coming, and the heart at once responds. The Old Testament ends with "Lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." The New Testament ends, in the presence of all He has pictured in

this book, all the evil and the judgment of it, with "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen." "All the saints" it should be. Not one excepted, all included, for grace alone it is that has brought anyone and all into that blessed circle. May it indeed be with us, and fill, and keep, and sustain, and comfort our hearts until He come, for His name's sake.

## IN THE DOCK OR THE WITNESS BOX.

THERE are two forces opposed to each other, the Holy Ghost and the world. One part of the mission on which the Holy Ghost has come into the world is to bear witness against it. This we learn from the Lord's words in John 16. 8, 9, 10, 11: "*And 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.*" This solemn statement of truth does not mean that He convicts *individual sinners* in the world of sin, as it is often interpreted to mean; He does do that in infinite mercy, and leads them along that road to repentance and blessing, but that is not the meaning of this scripture. The force of it is that the very presence of the Holy Ghost here is a proof that *the world*, as the world, rejected the Son of God when He came into it. His presence demonstrates the fact that sin, not ignorance merely, characterizes the world; for men loved, and still love, darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. Sin is the great characteristic of the world; righteousness is centred in Christ whom the world murdered. Righteousness cannot be enthroned on earth until He comes back again, which He certainly will do; and that to execute the judgment that is to come upon the world; meanwhile He has gone to the Father, and the Holy Spirit directs attention to Him there.

There can be no fellowship between the Holy Ghost and the world, no collusion, no compromise. The Holy Ghost is the direct witness against the world; **THE WORLD IS THE CULPRIT IN THE DOCK; THE HOLY GHOST IS THE WITNESS IN THE WITNESS BOX.** Christendom would like to have a foot in each, in the dock and in the witness box; it will be finally spued out of the Lord's mouth for its unfaithfulness to Him (Rev. 3. 16); and judged with the world with which it has joined hands.

Are we in "the fellowship of the Spirit?" It demands separation from the world. If we are with the Holy Ghost against the world, which is not of the Father (1 John 2. 16), we shall meet with opposition; the devil will oppose us, for the world is his stronghold, it lies in his lap, it is his nursling. He wants to allure those who go right on their way, as Faithful and Christian pressed on through Vanity Fair. If he cannot bribe us he will try to crush us, but "greater is he that is in YOU than he that is in THE WORLD" (1 John 4. 4). If the Holy Ghost is in us He has brought us on to His side, we are sharers with Him in the witness that He bears for Christ (John 15. 26, 27), and against the world. How honourable is this calling! May we not deny it by compromising with the world; all the resources of God are at the disposal of all who desire to be true to Christ, the earth-rejected but heaven-accepted Christ.

# SUPPOSING! No. 1.

(HAROLD P. BARKER).

"Supposing Him to be the gardener." (John 20. 15.)

LOVE to the Lord Jesus does not in itself prevent us from sometimes making very serious mistakes. We find this illustrated in the case of Mary Magdalene. She undoubtedly loved the Lord with all the strength of a true and grateful heart. Yet she made the mistake of jumping to a hasty conclusion. The risen Christ stood before her. And she supposed that He was the gardener!

There appears to be a significance in this mistake, greater than that which lies upon the surface. It turns upon the fact that a garden is essentially and characteristically a thing of earth.

The first garden mentioned, that which the Lord God planted, "eastward, in Eden," became the witness of man's fall. It was the scene into which sin entered, with all its disastrous and far-reaching consequences for the human race.

Another garden, that of Gethsemane, was the place where the power of Satan marshalled itself against the Holy One, causing Him much anguish of soul, and finally achieving His arrest. Therein was witnessed the arrival of man's "hour," and the power of darkness (Luke 22. 53).

A third garden was that at Calvary (John 19. 41). Here was the tomb where the Saviour lay. It was the garden that witnessed His death and burial.

These three gardens were miniature worlds. What took place in them were the great salient events in the history of mankind. The entrance of sin, the fall of man, the assertion of the power of Satan, the betrayal, crucifixion, and burial of the Son of God; of all these things this world has been the scene.

And Mary supposed that the risen Christ was the gardener! Is she the only one that has made so singular a

mistake? Are there not those to-day who imagine that the Lord Jesus Christ stands in relation to the *world* as a kind of gardener, to till it, care for it, sow seeds of goodness and truth in it, water it, improve it, and ultimately cause it to blossom as the rose? Is not this the idea that underlies that monstrous and hybrid creed known as *Christian Socialism*?

The self-styled "Christian Socialist" aims at the betterment of the world. He would make it a brighter place for men to live in. He would abolish slums and build garden cities; he would place industry on a basis where all concerned should enjoy an equal share in its fruits. And he would make men good by inducing them to walk in the steps of Christ. Christ is, to him, a great reformer; one whose teachings, if followed, would make the world an ideal place. In this sense they insist on "supposing Him to be the gardener."

What makes this notion so insidious is the undoubted fact that the Lord Jesus Christ will one day put the world right. But that day is not to-day, nor to-morrow, nor the day after. Not until the noxious weeds have been gathered up, bound in bundles, and burned; not until all the workers of evil shall have been arrested by the potent hands of the angels (Matt. 13. 41); not until the world has been visited and purged by the judgments of God, will this take place. Not in this age, but in the coming one, will the Lord Jesus act as a gracious gardener to this world, making the desert rejoice and "blossom as the rose" (Isa. 35. 1). Then will things be righted. "The man of the earth" shall oppress no more (Ps. 10. 18). The Man from heaven will possess and rule the earth. In His days the righteous shall be the ones to flourish, and He will espouse the cause of the poor and needy (Ps. 72.).

But while the earth is in possession of a race that has rejected and crucified the Saviour, who said, "This is the heir, come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours" (Mark xii. 7), how can He stand to it in the relation of gardener? How can He cultivate that out of which He has been flung? Were He to do so, would not the result be to encourage them to pursue their way without God and in independence of Him?

The day is coming when those who have seized the earth, and treated it as if it were their own, will be dispossessed. Any attempt to antedate the blessing and glory of that day is bound to fail. No scheme based on the idea that the world is a garden that only needs improvement and reconstruction, and that this is what Christ, as gardener, is seeking to effect, can possibly succeed.

Does an architect bestow labour upon a building on an island which he knows will be shaken by a catastrophic earthquake? Does a sculptor devote his skill to the fashioning of a snow man when he knows that to-morrow's sun will turn it into a dirty and shapeless mass? And does a gardener sow his seeds, or set out his choice plants, in a plot of ground overrun by wild beasts? God did this in the past for a purpose of His own, with the result recorded in Psalm 80. 13: "*The boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the wild beast of the field doth devour it.*"

His end was achieved and is plainly recorded in Rom. 3. He is gathering out of it now a people for His name (Acts 15. 14), and yet there is a sense in which we may speak of the Lord Jesus Christ as gardener, without any "supposing." He is this, in a way, to *His own people*. Has He not promised it? Read the glowing words in Isa. 58. 11: "*The Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones; and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose*

waters fail not." This promise, made to the redeemed of the house of Jacob, avails for us to-day. As a shepherd cares for his sheep, and as a gardener cares for his garden, so does the Lord care for us. He makes our souls, even as He will make the souls of His ransomed of Israel by-and-by, "as a watered garden" (Jer. 31. 12). He tends us, ministers to us, defends us, visits us, cares for us in a thousand ways. We are "God's tillage" (1 Cor. 3.).

Then will it be a mistake if, as in the case of Mary, we suppose Him to be the gardener? Not if we remember that He cannot be, in this, the day of His rejection, a gardener *to the world*; and if we remember that to us, His beloved church, He is more (oh! so much more!) than merely a gardener. Our mistake will be a sorrowful one indeed if we think of the Lord Jesus *only* as One who cares for us, guides us, and helps us.

The old German writer of the middle ages knew better than this when he penned the words, so beautifully rendered into English by Mrs. Bevan as follows:—

Is it sweet to know He careth  
For my every need?  
Know that He will ever tend me,  
Watch, and guard, and feed?

Yet unutterably sweeter,  
Wondrous though it be,  
His desire is toward me,  
He hath need of me.

Not to shield my path from sorrow  
Is His care and thought:  
Not to make the dark world brighter,  
Where Himself is not;

But to have me there beside Him  
In the love and light,  
There to tell my heart how precious  
I am, in His sight!

It is sweet to know that our blessed Saviour fills the little circle of our earthly life with His care and His mercies, but let us remember that there is *another circle, for which we are wanted*. When Mary made her mistake of supposing the Lord to be the gardener He spoke to her of this other circle—

the circle of relationship with the Father, and of the Father's love. As the risen Christ, He could claim Mary, and those He called His "brethren" (John 20. 17) for that circle. He wanted them for His companions *there*; not merely that they should be the subjects of His delivering mercy and continual goodness *here*. The Father's love was no new thing to Christ: He had ever known it; it was the eternal joy of His heart. But it was a new thing for Him to have companions in the circle of that love!

While men were always the subjects of divine goodness, the circle of which we speak must for ever have remained closed against us had it not been for the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. His death put out of the way all that made us unsuitable for that circle, it closed up our history as men in the flesh, members of a rebel race, and at the same time disclosed the greatness of the Father's love. Now that Christ has risen from among the dead, He makes us the sharers of His risen life, and companions with Himself in all His joys.

Oh, how infinitely this transcends the thought of His being a gardener to us, and tending us as the subjects of His loving care. We *need* His care as long as we are in the world, but it is our privilege to dwell, not even among the mercies and loving-kindnesses of the Lord, but in the region that lies beyond all, where need will be a thing of the past, where

mercy will find no scope, and where faith and hope shall have ceased to be.

What then abides? The Father's love, and all the joys that belong to, and go with, that wonderful relationship: Christ, and all that is His. And He shares all with us. We are His brethren; that love in which He dwells is our dwelling-place too; it rests in unclouded fulness on Him—*and on us*.

Nor, in speaking thus, am I speaking merely of what is future. All this is as true in the present as it ever will be. And God has given us His Holy Spirit, not only as *the Spirit of Sonship* (as in Rom. 8. 15), that we may enter into the joys of this relationship, but as *the Spirit of His Son* (Gal. 4. 6), that we may enter into them even as He, the beloved Son, does.

Instead, therefore, of "supposing Him to be the gardener," let us view Him as the beloved Son of the Father, who has, in His risen life, formed eternal links between Himself and us, that we may dwell, now and for ever, along with Himself, in the midst of those things in which He finds His own peculiar joys.

What calling, what destiny, can be loftier? What people more highly favoured than we? What place more supremely blessed than the place we shall share with Christ through everlasting ages? "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!"

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## "MAKE STRAIGHT PATHS FOR YOUR FEET."

THE difficulties of the Christian life are felt most by those who shrink from complete and unreserved devotion to God; "*the straight paths*" of perfect loyalty to Christ are, for many reasons, easier to walk in, than the crooked paths of compromise with the world; a stern fidelity to Christ on the part of those who are strong, is

the surest way of helping and healing the weak. Let there be then on our part an unhesitating and irrevocable choice of the perfectly right course; "*lest that which is lame be turned out of the way*"; any other course must be full of danger to those who are weak in the faith (Hebrews 12. 13).

# GOD'S GOVERNMENT : (No. 1).

## Can We Understand It ?

**Prefatory Note.**—This paper, and those of the series to follow, are taken from an old volume, picked up in an Edinburgh bookshop. The author, William Turner, an Aberdeenshire minister, treats therein of a variety of subjects, discussing the cuneiform inscriptions of Persia, which in his day were undergoing a tentative decipherment, and entering at great length into the vexed question of the tenses of the Hebrew verb.

Sandwiched in between these learned and now out-of-date disquisitions is a treatise, extending to forty-seven pages, entitled, "The History of Job, and its Place in the Scheme of Revelation." No detailed exposition is given, but an outline of the teaching of the book of Job is presented in such a striking way, that I have thought it a thousand pities to let a work of such value remain hidden in a volume to which few have access. The author's treatment of what he calls "the supra-mundane question" throws a flood of light on the gracious and wonderful ways of God in His governmental dealings with men.

I have therefore taken the treatise and greatly abridged it, eliminating for the sake of brevity, pages and pages of most interesting matter, modernizing the phraseology in not a few instances, and breaking the whole up into chapters, to suit the columns of a monthly magazine. My desire especially is to bring fresh cheer to those who are called to pass through deep waters of trial, by helping them to an enlarged view of the government of God in connection with human suffering.

H. P. BARKER.

### CHAPTER I.

#### INTRODUCTORY.

**HARD** questions in regard to the date, authorship and contents of the book of Job have been debated, into which I do not enter. I understand it to be the **AUTHENTIC RECORD OF A SPECIAL DIVINE REVELATION**, a revelation intended for a particular purpose, vouchsafed in patriarchal times to a certain tribe or family, belonging apparently to the house of Esau, and dwelling in the land of Uz, to the east or south-east of Canaan.

It may be asked, Does not the controversial character of the book

impair its authority as a revelation of truth? Who can tell which, among the various views and sentiments expressed by the different speakers, is to be regarded as expressive of the mind of the Most High? How shall it be determined which passages are to be quoted with confidence as inspired of God, and which to be set aside as the product of mere human wisdom? It is evident that in the book itself the words of both Job and his friends are represented as marked by imperfection. The former is asked by Jehovah, "Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?" To the latter it is said, "Ye have not spoken of Me the thing that is right" (38. 2; 42. 7). The statements of each, therefore, are to be judged by the general terms of the Word of God, and are to be accepted only when in harmony therewith. It is not the particular sentiments or words of the human speakers, but the great lessons resulting from that revelation of God, of which the book is the record, that are to be regarded as divine.

Questions as to the inspiration of this or that particular saying are here irrelevant. We have before us the inspired record of an interposition by God in human life. It shows us men in their weakness and ignorance, doubting, groping, struggling, rashly accusing and rashly repelling accusation, involved in blind amazement and alarm, or in equally blind self-confidence and pride. It shows us also God arranging, regulating, overruling the whole action, so as to make it, as here recorded, a source of permanent instruction.

The scene is *laid in two worlds*, the invisible and the visible; the powers of the spiritual as well as those of the material universe take part in the action; and in each of these scenes a different question is brought

upon the arena. It will conduce to clearness of exposition to take up first the second of these aspects of this divine drama.

The *mundane* question is that regarding human suffering, and the relation in which this stands to God and to His righteousness.

This has often been represented by expositors as if it embraced the whole action of the book. Yet it is the less important of the two with which the book deals, and is introduced as incidental to the other.

In this department of the history we have set before us the patriarch Job, a man in an eminent position and of the highest character, whose great material prosperity only served to make his goodness more conspicuous, and to render him, to a wide circle, the type and exemplar of God-fearing men.

Then we have this man, by a rapid succession of calamities, reduced to utter indigence, not only his cattle and his property swept from him, but his sons and daughters crushed to death by a sudden stroke. Then, while his heart is yet wrung within him by this strange series of disasters, his own person is stricken with a frightful and painful malady, so that his presence becomes loathsome to his friends and to himself, and in his anguish he shuns all society, and goes forth to sit among the ashes.

In these sad circumstances he is visited by three other patriarchs, who come from different parts to see and to condole with him. They sit silent by him, disconcerted at the sight of his wretchedness, and overwhelmed by the new thoughts in regard to their friend which it excites within them, till at last the wild outburst of his anguish and despair gives occasion to the colloquy which the book recites.

Though only Job himself and the friends, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar are mentioned, there is no reason to suppose that they were alone while engaged in this lengthened debate.

Another, Elihu, is introduced towards the close as taking part in the conversation, and it may be supposed that there were others present. The afflictions of Job had doubtless been borne abroad throughout the East on the wings of universal rumour, and formed the subject of general discussion, and the meeting between him and his friends, who had come so far to visit him in his wretchedness, was a great and solemn occasion, attracting together an interested company.

If we set ourselves to realize the situation, and take into account the sentiments then prevalent regarding the providence of God, we shall find that the conversation could not well have taken any other turn than that which it actually took. The speakers were all pious, candid men, and the occasion was not one for empty courtesy and commonplace condolences. The calamities of Job were of a kind to stir all hearts, and to lead to deep questionings in regard to the principles of God's government among men. The circumstances were such as seemed to involve the honour of the Most High, and it is plain that to the hearts of Job's three visitants His honour was dear. Doubtless, also, they were stunned and grieved by the vehemence of Job's opening words, and the violence with which he seemed to arraign the procedure of the Eternal.

Hence the laudable object which throughout they kept in view was (1) To vindicate the righteousness of God in regard to the calamities which had befallen their friend; and (2) To persuade him to such conduct as seemed in the circumstances to be dutiful, and especially to lead him to repentance, supplication, and humble acquiescence in the divine appointments.

It should be borne in mind that, whatever light may be shed regarding the special reason of Job's afflictions upon the minds of the readers of the book, no such light was available for Job himself or for his friends. They were in ignorance as to the secret spring

in the unseen world whence they had originated; and this very lack of explanation, this apparent unreason in those sudden disasters by which this distinguished servant of God had been overwhelmed, was just that which gave occasion to the questions here debated:—

1. Is God capricious in His inflictions? Are His judgments sent indiscriminately and at random? or, more awful still,

2. Is God unjust? Can it be that there is unrighteousness on the throne of the world?

### “WEEP NOT FOR ME.”

SUCH words spoken at such a moment! “Weep not for me,” said our blessed Lord, as He passed from Gabbatha to Golgotha, from Pilate’s judgment hall to the cross at Calvary, “but weep for yourselves and for your children.”

Resent their sympathy He did not, nor did He under-estimate the lamentation of these daughters of Jerusalem; but, knowing the future of that unhappy city and its approaching desolation, He could contrast His own sufferings with those which should, ere long, befall its children. These are His only recorded words on that short journey. He stood within a few yards of the place of execution and of an agonizing death. He knew all that lay before Him, just as He felt all the effects of the mockery, indignity, cruelty and scourging through which He had already passed; but calm and self-possessed, and mindful, as ever and always, of others rather than of Himself, He could pause on that awful road, turn round, and bid these troubled mourners to weep not for Him, but for themselves. If they lamented for Him, He lamented for them. They could see what was happening to Him; He could foresee what should happen to them.

If He, the green tree, should suffer thus at the combined hands of Jew and Gentile, what should not be the

3. If such suppositions cannot be entertained, what is the true theory? On what principles is suffering distributed, and how is it to be explained that such a man as Job has been subjected to trials so marked and severe?

Around these great and solemn questions the utterances of Job and of his friends revolve. And as the case of Job is only a sample of what is perpetually recurring, as the afflictions of the apparently righteous are many in all ages, it is evident that the subject is one of enduring and universal significance.

### Luke 23. 28.

(J. WILSON SMITH.)

fate of the dry and sapless stock of Israel, when the Roman power should let loose its full fury upon it? The crash of mountains and hills would be sued in vain. Mercy at the hand of man would be unknown. The streets of the city should flow red with blood. If there were no mercy for the green tree, how much less for the dry? History tells us the nature of the seige of the city.

But what think ye of the Man who could thus calmly, in such a crisis and in such overwhelming circumstances, speak so kindly, so wisely, so unerringly, could lift the curtain of the future on others, while His own was falling so darkly on Himself?

Yes, what think ye of such a Man?

Concentrate your thoughts on Him. His words were no threat, no empty cry for just retribution. They were the unimpassioned statement of One to whom every event was fore-known. One who, if Man, was at the same time God; and who, in the course of only a few minutes’ respite, could say at the first shock of crucifixion: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” Not a trace of retaliation nor revenge! What a Man! What fruit did not that Green Tree bear always, but most and richest when the storm beat its heaviest and worst.

Again, “What think ye of Christ?”

The Brook that dried up. (I Kings xvii. 2-7.)

THE prophet has been alone with God in the secret place of prayer. Then for a brief moment he witnesses the good confession in the presence of the apostate king. The future, however, holds a far greater service for Elijah; the day will come when he will not only witness for God in the presence of the king, but he will discomfort the assembled hosts of Baal, and turn the nation of Israel to the living God. But the time is not yet ripe for Carmel. The prophet is not ready to speak, the nation not ready to hear. Israel must suffer the years of famine ere they will listen to the Word of God: Elijah must be trained in secret before he can speak for God. The prophet must take the lonely way of Cherith and dwell in distant Zarephath before he stands on the Mount of Carmel.

The first step that leads to Carmel in the west, must be taken in another direction. "Get thee hence and turn thee eastward," is the word of the Lord. In God's due time He will bring His servant to the very spot where He is going to use him, but He will bring him there in a right condition to be used. To become a vessel fit for the Master's use, he must dwell for a time in solitary places and travel by rough ways, therein to learn his own weakness and the mighty power of God.

Every servant of God has his Cherith before he reaches his Carmel. Joseph, on the road to universal dominion, must have his Cherith. He must pass by way of the pit and the prison to reach the throne. Moses must have his Cherith at the backside of the desert before he becomes the leader of God's people through the wilderness. And was not the Lord Himself alone in the wilderness forty days tempted of Satan, and with the wild beasts, before He came forth in public ministry before men? Not indeed, as with ourselves, to discover

our weakness and be stripped of our self-sufficiency, but rather to reveal His infinite perfections, and discover to us His perfect suitability for the work which none but Himself could accomplish. The testing circumstances that were used to reveal the perfections of Christ, are needed in our case to bring to light our imperfections, that all may be judged in the presence of God, and we may thus become vessels fitted for His use.

This indeed was the first lesson that Elijah had to learn at Cherith—the lesson of the empty vessel. "Get thee hence," said the Lord, "*and hide thyself.*" The man who is going to witness for God must learn to keep himself out of sight. In order to be preserved from making something of himself before men, he must learn his own nothingness before God. Elijah must spend three and a half years in hidden seclusion with God before he spends one day in prominence before men.

But God has other lessons for Elijah. Is he to exercise faith in the living God before Israel? Then he must first learn to live by faith from day to day in secret before God. The brook and the ravens are provided by God to meet His servant's needs, but the confidence of Elijah must be in the unseen and living God, and not in things seen—in brooks and ravens. "*I have commanded,*" said the Lord, and faith rests in the word of the Lord.

Moreover, to enjoy God's provision the prophet must be in the place of God's appointment. The word to Elijah is, "*I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.*" It was not left to Elijah to choose his hiding place, he must submit to God's choice. There only would he enjoy the blessings from God.

Moreover, implicit obedience to the word of the Lord is the only path of blessing. And Elijah took this path,

for we read, "*He went and did according to the word of the Lord.*" He went where the Lord told him to go, he did what the Lord told him to do. When the Lord says, "Go and do," as to the lawyer in the Gospel, unquestioning and immediate obedience is the only path of blessing.

But the brook Cherith had a yet harder and deeper lesson for the prophet—the lesson of the brook that dried up. The Lord had said, "Thou shalt drink of the brook"; in obedience to the word "he drank of the brook"; and then we read, words which at first sound so passing strange, "*the brook dried up.*" The very brook that the Lord had provided, of which He had bid the prophet drink, runs dry. What can it mean? Has Elijah after all taken a wrong step, and is he in a false position? Impossible! God had said, "I have commanded the ravens to feed thee *there.*" Was he doing the wrong thing? Far from it; had not God said, "Thou shalt drink of the brook"? Beyond all question he was in the right place, he was doing the right thing. He was in the place of God's appointment; he was obeying the word of the Lord—and yet the brook dried up.

How painful this experience, how mysterious this providence. To be in the place of God's appointment, to be acting in obedience to His express commands, and yet suddenly to be called to face the complete failure of the provision that God has made for the daily need. How testing for faith. Had not Elijah boldly said before the king that he stood before the living God? Now he is confronted with the dying brook to test the reality of his faith in the living God. Will his faith in the living God stand firm when earthly streams run dry? If God lives, what matter if the brook dries? God is greater than all the mercies He bestows. Mercies may be withdrawn, but God remains. The prophet must learn to trust in God rather than in the gifts that He gives. That the

Giver is greater than His gifts is the deep lesson of the brook that dried up.

Is not the story of the brook that dried up told in a different setting when, at a later day, sickness and death invaded the quiet home life at Bethany? Two sisters bereft of their only brother came face to face with the brook that dried up. But their trial turned to the "glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby." That which brings glory to the Son, carries blessing to the saints. If Lazarus was taken, Jesus the Son of God remained, taking occasion by the failure of earthly streams to reveal a fountain of love that never fails, and a source of power that has no limit. So, too, in the prophet's day, the brook that dried up became the occasion of unfolding greater glories of Jehovah, and richer blessings for Elijah. It was but an incident used by God to take the prophet on his journey from Cherith—the place of the failing brook—to the home at Zarephath, there to discover the meal that never failed, the oil that did not waste, and the God that raised the dead. If God allows the brook to dry up, it is because He has some better, brighter portion for His beloved servant.

Nor is it otherwise with the people of God to-day. We all like to have some earthly resource to draw upon; yet how often, in the ways of a Father that knoweth we have need of these things, we have to face the brook that dries up. In different forms it crosses our path: perhaps by bereavement, or by the breakdown of health, or by the sudden failure of some source of supply, we find ourselves beside the brook that has dried up. It is well if, in such moments—rising above the ruin of our earthly hopes, the failure of human props—we can by faith in the living God accept all from Him. The very trial we shall then find to be the means God is using to unfold to us the vast resources of His heart of love, and lead our souls into deeper, richer blessing than we have ever known. 6:

# THE LOVE OF CHRIST FOR HIS CHURCH.

Eph. 5. 25-27.

J. H. DARDY.

“Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it :

“That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

“That He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing ; but that it should be holy and without blemish ” (Eph. 5. 25-27)

THE first thing of all is His own unmotivated love. “He loved the church,” perfectly, divinely, infinitely ; we here find the utterness of His love. “He gave Himself.” He did not only do something for it, “He gave Himself !” And this is constantly repeated in the Word ; it is even said that “He gave Himself for our sins,” our sins being that which was in the way between us and God. As I look at Christ's love, I see that it has no motive but in itself ; and it gives itself ; nothing is held back. He is wholly and altogether mine ; He has given Himself, and all is bound up in that. The self-sacrifice of Christ was absolute ; it was Himself, all He is, and all He was in His perfection. The whole motive of His nature was engaged in it. “He gave Himself.” And this is a wonderful thought, if our hearts could only get hold of it. It is not that He gave His blood, and gave His life, though that is true, and we may speak of it distinctively, for Scripture does ; but the point here is the character of His love ; so it says, “He gave Himself.” The motive was self-giving.

Mark here how, as regards the process of fitting the church for Christ, loving it and giving Himself for it goes first. It does not say, He cleansed it and washed it so that He might have it, and then loved it because it was cleansed and fit to be loved. No. He gives Himself for it, and possesses it with a perfect title ; Himself given for it, in the absolute completeness of His whole heart, according to which He has taken it to Himself. He gives

Himself for it because He loves it ; and now, He says, it must be cleansed and made fit for me. Not, it must be happy—happy it is, no doubt—but not only so ; it must be made fit for Himself. I cannot be satisfied if a person I love is not what I like him to be—my children or wife, for example. It is not a feeling of discontent—I do not mean that—but a want of full satisfaction. So Christ sets about making the church what He would like it to be. He cleanses it by “the washing of water by the word.” As He said before : “Sanctify them through Thy truth : Thy word is truth.”

As the word comes from God, it judges all that is contrary to God, by the revelation of what is in God, so that it may make me like what it reveals. “For their sakes,” He says, “I sanctify Myself.” As man, He set Himself apart as the perfect expression of what is divine in a man, or man according to God. So it is not that I am what I ought to be, but that I am connected with Christ, who is the expression of what I ought to be, and forms me into His likeness. “We all, with open face beholding the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” This is the way it cleanses ; it purifies our motives, thoughts, and apprehensions, thus changing us into the same image from glory to glory. But He is the doer ; He redeems us, cleanses us, sanctifies us and presents us.

There is also a thought here which is full of the deepest interest ; and that is that we cannot separate the cleansing from the glory. The cleansing is according to the glory, and, when the body is changed, the state of holiness is according to the glory revealed ; see 1 Thess. 3. 13, where we should have said “unblame-

able in holiness" in our walk; but we read, in the presence of "God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." We cannot really get on without looking at Christ in glory. It is said that "He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing: but that it should be holy and without blemish." That is the cleansing. Practical cleansing is by the power of the revelation of the glory of Christ. But let us always remember that this cleansing is not in order that we might belong to Him, but, "Christ loved the church, and gave Himself for it that He might cleanse it."

He goes on to say, "No man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth it and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church." It is not only that He fits it for Himself—makes it according to His own mind; but the same love that fits it, watches over it in the

circumstances of weakness in which it is found, as it passes through the world. Why, he says, a man's flesh is himself; Christ takes care of Himself in taking care of the church. As He said to Saul: "Why persecutest thou Me?" You are touching Me in persecuting them. Christ does not separate the saints down here from Himself. He is interested in them, cares for them, nourishes and cherishes them as a man does the flesh of his own body. And in this He can never fail. The darkness may be great, and the power of evil strong and growing stronger (not that God is not working, for He is: and when the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him, and is doing so, and preparing His Church for the coming of the Lord), but no more than a man can hate himself, can Christ fail in doing this—nourishing and cherishing the church.

## STUDIES IN PREACHING. No. 4.

### The Apostolic Sermons. (Acts 4.)

(J. T. MAWSON.)

PETER is confronted by a very different audience in chapter 4. to those that he had already addressed. His first was a cosmopolitan multitude gathered from far and near to the feast in Jerusalem; his second was more especially a city audience and perhaps more critical than the first, but both would be largely composed of the common people amongst whom Peter would naturally be at home. But now he stands with John before the leaders and rulers, the men of light and learning; a coldly critical audience, and withal bitterly hostile to the men and their message. This was a great test, and would prove conclusively whether Peter was serving by the power of the Holy Ghost, or in his own natural energy. His former audiences were such as might be easily moved by the natural eloquence and fervency such as he could evidently command,

but not these before whom he now stood. They were well versed in the law; they were master logicians, and had all the confidence that their position and influence and authority in the city gave them. Moreover, they had taken the place of leading the people in God's way, and the people had followed them submissively, and they believed that they had but to threaten and command, and Peter and John would immediately obey. Before such an audience as this, the man who had trembled with fear and denied his Lord at the taunt of a servant girl, would have little to say if he stood there in his own natural ability and strength of purpose.

But Peter neither trembles nor hesitates; he is the master in that assembly. With trumpet clearness he makes known the truth; exposes

their folly and guilt; clearly defines the terrible question that lay between God and them, and exalts the name of Jesus. There can be no mistake in the application of his direct and powerful words. These rulers of the people, with all their learning, had let the lame beggar lie at the gate of the temple; they had put forth no effort to help him; *they were the impotent men* in spite of all their pride and pretension. But Jesus of Nazareth was not impotent, for by His name the helpless cripple had been restored to perfect soundness. But these rulers had crucified Him, and if their purpose had been fulfilled, mankind would have been deprived for ever of the virtue that was in His name; for they were His enemies who said, "When shall He die, and His name perish?" (Ps. 41. 5). But God had raised Him from the dead, plainly showing what He thought of their great sin; what He thought of Christ, and His way of blessing for men.

Peter would have been no match for these men apart from the Holy Ghost; he was the mouthpiece, the vessel for the communication of God's message to them; the words he spoke were divinely inspired; they were God's words; hence the power and importance of them. The poor blind builders of the great world-system did not discern the one indispensable stone in Jesus; or they saw, if any light penetrated their minds, that if they accepted Him, they must cease their own building, acknowledge their own ruin, and be born anew. This they would not do. They could find no place in their building for Him, and so they cried, "Away with Him." There was room for Herod and Pilate, for Priests, Pharisees and people; room even for Barabbas, but none for Jesus in their building, their tower of Babel; so He must go, for it must stand at all costs. So the Stone was rejected, but God had raised Him up. This was the Lord's doing in contrast to theirs, and now He is preached as

ruined man's only hope. "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven even among men, whereby we must be saved."

The chief thought in this, is not individual salvation; it is salvation for mankind, for Israel, for all. Men must abandon the schemes for the reconstruction of the world and look to Christ; they must turn from their own building which is falling to pieces about them, and cry to Him. He is the only hope, but they need no other, for He is all-sufficient. It was this that Peter proclaimed to these rulers—there is no hope for you except in the Man you have rejected.

This needs to be pressed to-day, for the world-builders are building more feverishly than ever, and leaving Christ out. All will fail, whether Peace treaties, League of Nations covenants, or whatever else is requisitioned in order to shore up this great world-system; all will come to naught; Christ is the only hope. It is plain that the world will not own Him until He comes in judgment; it is plain that no nation or groups of nations will own Him, for they still make their treaties without reference to Him; hence it follows that it comes down to the individual soul. This is the character of salvation to-day—it is individual. Hence the Gospel preacher can find no better text than this, yet we should proclaim also the great fact that the Stone rejected by the world-builders is the only hope of men.

What a lesson for us in preaching, is the way in which Peter sticks to his one theme—JESUS. Crucified but risen, rejected by men but exalted by God—the one, only, but all-sufficient Saviour. He was a Holy Ghost preacher, and we may test the preachers of to-day by this standard; if they turn away from this preaching, they have turned away from the truth; they are not guided by the Spirit of truth, and they have no Gospel for perishing men.

## THE MYSTERY OF THE GOSPEL. No. 2. (JAMES BOYD).

(Eph. 6. 19.)

I have spoken of the power of God which was first of all witnessed in the resurrection of Christ from the dead. It is spoken of as "the exceeding greatness of His power to usward." That power has raised Christ from the dead, and set Him at God's right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name named, not only in this age, but in that to come, put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all (Eph. 1. 20-23).

This is the power that is active toward us, and which will never rest until we are found with Christ at the height of those eternal counsels of love. The fact that the Head has been placed where He is, is the pledge and guarantee of the glorification of the body, for where the Head is, there must also the body be. May we have the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him that we may be assured of this!

The manifestations of the boundless love, that is the spring and fountain of all God's activities toward us, are here seen in a different way from the way in which they are seen in the gospel. In the gospel, that love is witnessed in the death of Christ (Rom. 5. 6-8), but here in Ephesians, where we are viewed, not as sinners active in sin's service, but dead in sins, "God who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, hath quickened us together with Christ." The love that was manifested in the death of Jesus has not in that terrible ordeal to which it was subjected lost any of its power. It is here seen bringing us out of death in the life of our risen Redeemer, or rather in the life of God Himself, though in this, if a distinction can be made, a difference does not exist. But in

Colossians, for a very good reason, the life is of Christ,—He is it, whereas here it is of God. The life, however, is the same, divine and eternal.

It is the exceeding greatness of the power of God manifested in raising Christ from the dead that is seen in its activity toward us. From the middle of verse 20 of chapter 1. the reference is only to Christ. To the end of the chapter nothing that is there said is true of us, except that we are His body. In chapter 2. when we come in, it is as quickened with Christ, and Jew and Gentile raised up together with Him, and made to sit down together in the heavenlies in Christ; not *at His right hand, far above all principality*, etc., this is only true of Christ. It is enough for us to know that we are united to Him in the place where He is, but there must always be something distinctive in the glory that is His, and which no one can share with Him, for in all things He must have the pre-eminence.

And here for the first time in the epistle we come to *union* with Him. Jews and Gentiles are taken up out of their death in sins, quickened with Christ. God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love wherewith He loved us, has put forth His life-giving power, and caused us to live in the life in which He raised His Son from the dead, setting us down in union with Him in the heavenlies, that in the ages to come He might display the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. The time for display has not yet arrived, but when it does arrive it is in the blessedness of our union with Christ that the riches of that grace will be displayed.

What wealth of blessing is thus bestowed upon those who were once Gentiles in the flesh, without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of

Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope, and atheists in the world. For such we were in our natural condition. Dead in sins we all were, whether Jews or Gentiles; by nature children of wrath, the one as truly as the other. But the Jews had been brought into outward relationship with God; were loved for their fathers' sakes; they had the law and the promises; were the chosen people of Jehovah, and were under His special care and cultivation. But the Gentile had none of these things. He was left like the wild olive out in the waste, unpruned and degenerate, and without God in the world.

But now in Christ Jesus, and by His precious blood, we who were afar off have been made nigh. How nigh? "In Christ Jesus." Farther away we could not have been, nearer we could not be brought. We were as far off as our fallen condition and our enmity against God could place us, now we are as near as our acceptance in the Beloved can bring us. And on the ground of the blood of Christ, that blood which is the witness of the greatness of the love that has been lavished upon us.

"For He is our peace." He is our peace, if it is a question of our relations with God. He has made peace by the blood of His cross. Every question that holiness or righteousness could raise with regard to our sins or ourselves, has been raised, raised with Him when He took our place, was made sin for us, and bore our sins in His own body on the tree. The storm of divine fury that our guiltiness had aroused, and which beat upon His defenceless head, has spent all its fury; and peace unclouded, unruffled and everlasting is crowned with glory.

And He is it. We needed righteousness, holiness, and redemption, and on the part of God He has been made all these to us. We cannot tarnish that righteousness, we cannot pollute that holiness, we cannot shake the foundation of that redemption. If we

fail, there is no failure in Him. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and He is the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 2. 1, 2). Our peace is He who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification; and "Being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5. 1). He is established by God as our permanent righteousness, and that in the place where righteousness is needed, not before men (this we might dispense with in our contempt of their opinion) but in the presence of God Himself.

But He is also our peace as between Jew and Gentile, for He has made both one, broken down the middle wall of partition between us, and abolished in His flesh the enmity, the law of commandments in ordinances, that He might form the two in Himself into one new man, making peace. It is not the Jew degraded to a Gentile level, nor the Gentile exalted to the level of the Jew, but both in Christ, not in the flesh at all, where only these distinctions exist. The Jew no longer a Jew, and the Gentile no longer a Gentile, but both formed into *one new man*, where peace must reign, for it takes two to quarrel.

Both also are reconciled to God in one body by the cross, He having by it slain the enmity. Here we are out of all relations and distinctions that exist in the flesh, and we are in Christ, in new creation, and in right relations with God, and also in right relations with one another. And in order that our ways in this world might be regulated by what God has made us in Christ, the glad tidings of peace has been preached to the Jew that was nigh, and to the Gentile that was far off, for by Christ we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. Here we touch again the summit of our privileges. It is not access to Jehovah by blood that cannot take away sins, and by a carnal priesthood, but through Him whose blood is of infinite value,

and whose priesthood is after the power of an endless life, and that, too, by one Spirit to the Father. Here in this verse we have the whole Trinity concerned in our approach to God.

In the next few verses, from verse 19 to the end of the chapter, we have the house of God, first in its vital and incorruptible character; and second, in its responsible and public character, which has, alas, become sadly corrupted. "Now, therefore," we are told, "ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord." Here I am persuaded the reference is to that which our Lord said He would build (Matt. 16. 18), against which the gates of hell would be unable to prevail. This He builds Himself, and He builds it of material that is of His own nature, and which is instinct with His life, material that is of the same nature as the rock upon which it is built—the power of life in the Son of the living God. This structure will stand against all the assaults of the power of death.

But in verse 22 we have the house of God in its responsible character, and upon which professed servants of Christ are viewed as at work. This is referred to in 1 Cor. 3. 9-17. There we find builders good and bad, building with good and bad material, some of which will stand in the day that will be revealed in fire, and some of which shall be burned up. But all this has reference to the house as the dwelling-place of God, and though very closely connected with the mystery in the way in which we have been contemplating it, this is not the same thing.

From verse 13 until the end of verse 18, we have the nature and character of the privileges into which we are called, and which are alike common to believing Jews and Gentiles.

In chapter 3. we have the administration of this mystery in the hands of Paul.

In chapter 4. we have the power of life in the risen and glorified Christ active in the members down here, with a view to the building up of the body.

In chapter 5. where we have this mystery again, it is the love of Christ that is the foundation of all His activities with relation to His church, which is there regarded as His body and His spouse.

To Paul and to none other was the administration of this mystery committed. He alone was used of God to bring Jew and Gentile out of the whole state in which they were, as under law or without law, and to place them both on one common level, and in new relationships and privileges before God in Christ; leaving Jew and Gentile still in the world, to be taken up as separate people, when once the times of refreshing should come from the presence of the Lord.

This mystery, then, "which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men," is, "That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the Gospel." Whatever blessings shall be the portion of the Gentiles in the time to come, they will possess everything in an inferior and subordinate position to Israel. Instead of their possessing things in common with Israel they themselves will be possessed by Israel (Isa. 54. 3; 60. 9-16). They shall never be joint heirs with the chosen nation of Israel. But in the present dispensation we find a remnant taken out of Israel, and a chosen number taken out from the nations, and placed on an entirely new platform of blessing, and that by the quickening power of God, no longer Jews and Gentiles, but new creation in Christ, every earthly and national distinction gone for ever, and heirs together of all over which Christ is placed as Head.

And not only this, but both a joint-body, in marvellous relationship with Him who is placed as Head over all things, and in the closest relationship with one another that can possibly be imagined. Nor indeed could it have been imagined had it not been made the subject of revelation to poor Gentiles like ourselves. The Jew and the Gentile remain undisturbed in the world, the national privileges of the Jew for the time being set aside, and both Jew and Gentile concluded under sin, while the mercy of God is being proclaimed to both by the Gospel, by means of which "the promise of Christ" may be the portion of both. These three things go to complete that which the apostle here calls "*The Mystery.*"

Among the Gentiles, by him to whom the administration of this

mystery was committed, the unsearchable riches of the Christ were proclaimed. And what profound and incomprehensible riches are His! The One through whom the vast thoughts and counsels of the Father shall all be worked out and fulfilled! All the infinite wisdom, knowledge, purposes, and resources of the Godhead—who could search all these to their finality, or perfectly understand one conception of the Divine mind? To the man who was the greatest enemy of Christ, the chief of sinners, the least than the least of all saints, and the one not meet to be called an apostle, was this grace given, that he should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and bring to light what is the stewardship of the mystery, which hitherto had been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ.

## "THE LAW OF THE LORD."

C. KNAPP.

THE well-known nineteenth Psalm divides itself naturally into two unequal parts of six and eight verses each. The first part speaks of *God* and His creation, while the remaining portion tells of *Jehovah's* law, His Word. Both bear witness of Him; and these testimonies, though in themselves distinct and complete, are nevertheless co-related and in perfect harmony the one with the other. The one witnesses to "His eternal power and Godhead," "His wonderful *Works*," while the other testifies of "His *goodness* to the children of men," His righteousness, His faithfulness, His grace.

And it is to be noted that the sphere of the creation to which the psalmist alludes is not the lower or "earthly" portion, which has been corrupted and marred by man, but the heavenly part to which the ruinous results of human guilt have not extended.

It is our purpose here to examine only the latter section of the psalm. It begins, "The law of the Lord is

perfect, converting the soul." This, of course, is the written law, the holy Scriptures as the psalmist knew them. They convert, or *restore*, the soul of man, departed from God. This, the testimony of creation alone, even the grandest and most brilliant part of it, could not effect, as we see from Romans i. 18-32. The heavens, the starry heavens, could but declare His glory, and the blue vaulted firmament show His handiwork. The star-decked sky by night and the sun-illumined dome by day, were constantly yet silently preaching both the power and wisdom of their Creator; there is neither speech nor language,—no audible voice is heard, "yet their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world." "The earth," *erets*, often translated *land, country, ground*, implies a more limited sphere than "world," *habitable world*. And one of the meanings given to "line," *qav* by Strong, is a *musical string*, or *accord*. Is this "the music of the spheres"? It seems to suit the

setting and circumstances better than a measuring line. Anyway, their testimony to God is so sufficient and convincing as to leave the idolator "without excuse." No notable astronomer, as has been often said, was ever an atheist.

But for conversion, restoration to the favour and fellowship of God, something more is required, and that is the revelation He has given of Himself in His written Word. It is called His *law* here, as that which possesses authority, over the conscience, particularly, and it is with the conscience that any real work of God in the soul always begins. This law is "perfect," or in itself sufficient, without the aid of either science or tradition. It is light in itself and "gives but borrows none." The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God, therefore it is said, "The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple." The testimony of science (often "falsely so-called") is anything but sure,—so much so that its text-books have constantly to be rewritten, and those of a decade ago, go now to the paper mills in carload lots. God ever makes foolish "the wisdom of the wise." And it is His Word alone that can make us "wise unto salvation" (2 Tim. 3. 15). This is indeed true wisdom—"the wisdom of the just" (Luke 1. 17).

Jehovah's "testimony" is His witness, His attestation, both of Himself and concerning His works. It is here said to be "sure;" "very sure," His testimonies are said to be elsewhere (Ps. 93. 5).

And this testimony is said to make, not the wise wiser, but "wise the simple." These things are hid "from the wise and prudent"; but God "has revealed them unto babes" (Matt. 11. 25). Heaven's rule is: "If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise" (1 Cor. 3. 18). The heady, the haughty, never really apprehend the mind of God; it is to "the

mEEK" that "He will teach His way" (Ps. 25. 9). Oh for more of

"The new-born babe's simplicity."

"The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart." This is the only place in Scripture where the Hebrew word for "statutes" here is so translated. It is rendered "commandments" in Ps. 103. 18 and 111. 17. And apart from these three instances it is only found in Ps. 119, where it occurs 21 times, and is there invariably translated "precepts." This last is evidently its proper meaning; and "precept" is defined in the dictionary as "a rule of action." It is something less rigid than law, which "gendereth to bondage." These precepts "rejoice," or make glad, "the heart." The soul does not feel itself enslaved, as under law, but rejoices in the liberty of grace. "I will walk at liberty, for I seek Thy precepts," the same psalmist says elsewhere (119. 45).

"The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes." "The commandment" in particular differs from "the law" as a whole, in that it is more specific. The apostle makes this distinction in Romans 7. 12, where he says, "Wherefore the *law* is holy, and the *commandment* holy, and just, and good." And in James 2. 10, we read: "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all." The word "point" here is in *italics*, supplied, and "commandment" would probably be the better word to insert.

And the commandment, whatever it may enjoin or prohibit, is "pure," *clear, clean*, as it is translated elsewhere. Infidels (some who call themselves "Christians") cavil at God's commandment to His people to exterminate the Canaanites; but to the real believer this commandment, like all He ever gave, is "pure." So, too, His command to Abraham to slay his only son Isaac, His command to Saul to destroy the Amalekites, His commandment to the woman to "keep silence

in the churches," and to Christian men to practice non-resistance. He says with the psalmist: "I esteem all Thy precepts concerning all things to be right" (Ps. 119. 128). The commandment he adjudges to be not only "holy" (not common, or human, merely), but also "just and good." He recognizes it to be not only divine, given of God from heaven, but also in strictest conformity with all the requirements of justice; and it is even more than righteous—it is also "good," beneficent, with the well-being of the creature, man, in view. Even the much carped-at command to slay without mercy the Canaanites was "good"; it was an act of greatest beneficence on the part of God to a world at large. For that narrow strip of land along the eastern shores of the Mediterranean occupied by these reprobate nations had become a moral plague-spot in the earth; and to prevent the deadly contagion from spreading to the utmost bounds of the habitable world, He ordered their complete extermination. The measure may seem severe; so is hanging murderers, and shooting spies, and dynamiting houses to prevent the spread of fire. But when the end in view is understood, these acts of government are seen to be, not only just, but "good," beneficent, as well. And the only ones likely to complain are the guilty, or those immediately affected.

So not only is the commandment good, but, when understood, it "enlightens the eyes," gives understanding as to the principles of God's government. Jonathan's eyes were "enlightened" by the eating of a little honey (1 Sam. 14. 27, 29); here the eyes are enlightened in a spiritual sense by that which in this very psalm is said to be "sweeter than honey and the honeycomb."

"The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever." "The fear of the Lord," or "of God," is an expression capable of furnishing material sufficient for a study in itself.

It is first used in connection with uncircumcised Gentiles, the Philistines, where Abraham says of Gerar, "Surely the fear of God is not in this place" (Gen. 20. 11). And such a place did this holy fear of God have in the lives of the patriarchs that He is twice called by Jacob "the fear of his father Isaac," a most remarkable expression (Gen. 31. 42, 53). Joseph, in his Egyptian palace, said, "I fear God." The fear of the Lord to these holy men was indeed "clean"; its sanctifying influence was manifested in their separated lives, as, for instance, when Joseph says to the temptress, in the house of Potiphar, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" "Able men, such as fear God," are in Exod. 18. 21 coupled with "men of truth, hating covetousness." Over and over again, no less than twelve distinct times, does the man Moses in his parting message to the people, in the book of Deuteronomy, solemnly charge them to fear the Lord. So, too, does Joshua in his farewell address exhort Israel to "fear Jehovah, and serve Him in sincerity and truth" (Josh. 24. 24). And the very writer of this 19th psalm describes himself as one devoted to God's fear (Ps. 119. 38). He chose as his companions, too, those that feared Jehovah (Ps. 119. 63). And in that most practical book, the Proverbs, the expression, "the fear of the Lord," is found exactly as many times as it is used in Moses' parting words to Israel—twelve.

It "endures for ever"; it is always and ever the obligation of the creature to fear, or reverence, the Creator. So in the "everlasting Gospel," preached by the angel in the closing days of the Great Tribulation, men are called upon to "fear God and give glory to Him" (Rev. 14. 7). To speak of the fear of God seems out of date to most to-day. They talk glibly of His love, His goodness, and the "wideness of His mercy"; but who talks or preaches now of God's *fear*? "Walking in the fear of the Lord" was one of the characteristic

marks of the early churches of Judea (Acts 9. 31). And the apostle Paul, in the synagogue at Antioch, addressed himself, not only to the "men of Israel," but also to those among them who "feared God" (Acts 13. 16, also verse 26). And the "conclusion of the whole matter" of the inspired Preacher's discourse was, coupled with keeping His commandments, to "fear God"; and this, he says, "is the whole duty of man" (Eccles. 12. 13).

"The judgments of the Lord are true (or *truth*, marg.) and righteous altogether." Jehovah's "judgments" are His "verdicts, pronounced judicially, especially a sentence, or formal decree . . . abstractedly, justice." And in the following quotations God's judgments are differentiated from His words—"all the words of the Lord, and all the judgments" (Exod. 24. 3); from His *ordinances*—"Ye shall do My judgments, and keep Mine ordinances" (Lev. 18. 4); from His *commandments*—"These are the commandments and the judgments, which the Lord commanded" (Num. 36. 13); from His *statutes*—"What nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law?" (Deut. 4. 8); from His *charge*—"Thou shalt . . . keep His charge, and His statutes, and His judgments, and His commandments, always" (Deut. 11. 1); from His *law*—"They shall teach Jacob Thy judgments, and Israel Thy law" (Deut. 33. 10); from His *testimonies*—"to keep His statutes, and His commandments, and His judgments, and His testimonies" (1 Kings 2. 3). He gave Israel "right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments" (Neh. 9. 13). "Thy judgments are a great deep, O Lord," the psalmist says elsewhere (Ps. 36. 6; "Thy judgments are good," he also says (Ps. 119. 39). "The judgments of the Lord (. . . which are framed in infinite wisdom) are *true*; they are grounded upon the most sacred and unquestionable truths; they are *righteous*, all consonant to natural

equity; they are so *altogether*: there is no unrighteousness in any of them, but they are all of a piece."—*Matthew Henry*.

Having given us thus a six-sided view of the written revelation of God, the psalmist at once begins to appraise them; "More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb." They are of infinitely more value than the most prized substance on earth—gold, and bring more pleasure to the soul than the sweetest thing in nature—honey and the honeycomb.

By them, too, the servant of God is "warned." The word is elsewhere translated *admonish*, *teach*, both of which verbs, with *warn*, describe what Scripture does for him who would be God's "servant."

"And in keeping of them there is great reward." Not only is there reward for keeping God's Word, but *in* it as well; there is "great reward" in the very act—in joy and peace and satisfaction of soul now, to say nothing of the reward promised by and by at "the judgment seat of Christ."

We need this written Word, for who of himself "can understand his errors"? Natural conscience is no sufficient guide, for had we only it to follow, we should, however sincere and desirous of doing God's will, commit many sins in ignorance. This appears to be the meaning of the psalmist's "secret faults" or sins—whatever the word, for "faults" is supplied. By "secret" he seems to mean secret from himself. The law required a sacrifice for sins of ignorance; here the psalmist prays for cleansing from such sins.

But there is a "presumptuous," a "wilful" sinning, for which neither law nor gospel makes provision (see Num. 15. 28–30; Heb. 10. 26). This he prays to be delivered from; so should he be "upright" and "innocent from the great transgression." This last may be used either with or without the article, like "the sin" of Heb.

12. 1. If specific, it probably means either apostasy or idolatry, if not both, for they are sister sins.

And now, having written his psalm for "the chief musician,"—his composition concerning God's testimony both of *creation* and *revelation*, he humbly petitions that the effort of his heart and pen may be acceptable in the sight of

Him who was both his "strength (*rock*) and his Redeemer."

And may that same blessed One be pleased in His infinite grace and condescension to accept also the feeble attempt here made to unfold to others some of the beautiful details and profitable lessons wrapped in this notable "psalm of David." Amen!

## ANSWER TO CORRESPONDENT.

"The Blood of Jesus Christ . . . cleanseth from all sin."

BURMA.—If 1 John 1. 7 refers to believers, kindly state how the blood can be said to cleanse them?

THIS sentence is an abstract statement, i.e., it is a statement describing for us what the blood is in itself, its efficacy, and is not dealing with the application of it at any given time.

There are three statements in the verse, describing for us the place and privileges of the children of God. *First*, walking in the light, that is, before God, who is now fully revealed by Jesus Christ His Son, the Word of Life. And notice here that it is not a question as to *how* we walk but *where* we walk. The Christian does not walk in the darkness of paganism, or the dim light of the former times of types and shadows, for the true light now shines; God is fully revealed, and through grace we know Him. *Secondly*, in this light we have fellowship one with another, we have our life and joy in common before the Father. *Thirdly*, the blood cleanseth from every sin. Sin that would have made the light intolerable to us, and brought the eternal judgment of God upon us if we had stood before His throne with it; sin that would have made fellowship with one another impossible, is met by the all-cleansing blood. Its efficacy abides as the light abides and the fellowship abides.

What a relief it is to know that that blood meets all that we are in the presence of all that God is, and that we are not one day in the light and the next in the darkness, but that we are set in the light for ever as the children of God; that the basis of it all is the blood in its eternal efficacy.

The very popular idea that the Christian must go repeatedly to the blood for a re-cleansing is not in this passage; it is not in any passage in the New Testament. It is a failure to understand that "by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Heb. 10. 14). The Christian needs no fresh application of that blood—that once-for-all sacrifice has sanctified him for ever, given him a purged conscience and set him in the light.

But if the believer sins, what then? He has an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and He is [personally] the propitiation for our sins (chap. 2. 1, 2); and the result of His advocacy is that the truth is brought home to the believer's conscience and heart, so that he may see the enormity of his sin and confess it to the Father, that he might be forgiven, and cleansed from all unrighteousness. This cleansing is not by blood, for that stands once for all, but by water. It is the washing of water by the word (Eph. 5. 26); (see also John 13. and John 15. 3). It is not a question of the *guilt* of sin, that has been met once for all by the blood, but of the *defilement* of sin. The sins of the believer are not dealt with in a penal court, the blood has settled the question from that point of view; they are dealt with by the Father. He cleanses His children from the *defilement* of sin. He puts them under discipline and chastisement to this end, and so brings them to self-judgment and confession and thus cleanses and restores them when they sin to communion with Himself.

## EDITORIAL NOTES.

### Service, Fellowship, Prayer, and Power.

WHAT properly belongs to this month's "Studies in Preaching," we are taking up in these Notes, because we wish to bring more prominently before our readers the important lessons to be learned from Acts 4. The servants of the Lord, Peter and John, were face to face with the first crisis in their triumphant career as witnesses for their exalted Lord. The question at issue was, Ought they to be obedient to God or man?

God had commanded them to preach JESUS, and the leaders of the people were determined to stop them from doing so. The preaching was a challenge to the pretension and pride of these men; it exposed them as being utterly alienated from God, and left them with only one door of escape from certain doom, and that door the narrow one of *repentance*. They would have none of it, and commanded Peter and John "not to speak or teach in the Name of Jesus any more." The servants of the Lord had but one answer to a command of that sort, and they gave it without fear or flinching. "*Whether it be right,*" said they, "**IN THE SIGHT OF GOD** to *hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have heard and seen.*"

IN PASSING, we might say that this passage has been used to justify resistance to the proper civil authority, and, consequently has been made to clash with Romans 13., where the higher authorities are definitely stated to be ordained of God; with the result that some otherwise faithful Christians have resisted the authorities set over them, and in so doing have resisted the ordinance of God. We must be subject to the authorities *for conscience sake* (Rom. 13. 5). But these men in Jerusalem had no authority from either God or man; they were a self-consti-

tuted religious authority, presuming to dictate to the servants of God what they should and should not do.

WHAT WOULD BE RIGHT IN GOD'S SIGHT was the only question that concerned the Apostles, and because they feared God they were unafraid of men, and uninfluenced by them, no matter how influential they appeared to be. To be like these men should be the ambition of every servant of God to-day. The need is great; greater, if that were possible, than when Peter and John turned undaunted faces to these leaders in the city, and spoke out so boldly and so well. The servant of Christ must not strive, he must show a yielding spirit when it is a question of his own personal interests; self-esteem that makes him ultra-sensitive can only hinder him; but when it is a question of the will of God and the preaching of Christ, he must be uncompromising; he must be a veritable Ezekiel, whose forehead was adamant, harder than flint. He must obey God and not men, not even his brethren; his whole business is to serve in the sight of God.

INVERTEBRATE MEN-PLEASERS are the great majority of those who profess to serve God, we fear. The question with them is not, What saith the Lord? but, What will please the people? Hence Pleasant Sunday Afternoons, and Popular Services for the People, have taken the place of those old-time preachings, in which the consciences of men were brought so powerfully and effectually under the word of God, that they cried out in their sore distress, "What shall we do?"

We are in the days foretold long ago in the Sacred Word: "*The time will come*

when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned to fables" (2 Tim. 4. 3, 4). These teachers, on the principle that they who pay the piper call the tune, obey men rather than God, and cry, Peace, peace, when there is no peace, and forget, that "EVERY ONE OF US SHALL GIVE ACCOUNT OF HIMSELF TO GOD" (Rom. 14. 12), and that it is written, "After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them" (Matt. 25. 19). May God, in His mercy to men, still raise up and maintain those who, like Ezekiel, shall boldly say to their hearers, "Thus saith the Lord," "whether they will hear or whether they will forbear."



TO OBEY GOD is the first concern of every divinely called and equipped servant of God. This we are clearly taught by the attitude of these Holy-Ghost-filled men; but having concluded their witness "and being let go, THEY WENT TO THEIR OWN COMPANY and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them" (Acts 4. 23). Though they asked no licence from men to serve God, and refused to receive commands from men, they were not independent units, flitting hither and thither without centre and home. They were not even like John the Baptist, a man without mate or helper, a lone and rugged figure lifting up his voice in the wilderness; for since his day a great event had taken place—the assembly of God had been formed on earth by the coming of the Holy Ghost from heaven. That assembly was the centre and the spiritual home of these men; for in that assembly the Lord's authority was owned, His presence was known; there the Holy Spirit dwelt; and His saints were one. The apostles, though they had their special service

outside in witnessing to the world, had their place inside that assembly; they loved it and were part of it; hence, as the bee returns on swift wing to the hive, to enrich it with what it has gathered in the outer world, so returned these servants of God to the assembly of God, bringing their spoils with them; and as the labourer returns to his cottage joys, when his day's work is done, finding there rest and comfort and renewed strength for the day to come, so these servants found in the fellowship of their brethren both comfort and spiritual strengthening. The joys and sorrows of the testimony outside were the joys and sorrows of the assembly inside; and each individual in the assembly would be, if intelligently there, as deeply interested in the prosperity and success of the work of the Lord as the apostles themselves.

This significant action on the part of Peter and John was not done for their own joy only, but because it was due to "their own company." They recognized that the work of God was one; and all who are spiritually intelligent will recognize this to-day. It must be so if one Spirit does it. Unless a man divorces his work from the Holy Ghost in his thoughts, and looks upon it as his own work instead of God's, he must see that the work is one, and that the little that he is able to accomplish in connection with it is only a part of one great whole. Every bit of work that is done for God in the way of witnessing or soul-winning, goes towards the enrichment and building up of the assembly of God; hence all who are intelligent in the truth of the assembly will be interested in all God's work. The sectarian will be concerned about building up his own little sect, but he who would keep the unity of the Spirit will be interested in "the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4. 12, 13).

IT IS NOT DIFFICULT to imagine the keen interest with which that assembly would listen to the apostles' report, for they were all involved. The spreading of the fame of Jesus was their common cause; it was the mission of the Holy Ghost who indwelt them all. Then when the story was told **THEY LIFTED UP THEIR VOICE TO GOD WITH ONE ACCORD.** What wonderful fellowship this was! And how blessed is this divine scheme of unity in prayer inside, with the witness outside! Here was fulfilled the Lord's words in Matt. 18. 19; Mark 11. 24; John 16. 23; and we are not surprised that in answer to the prayer, the very place where they were assembled was shaken by the power of the Holy Ghost.

But notice how these men, praying in the Holy Ghost, did pray. They realized that it was **GOD'S WORK** they were doing, not their own, so that those who were opposed to it were rising up to fight against God and against His Christ. They were servants only, and all they desired for themselves was divine enabling to speak **GOD'S WORD** with all boldness. They did not ask for protection from the rising fury of their foes; to speak the word with boldness was all their desire, and having done this, that God would stretch forth His hand and do wonders in the name of Jesus.

**WHAT A HELP** this prayer meeting must have been to the apostles! and how blessed the result for the assembly! they were together of one heart and of one soul; one object—Christ—controlled them and filled each heart, thus

making them of one heart; and their love to Him united them in one desire and prayer—His glory; and this they gave expression to as one soul, and so powerfully and triumphantly did the interests of Christ rise up above all their own individual interests that they had all things in common. Then we read: "*And with great power gave the apostles witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and great grace was upon them all.*"

**TIMES HAVE CHANGED**, we sadly say, and such a condition of things is impossible now. Yes, with men it is impossible; and owning the failure and sin of the church in this oneness and witness for Christ, and each his part in that sin and failure, we must lift up our eyes and yearn for His coming again, when all shall be made according to His mind. But meanwhile, here is the pattern, and a beautiful picture it is; here is the headline, divinely written, that we might learn the truth from it. We must not lower the standard, and if this is the truth our conduct must not be contrary to it; and we seek the power and grace of God to act upon the pattern here disclosed; assured that He is able to enable all who will do His will to walk in the truth that He has revealed for us. This grace is in Christ Jesus, and to Timothy, in the perilous times of departure from the truth, such as these are, Paul wrote: "*Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also*" (2 Tim. 2. 1, 2).

God makes His own feel that His support is worth all the trouble in the world.

There is no strength but in Christ. I have none at any time except my soul is in secret communion with Him. To hinder this the devil will use all his power.

# THE LIGHT AND THE TRUTH.

(J. T. MAWSON)

*"O send out Thy light and Thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto Thy holy hill, and to Thy tabernacles. Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy: yea, upon the harp will I praise Thee, O God my God."*—Psalm 43. 3, 4.

THUS cried the Psalmist as his soul panted after God, and God has answered his cry. He had purposed to do so before time began, so that every one who sought Him might find their full joy in Him, and that in a way that never could have entered into any human mind. The way He has done it is told out in the Gospel of John the Apostle; where we see the height from which "the light" and "the truth" have come, the greatness of the One who was sent forth to be both; the depths of shame into which He went to save us; and the triumphant way in which He leads us, not to God's altars merely, but to His very home and heart. For the light and truth have not been sent forth in vain, and Jesus, who is "the light" and "the truth," has revealed the Father so blessedly that He has become infinitely attractive to us, He has become our exceeding joy.

In chapter 1. we learn THE GLORY OF HIS PERSON, who said, "*I am the light,*" and "*I am the . . . truth.*"

*"In the beginning was the Word"*—  
HIS ETERNAL EXISTENCE.

*"And the Word was with God"*—  
HIS DISTINCT PERSONALITY.

*"And the Word was God"*—  
HIS PERSONAL DEITY.

*"The same was in the beginning with God"*—

HIS ETERNAL COMPANIONSHIP WITH, BUT DISTINCTION FROM, THE FATHER.

The Word brings Him before us as the One in whom the wisdom of God's infinite mind has found personal expression in whatever way God has expressed Himself; hence we read of Him:

*"All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made"*—

HIS CREATIVE WISDOM AND POWER.

Thus is the eternal glory of His Person told, and thus John introduces Him to our faith and adoration.

From the glory of His Person He proceeds to THE GREATNESS OF HIS CONDESCENSION.

*"The Word was made flesh"* (ver. 14).  
HIS REAL AND PERSONAL INCARNATION.

*"And dwelt among us"*—  
HIS ENTRANCE INTO ALL THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF MANHOOD.

*"Full of grace and truth"*—  
HIS SUITABILITY TO ALL THAT MEN ARE WITHOUT COMPROMISING WHAT GOD IS.

And in connection with His coming to tabernacle among us, a fresh glory bursts upon our vision; one that creatorial power could not reveal; one that never would have been revealed at all had it not been for the great purpose that was in the heart of the Father in sending Him forth.

*"And we beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only-Begotten of the Father."*

HIS UNCHANGING RELATIONSHIP IN LOVE AND ONENESS IN NATURE WITH THE FATHER.

An able and reverent writer has said: "His was the glory of the Only-Begotten, come fresh from the splendour of uncreated light. Every

idea but that of pure sovereign Deity in this part of the argument is trifling and profane."

The same writer, speaking of this wonderful epithet, "Only Begotten Son," says: "When the evangelist would affirm the perfect and eternal intimacy and union between the glorious Persons in the Godhead, and the unspeakable and infinite endearment of our Lord to the Father; when he would convey the loftiest possible idea of the majesty of evangelical truth; when he would impress the minds of his readers with a deep sense at once of the inscrutableness of the Divine nature, and the certainty of the manifestations of God in Christ, he declares—'No man' (nemo), no being of created mould, 'hath seen God at any time; THE ONLY-BEGOTTEN SON, who exists in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him' (verse 18). When, again, he would illustrate the benevolence of God with the highest splendour, he says, 'In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that GOD SENT HIS ONLY-BEGOTTEN SON into the world, that we might live through Him.' And, finally, when our Lord would represent unbelief as the last extreme of human guilt, He finds no stronger argument than that conveyed in this appellation, 'He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in THE NAME OF THE ONLY-BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD.'"

We pass from the glory of His Person, and the greatness of His condescension, to the PERFECTION OF HIS LIFE.

"I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do" (chapter 17. 4).

#### HIS ABSOLUTE DEVOTION TO THE WILL OF GOD.

"I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (chapter 8. 12).

#### HIS PERFECT MANIFESTATION OF GOD, THE ONLY SOURCE OF LIFE AND LIGHT FOR MEN.

"Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end" (chapter 13. 1).

#### HIS UNCHANGING LOVE AND FAITHFULNESS TO THOSE WHOM HE HAD CHOSEN OUT OF THE WORLD.

How great the blessing that comes from the consideration of the fulness of light and truth in the lowly life of this glorious Person; of His suitability to meet the condition and need of every sinner whom He sought; of His patience toward their ignorance; His sympathy toward their sorrows; His mercy toward their sicknesses, and His grace toward their sins. What witness to His fulness is borne by Nicodemus, the Sychar sinner, the Bethesda cripple, the storm-tossed disciples, the hungry multitude, the guilty adulteress, the blind beggar, the stricken Bethany sisters, and all who were not too utterly blinded by their love for their own evil deeds to behold His glory. It was thus amid weariness and hunger and thirst, despised and rejected by men, that He laboured amongst them, that the Father's heart might be made known, His words declared, and His works performed; and He that hath seen Him "hath seen the Father." He is the light and He is the truth.

We pass on from His perfect life to HIS SUFFERING AND THE SHAME THAT MEN PUT UPON HIM.

"And one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand" (chapter 18. 22).

"Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber" (verse 40).

"Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged Him" (chapter 19. 1).

“ *And the soldiers plaited a crown of thorns, and put it on His head, and they put on Him a purple robe. And said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote Him with their hands* ” (verse 2).

“ *They cried out, Away with Him, crucify Him* ” (verse 6).

“ *Then delivered he Him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led Him away* ” (verses 15, 16).

Thus He, whose glory the Gospel unfolds before us, was smitten, scourged, mocked, buffeted, execrated, and crucified.

Along this path of sorrow and shame the Man of sorrows trod His stedfast way to accomplish the will of God. Rising up above all the contumely and the hatred wherewith the men—whose very breath was His—hated Him, He took up the question of God's glory in regard to sin, and became the bearer of it.

“ *And He bearing His cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha* ” (Chapter 19. 17).

He upholds “ all things by the word of His power,” we learn from Hebrews 1. 3; but heavier than the universe was the burden that He carried that day, for then and there He was “ **THE LAMB OF GOD WHICH BEARETH AWAY THE SIN OF THE WORLD.**”

“ *They crucified Him, and two other with Him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst* ” (verse 18).

“ *When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, He said, IT IS FINISHED: and He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost.*”

How incomparable the dignity of the holy Sufferer amid the shame of that cross! How triumphant that word, ere He gave up His life! The will of God accomplished; the prince of this world utterly confounded; the great sacrifice made that would fill the

universe with the glory of the light and the truth that He went even into death to fully manifest.

One more passage from this most solemn chapter we must quote:—

“ *One of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came there out blood and water* ” (verse 34).

The last act of man's hatred brought out the love of God in all its fulness.

“ *The very spear that pierced His side Drew forth the blood to save.*”

And now through the infinite, eternal, and ever-abiding efficacy of that blood we are in the light, i.e., we are brought to full revelation of what God is, that our joy may be full. “ If we walk in the light as He is **IN THE LIGHT** we have fellowship one with another ” [**IN THE TRUTH**] and the never failing basis of both is—“ the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin ” (1 John i. 7).

As we consider the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ we are not surprised at anything that may flow from it. We are assured that God must have had some great purpose in sending Him forth, and in this we find that we are not deceived, for when risen from the dead the Lord sends this message to His disciples. “ Go unto **MY BRETHREN** and say unto them, I ascend to **MY FATHER AND YOUR FATHER, TO MY GOD AND YOUR GOD.**” He has brethren now to whom He can declare His father's name, and lead them, not to a Jewish altar upon which smokes an impotent sacrifice, but having Himself sanctified us for ever by His one offering, He leads them to the Father that they may worship Him in spirit and in truth. We accept in deep humility this place and relationship which eternal love first planned and then made possible, and while we find our joy in fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ, we own Him who leads us into it as our Lord and our God.

## “LET HIM DENY HIMSELF.”

WHAT need we all have to be ransomed and redeemed from that master-tyrant, that cruel and lawless lord SELF!

Self is the master idol we all bow down to. Every man blameth the devil for his sins, but the house-devil of every man that eateth with him and lieth in his bosom is SELF.

SELF is our worst enemy. We may have enemies who hate us more than we hate ourselves, and would hurt us, if they could, as much as we hurt ourselves, but the point is they cannot. No man ever hurt me as much as I have hurt myself.

“This know, that men shall be **LOVERS OF THEIR OWN SELVES**,” and being such they are “covetous, boasters, proud, unthankful, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, traitors, heady, high-minded”; and the divine exhorta-

tion is “**FROM SUCH TURN AWAY**”; *but that surely means that a man must begin by turning away from SELF.*

“Pray, sir, said Academicus, tell me more plainly just what this self of ours actually is? Self, replied Theophilus, . . . is darkness, pain, and disquiet. It is the one and only enemy of Christ. It contains everything that a man has to dread and to hate, to resist and avoid. . . . No hell in any remote place, no devil, no darkness or pain that is not within you, no antichrist, no furious beast, no fiery dragon, without you or apart from you can do you any real hurt. It is your own hell, your own devil, your own antichrist, your own dragon that lives in your own heart's blood that alone can hurt you.” Let a man deny himself, and he can only do that by taking Christ instead of self, and then all outward enemies are powerless.

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## HEARSAY.

WE well remember hearing a brother now with the Lord tell how he was rebuked and humbled, and learned a good lesson. On a certain occasion he repeated a grave matter he had heard to a servant of the Lord, who, having listened, quietly referred him to Deuteronomy 13. 14, and asked:—

1. Have you, dear brother, “enquired”?
2. Have you “made search”?
3. Did you “ask diligently”?
4. Is it “truth”?
5. And “the thing certain”?
6. That “such abomination IS wrought among you”?

Our dear brother could only acknowledge, regretfully, that he had not fulfilled one out of the six questions, and was repeating a grave matter on “hearsay,” without making any

attempt to act in a scriptural way! He never forgot his lesson, and often passed it on for the good of his brethren and sisters: “If thou shalt hear say . . . then shalt thou enquire, and make search, and ask diligently, and behold if it be truth, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought among you” (Deut. 13. 12-14). Let us each one suffer the word of exhortation, for a tale-bearer is an abomination to the Lord; and to be an accuser of the brethren is to be enlisted in Satan's service, for this is his work (Rev. 12.) ; and what his name “devil” means.

What care we need as to this, for false accusers are to abound in the last days, as 2 Tim. 3. distinctly declares. Those who wear the uniform of the soldiers of Christ must not traitorously use the devil's weapons against their fellow-soldiers.

## SUPPOSING ! No. 2.

(HAROLD P. BARKER.)

“Supposing Him to have been in the company.” (Luke 2. 44.)

[F Mary Magdalene made a great mistake in supposing the Lord Jesus to be *what* He was not, Mary, His mother, was equally wrong in taking for granted that He was *where* He was not. She assumed, as did Joseph her husband, that He was in the company with whom they were, whereas, in point of fact, He was far away.

Mary and Joseph were moving in a path that they had trodden together ever since they were man and wife, in obedience to a long established and divinely ordained custom (Luke 2. 42). It was a path from which it would have been wrong for them to depart. Naturally, then, they supposed that the Lord was in their company, and great was their astonishment to find that He was not.

It is possible to pursue a path of obedience, according to the Word of God, in such a formal fashion that we cease to have the company of the Lord with us therein. We so easily fall into mere routine that what was once an act of faith and devotion, becomes the mere perfunctory performance of a recognized duty.

Off the coast of Maine, U.S.A., there is an island on which a large hotel was built, attracting a considerable number of summer visitors. To meet the requirements of these visitors, the Government established a post office there. Some time ago the hotel was burned to the ground, and not a single person remained on the island. Yet, even after a lapse of twelve months, the post office was still maintained. The steamer still called every day at the deserted wharf; the postmaster still rowed over from his home to meet it and gravely exchanged empty mail sacks with a man from the steamer! It may be that this daily routine still continues, for it was quite a recent paper that called attention to it. Such is the folly of following in a mechanical, routine fashion, a

practice for which there once existed a good reason.

We Christians may easily find ourselves doing this. We may start to walk in a certain path, seeing it clearly marked out for us in the Holy Scriptures. In the energy of a God-given faith, and with a real desire to please Him, and bring glory to His name, we make the start. We have the joy of the company of our blessed Lord in the path, and our souls are filled with delight. Years pass, our faith loses much of its energy, our devotion wanes, our enjoyment of the Lord's presence with us becomes less and less. Yet, all the time we go on “supposing Him to be in the company.” But is He? May we not be making a mistake in taking His presence for granted?

We may apply this *collectively*, to companies of saints, or *individually*, each one for himself or herself. Let us consider the matter in this latter way and make a personal application of the Scripture to our own souls.

Notice that Mary and Joseph could go *a whole day's journey* before they missed the One that was more to them than all the world. Evidently they had not been keeping very close to Him. The road they were treading had been often trodden by their feet, and now they could travel as well without Him as with Him. His company meant so little to them practically, that hours could pass before they observed that He was no longer journeying with them.

If we are really walking with the Lord, our souls will be very sensitive to His presence, and when any coldness or sin on our part deprives us of the supreme joy of companionship with Himself, we shall perceive it at once. To go on, merely *supposing* everything to be as it should be, is a sure proof of distance having previously come in between our souls and Him.

When Mary and Joseph were at

last awakened to their loss, they at once made it the chief object of their lives to recover the company of the One they so dearly loved. The pathway they were pursuing became a thing of naught in their eyes, unless they could pursue it, as of old, with Him at their side. And they *turned back* to seek Him. They turned their backs on established custom, and on "their kinsfolk and acquaintance." In order to have their faces once again towards Himself, there was nothing that they would not abandon.

Let us say "Selah" here, and pause and consider. Let us put ourselves among the disciples who said, every one of them, "Lord is it I?" Have we, any of us, gone on our way, the way of correctness in doctrine and manner of life, taking for granted that all the time the Lord was with us therein? And have we been awakened to find ourselves unsupported by close communion with Himself? Do we blush with shame as we recall the many days' journey we have taken by ourselves? And upon what shall we turn our backs in order to recover that nearness to Himself in communion, that joy of companionship, without which the most orthodox belief and the most exemplary conduct are but as milk with no cream?

Let us emphasize the question. *Upon what are we going to turn our backs?* It may mean the parting with certain of our kinsfolk and acquaintance, the surrender of some prized object of ambition, or the abandonment of a long cherished habit of life. If Christ is really dearer to us than all besides, *His company* will be a greater treasure to our souls than anything that we possess.

Notice further that though Mary and Joseph had only travelled for a single day without the company of the Lord Jesus, it was fully three days before they found themselves at His side once more. It is easier to lose our communion than to regain it. An hour spent in sloth and idleness; a harbour

afforded in the mind to thoughts of folly and sin; a leaping up of the heart in response to some subtle attraction in the world; the reading of a book that drags the soul down to the ground; any such thing, unrepented and unconfessed, means loss of communion. To recover it, self-judgment and confession are required. Confession on our part is met by instant forgiveness on the part of God (1 John 1. 9). But full restoration to the joy of companionship with Christ does not always follow hard upon the heels of forgiveness. We are made to feel that we cannot play fast and loose with the presence of the Lord. But our search for His company, though it may be as painful and humiliating as that of the awakened bride in Song of Solomon 5. 6, 7, will be rewarded if we earnestly seek it. Delay there may be, but restoration will surely come.

This we may gather from Hosea 5. 15, and 6. 1-3. The Lord, unappreciated and sinned against, withdraws His presence. Then comes the appeal to His people to return to Him. If He has torn, He will surely heal; if He has smitten, He will without doubt bind up. But not at once. There must be an interval, so that the reality of the desire for His presence may be tested. "*After two days will He revive us: in the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight; then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord . . . and He shall come unto us as the rain.*"

So it was with Mary and Joseph. After three days of sorrowing search they found Him whom their souls loved. But where? Not in the social circle, among the "kinsfolk and acquaintance," but in what we may call *the circle of the Father's business*. This is what the heart of Jesus was set on, as much when He was twelve years of age, as later when engaged in His public ministry. "Wist ye not," said He, "that I must be about My Father's business?"

And what, at the present time, is the Father's business? Not with the world at all, save that He is still visiting the nations in grace, taking out of them a people for His name (Acts 15. 14). His business (during this present interval of the suspension of His relations with Israel and the world) is in connection with those eternal purposes of which Christ is the central object, and with which we, by infinite grace, are linked. The Lord Jesus Christ is actively engaged in bringing to a head all those gracious counsels. He it is who is conducting the "many sons unto glory" (Heb. 2. 10), and it is in Him that the administration of the Father's great and glorious things is vested. "The Father loveth the Son and hath given all things into His hand" (John 3. 35). Those who believe in Him are led (in spirit now, actually by-and-by) to a land of life, and holy love, and eternal joy. Eternal life, the very life of eternity with all its holy and glorious pursuits and joys, is their present portion. This is the circle where the Father now worketh and Christ works too. It is in this circle of the Father's business, where the activities of eternal love are in exercise on behalf of its objects, where Christ is now to be found. My soul, betake thyself thither, and there amid the activities of love, the Father's love, thou shalt find Him whom thou seekest!

Neither Mary nor Joseph in the

least took in His meaning when He spoke of the Father's business. "They understood not the saying." But the blessed Lord, in great grace, and in that obedience which was part of the perfection of His holy humanity, "went down with them."

Even so will He do with us. Do we fail to understand the Father's business? He will not frown upon us because of the feebleness of our comprehension. Graciously He will come down to us and give us the joy of His company amid the circumstances of our life, if we are unable to follow Him in spirit with the circumstances of His life in glory. But it is good to *sup with Him*, and not only have Him sup with us (Rev. 3. 20). To have His presence with us amid the perils and trials of life is an immense thing, but a higher joy still to know Him *where He is*, and enjoy His company *there*.

Let us do as Mary did. She "kept all these sayings in her heart." That is the way to a fuller understanding. Ponder the words that seem beyond your comprehension. Treasure them in your heart. Find food for your meditation therein, and "God shall reveal even this unto you" (Phil. 3. 15).

And never, never take for granted that the Lord is with you in your pathway, but seek His company day by day. Be content with nothing short of the enjoyed reality of it.

## SERVICE FLOWING FROM FELLOWSHIP.

WE must be near to the Lord to know the unwearying patience that He shows in our training for service. He will spare no pains; no time will be too precious or too long for Him. In the love that brought Him to the cross, He would hold intercourse with us, converse with us, sanctify us, and make us fit for His holy service. On our part, do we grudge to spend time in prayer and intercourse with Him? Shall we not commit ourselves entirely to the love which gave up all for us,

and look upon it as our greatest happiness now to hold fellowship with Him daily? Oh, all ye who long for blessing in your labours, He calls you to be with Him. Let this be the greatest joy of your life; it will be the surest preparation for blessing in your service. O, my Lord, draw me, help me, hold me fast, and teach me to live daily in fellowship with Thee, and to know that all acceptable service flows from such fellowship.

# THE MYSTERY OF THE GOSPEL. No. 3. (JAMES BOYD.)

(Eph. 6. 19.)

THE visitation of the Gentiles by God through His servants was a new thing, for the times of their ignorance, when they worshipped the work of their own hands, God had winked at. They had not then come into view as a people taken account of by God. But now that the Word has come to them it is in infinite grace, and in all the unsearchable riches of the Christ. It has not come to them in the way in which the law came to Israel, but it is in all the love of the heart of Him who gave His only begotten Son; and by the Gospel a light above the brightness of the sun has been made to shine in the remotest and darkest regions of the earth. By means of a temporal salvation accorded to one favoured nation, and a law for the ordering of that nation's conduct in its relationship with God, great light was caused to appear, astonishing and terrifying the peoples of the earth; but compared with the unsearchable riches of Christ, now preached among the Gentiles, that light is little else than darkness. Eternity itself will not enable the creature to come to the end of the riches that dwell in Him, in whom the wisdom, power, and resources of the Godhead are centred.

The bulk of the Gentiles may profit nothing through the preaching. They may even hate the light, and remain in the darkness of idolatry, but they are at least brought to behold the administration of that mystery, an administration which was committed to the Apostle, who was sent among them by the risen Christ. The effects of the preaching they could see in the separation from this evil world of those who believed the Gospel, the heavenly-mindedness that in some measure characterized them, and Jew and Gentile sitting down together in the closest relationship, and walking together in a unity that was impossible for them to understand. These are some of the ways in which the adminis-

tration of the mystery could be seen by all. It might wound to the quick the pride of the hitherto favoured Jew, and the faithful steward of this mystery might have to bear alone the brunt of his jealous rage, but the unsearchable riches must be preached, and the administration of the mystery be brought to light, whatever happened to the servant of God to whom the ministry was given.

The principalities and powers in the heavenlies must also learn something from what God was bringing to pass in this fallen world. These interested spectators of the grace of their Creator to His rebellious creatures must by the church be taught the manifold wisdom of God. Peter says the angels desire to look into the grace that has come to the believing remnant of the Jewish nation (1 Pet. 1. 12). Here by the church is made known to the heavenly host the infinite resources that are in the mind of God. These celestial hierarchs had been witnesses of the ways of God with men during the term of their probation. They had seen the pride and rebellion of the heart of man, under the influence of the devil, rejecting every experiment on the part of God to direct the feet of the sinner into the paths of righteousness. The infinite patience and longsuffering of the Lord had been delineated before those holy beings during the age of law, while the idolatry of the Gentile was winked at, and in spite of the lawless condition of the world they had observed the wisdom of God exercised in the sovereignty of His grace, reserving to Himself out of the fallen race a generation of the righteous who had obeyed the very testimony that had been rejected by the majority of mankind. And, last of all, they had seen the Saviour, who had come in unspeakable grace into the world, taken by wicked hands, crucified and slain. Now by the church a new thing is brought to light, a heavenly people are

found upon earth, who are not of this world, even as Christ is not of this world, and who are members of the body of the risen and glorified Saviour. The subtilty of the devil has been no match for the wisdom of God. All along the line he has suffered defeat at the hand of God, and according to the greatness of his wickedness and the depth of his deceit, has been brought to light the righteousness of God and the sublimity of His wisdom. The Church becomes thus the lesson-book of angelic beings.

The Mystery was the great secret of the *Creator*. This indicates to us the wonderful place the Church shall have in the new heaven and the new earth. In the ordering of the nations (Gen. 10.) Israel was in the mind of God, and the place that that nation was to occupy was taken account of, and prepared, half a millennium before it was redeemed out of Egypt (Deut. 32. 8-14). That nation was to be supreme among the nations of the earth, and it will yet be when God takes them up again, when He maketh atonement for His land and for His people (verse 43). "In that day," He says, "will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof, and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old; that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by My Name, saith the Lord that doeth this" (Amos 9. 11, 12).

This is His purpose in connection with His ordering and government of the nations upon the earth. But the mystery belongs to *eternal* counsel. It was hidden in the heart of the *Creator*, and never divulged to any creature, until He had turned that persecuting Benjamite into the most devoted servant that ever in this world lifted up his voice in the name of Christ; and to him, as we have seen, the administration of this mystery was committed.

But it is not for no purpose we are

told that it was hid in the heart of the *Creator*. Such a statement implies that it was designed to have a wonderful and most important place in the creation of God. And this is just what we are told in the first chapter of Paul's epistle to the Ephesians. We have seen that God has raised Christ from the dead, and "set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come; and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." Here we have Christ supreme in the whole creation of God, everything under His feet, the Godhead alone excepted (1 Cor. 15. 27). He is Head *over* everything that has been created, but Head, not over, but *to* the Church, **WHICH IS HIS BODY**, the fulness, or complement—that which completes—of Him that filleth all in all. This is the eternal place of the Church in redeemed creation; the body of Him who is Head over all things.

The desire that the saints of God might understand this mystery brings the steward of it down upon his knees in the presence of God. The slowness to enter into the depths of this masterpiece of Divine wisdom manifested by the saints, gave the Apostle continual anxiety. He has said all that he can say about it in words, and in very simple words too, but in the things of God the letter is not everything. When the letter has been learned it is only the Spirit that can give the things vital power in our souls; for these things belong to "*the depths of God.*" Therefore the Apostle is down upon his knees making an appeal to the Father, who is the Author and Originator of this mystery, that He would grant according to the riches of His glory, that the saints might be strengthened with power by His Spirit in the inner man. The natural ability of the creature, even when born of God, is of no

avail in the understanding of the things that relate to Divine counsel. The Gospel that is preached to the men of the world, repentance and remission of sins, can be understood by anyone, but when we come into contact with the deep things of God, we must have the aid of the Divine Spirit. But this is freely granted.

Another requisite is Christ dwelling through faith in our hearts. We are ever, thank God, in His heart, but not always has He His rightful place in our hearts. Then, "being rooted and founded in love," we require to be always in the consciousness that we have a place in the love of God, from which no power in the universe can dislodge us. Thus equipped we shall be able to look abroad with all the saints upon the breadth, length, depth, and height of that universe that shall be the result of the fulfilment of all the vast counsels of the infinite wisdom, power, and love of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and we ourselves shall be filled to all the fulness of God.

Of this universe which shall be radiant with the glory of redemption, the love of God, Christ and His body is the centre. He is surely centre supreme, but we are His body, and the Head and the body cannot be separate. And from that centre we look abroad upon a sphere lit up with the revelation of God, as it shone down herein the Son of His love. And of that universe Christ shall be the light, as the sun is the light of the solar system. But it will be by means of His body that He will illuminate that wondrous sphere of everlasting peace and joy. His members will be like the rays of the sun, which from that central orb in the heavens shall visit the remotest parts of that system, enlightening, warming, and vitalizing everything, so that everything will be continually rejoicing in the love of God.

We have a pretty good idea of what the body is to a man down here. It completes him. It is himself, a part of himself that gets a good deal of his

attention—too much in most cases. He nourishes and cherishes it. It is the means by which he is in contact with things down here. By its means he makes known to others what kind of a man he is morally. His every movement is the manifestation of his moral state. He can be known by no other medium. To lose his body is to lose his place on earth, and to bring to an end the works that must come up before the judgment seat of Christ, to the praise or blame of the saint, or to the eternal condemnation of the impenitent sinner. Blessed is that man who has presented his body a living sacrifice to God, holy and acceptable, which is his intelligent service (Rom. 12.).

And is this figure of speech, which is used by the Spirit of God regarding our relations with Christ, to convey no true meaning to our souls? Is it not used to enable us to understand the service in which our Saviour shall engage His members throughout the ages of eternity? Even now, and here in this world, His members are to come out morally descriptive of their glorified Head, and in this way do we truly serve Him. And is this to cease in the coming ages? If so, we shall cease to be His body, and He shall cease to be our Head.

How much do we appreciate this marvellous relationship that was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began? How deeply have we by the Spirit of the Father entered into the profound blessedness of it? Joined to Christ! Part of Himself! As truly part of Him as my body is part of myself. The Head and the body make one Man. Our relationship in this way is to Him on the human side. We are not joined in this way to Godhead, which would deify us. It is to the glorified Man, viewed as Man, that we are thus united. None of the other redeemed families is thus united to Him. This is the Father's gift to Him in the day of His rejection by this world, and only the Spirit of the Father can lead us into the knowledge of it.

## NOTES FOR PREACHERS.

### “Who then can be Saved?”

“JESUS looked round about, and saith unto His disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! . . . And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved? But Jesus looking upon them saith, WITH MEN IT IS IMPOSSIBLE, but not with God: for *with God all things are possible*” (Mark 10. 23, 26, 27).

Consider this saying, “With men it is impossible,” and yet remember, preacher, that to save men you are sent. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE; it is impossible for a man to stay the tide as it rolls upon the shore; or to create an angel; it is equally impossible for him to save a soul. With men it is impossible. Impossible to make a man prefer faith to sight, choose the wealth of heaven to the gold of earth, abandon self for Christ, and choose God’s way instead of his own. But the saved man, according to God, does these things; and this means that his very nature is changed. But it is impossible for a man to change his own nature, or that of his fellows, just as it is impossible for him with a few magic words to change the spots of the leopard or the skin of the black. Let the word *impossible* sink into our souls; we have surely not sufficiently considered it, or our grasp of its meaning has been very superficial. It is impossible, *impossible*, IMPOSSIBLE!

The preacher who realizes this will not vaunt himself, he will not be puffed up. He will be a humble man owning his nothingness, and withal dependent, as he goes forth on his mission. He will not go forth lightly; certainly not to make a parade of his powers or display himself, for he is powerless; “with men it is impossible.”

“Who is sufficient for these things?” God, and God alone, “for with God all things are possible.” Ah! the knowledge of this turns a man to God.

The preacher must turn to God, wait upon God, go forth from God with God’s message, knowing that God can lay hold upon the most unpromising of men and transform them into His saints.

But here lies the great hindrance; if the preacher refuses to let self go and rely only upon God, how can he expect his hearers to let self go for Christ? If the preacher shrinks from owning that he has no power, and that every effort he puts forth as of himself is independence of God, and so sinful, how can he expect his hearers to own that they have no power to save themselves, that their best efforts are sinful, and that God is their only hope? One of the chief causes of powerless, fruitless preaching, is the failure to understand the significance of these words of the Lord.

(EDITOR.)

### “WITH HIM.”

“He ordained twelve that they might be *with Him*, and that He might send them forth to preach” (Mark 3. 14). “And ye also shall bear witness because ye have been *with Me* from the beginning” (John 15. 27). This fact was noticed by outsiders, by their very enemies. “They took knowledge of them that they had been *with Jesus*.” The chief characteristic and indispensable qualification for the man who will bear witness for Christ, is that he has been with Him. To sit at the feet of the Master, to be in continuous fellowship with the Lord, is the only preparation for witnessing for Him; and only vessels prepared in this way will please the Holy Spirit. But what an unspeakable grace, that the Lord Jesus would train us in His ways, fashion us after His own likeness, and mould us in His company so that others may learn from us. Paul had known this when he wrote to his converts, “Ye became followers of us and of the Lord.” “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.”

## CONFIDENCE IN GOD.

(EDWARD CROSS.)

(1 Kings 8. 18-28; Neh. 9. 4-8, 32-38.)

IN the first scripture we have Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple, when the glory of the kingdom was still untarnished. The second scripture is the prayer of Nehemiah under circumstances the exact contrast of the former, circumstances of the deepest distress of the people, when all was lost to them but God. The comparison between these two prayers is of great interest; and, first, remark that Solomon prays because he has the mind of God. (Vers. 25, 26.) He knows why he prays and what to pray for: as on a former occasion (2 Sam. 7.) David prays in a similar way. The Lord first communicates to him His mind and purposes (2 Sam. 7. 17), and then David rehearses all this before the Lord, and turns it into prayer that the Lord may establish His word to him. This is an important principle; for if I have from God what He is going to do, I can then assuredly pray about it intelligently and confidently. And so Solomon, knowing what God was going to do to the house, prays.

The subsequent history of the house is given in the following chapters, with all its sorrow and humiliation on account of the people's sins. They failed miserably, and judgment must begin at the house of God. Amongst the first things that go are the golden shields, the glory of the place: and I suppose that as a principle it is the best thing that always goes first. This history goes on until in due time we find ourselves in Nehemiah's day: and here we find them praying this remarkable prayer of which I have read a part. If we have something glorious in Solomon's day, we have something strikingly beautiful in Nehemiah's day. Look at the distress in which the people are, but look at this prayer at such a time. We could all pray with Solomon in his day, but could we find faith to join with

Nehemiah in this prayer? Look at the opening verses (5, 6); there is nothing in Scripture more beautiful, more majestic, than the style of this opening address here. Israel was down at their lowest; they will put the Lord their God at the very highest. A great crisis needs a great Saviour, and they know here who He is whom they are addressing—the Shepherd and Hope of Israel in the day of difficulty.

“And the Levites said, Stand up and bless the Lord your God for ever and ever: and blessed be thy glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise. Thou, even thou, art Lord alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host; the earth, and all things that are therein; the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee.”

What of the feeble remnant now? They were feeble enough surely, a contempt to their enemies; a fox walking on the wall they built would throw it down, forsooth! But what of God, the covenant God of His people, the Creator and Preserver of the universe? They would talk of their own weakness and confess their sins, and their disobedience, and their provocations, and their rebellions, and their justly merited chastisements, and their low estate in consequence; but of Him they had no words adequate to speak of His glory, and of His blessing, and of His praise; of His manifold mercies and His long-suffering patience and pity. The deeper down they were the more they rejoiced to exalt Him, and that in the true spirit of self-judgment and confession. They have God before them in the reality of what *He* is, and therefore they are before Him in the true acknowledgment of what *they* are.

This prayer of the remnant goes

farther back than that of Solomon. Solomon goes back to Abraham, the beginning of all things to a Jew. Here they go back to God Himself. (Compare Isa. 63. 16). Abraham's "God" is a higher title than "the God of Abraham," and this is the source of all things, the resting-place of faith; He abides the same when all else fails. "God is our refuge and strength; a very present help in trouble" (Ps. 46). It is not uncommonly said that "all is gone," "all has failed." Yes, in man's hands, all has failed, deplorably failed; perhaps, more than any of us has any right conception of. But that is man's side of it: and we must ever remember this—with God nothing has failed and His word abides to-day as ever: and faith clings to it as when first it was uttered. He may deny us, and He will if we deny Him, but He cannot deny Himself (2 Tim. 2. 12, 13).

Now mark the way in which they go through in detail the history of their own failures and iniquities. There is no use trying to cloak that which cannot be cloaked. They go through their whole history, and they say, "Here we are this day." Nor would the Spirit of God cover up to-day what must come to light; when a soul comes to God according to the truth of what He is, then it can, *it must* go to the very bottom of what it is itself. There is no use trying to go on with God while covering up that which is contrary to Him.

In 2 Tim. things were already in the apostle's lifetime reduced to their lowest ebb. He does not talk merely of weakness that might be helped, or a breakdown that might be remedied.

The state of things was lower still than that. He says to Timothy, "Be not thou *ashamed* of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner" (1. 8); he says, "I am not *ashamed*, for I know whom I have believed" (v. 12). And of Onesiphorus he says, "He was not *ashamed* of my chain" (v. 16). Yet how often do we turn to this epistle for encouragement, and help to "stir up" (v. 6) the smouldering embers of spiritual energy in the testimony of the Lord. "For," says the apostle, "God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love and of sound discretion." But then he refers everything to Christ, and the expression, "in Christ Jesus," repeated seven times (chaps. 1. 1, 9, 13; 2. 1, 10; 3. 12, 15), shows where his confidence in God found its anchor and its strength.

Circumstances may be similar to-day to the days when "Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses" (3. 8), power may be on the side of the oppressors (Eccles. 4. 1), and the outlook may be hopeless; yet what of that, though "no man stood with him, but all men forsook him," when he can say, "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: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and shall preserve me for his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory to the ages of ages. Amen."

"It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes."

How few there are without some secret corner in their hearts which they would not like to have searched out by Him! That corner *must* be searched out, for He must be a Saviour after His own fashion; and if we would not have it searched, we can have little apprehended the fulness and reality of His salvation. Not alone does He save from wrath—He saves from *sin*. It is in subjection to His yoke that we find rest. God grant it to us for His name's sake even now.

## ELIJAH. No. 3.

(HAMILTON SMITH.

## The Widow's Home. 1 Kings 17. 8-24.

THE brook had failed, but the Lord remained. His servant was not forgotten. He knew his need and had seen the drying of the brook. But no word of warning came, and no fresh direction, until the brook had dried. The love of the Lord will meet the need of His saints, but the way His wisdom takes will keep them in the path of faith.

Moreover, the plan the Lord unfolds is so remarkable, so contrary to all that the prophet could have conceived, so opposed to his religious training, his natural thoughts and spiritual instincts, that had the plan been unfolded to the prophet before the drying of the brook, possibly he would not have yielded so ready an obedience. Like the prophet of a later day, when sent to another Gentile city, he might have fled in an opposite direction. Elijah was a man of like passions with ourselves, and it may be, even as we, he needed the pressure of circumstances to make him willing to obey, and take a path so distasteful to him as a natural man.

For, strange as it may seem, the prophet is told to arise and go to Zarephath and dwell there. He is to leave the promised land and go to a city of the Gentiles, and of all cities, a city that belonged to Zidon—the home of Baal, whose worship had brought ruin on the land—the home, too, of the wicked Jezebel, who had introduced the worship of Baal and murdered the prophets of the Lord. And, stranger still, arrived in that foreign land, the great prophet was to be dependent upon a widow woman for his daily sustenance. For, said the Lord, "Behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee." Had the Lord commanded the prophet to sustain the widow woman we might think it more fitting. But no, God's plan is that the widow woman is to sustain the prophet. There were other cities and other

lands that surrounded Israel far less guilty than Zidon. There were "many widows" in Israel in as sad a plight, but they will not suit God's plan. As ever, God has Christ in view. A thousand years hence, in the city of Nazareth, the Lord would require an illustration of sovereign grace, and therefore to a needy widow in the thrice guilty land of Zidon the prophet Elijah must go. God has a purpose in every detail of the path He plans for His servants, though a thousand years may pass before that purpose is disclosed.

The faith of the prophet yields unquestioning obedience to the word of the Lord. "He arose and went to Zarephath." Moved by faith, urged possibly by the untoward circumstances, he obeys the Lord and takes his solitary way to the distant city of Zidon, across—

A barren thirsty ground  
With thorns and briars o'erspread,  
Where foes and snares abound.

Arrived at the city gate the prophet is confronted by the widow. To natural sight and human reason it seems impossible that this can be the widow by whom he is to be sustained. In absolute poverty, this desolate and starving woman has reached the end of her resources. With only a handful of meal and a little oil in a cruse, she is gathering a few sticks to prepare one last meal for herself and her son, and then to wait for death to end their sufferings. With only sufficient for one more meal, how can she sustain the prophet? The widow speaks indeed of the living God, but it is Elijah's God, for she says "thy God," not "my God." She had no personal faith in the living God: her hopes were connected with the barrel of meal and the cruse of oil, and, as they are failing, there is nothing before her but the gates of death. God, however, has another way than death for the widow. His sovereign grace

has purposed that life—resurrection life—shall fill her home with blessing. As for Elijah, in God's due time he shall pass into the glory, not through the gates of death but by a chariot of fire and horses of fire. Meanwhile he must dwell for a time at Zarephath. Now Zarephath signifies the place of the smelting furnace. The prophet has passed the test of the failing brook at Cherith, he must now face the furnace of trial at Zarephath. But this is God's road to Carmel. Is he to call down fire from heaven? Then indeed he must pass through the fire on earth. Is he going to stand for the living God before all Israel? Then first he must learn in secret the sustaining power of God in the furnace of trial. The failing brook at Cherith, and the refining fire at Zarephath, are steps in the journey to Carmel and the chariot of fire.

Yet how humbling to pride to be sustained by a widow woman; how withering to all self-confidence the distressing circumstances. But the desolate widow, the handful of meal, the cruse of oil, and death hovering over all, only serve to unfold the resources of the living God. And, the utter weakness and hopelessness of the circumstances being revealed, God is free to unfold the resources of grace. Elijah's request for "a little water" and "a morsel of bread" bring to light the condition of the widow woman. And truth being maintained, grace can be displayed. How rich the grace that filled the widow's home! All fear was banished, for the first words of grace were "Fear not."

Then follows *the provision of grace*. "The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail." Their needs are met and death is driven from the door.

Further, in this fine scene we have *the teaching of grace*, for not only does grace bring salvation to the needy, but it teaches us how to live. The life given by grace is a dependent life.

It was not a barrel of meal or a cruse of oil that was promised. The supplies of grace are indeed unlimited, but grace gives no store in hand such as nature delights to possess. The promise was that the handful of meal should not waste nor the oil in the cruse grow less. There would be sufficient for each day but no store for the morrow. Grace teaches us to live in dependence on the Giver of the grace.

Lastly, there is *the hope of grace*, for grace holds out a blessed prospect. "The day," the great day, the happy day, was coming, when the Lord would send rain upon the earth. How happy the home, be it but a widow's cottage, that is fed by the provision of grace, directed by the teaching of grace, and cheered by the hope of grace.

In far greater fulness this same grace has been revealed in this the day of grace. In the widow's home we move amongst the shadows, but now we have the substance, since the One has come who is full of grace and truth. Throughout all the days of our pilgrim journey in this world of need we, too, have the barrel of meal that shall not waste, and the cruse of oil that never fails. Does not the meal—the fine flour—speak to us of Christ, of whom it is said, "THOU REMAINEST," and "THOU ART THE SAME"? (Heb. I. 11, 12). Others may fail us, but He remains. Others may change, but He is the same. And does not the oil speak of that other Comforter—the Holy Spirit—who has come to abide with us for ever? (John 14. 16). Earthly streams run dry, but with the living Christ in the glory, and the indwelling Spirit on earth, the Christian possesses never-failing resources.

Moreover, the grace that has brought salvation to us, teaches us to live "soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." Such a life can only be lived by daily dependence upon Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit.

And the grace that has brought salvation, and teaches us how to live, has set before us that blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ. The appearing of grace leads on to the appearing of glory (Titus 2. 11-13). Then indeed the needs of the saints will be met, their trials for ever past, and earth's famine for ever ended. Well may we sing:—

He shall come down like showers  
 Upon the new-mown grass,  
 And joy and hope, like flowers,  
 Spring up where He doth pass :  
 Before Him on the mountains,  
 Shall peace the herald go ;  
 And righteousness, in fountains,  
 From hill to valley flow.

But further revelations of the glory of the living God await the household at Zarephath. God has other lessons for Elijah, and deeper exercises for the widow. God would reveal Himself not only as the sustainer of life, but as the Giver of life. To be equipped for the great day of Carmel, Elijah must know God as the God of resurrection. To be established in peaceful relations with God, the widow must know God as the God of truth as well as the God of grace, and for this conscience must be awakened, her sin recalled, and her sin judged.

With these high ends in view the shadow of death is allowed to fall upon the widow's home. Her only son falls sick and dies. For a full year the widow has enjoyed in simple faith the mercies that God has provided, but at length in the presence of death her conscience is awakened and she remembers her sin, for death is the wages of sin. As long as life flows quietly and our daily needs are met, we may live with little exercise as to much that, in God's sight, calls for self-judgment. But under the exercise of some special trial, conscience becomes active, the vision is cleared, and much that may have been wrong in the past in thoughts, words, habits and ways, is seen, dealt with, and judged, in God's presence.

Elijah, too, has lessons to learn in this great trial. It becomes a fresh occasion for the exercise of his faith in the living God. Very beautifully he looks beyond the disease and the power of death, and sees in the evil that has come upon them the hand of the living God. In his view it is not disease that has killed the child, not death that has struck him down, it is God that has slain the widow's son. If it is the work of disease and death there is no hope, for they could take the child away but they cannot bring him back. But if God has slain the child, then God can recall the child to life.

The faith of Elijah keeps God between himself and the sorrowful circumstances. But Elijah recognizes that in himself he has no power. This may be signified by the act of stretching himself on the child, or, as the margin reads, he "measured" himself. He thoroughly identifies himself with the dead child; he takes his measure and realizes that, like the dead child, he has no strength. Elijah is powerless in the presence of death. But if the child is dead, God is living. If Elijah has no power, Elijah can pray. By the act of stretching he identifies himself with the powerlessness of the child; by the act of prayer he puts himself in touch with the mighty power of the living God.

The man of like passions with ourselves again draws down the power of God by prayer. "O Lord my God, I pray thee let this child's soul come into him again." As One with whom he is in conscious relationship, and well known and proved, he can say with great confidence, "My God." His faith recognizes that it is within the power of the living God to raise the dead child, and with yet greater faith he prays that it may come to pass. Did ever man, before or since, ask a greater request of God in language so simple and in a prayer so brief. Very evident is it that the effectual fervent prayer is neither elaborate nor lengthy.

The prayer is heard and the request granted. God reveals Himself as the God of resurrection. Not only is God the living God, not only is He the source of life, and the sustainer of life, but He can impart life to the dead. He breaks the power of death and robs the grave of victory by the mighty power of resurrection.

Elijah, laying no claim to the risen

child, delivers him back to the mother. The woman at once discerns that the prophet is a "man of God." We know also that Elijah was a man of like passions as well as a man of God, and further, for our profit we are privileged to see that the man of like passions was transformed into a man of God by the simple and blessed fact that he was a *man of prayer*.<sup>31</sup>

## GOD'S GOVERNMENT: (No. 2).

### The Usual View of God's Dealings.

THE view which the mind that believes in God is prone to cherish, and with which it consents only with reluctance to part, is *that manifest righteousness must mark God's distribution of good and evil upon the earth*, that the prosperity and adversity of men are determined by recognizable retributive justice, and hence, that the treatment of men at the hands of divine providence is an infallible index of their true character.

Accustomed to see justice done between man and man by human governments, we naturally expect to see it reigning also in the government of God. If earthly rulers and judges sometimes pervert justice, or fail to exercise a perfect righteousness, we expect that no such failure will be found in the rule of the Most High. The common sentiment which measures character by condition, which believes that great calamities necessarily and universally follow great crimes, and which led to the general conviction that those men on whom the tower of Siloam fell were sinners above all others, is a homage rendered by the natural conscience to the righteousness of the Eternal. That principle within us which demands that we should act uprightly to others, and makes us feel that if we do wrong we deserve to suffer, teaches us also to expect that we shall find the world the theatre of

a government manifestly just, and hence to interpret all suffering as the penalty of wrongdoing. This, the natural anticipation of the heart, is the sentiment which, in the book of Job, is held and maintained by the three friends, and which the patriarch himself also held till his own experience led him to doubt it.

### *This View is not mere Error.*

Like all errors that have wide prevalence, this view of things is not mere error; on the contrary, it represents a large amount of important truth. It cannot be gainsaid that suffering, wherever inflicted on rational creatures, is the result of sin and an indication of the existence of rebellion against God, and that ultimately, and in its final issues, the government of God will be found characterized by a perfect righteousness, so as to meet and satisfy the demands of every conscience.

Surely we do right to anticipate the manifestation of justice in the administration of God. Surely the foundation of the divine, as of all government, is righteousness; and righteousness must some time be displayed and vindicated if the confidence of subjects is to be retained. It must be evident to all who believe in God, that if righteousness appears veiled,

eclipsed, forgotten, or set aside in the divine procedure, it must be for some special purpose, and for some transient occasion.

Hence it is easy to understand that, in great part, the speeches of Eliphaz and the others are, abstractly taken, full of truth, marked by statements sound, edifying, and important, and in their general outline, presenting only what is in harmony with the whole tenor of Scripture, and finding parallels throughout the Psalms and Prophets in their constant promises of reward to the good, and denunciations of woe to the wicked.

This anticipation of visible justice in the providence of God continues to be widely prevalent, but doubtless at the period to which the history of Job belongs, it was still more general and profound. There were special reasons why this should be so in the world's early history. Not only was it then, as now, enforced by the natural dictates of the human conscience, it was supported by signal and memorable events in the world's history. There is a reference in one of the speeches of Eliphaz to the destruction of mankind by the flood (22. 15, 16), and Bildad alludes perhaps to the overthrow by fire of the cities of the plain (18. 15). It is obvious from such references that these terrible visitations of divine judgment had deeply impressed the minds of men, a fact confirmed by the fact that the traditions of the deluge have, with the dispersion of the families of mankind, spread over the whole world. The remains of the ancient literature of the Euphrates valley show that this catastrophe was, in the memory of the men of the East, distinctly connected with the world's sinfulness, and expressly represented as the work of divine justice. By such ineffaceable remains and traditions, the natural intuitions of the human mind were strengthened, and doubtless Eliphaz and the others felt that they had the warrant of God's own providence in

its most striking incidents for regarding outward calamity as the mark of peculiar guilt.

It is for us an easy thing to point out the fallacy of this. After the long experience of the intervening ages, and with the teaching of the Word of God, it is easy to show that to apply the natural demands of the human conscience to the interpretation of divine providence towards men upon the earth is hasty and unwarrantable. We are able now to understand that this goes upon rash assumptions, such as these:—

1. That this present world, and the life of the individual man in it, furnish an adequate arena for the display and vindication of the divine righteousness and for the exhibition of the results of the government of God.

2. That the mind of man is competent to determine what is due, in the way of retributive award, to various individuals and communities, and is able to judge in regard to the varying degrees of merit and demerit belonging to different kinds of character and conduct.

3. That, in fine, there can never arise special circumstances in a system of administration so vast and complex as that of God, producing what to short-sighted creatures appears as a suspension, or derangement of justice, and that the wisdom of the Omniscient may not discover means of maintaining righteousness which to us are infinitely above all anticipation.

But though to us all this may be obvious, it can be no reproach to the contemporaries of Job that they held fast to the conviction that the justice of God is made manifest in His providence, and hence were shut up to the conclusion that the only explanation of signal suffering was the supposition of signal guilt.

*(To be continued.)*

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

## “Lead us not into temptation.”

1ST DIFFICULTY.—*Can, and does, God lead His children into temptation?*

2ND DIFFICULTY.—*If we are to pray not to be led into temptation, what does James mean (chapter 3. 2), “Count it all joy, my brethren, when ye fall into manifold temptations”?*

THERE are two kinds of temptation which must be carefully distinguished: Firstly, there is that which proceeds from within. “Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed” (Jas. 1. 14). Needless to say that God could never lead into such temptation, nor could joy be connected with it. “Let no man say when he is tempted [thus] I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man” in this manner (Jas. 1. 13). Secondly, there are the temptations or trials which come from the outside, difficulties in the

path, persecution, suffering or loss, and God may use these things for the trying of faith, and even bring about the testing, in order to manifest that which He Himself has wrought in the soul. Such a case was that of Abraham in respect of Isaac. Now in such trials it is the privilege of the Christian to rejoice as Paul and Silas did in the prison at Philippi, glory being brought to God thereby. At the same time, the sense of our own weakness and inability to stand the testing of faith, unless divinely supported, would lead us to pray “Lead us not into temptation.”

From temptation within Christ was absolutely free, for in Him was no sin; but as to that which came from without, He was in all points tempted like as we are (Heb. 4. 15). For temptation from within we need the application of His death; while for that which comes upon us from without, we need His sympathy and the rich supply of His grace for support.

(JAMES GREEN.)

## “Ceased from Sin.”

“He that hath suffered in the flesh, hath ceased from sin” (1 Pet. 4. 2). *Please explain.*

IN the verse referred to Peter expresses the same teaching as Paul in Rom. 6., viz., that in Christ’s death we have died in God’s account. Christ has died unto sin once, that is suffered for us in the flesh; we are to arm ourselves with the same mind, namely, reckon ourselves dead indeed unto sin and alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. In so

dying to sin, through His death, we pass from under its dominion, Christ’s death has severed the link. In this way we “cease from sin,” being dead to it, that we should no longer live the rest of our time in the flesh, to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. This position the Christian has to maintain at whatever cost of self-denial.

Peter uses the expression, “suffered in the flesh,” as equivalent to “having died.”

(JAMES GREEN.)

## The Unjust Steward.

THE parable does not commend the unjust dealing of this man who was discharged from his stewardship, but the wisdom that made him use that over which he still had power with an eye to the future. The application of it is—*Use the present with the future always in view.*

A brief exposition of the parable in its setting may make the meaning clear. Man was placed in charge of things in this world as God’s steward, but he was from the beginning, and still is, an unfaith-

ful steward, for instead of holding all and using all for God’s glory, his chief concern has been to enrich himself and enjoy everything without any reference to God, as though everything he could grasp belonged to himself. This has been his ruin, and he has forfeited everything, his own life also, and is, in consequence of his unfaithfulness, under “notice to quit.” This is true of every man, as Romans 5. 12 proves: “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and

*death by sin ; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."*

But at this point God steps in in unspeakable grace and, in His Gospel, He says to man, "Though you have forfeited everything on earth by your sin, yet I will give you something infinitely better in heaven. Though you have forfeited your lives, I will give you eternal life ; though you have no security of tenure in this earthly house of your tabernacle, I offer you a place in 'everlasting habitations.' You cannot justly call any earthly possession your own, but I open to you My eternal treasures in Christ. I offer them to you and I will give you a title to call these true riches your own" (verses 11, 12). Everything depends upon how this wonderful offer of God's grace is treated. Alas, the majority of men refuse God's offer, like those who with one consent began to make excuse in chapter 14, 18, 19, 20. They don't admit that they are only stewards of the things that they mean to enjoy, and that they have forfeited their right to use them ; they mean to hold them as long as they can as though they were entirely their own, preferring them to that which God offers. Hence, when they are ejected from their stewardships by death, there are no everlasting habitations for them, for they have refused them, and, like the rich man at the end of this chapter, they have their portion in hell. These chapters, the 14th, 15th and 16th, hang together.

But those who act wisely realize that their tenure here is short ; like the unjust steward they know that they are to be put out of their stewardship. The man who owns God's justice in this, will surely cast himself upon the mercy of God as the publican did in chapter 18, 13, and will gladly and gratefully accept God's wonderful offer, and make the future secure. Henceforth the future becomes his chief concern, it governs him. He

looks "not at the things that are seen ; but at the things that are not seen ; for the things that are seen are temporal ; but the things that are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. 4. 18). When the heart is set upon things above the present is not despised, but the things that belong to it are held at their true value and used, not, for self-gratification, but in dependence upon God and for his glory, as any faithful steward would use his master's goods for his master's benefit.

It is a parable for disciples, and to them the Lord says, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (verse 13). The man whose heart is set on worldly riches is not serving God, he is sacrificing the future for the present.

J. G. Bellett, commenting on this parable, says, "The Lord has others to converse with. He has to meet *disciples*. And accordingly, at the opening of chapter 16, he does meet them. He gives them a word to stir their diligence and encourage their hopes. He tells them to aim high in their expectations, and to lay out their energies to sure and eternal profit. Being disciples, they are to be regarded as having already come back as prodigals, and their business now was to value the hopes which grace had set before them, and to 'make to themselves friends' of every talent and opportunity, as knowing that their labour should not be in vain in the Lord." Whatever is expended upon others for the Lord's glory has a value that extends beyond time ; whatever is expended on selfish gratifications perishes in the using. Money and the things of this life are called "the mammon of unrighteousness" because the rights of the rightful Owner of all are refused. God says, "The gold and the silver are Mine," but how much of it is poured out in selfish pleasure, and how little of it is used for His work and glory !

(EDITOR)

## "No Scripture is of Private Interpretation." 2 Peter 1. 20.

E. N.—Please explain the meaning of the above statement.

THE prophetic writings are not a mere collection of interesting manuscripts, independent of and having no reference to each other, as the critics

would have us believe, but One Mind dictated them all, for "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

So that while each writer had his own special message to deliver, and that mes-

sage had its own application to the people to whom it was delivered, yet it did not stand alone, it was part of one whole.

In each part as it was given there appeared the development of God's ways to His grand goal, and each pointed on to the time when Christ should first suffer and then enter into His glory, when He should reign in righteousness and fill the earth with the knowledge of God. So Peter speaks of these prophets "Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ in them did signify, when it testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow" (1 Peter 1. 11). "And Paul, as his manner was . . .

reasoned . . . out of the Scriptures . . . that Christ must needs have suffered and risen from the dead" (Acts 17. 2, 3). And most blessed of all, the Lord Himself said to His disciples, "All things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and in the Psalm concerning Me. Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures" (Luke 24. 44, 45).

So that none of these Scriptures stand alone, they have not each a separate or private, much less a contradictory interpretation, but they all bear one common and united testimony TO CHRIST.

(EUREKA).

## ZIONISM AND THE JEWS.

THOUGH the British declaration in regard to Palestine being made a national home for the Jews seems long in being realized, yet the interest in it amongst the Jews is unabated, as the following paper shows.

From Persia there comes striking evidence of the intense interest in the Jewish Palestine. Persia appears to have received the news of the Balfour Declaration only a year ago. It created a veritable sensation. The first intimation was a telegram from the Zionist Organization in Petrograd. This was read in a synagogue, and aroused great enthusiasm. The worshippers bowed down, thanked God, and raised cries of joy at the new redemption. Practical steps followed. A number of young men formed a Zionist Committee, and communication was established with the Copenhagen Zionist office. Just about this time the country was afflicted by a series of epidemics — typhoid, typhus, and pestilence following famine, which, in Teheran alone, wiped out one-seventh of the 7000 Jews in the city. The help sent by the American Jews saved many lives. By Passover (in March last) the famine and pestilence had abated, and a great demonstration of thanksgiving was held, at which the deliverance from Egypt, the proclamation by Cyrus, and the British Declaration were linked together. The gathering ended with cries of "Long live Persia! Long live the Allied Powers, the champions of the small nations! Long live Zion!" Zionist societies are being formed in all parts of Persia.

Siberia, too, is responding to the call of Zion. The Jewish communities there have grown considerably during the last two years, and a striking factor in connection with the

work of organizing local Jewish activity is that time is always found for interest in the regeneration of Palestine. A conference of the "Zeiri Zion" (Young Zion) was held at Ekaterinburg last June, although the country round about was in the war zone between the contending armies of Koltchak and the Bolsheviks. Nevertheless, representatives came from Tchelabinsk, Ufa, and Tumeny. A system of progressive self-taxation on the basis of income in aid of the Jewish National Fund was advocated, and collections are being organized for the erection of a large immigrant house in one of the ports of Palestine.

For five years Siberia was cut off from all communication with Palestine, and the greatest interest is evinced in all news of the Zionist Movement. Money has already been collected, but owing to the present low rate of exchange, and the difficulties in the way of communication, work has not yet been started. Meanwhile the usual Zionist influence in the direction of cultural activity is to be noted. There is considerable study of Hebrew, and to overcome the difficulties presented by the lack of teachers, the Central Bureau, "Tarbut" (Culture), in Tomsk has organized training classes. The task of arousing the stray and scattered small communities in remote regions is also in hand.

It is obvious from such reports as these that Zionism is the only real progressive force in Jewry at the present time. Its power to arouse the dormant spirit to intellectual and practical activity on modern lines is comparable with nothing that has preceded it for centuries. (From Palestine.)

Thus is this race, cast off for the time being because of unbelief, being prepared for their return to the land given by God to their fathers.

# TIME IS SHORT.

## A Word to Christian Young Men.

HOW long will you dream of great things you hope to do? Let your mind be made up without delay, for time is short. There are many who would have been far more useful if they had not dreamed so much about being imposing. Oh, the wonderful plans for converting Europe, London, or evangelizing the world, which evaporate in speech. Did you ever hear of a certain King of Russia, who always wanted to take a second step before he took the first? Be not like him. In the name of the Eternal God do the work that He has put within your reach. Better slay a single enemy than dream of slaughtering an army; better plant a single blade of grass or sow a single grain of corn, than dream of fertilizing the Sahara, or reclaiming from the mighty sea untold acres of fertile land. Such dreams are the children of an idle brain. Do something, sirs, do something. It is high time to wake out of sleep, for the time is short.

### TIME IS SHORT.

My soul, bend thyself down, and lay thyself out for the glory of God. Be this the one aim of thy entire being. Form thy friendships and order thy occupations so as to fulfil this first and highest duty and privilege of life. Be it thy one motive to live for His honour, and, if needs be, even to die to promote His renown among the sons of men. "*Present your bodies a living sacrifice.*" Attune your souls to that great Hallelujah—"While I live will I praise the Lord. I will sing praise unto my God while I have my being. Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord; Bless thou the Lord, O my soul."

### TIME IS SHORT.

The man who devotes all his strength to accomplish one reasonable object is generally successful. In vain you dissipate your strength and fritter away your opportunities by dividing

your attention. You want to be a Christian and serve the Lord, yet your heart is set on riches. It can't be done. Choose whom you will serve. You have desires to serve the Lord; thank God for that; but you want to be known in the world as a good companion; to gain a reputation as a man of knowledge and a good talker; ambition prompts you to seek fame amongst your fellows. Very well, I shall not denounce any of these things, but I would use every persuasion to induce you to renounce the world. You will not serve Christ unless you do. If Christ has bought you with His blood, and redeemed you from this present evil world, He has henceforth a claim upon you as His servant, and it is at your peril you take up with any pursuits that are inconsistent with a full surrender of yourself and your service to Him. *You belong to Him, live wholly for Him.*

The reason why the majority of Christians never attain to any eminence in the divine life, is because they let the floods of their lives run away in a dozen little trickling streams, whereas if they cooped them up into one channel, and sent that one stream rolling on for the glory of God, there would be such a force and power about their character, their thoughts, their efforts, and their actions, that they would "live while they lived."

### TIME IS SHORT.

I saw a lad, believing in Jesus, and giving his young heart to Him. No sooner was he saved than he began to serve the Lord after a boy's way, and still increasing in intelligence and energy, to lose no time. He early learnt the lesson of the corruption of his own heart, and turned wholly to Christ from self. And so watchful was he, that his time was not spent in wandering and retracing his steps, in backsliding and

repenting, in getting lukewarm and rekindling former ardour. So he lived and served the Lord, bringing forth much fruit for the Father's glory: a vessel meet for the Master's use. His life was brief; it was soon over. But might not God Himself look down from His eternal dwelling-place with satisfaction upon such a life? The slender threads of the fleeting moments were worked up into the goodly fabric of a complete biography.

One talent has been given you—**TIME**—and that endowment sparse! Prize this gift so as to economize it; look after it so as not to squander it; employ it so judiciously that it will never be regretted; invest it so profitably that as a faithful steward you may welcome the advent of the Lord, ready to give an account.

#### TIME IS SHORT.

Oh for men with one ambition and one enterprise, to glorify the Lord. I have prayed and do pray that He may make the most of me—to do it anyhow. What if to this end I must be cast into the furnace of affliction and suffer for His sake? What if my honour should be trampled in dust and my name become a hissing and a by-word, if the witness of my integrity is on high? Here am I, Lord, to do aught, to bear aught that Thou shalt bid. Only get

as much glory to Thy name as can be out of a poor creature such as I am.

Who will join me in this petition? Vows made in our own strength are vain; but I solemnly charge each Christian young man to foster this aspiration. In the name of Him who has redeemed you with His blood, gird up the loins of your mind. Survey the course you have to run. Prepare for the good fight of faith, in which you are to engage. Live to the utmost consecration of your entire manhood in its triple nature—spirit, soul and body. Yield yourselves up unreservedly to the Lord Jesus Christ. Do not stop to parley. **THE TIME IS SHORT.** "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might." Work while it is yet day, "for the night cometh when no man can work."

"*The time is short.*" This ought to fire us with zeal for immediate action. The sun posts on, the sands run down. Now is the accepted time. Let those who love the Lord be prompt. The time to do the deeds that must be done, or left undone, flies swiftly past. Be quick. Preach the Word.

"Not many lives, but only *one*, have we—  
How full and active should that one life  
be—

That narrow span  
Day after day filled up with blessed toil,  
Hour after hour still bringing in new spoil."

## OUR HEAVEN.

**SAMUEL RUTHERFORD** said that to see Christ through the keyhole once in a thousand years would be heaven enough for him. Thus did he express his love for his Saviour, and the joy that one glimpse of His face would yield to him. But that would not be enough for the Saviour whom he loved and adored. No; His love has something to say in this matter. It has already said it, and it is this: "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also." And, "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me,

be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory."

There shall be no closed door in that glory to hide the Saviour from His blood-bought saints.

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

"Close to His trusted side  
In fellowship divine.  
No cloud, no distance then shall hide  
Glories that there shall shine."

And, most wonderful prospect, "*we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.*"

## THE PLACE FOR SELF.

(J. WILSON SMITH.)

“OH! send me forth, my Saviour,  
 Oh! send me for Thy glory,  
 Regarding not the praise of man,  
 And trampling on the fear of man,  
 And fighting for Thy glory.

There is a man who often stands  
 Between me and Thy glory,  
 His name is Self—  
 My carnal self,  
 Self-seeking self,  
 Stands 'twixt me and Thy glory.

Oh! mortify him, mortify him,  
 Put him down, my Saviour,  
 Exalt Thyself above; lift high  
 The banner of Thy cross,  
 And in its folds  
 Conceal Thy standard-bearer.”

For exactly fifty years have I had the above beautiful hymn in my possession. Who may have been the writer I cannot say, nor does it matter; but, seeing that it may be out of print and that its sentiments are not only very fine, but of immense spiritual importance to every one who would seek, in any sphere, or measure, to exalt the glory of the Lord Jesus, I feel that the reproduction of it now must be for the encouragement of all such. I may say that it was the prayer, in poetic language, of a few devoted servants of Christ who at that time laboured in Canada with very great blessing on all hands. The gracious power of God rested on them. Their labours were not in vain in the Lord.

By this time the most of them have passed away to be with the Lord, while their names are, no doubt, forgotten, or being forgotten. But what matters that? Their earnest prayer was: “*Conceal Thy standard-bearer.*” They sought that “self” should be annulled—carnal, self-seeking self—that it should be mortified, put to a practical death,

in order that “Thyself alone” should be exalted.

It was in this self-obliterating and Christ-exalting sense that they desired to be sent forth, careless of human favour or flattery, so long as they fought for His glory. They went, they lived, they served, they lifted high the banner of the cross—and their fruit shall remain.

May the spirit of whole-hearted consecration that is breathed in these verses become infectious everywhere. Their object is one and the same. The motive, the desire, the deep craving in each is the true and only genius in Christianity. This, in its divine conception, knows of nothing but that which makes everything of the Lord and nothing of His servants and confessors. “That Christ may be magnified in my body whether by life or death,” was the consuming hope of the apostle Paul. All else was secondary. This was the commanding object in his wonderful and most fruitful life. And so should it be with every one of Christ’s saints and servants.

How abhorrent “self” becomes when Christ is rightly learned! It came to its end, in the sight of God, at Calvary. There it was mortified, indeed, in the cross, but we discover daily its present existence and power, even though possessed of the indwelling Spirit of God, in whose gracious strength alone can we overcome it.

But just as we really enjoy the Lord Himself in all that He is, so do we find an object infinitely superior to our wretched self.

May this sweet old hymn stimulate our hearts to a constantly renewed devotion to the living, loving, coming Lord.

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We are quick at seizing the reins when we see danger ahead; but the Lord knows better than we do what has to be done; in due season He will deliver all who look to Him.

## THE FRIEND OF SINNERS.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

FOR one brief hour only is the veil that covers the first thirty years of our Lord's life drawn aside, and one saying of His alone during that period is recorded for our learning. But what a revelation of sinless, holy perfection, and readiness to bear the yoke of service for the blessing of mankind, does that one saying reveal! "*How is it that ye sought Me? Wist ye not that I must be about MY FATHER'S BUSINESS?*" It is probable that at the age of twelve a child begins definitely to choose between evil and good; and the Lord is shown to us in this beautiful passage as making His choice; He refused the evil and he chose the good; as it was written by the prophet, that Emmanuel would. His Father's business—His Father's will—this to Him was good and perfect and acceptable, and with this will treasured in His heart He lived His youthful days, until the due time came for His manifestation.

"A word, fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver," and "A word spoken in due season, how good it is." Such were all the words of the Lord; every one of them came forth in its own time and circumstance, and none were more fitly spoken than this word. And in the record of His words also, all are divinely placed. If a Divine Person, divinely perfect and blessed, came into the world for the eternal blessing of men, it is only fitting that a Divine record of His words and ways, also divinely perfect and blessed, should be given of His coming, that those for whom He came might have a perfect assurance as to it. Admit the former, and the latter follows in logical sequence. To suppose that God would send His only-begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him, and having done that, allow an imperfect, contradictory human record to be the only record of His life and death here, would be to suppose Him to be guilty of colossal folly. The record must be as perfect in its own sphere as

the One whose life and mission it records was perfect in His, or else we have no sure knowledge or certainty of these things upon which depend our soul's eternal welfare. If the Holy Scriptures are what the critics say they are, mere ancient, human documents, in which are recorded events which the writers did but poorly remember, to be tested by human scholarship, which, by the way, commences its test by a decided bias against them; if they may be cut and criticized, accepted or rejected, in parts or wholly, then where are we in this matter? The angels' triumphant declaration that He brought "good tidings of great joy" when He announced the birth of Jesus is a mockery; we know not whether our great Redeemer did ever say, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Such wonderful words may have been put into His mouth, as Shakespeare put great sayings into the mouths of his heroes. Did He really warn men against "the damnation of hell," and speak those blessed words about the many mansions in His Father's house? We cannot say unless the record of them is divinely perfect, and divinely sure.

We believe in God, and we are confident that "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." We are confident also that having given "His unspeakable gift" for men, He would see to it that they should be in no uncertainty about it; hence are the Scriptures God-breathed; the men who wrote them were moved by the Holy Spirit; they had these things, not by hearsay, or from their own imperfect observation, but "*from the very first,*" from the source of all true knowledge, from God Himself. Hence our remark that the records of our Lord's words are divinely placed, so that they shine like apples of gold in pictures of silver.

It is in Luke's Gospel that these youthful words of the Lord Jesus are alone recorded, and how beautifully they fit in to the character of this Gospel. *The Gospel of Luke is the Gospel of "My Father's business."* It is the Gospel of grace, this the Father's Name implies. It is the Father, who in the very heart of the Gospel sees His prodigal son afar off, and has compassion upon him, and runs to meet him while yet he is a great way off, and falls on his neck and kisses him; and cries in His gladness, "Let us eat and be merry: for this My son was dead and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." Yes, Luke's Gospel is the Gospel of grace to guilty sinners, and the Lord was the vessel of this grace; His Father's business was His business. He was here to commence it, to carry it on, and to finish it, and the fact that He is crowned with glory and honour at His Father's right hand, is the proof that He has most blessedly done it; as is the fact also that millions are rejoicing in the grace of God, which has brought salvation to them.

Being the vessel of God's grace He was, and is, the Friend of sinners. Mark His first words in public testimony as given to us in this Gospel. *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."*

He came to men, bruised and broken and blinded and bound by sin, and said unto them: "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears," and they all wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of His mouth.

In each Gospel the form of the opposition from His foes brings into greater prominence the chief feature that the Gospel presents. It is so here. The religionists did not like grace, they could not understand it;

so full were they of their own importance that they marvelled that Jesus did not pay court to them and seek their patronage; they grew angry and scornful when He sought the company of sinners, and this is their chief complaint in this Gospel; to this they shouted their opposition constantly.

In chapter 5. 30 they murmured against His disciples, saying, "*Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners?*"

In chapter 7. 34 they grow abusive and say, "*Behold a gluttonous man, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners.*"

In chapter 15. 2 they say with bitter enmity, "*This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them.*"

And again in chapter 19. 7 "they all murmured, saying, *That He was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.*"

They spoke the truth in their hatred, and that which they thought was His shame was His glory, as a countless host of sinners saved by grace will declare in His eternal praise.

Not to the proudly religious did He come who, though wise in their own conceit, were "fools grown insolent in fooling; most, when the lost were dying at the doors." He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance; "the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which is lost."

He said, "*Fear not,*" to sinful Simon (chapter 5. 10), "*I will—be thou clean,*" to the poor foul leper (chapter 5. 13); "*Weep not,*" to the broken-hearted widow (chapter 7. 13); "*Thy sins are forgiven,*" to the weeping sinner at His feet (chapter 7. 48); and "*To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise,*" to the dying robber (chapter 23. 43).

He came to do His Father's business, and for this there was given to Him "the tongue of the learned" [or instructed]; that He should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary; His ear was wakened morning by morning, to hear as the learner

(Isaiah 50. 4). But who was He who thus lived in entire and daily obedience to His Father's word, so that He might carry on His business? Isaiah 50 tells us this also. He says: "*Wherefore, when I came, was there no man? when I called, was there none to answer? Is My hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem? or have I no power to deliver? 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 I make sackcloth their covering*" (Isaiah 50. 2, 3).

Yes, this is He who came from heaven to be the sinner's Friend, and to bring to the poorest and the worst the saving grace of God. He is the

Creator, who came to redeem with outstretched arm; but it involved Him in a life of suffering and shame amongst men, and in hatred from those who loved Him not. The One who with hand omnipotent draws the curtain of night across the heavens, says: "*The Lord God hath opened My 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*" (Isaiah 50. 5, 6).

Wonderful Friend of sinners! who would not cast aside their own righteousness and pride to make Thy acquaintance, and count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Thee!

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## CALL TO REMEMBRANCE.

"**B**UT call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions" (Heb. 10. 32). God has not forgotten those days, backslider. Your face then was so happy that you were a living advertisement for the Gospel; your cheerfulness under trial was an invitation to sinners to come and find a like joy. But now it is not so, you are like the bruised reed from whence no music comes, and like the smoking flax that yields no light, but only a dolorous and nauseous smoke. It is sad for your own sake, but sadder for the sake of others, for were you now to attempt a verbal word of testimony for Christ, it would be very feeble and destitute of good. Until the joy of the Lord becomes your strength again, you will breath a heavy atmosphere and your utterances for Christ will be checked if not choked by your unhappy state. You are like the baggage of an army, or the sick that

cannot be wholly left, you hinder the rapid march of the brave soldiers of the cross. Once your voice was that of a hero inspiring the troops. Call those days to remembrance; now they hear no cheering word from you, and if they turn their eyes away from the Captain of their salvation, and look at you, which God forbid, they will be dispirited and flag and fail.

Remember from whence you have fallen and return. Return, for the Father's heart is still the same and Jesus changes not. Return, for mercy awaits thee. God is God and not man, or you would long ago have been destroyed. Return now, for He will put away thy sin as a cloud, and thy transgressions as a thick cloud. Acknowledge thy wanderings, own thy treachery in the presence of the foe to Him, so shall He freely forgive and restore thee perfectly, and thy joy shall come back to thee as in the former days.

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IT is of all importance that our inner life should be kept up to the height of our outward activity; else we are near some spiritual fault.

# THE SON OF GOD LOVED ME.

(H. J. VINE.)

FEW men, if any, save the Man of Sorrows, ever drank of the cup of grief as deeply as the apostle Paul did ; yet he found solace in divine love all through his earthly days. To him the cross of Christ was the unique expression of that love. "I live by faith," he said ; "the faith of the Son of God, who has loved me and given Himself for me" (Gal. 2. 20). He was therefore sustained and cheered on, notwithstanding the difficulties which beset his path. Moreover, he deepened in the knowledge of the triumphs of the One who personally loved him, and who loved him personally ; therefore joy was continually his portion also, as he wrote, "Grieved, yet always rejoicing." The secret of his buoyant energy lay in the known love of the Son of God in the power of the Spirit. "He loved me," he could record, and he lived by the faith of Him.

Although the apostle John is used to give us more of the truth concerning our Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God than Paul, nevertheless the latter tells us that all the activity of the gifts, which the ascended Christ has given, is in view of our coming to the knowledge of Him thus. This is the end before the gifts—"The edifying of the body of Christ, until we all arrive at the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, at the full grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fulness of the Christ" (Eph. 4. 13).

Many things that look great to a child appear comparatively small to the full grown man. The knowledge of Him in whom the eternal God has been fully revealed ; in whom He has spoken fully and finally ; who is the Heir and Creator of all things ; who has risen victorious over death and the grave after giving Himself in love for us ; who has defeated Satan and sits on the right hand of the throne of the greatness in the heavens ;—the knowledge of Him in whom is life, yea, who is "the true God and eternal

life ;" will set many things that appear great to a babe in Christ in their true relation as comparatively small, it may be, even though important, as all things that are of God are. So the apostle adds, "That we may be no longer babes tossed to and fro." To be able to rejoice that such an One loved me and gave Himself for me, will not only keep me from being tossed about, but give me joy and comfort in the path of God's holy will.

And then in Him we have *life*. "God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that has the Son has life : he that has not the Son of God has not life." The first epistle of John is specially written that those who believe on the Name of the Son of God may *know* that they have eternal life, just as the Gospel of John is written that we might *believe* that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that we might have life in His Name. In a world of death and departure from the true God, how blessed to live in the circle where life in the Son of God is known ! *Victory over the world* is gained by those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God, notwithstanding all its allurements and violence, its lust and pride, appealing to the flesh, the eyes, and our life in the body. We cannot over-estimate the importance of being built up in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ ; for as we grow in grace and up to Him in all things, that which is not according to Him will be outgrown.

What an *abode*, too, is provided, even before we are taken to the Father's house to dwell where the Son is for ever : "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in Him and He in God,"—who is love,—and "he that dwells in love dwells in God and God in Him." All fear is cast out by the love which is perfect—the love which was manifested in the death of the Son of God, by which we have been reconciled to Him ; and we can say, "We have known and believed the

love which God has to us" (1 John 4. 16). As those who are provided with such an abode, each one who confesses Jesus as the Son of God may say, with a deepened sense of its marvellous grace and blessedness, "He loved me and gave Himself for me."

The one who is thus established will not be easily drawn aside by the strifes which arise as to sectarian and party *fellowship*, for he will abide in that into which *all the saints* are called; as we read, "God is faithful, by whom ye have been called into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor. 1. 9). Men may build up select fellowships of their own, but God does not call us into them. It is the fellowship of the Son of God into which He calls us. We need none other, that is enough. Oh, that our hearts took in more of the abundance that is here; then "the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God" would prove to be infinitely blessed, and we should be stable as well as satisfied, desiring no other fellowship, but rather deepening in the reality of the fellowship of the Father and the Son; and as we walk in the light having happy and holy fellowship one with another without misgiving, for the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from every sin.

*Worship* also has a special place here. In the presence of such an One as He is, who has loved us so truly as to give Himself for us, we are instinctively moved by the Spirit to worship God's beloved Son. How can the soul that says, *He loved me and gave Himself for me*, do otherwise? We have spoken of this personal love, and of the greatness of the One who so loved us; also of the facts of *life* in Him. *Victory* over the world and an *abode* in divine love; likewise of the *fellowship* of God's Son into which we are called. *Worship* follows naturally. In the freedom and power of the Spirit we can let our hearts overflow before Him, and allow them to tell out the sense that we have of His love and glory.

When Jesus drew near to the man whose eyes He had opened, and who had just been cast out by the religious zealots at Jerusalem, He asked him, "Dost Thou believe on the Son of God? Who is He, Lord,—he answered,—that I might believe on Him? and Jesus said to him, Thou hast both seen Him, and He it is that speaketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe; and he worshipped Him." What a sight! a once blind sinner, now a rejoicing believer, having sight and victory over religious opposition, found worshipping in the presence of the blessed Son of God! How fragrant and precious to Him!

The disciples were in the storm-tossed ship. Jesus drew near. "Be of good cheer," He said, "It is I, be not afraid." Peter answered, "Lord, if it be Thou command me to come to Thee on the waters." And He said, "Come." Peter walked on the waters to go to Jesus. That was victory, truly!—victory over the elements that would have engulfed him! It is not surprising that directly he looked at the boisterous storm, and got his eye off the Lord, he began to sink, needing to be saved by that ever-ready hand, and taken into the ship. When they were there the storm ceased, and those that were in the ship came and worshipped Him, saying, "*Truly Thou art the Son of God.*" How precious in the sight of heaven! What a delight to the Father to see His Son, the darling of His heart, thus honoured!

The cast-out and the storm-tossed were brought to own and worship the Son of God. Better to have Him, the Centre of all God's thoughts and counsels, than the best religious fellowships of man, than the most stable and respectable of his organizations. May we all prove this plenteously till we surround Him in glory, fully conformed to His image, and behold His everlasting loveliness, the Firstborn among many brethren, according to God's purpose.

## ELIJAH. No. 4.

(HAMILTON SMITH.)

## The Governor of the King's House. (1 Kings 18. 1-16.)

AT last the years of famine draw to their close, and again the word of the Lord comes to Elijah saying, "Go, shew thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth." In the beginning of the years of drought the Lord had said to Elijah, "Get thee hence, and *hide thyself*"; now the word is, "*Go, shew thyself.*" There is a time to hide ourselves and a time to show ourselves; a time to proclaim the word of the Lord from the housetops, and a time to draw "apart into a desert place and rest a while." A time to pass through the land "as unknown," and a time to mingle with the crowd "as well known" (2 Cor. 6. 9). Such changes are the common lot of all true servants of the Lord. The Baptist, in his day, was in the desert "as unknown" till the day of his showing to Israel "as well known"; only to withdraw again from the public gaze in the presence of One of whom he could say, "He must increase, but I must decrease." This grace, which knows when to come forward and when to withdraw, finds its most perfect expression in the Lord's own path. He can gather all the city at the door of His lodging as One that is "well known," and rising a great while before day, He can depart into a solitary place "as unknown."

But such changes in the path of the servant, if they are to meet with a ready obedience, demand low thoughts of self and great confidence in God. This high quality of faith was not wanting in Elijah. Without raising a single objection he "went to shew himself unto Ahab." His secret training had fitted him for the demands of the occasion. In the eyes of the king, Elijah was an outlawed man, a troubler of Israel, and to show himself to the monarch would be simple madness in the light of human reason. Could not God bring rain upon the earth without exposing His servant to the wrath of

the king? Doubtless He could, but this would by no means meet the circumstances of the case. The rain had been withheld at the word of Elijah in the presence of the king, and the coming of the rain must also depend upon the intervention of God's prophet in the presence of the king. Had the rain returned apart from the public testimony of Elijah, he would at once have been set down as a false prophet and a boaster, and still worse, the deliverance would have been attributed by the prophets of Baal to their idol.

We are not left in any doubt as to the moral condition of the king. While Elijah journeys from Zarephath at the word of the Lord and for the glory of the Lord, the king takes a journey prompted by pure selfishness and with no higher object than the preservation of his stud. For three and a half years neither rain nor dew has fallen—the famine is sore in the land—king and people are proving that it is "an evil thing and bitter" to forsake the Lord God and worship idols. But what of the king? Has this sore calamity softened his heart, and wrought repentance before the Lord? Is he journeying through his kingdom seeking to alleviate the distress of his starving people and calling upon all to cry to God? Alas! his thoughts are occupied with his horses and mules rather than his starving people; and so far from seeking God he is merely seeking grass.

A weak, self-centred, self-indulgent man, controlled by a strong-minded, idolatrous woman, he has become the leader in apostasy, and the avowed enemy of the man of God. And now, unmoved by the terrible visitation of the drought and the famine, the universal misery finds him still pursuing his selfish and frivolous life, alike indifferent to the sufferings of his people, and to the claims of God.

Such is the picture of human depravity presented by the king.

But at this point another and a very different character passes before us. Obadiah was one who feared the Lord greatly and who, in times past, had wrought a very signal service for the prophets of the Lord, and yet, strangely enough, he is the governor of the king's house. What an anomaly that one who fears the Lord greatly should be found in intimate association with the apostate king. "It was not," as one has said, "that he was betrayed at times merely, nor was it that his way was stained at times, but his whole life evinces a man of mixed principles."

Both Elijah and Obadiah were saints of God, but their meeting is marked by reserve rather than by the communion of saints. Obadiah is deferential and conciliatory, Elijah cold and distant. What fellowship can there be between God's stranger and Ahab's minister? Another has truly remarked, "We cannot serve the world, and go on in the course of it behind each other's backs, and then assume we can meet as saints and enjoy sweet communion."

Obadiah tries to escape from a mission which in his sight is fraught with danger. "What," he exclaims, "have I sinned," that I should be sent to the king? But Elijah had said nothing about sinning. Then Obadiah pleads his good deeds. Had not Elijah heard of his kindness in times past to the prophets of the Lord? However, it was no question of bad deeds or good deeds; the source of all Obadiah's trouble was *the false position* he was in. \* He was a man of the unequal yoke.

The Spirit of God takes occasion by this scene to depict the solemn results of the unequal yoke between righteousness and unrighteousness, light and darkness, Christ and Belial, he that believeth, and an infidel (2 Cor. 6. 14-18).

1. *Obadiah has to take his orders from the apostate king.* Elijah takes his directions from the Lord and moves and acts according to the commands of the Lord. Obadiah, though indeed he may fear the Lord, is not used in the service of the Lord, and gets no directions from the Lord. Ahab is his master, Ahab he has to serve, and from Ahab he takes his directions. Thus in this time of national calamity he fritters his time away in the trivial work of seeking grass for his master's beasts.

2. *He lives at a low spiritual level.* Being in the way on his master's errands, "Behold Elijah met him." In the presence of the prophet, Obadiah falls on his face addressing him as "My Lord Elijah," indicating that he is conscious of the lower level on which he lives. Obadiah may dwell in the palaces of kings, Elijah in the lonely places of the earth, companion of the widow and the fatherless, nevertheless Obadiah knows full well that Elijah is the greater man. The high positions of this world may carry with them earthly honours, but cannot impart spiritual dignities. Elijah will not even recognize that Obadiah is a servant of the Lord. To him he is only a servant of the wicked king, for he says, "Go, tell *thy Lord*, behold Elijah is here."

3. Obadiah's sad reply clearly reveals that *he lives in craven fear of the king.* The servant of a selfish autocrat, he shrinks from a mission which may incur his wrath and summary vengeance.

4. Not only does this unhallowed association keep Obadiah living in fear of the king, but *it destroys his confidence in God.* He recognizes that the Spirit of the Lord will protect Elijah from the king's vengeance, but, for himself, he has no faith to count upon the protection of God. A false position and an uneasy conscience have robbed him of all confidence in the Lord.

5. Lacking confidence in the Lord, *he is not ready to be used by the Lord.* He shrinks from a mission in which he can see danger and possibly death. Three times he repeats that Ahab will slay him. He seeks to be excused the mission, pleading the wickedness of the king on the one hand, and his own goodness on the other.

How different the attitude of Elijah. Walking in separation from evil, he is filled with holy boldness. Not, however, that his confidence was in himself, or his separate walk, but in the living God. He can say to Obadiah, "As the Lord of Hosts liveth, before whom I stand, I will surely show myself unto him to-day." How solemn, that Elijah is compelled to address a saint of God in the very terms in which he had addressed the apostate king (1 Kings 17. 1; 18. 15). Obadiah, standing before the king, is filled with the fear of death; Elijah, standing before the living God, is filled with calm and holy confidence. In faith in the living God he had warned the king of the coming drought; in faith in the living God he had been sustained in secret during the years of drought; in faith in the living God he can once more face the king, saying without a trace of fear, "I will surely shew myself unto him to-day."

Obadiah had passed through no such training. His had been the path of ease rather than the path of faith. He had moved in the crowded scenes of the city as the head official in the court of the king, and not in the solitary places of the earth as the faithful servant of the Lord. His sphere has been the king's royal palace rather than the widow's humble home.

In the eyes of the natural man, how desirable the position of Obadiah with its ease, and wealth, and exalted station, and how distressing the lowly path of Elijah with its poverty and privations. But faith esteems the reproach of Christ greater riches than

the treasures in Egypt. Elijah found greater riches amidst the poverty of the widow's home than Obadiah enjoyed amidst the splendours of the king's palace. May we not say that, at Zarephath, there were unfolded before the prophet's vision "the unsearchable riches of Christ," the meal that never wasted, the oil that never failed, and the God who raised the dead? No such blessings fell to the lot of Obadiah. Truly he escaped the reproach of Christ, but he missed the unsearchable riches of Christ. He escaped the trial of faith and lost the rewards of faith.

Of Moses, in a yet earlier day, it could be said, "By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king, for he endured, as seeing Him who is invisible." So here we may surely say of Elijah, he turned his back on the world of his day, not fearing the wrath of the king, and, with his vision of the living God, he endured as seeing Him who is invisible. All this was wanting in Obadiah. He may have feared God in secret, but he feared the king in public. He never broke with the world, and he had no vision of the living God.

Apart from the world, in holy separation to God, the prophet Elijah is in touch with heaven, and sees unfolded before his eyes the wonders of grace and the power of God. To these heavenly wonders Obadiah is a complete stranger: identified with the world and associated with the apostate king, he can only mind earthly things, and thus, while Elijah is seeking the glory of God and the blessing of Israel, Obadiah is seeking grass for horses and mules.

Having delivered Elijah's message, Obadiah drops out of the story, while Elijah passes on to fresh honours as a witness of the living God, to receive at last a passage to glory in a chariot of fire. 116.

# GOD'S GOVERNMENT : (No. 3.)

## The Debate and its Conclusions.

WE are now prepared to glance at the debate which arose as, in the circumstances it could not but arise, between Job and his friends.

In this debate there were two cardinal questions :—

1. Is God just or not in His dealings with men ?
2. Is Job a sinner beyond all others, or is he not ?

In regard to the former, the patriarch's heart went with his friends ; in regard to the latter, his own conscience and his fealty to truth impelled him to vehement resistance.

The loud outburst of complaint which, after his long and brooding silence, broke from the lips of Job when he cursed the day of his birth, conveyed, if literally taken, a reflection on the righteousness and goodness of the Most High. Stirred by this complaint, Eliphaz and his companions, in the first cycle of their addresses, give prominence to the truths thus assailed, and earnestly and eloquently assert the doctrine that God is a just God, prospering the good and punishing the wicked.

But Job inevitably finds in this a covert attack upon his own character, and the conclusion from the doctrine, which at first his friends abstain from propounding, is forced upon his view : " Since I am a sufferer above others, I must be a sinner above others." Thus in his answers, with his complainings against God, he mingles complainings against his friends : and to their arguments he opposes the facts of his own, and of general experience. I am innocent, he says, though I thus suffer ; nay more, " He destroys the righteous with the wicked." So plainly opposed to universal fact is the sentiment of his friends, that he expresses doubt as to their sincerity in professing it. " Will ye speak wickedly for God ? and talk deceitfully for Him ? " he asks,

These appeals to the anomalies of God's providential government do not indicate that Job held any other theory on the subject than his friends. They are simply urged in self-defence ; they are brought forward as facts parallel to the fact of his own calamity, and, like it, utterly inexplicable. Doubtless, both by himself and his visitors he was felt to be doing a daring, almost a blasphemous thing, in thus bringing into prominence the apparently dark blots in the Almighty's administration.

In the second cycle of their discourses, the friends put their ideas in a somewhat different, and, as it probably seemed, a more incontrovertible form. If the righteous are not invariably rewarded by prosperity, at least the wicked are always punished. Suffering is the appropriate lot of evil men.

Again the inference is felt to be inevitable. Since Job is pre-eminent in suffering, he must be pre-eminent in wickedness. And again the appeal of the sufferer is to the unquestionable facts of human experience : " Prove that wherewith ye reproach me." At the same time his spirit quails as if he were arraigning God. " When I remember, I am confounded and trembling taketh hold on my flesh. Wherefore do the wicked live, grow old, yea, become mighty in power ? "

In the third and final cycle of their discourses, the two friends who speak are shut up to that to which their previous arguments had pointed, namely, the direct accusation of Job, as one guilty of some secret and heinous sin. They cannot explain the fact to which the patriarch has appealed, and they cannot renounce their principle. The only thing left them is to reiterate the assertion that in this particular case, some hidden crime must be the explanation of Job's suffering.

Job, in reply, as he had before exhibited the wicked prosperous, now presents the righteous suffering calamity; then, as his spirit grows more calm and his words more measured, as if to satisfy his friends that he is no heretic and blasphemer, but a true believer like themselves in the justice of the divine administration, he gives distinct expression, in language parallel to their own, to his appreciation of the openly retributive character of divine providence (27. 11-23); then in splendid words declares his conviction that the secrets of God's administration are hidden with Himself, and that for man true wisdom lies in humble subjection, concluding by earnestly protesting his innocence of such iniquity as had been imputed to him.

We are not to suppose, in repudiating the insinuations of his friends, Job meant to disallow the fact of his sinfulness, or to claim perfection. The contrary is abundantly plain from his repeated statements. "If I wash myself in snow water and make myself never so clean, yet shalt Thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me." But confessing that he is not clean in God's sight, he is at the same time prevented by fealty to truth, and to his own conscience, from allowing that he is a hypocrite and pre-eminent transgressor. At the same time it is evident that, by insisting that he must be a sinner above all sinners, his visitors occasioned a reaction, called into active exercise the natural self-righteousness of his spirit, and led to a more violent assertion of his own integrity than in a serene mood he could have justified.

So far as the debate had gone, no real progress had been made in dealing with the question at issue. Both parties held the ground from which they started—on the one side, the fact that God must be righteous in His providence; on the other side, Job's knowledge that he was not a hypocritical transgressor. Between the

certain doctrine and the equally certain fact, they could find no means of reconciliation.

Enough, indeed, had been said to lead dispassionate onlookers to the conclusion that the ordinary idea that supposes that the dispensations of God towards man on earth are determined by regard to their various degrees of merit and demerit is *a line too short* to measure therewith the dealings of providence, and can furnish no adequate explanation of the varieties of human happiness and misery; that, whatever truth may underlie this doctrine, it is not truth which is applicable to the complex phenomena of human life, and that its rigid application tends, not to settle and satisfy the minds of suffering men, but rather to unhinge their judgment, to vex their souls, to exasperate their hearts against God, and to destroy their confidence in His righteousness.

A large amount of fresh light is thrown around the question by the interposition of Elihu. His discourses are directed against both parties, but especially against what was wrong and defective in the rash, impatient, and somewhat self-righteous utterances of Job, and were fitted to show him wherein he had erred. He clearly and impressively points out the mistakes into which Job had fallen:—

1. In maintaining that God withdraws Himself altogether from intercourse with men, whereas He is constantly, in various ways, communicating to them the knowledge of His will.

2. In seeming to question the justice of the divine administration, whereas the deep sinfulness of men entirely justifies God in inflicting upon them suffering.

3. In speaking as if the afflictions here endured were absolutely inscrutable, and even aimless and arbitrary, instead of being imposed by divine love to serve as chastisements with a view to the blessing of those afflicted.

# GOD'S UNIVERSITY.

(T. OLIVER.)

THE entrance into a university demands certain qualifications. Without these, study in the classes would be fruitless towards graduation, no matter how diligent a student might prove to be. The student must pass the preliminary examination and matriculate. These qualifications are obtained on the merits of the student. Similarly, the entrance to God's university or school demands qualifications, but they are obtained on the merits of another. "Who (Jesus Christ our Lord) was delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification. Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 4. 25; 5. 1).

In the 10th chapter of John's Gospel, the Lord proclaims Himself as the door of salvation, the sole entrance into the sphere of blessing in which we may be taught of God. The preliminary qualifications then are justification, and peace with God obtained on the merit of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ on the principle of faith.

The Scripture goes on to say that it is by the same person and principle we have access or our introduction into Christian standing in grace, i.e. our matriculation ticket to the school of God. The curriculum of every university deals with subject matter as well as method of instruction. This short paper treats of the latter rather than the former. The first lesson we are set to learn is paradoxical, i.e. involves an apparently impossible conclusion.

On the basis of our rejoicing or exulting in hope or prospect of the glory of God, we are called to glory or exult in a corresponding way in tribulations. Needless to say that this far transcends the conventional idea of Christian conduct. We sometimes read that a long illness has been borne with Christian patience and resignation. To rejoice in present tribulation, and that the joy is of the same character as that which will obtain in the glory of God, is too much for the human intellect to

apprehend. But all agree that to be resigned in prospect of the glory of God is hopelessly incongruous. There must, however, be substantial reason for the Apostle using the same word in both connections, and the niceties of Scriptural expression call for our careful consideration.

Our word "tribulation" comes from the Latin *tribula* and is equivalent to the Greek *θλίψις* (*thlipsis*). These words are used in the classics in various senses, as a harrow, a primitive threshing machine, pressure, and metaphorically as affliction. Whichever usage we take, a somewhat similar idea is conveyed. Even as the ground is under the harrow with the view of making it better adapted for reception and germination of the seed to be subsequently sown, so we are under the harrows of affliction that we, too, might afford more receptive and fruitful ground for the divine seed, the Word of God.

Again taking up the threshing-machine analogy, the grain is freed from the husk by the pressure of the "treaders," so the result of the formative work of God in our souls is freed from the chaff of nature by the pressure of adversity. The positive result is that we are prepared for reception of the subject matter of instruction in the power of the Spirit.

The witty Lord Bacon, the ablest of early investigators in scientific method, once tritely said, "Prosperity was the blessing of the Old Testament, adversity of the New." A time of adversity is always one of drawing near to God. This tendency is rich compensation for all tribulation. Whatever tends to our learning more of His love is greatly to be coveted.

In the so-called Sermon on the Mount, the Lord speaks of the way being "narrow" (Matt. 7.), literally "the way of tribulation." The worldling wishes the Christian's goal but shuns the way. The future reign with

Christ entails the present path of suffering, but we have His company even as the three Hebrew children had in the fiery furnace (Dan. 3).

Tribulation is not always physical, it is frequently mental, and the latter is more difficult to endure. Then there are the trials of success as well as those of failure. The discipline necessary to affluence is the hardest lesson to learn. The "pin-pricks" of life are often more testing than the heavy blows. Drudgery, neglect, misunderstanding, disappointments, breed complaints and stifle praise more effectually than deep trials.

When we realize that the trials of earth form part of our undergraduate training for a great and glorious destiny, we can use the language of the

Apostle, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. 4. 17).

In Rom. 5. the further steps in the mode of instruction are "patience," or more properly "patient persistency," and this leads to "experience," or better "proved or tempered character" and, finally, "hope," which involves no disappointment, because consisting of stable expectation from One who cannot fail, as the love of God is literally poured without measure into our hearts, as a flood from an artesian spring, through the Holy Ghost. No words can describe the present value of thus gaining a knowledge of God, and ere long our university curriculum will terminate with a brilliant graduation.

## "MASTER:" A WORD STUDY.

(C. KNAPP.)

THE word "Master" occurs some eighty-six times in the Authorized Version of the New Testament. This one English word does duty for eight different words in the Greek original, and we believe it will prove at once an interesting and an instructive study to note carefully the use made by the Holy Spirit in the selection of these various words to convey to the mind of the saints the thoughts of God.

The word translated most frequently "master" is *didaskalos*, meaning an instructor, or teacher; it is, in fact, translated ten times "teacher" elsewhere in the Word. It is used by the four Evangelists with about equal frequency—in all, about forty-seven times; and outside the Gospels it occurs (as "master") but once (Jas. 3. 1). It is translated "teacher" in John 3. 2, and "master" in verse 10 of the same chapter. Once it is rendered "doctor" (Luke 2. 46). There is a remarkable use made of this word in John, 13th chapter. In verse 13 Christ says, "Ye call Me Master and

Lord: and ye say well; for so I am." Here we learn that the disciples in addressing Him used the term, "Master," *didaskalos*, first; they gave His title, "Lord," *kurios*, a secondary place—teaching, to them, was above lordship. But He corrects this mistake in what He says immediately following—albeit, with the rarest delicacy; "If I then, your Lord and Master." He reverses the order used by them, as if to teach that obedience is above all learning and intelligence, even in the things of Scripture. It reminds us of that word of the prophet to the disobedient Saul, "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice; and to hearken than the fat of rams." To learn is well, but to put diligently into practice what we already know is still better.

The above word, *kurios*, is translated fourteen times "master." It is from *kuros* (*supremacy*), and means *supreme*, in authority, i.e. *controller*. It is elsewhere translated, sixteen times, "Lord," and "Sir" twelve times; once it is, strangely enough, translated "God" (Acts 19. 11). It is used

there, we suppose, as we should say "the Supreme." But the most accurate translation of J. N. Darby corrects this, using "the Lord" instead. This is the word translated "Sir" always in the New Testament.

Eight times "master" is the rendering of the Hebrew word *Rhabbi*, *rabbi*, "an official title of honour." These are : Matt. 26. 25, 49 ; Mark 9. 5 ; II. 21 ; 14. 45 ; John 4. 31 ; 9. 2 ; II. 8. Elsewhere the word is left untranslated, "rabbi." This is the word invariably used by Judas, the traitor. He never once addressed the Son of God as Lord ; the other apostles, at the supper, gave Him His proper title, Lord, *kurios* (Matt. 26. 22) ; but Judas, in verse 25, says Master, *rhabbi*. And in John 14. 22 the Spirit of God is quick to inform us that it was not the traitor who addressed Him as "Lord" : "Judas saith unto Him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it," etc. (see also 1 Cor. 12. 3). He "had a demon," and could not, therefore, call Messiah, Lord. But the time is coming, and coming soon, we believe, when every knee shall bow and every tongue—Judas's among them—shall confess that "Jesus Christ is LORD," *kurios* (Phil. 2. 11).

This same word "Master" is the sole rendering of the word "*epistates*," "an appointee over," i.e. *commander* (or *teacher*). It is found only six times in Scripture, and always in Luke : 5. 5 ; 8. 24, 45 ; 9. 33, 49 ; 17. 13. It is used by the disciples exclusively, excepting once, where it is the appellation applied to the Lord by the ten lepers.

Another word rendered by the English "master" is *despotes*, "an absolute ruler" (despot). It is only four times translated "master"—1 Tim. 6. 1, 2 ; 2 Tim. 2. 21 ; Tit. 2. 9, and 1 Pet. 2. 18. It is elsewhere translated "lord"—four times—Luke 2. 29 ; Acts 4. 24 ; 2 Pet. 2. 1, and Rev. 6. 10. It is the word frequently used for a master of slaves ; but it is a remarkable fact that, though it is used

by the apostles in reference to earthly masters, when they remind these masters that they also have a master in heaven, they do not use this term, but the milder and more dignified title of *kurios*, Lord (Eph. 6. 9 ; Col. 4. 1 ; also Rom. 14. 4). Christ's bondmen are under a "perfect law of liberty," "His commandments are not grievous," and He is to them no "despot," but a loving, gracious "Lord and Master." And He rules by love, not force.

Another word translated "master" is *kathēgetes*, a guide, i.e. a teacher. It is found only three times in Scripture—Matt. 23. 8. 10—and then used only by the Lord Himself.

*Oikodespotes* is another word translated "master." It means "the head of the family," and is found in Luke 13. 25 and 14. 21. It is elsewhere translated "goodman (of the house)" and "householder."

The one remaining word is *kubernetes*, "helmsman," i.e. captain, or (ship) master, and is used but once—Acts 27. 11.

Our study is finished. One thing we have learned if nothing more, and that is the wonderful fulness there is in the Word of God, of which our English Bible gives us but a faint idea. And as this fulness relates chiefly to Christ, it is to the Christian's advantage, and for God's glory, that he use all the helps available—translations, concordances, lexicons, dictionaries, and every other means available to assist him in gaining access to these treasures, hid from the slothful and indolent, but discoverable to those who will "search for them as for hid treasures," with the one object before them—the soul's profit and blessing—"through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord" (2 Pet. 1. 2). Amen !

NOTE.—The writer is indebted for his information in this paper wholly to the "Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible," by James Strong, S.T.D., LL.D., a work of incalculable value to the English student of the Scriptures.

## NOTES FOR PREACHERS.

**BRING** your sermons, and every sentence in them to this touchstone. "Will this glorify God, and edify the people? Shall I leave my hearers admiring my Lord, hating their sins, and forgetting me?"

The Gospel is a sovereign, and that of no common order; and preaching is the carriage in which he rides. It is not fitting that he should ride in a common, paltry cart of vulgar speech and low metaphor. His Majesty the Gospel is worthy of a better vehicle than the head and heart and hands of man ever made. But of what use is that preacher who turns the attention of the people to the composition, the painting, and the gilding of the chariot so as to lose sight of the monarch who rides in it—or should ride in it. It is the Gospel you preach that is the important matter, so preach it that it may be magnified.

"Understandest thou what thou readest?" said Philip the evangelist to the swarthy chancellor of Queen Candace. "How can I?" answered

that earnest seeker after truth. And Philip went up into his chariot and made a pulpit of it; and beginning at that same Scripture—that wonderful 53rd chapter of Isaiah, he preached unto him JESUS. No man is worthy of the name of servant of God who does not start here; he may have the unsearchable riches of Christ to unfold also, but he must begin at this point. The seed of the Word must be sown in the hearts and minds of the people, and that seed may be summed up in that one precious name.

"All, all the guilty sinner needs  
Is Jesus."

Paul preached the *forgiveness of sins* "THROUGH THIS MAN." God has pardon for men, and this is their first and chiefest need, but He can only pardon them through Christ Jesus. Into the one silver pipe of the atoning sacrifice God has made to flow the full current of pardoning grace. The preacher who forgets this, or makes little of this, is a false witness and a curse to his hearers.

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## "THEY THAT ARE CHRIST'S AT HIS COMING."

IT is taught by some that when the Lord comes, only those Christians who are faithful and looking for Him will go; and the others will be punished for their unfaithfulness, by being allowed to go through "the great tribulation" that follows the Rapture. One can only heave a great sigh of relief and say, Thank God that is *not true*. No, no! A thousand times no! Scripture teaches no such thing. It is "the dead in Christ" that rise, not *some* of them only. Then "we who are alive and remain" are to be changed, not *some* only. The Church, the body of Christ, is *one* (Eph. 4. 4). You cannot divide the body. And to make *part* of the body suffer in the tribulation would be to divide the body, and make Christ suffer in His members, *judgment from God* again. For the tribulation, remember, is *God's judgment* on apostasy, though

He uses men as His instruments to execute it. It is simply unthinkable that any member of the body of Christ could thus suffer judgment from God. It is practically making a *purgatory* for unfaithful saints ere they can be with the Lord.

Besides, how strange it would be to leave the living unfaithful ones to suffer, and allow the dead unfaithful ones to escape. For those who teach this doctrine allow that *all the dead saints rise*, irrespective of *their* previous conduct. But why this difference? No, no! We again say, it is *the whole Church of God*, and all the heavenly saints; all embraced in that precious sentence, "*they that are Christ's* (not *some*) at His coming" (1 Cor. 15. 23). All are to be "caught up together" and ushered into the Father's house. It will be the greatest transformation scene in the world's history.

## THE MYSTERY OF THE GOSPEL. No. 4.

(Eph. 6. 19.)

(JAMES BOYD.)

COLOSSIANS 2. shows us that the saints of God on earth are beset by two terrible dangers. Those to whom the Epistle was addressed were, on the one hand, in danger of giving up heaven as their hope; and on the other hand, there was a danger of their seeking something to add to the fulness that was for them in Christ. Hence the hope that was laid up for them in heaven is brought forcibly before them at the very outset of the epistle. They were dead with Christ from the elements of this world, and they were risen with Him through faith of the operation of God who raised Him from the dead; and these two things were administered to them by baptism, the initiatory ordinance into the profession of Christ upon earth. Therefore as dead with Christ they had nothing to do with the elements of the world; they were dead, and their life was hid with Christ in God, and they were not to appear as living men in connection with this world's system until Christ would appear, and then they would appear with Him in glory. Meantime as risen with Him they were to set their mind upon things above, where Christ sits upon the right hand of God. They had a heavenly place, and they were not to surrender it for an earthly, which would come under judgment at the appearing of Christ.

But he would have them know the great conflict he had for them, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as had not seen his face in the flesh, that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the full knowledge of the mystery of God (chapter 2.). This mystery of God is something wider than the body of which Christ is Head. It is the whole scope of Divine counsel—the great plan that was in the thought of God before He began any of His

works—that to which from the beginning all the operations of God in the universe were tending. This was not apparent in past dispensations while man was under probation; but now that the probation of man is over, and his helplessly lost condition has been made manifest, the ground is cleared for the unfolding of Divine counsel, and of the activities of eternal love toward the fulfilment of that counsel.

And of that mystery of God the Church is the centre; that is, as the body of Christ. It will be the nucleus of that universe of blessing. Christ, the supreme Centre of all, but in the Church, and by its means, filling everything with the glory of redemption. We have something analogous to this in John 17. 23: "I in them, and Thou in Me." The Father in the Son, and the Son in the assembly. In John it is the manifestation of the children of God, and the display is connected with the reign of Christ; but in the passage in Colossians, which we are considering, the outlook is eternity itself. But the difference, if a difference does at all exist, will not be great: God in Christ, and Christ in the Church, and the whole vast inheritance by this means recovered for God, and filled with His glory.

"Our God the centre is,  
His presence fills that land;  
And countless myriads owned as His  
Round Him adoring stand.

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

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

"God and the Lamb shall there  
The light and temple be,  
And radiant hosts for ever share  
The unveiled Mystery."

In this mystery of God dwells all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

While the love, wisdom, and power of God were working to bring this eternal purpose of God into actual existence, the enemy was working in all his wicked enmity to defeat the intention of the Creator. Though chief of the ways of God he had fallen from his high estate, and had dragged legions of others with him in his rebellious career. Man also had become his victim, and was now serving him who held him in bondage by the fear of death, which was the judgment of the sins of which he was guilty; death of which the devil had secured the might, and which he used to terrify the sinner, and to keep him at a distance from God. Influenced by Satan, the poor fallen child of Adam is even to this day priding himself in the miserable drivellings of his ignorant and corrupt mind. Professing themselves to be wise, men only became fools. It has always been so, and it is so to-day. Even professing Christians have become wiser than Scripture! The revelation given to us in the goodness of God has become antiquated! The mind of man has advanced out of childhood, and those that hold to "that which was from the beginning" (1 John 2. 24) must be left behind! Christianity has had its day, and that day has passed for ever; the mind of man has outgrown such primitive notions! It would be senseless to suppose that the world has made no progress during the last two thousand years! We cannot remain at the dead level of the ancients! The demand of the present generation is for greater light, and the thoughts of God must give place to the greater thoughts of the creature! And not one of these thoughts are for the elevation, but for the degradation of themselves. It is just history repeating itself, this time in that which professes the name of Christ, worshipping and serving the creature rather than the Creator (Rom. 1. 25). It is man exalted to heaven by the revelation of God, but thrust down to hell through his rejection of that revelation.

The warning of the great Apostle has

to a great extent fallen upon deaf ears. He says: "Beware lest any man make a spoil of you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the elements of the world, and not after Christ. For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power." What could the creature add to the fulness of the Godhead? All that God is in His approach to man dwells in the body of Jesus, and in Him that revelation was made. He could say: "He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father" (John 14. 9). What pleasure could one who has seen the Father find in the contemplation of a mere fallen child of Adam? Who having heard the Father's words spoken through the lips of Jesus would care to listen to the drivellings of human philosophy? Who that knows what truth is, would seek to feed his soul upon the vapid conceptions of the creature?

The revelation of God is a perfect revelation. It can have no additions, neither does it require any. We only need to get better acquainted with it. We have been mercifully delivered from the speculations of the mind of the creature in its wanderings from the living God. We have been brought out of darkness into His marvellous light. We can truly say: "We know that the Son of God has come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life" (1 John 5. 20). All this has come to us in the body of Jesus, and there it resides, and nothing can be added to it that is of any value to our immortal souls.

And we are complete in Him. All the completeness of the Godhead is presented to us in Jesus, and in Him we are presented complete before God. We require no additions to the revelation of God in Jesus, neither do we require any additions from the creature

to complete our acceptance before the face of God. In every way He is enough for the need of our souls. And therefore, as we have received Him, so are we to walk in Him; "rooted" in Him, drawing from no other source the nourishment that we need for our growth in the true knowledge of God. And "built up" in Him; refusing everything that on the part of man proposes to lift us out of mere childhood, and finding our spiritual development from Him, and from Him alone. "And stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving." That teaching requires no additions. John says in his first epistle, chapter 2. 24: "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 also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father." What could the mind of man add to the perfect revelation of God in the Son of His love?

We need not expect anything from man, for he can contribute nothing to the fulness that is in Christ, nor to the blessedness of our position before God; neither need we expect anything from principalities and authorities, for the

Head of the body is Head of all these. Our happiness and our safety lie in "holding the Head," and in realising that in every way we are *complete in Him*, "from whom all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God." To let go the Head in quest of additional light or nourishment is to wander in a rayless wilderness of human speculation, and to become a prey to the roaring lion, who goeth about seeking whom he may devour. But to hold the Head is to find abundance of grace ministered to our souls, and to be always satisfied with the good things of God.

We who believe on the Son of God, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, are called in one body, and we are exhorted to walk worthy of the calling. But as there is a certain moral state of soul in which only this can be done, we have it pointed out to us in plain and unmistakeable terms: "With all lowliness and meekness, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling." — Eph. 4. 2, 3, 4.

## OBEDIENCE AND POWER.

(J. N. D.)

"THE power to work a miracle God could bestow on whom He would. But an obedient man, who had no will to do anything with respect to which the will of God was not expressed, a man who lived by the Word, a man who lived in complete dependence upon God, and had a perfect trust, which required no other proof of God's faithfulness than His Word, no other means of certainty that He would intervene than His promise of so doing, and who waited

for that intervention in the path of His will—here was something more than power. This was the perfection of man, in the place where man stood . . . and a perfection which sheltered one who possessed it from every attack Satan could make upon Him; for what could he do to one who never went beyond the will of God, and to whom that will was the only motive for action?" Such was the life of Jesus who has left us an example that we should walk in His steps.

The Word of God is always new, and His love always precious. I continually find something new in the Word which nourishes the soul and reveals to it the love of God, and His ways.

# THE SECOND ESTABLISHED.

(FRANK B. HOLE.)

SOME of the great contrasts in the Epistle to the Hebrews are as follows:—

## IN JUDAISM.

*Moses the apostle.*

*Aaron the high priest.*

*The law with its hopes.*

*The first covenant.*

*The tabernacle—“the example or shadow of heavenly things.”*

*The many sacrifices, “the blood of bulls and of goats.”*

*“The way into the Holiest not yet made manifest.”*

## IN CHRISTIANITY.

*Christ the Apostle (ch. 1. and 3).*

*Christ the High Priest (ch. 2., 3., 5. and 7.).*

*A better hope and better promise (ch. 7. and 8.).*

*The new covenant (ch. 7.).*

*The true tabernacle—“the heavenly things themselves” (ch. 8. and 9.).*

*“His own blood,” “the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once” (ch. 9. and 10.).*

*“Boldness to enter into the Holiest” (ch. 9. and 10.).*

The epistle to the Hebrews is essentially the epistle of contrasts. In it we have the pure light of a heavenly and spiritual Christianity shining against the comparatively dark background of Judaism with its earthly hopes and carnal ordinances. In its own day Judaism had been the bearer of light for God. Like the moon, it caught and reflected the rays of good things to come, while as yet “the true light” had not arisen; but with the advent of Christ all was changed, and just as the edge of the moon is turned to blackness the moment it touches the sun’s disk at the beginning of an eclipse, so the light of Judaism became but darkness, or to use the exact Scripture phrase, “Even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth” (2 Cor. 3. 10).

In the case before us the natural process is of course reversed, for it is the sun of Christianity which eclipses the moon of Judaism, and the process of this is set before us in detail in Hebrews. Item after item is mentioned only to discover that in Judaism there was but a shadow, or a reflection of the true and abiding thing which comes to light in and through our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is when the Spirit of God comes to deal with the great sufficient and final

sacrifice of Christ—and here we touch indeed the very foundation of everything—that we get the remarkable statement: “He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second” (chapter 10. 9).

Here we have clearly revealed a great principle which characterizes all God’s ways, and once it is revealed we can see how it has done so from the beginning. From the very outset of man’s history as a sinner, God framed his dealings with men after this pattern, showing that His action in raising up Christ, sending Him as a sacrifice for sin, and consequently introducing spiritual and heavenly blessings, was no afterthought, but a determinate purpose before man’s sad history began.

The illustrations of this great truth which the early books of the Bible afford are numerous. We mention some which lie upon the surface.

*Cain*, the first man born into the world, was set aside in favour of the second, *Abel*, and subsequently when he had revealed himself as a murderer in favour of *Seth*, who took *Abel*’s place, typifying Christ as the risen “seed”—*Abel* having typified the “seed of the woman” slain.

*Ishmael*, the seed after the flesh, set aside in favour of *Isaac*, the seed according to promise.

*Esau*, the profane despiser of the birthright, set aside in favour of *Jacob*, who esteemed it, though filled with crooked scheming in order to obtain it.

*Leah*, the "tender eyed," set aside by *Rachel*, "beautiful and well-favoured."

*Aaron* the elder, but of weak character, set under the strong authority of *Moses* the younger.

*Manasseh*, elder son of Joseph, whose name means "Forgetting" displaced in favour of Ephraim, whose name means "Fruitful."

*Saul*, head and shoulders above the people, and their choice, judged and set aside for *David* the stripling, but the "man after God's own heart."

It will be noticed that the above-quoted foreshadowings of this great truth are all in connection, not with things, but with mankind. This is appropriate enough, for though in Hebrews the Spirit of God sets before us the application of the truth to details in thus contrasting Judaism and Christianity, yet we must turn elsewhere, and notably to 1 Cor. 15. to find the full truth stated in more general terms. Not only must Judaism go, as a system suited to man in the flesh, but the ruined earthly order of man, which Judaism recognized and appealed to, must be set aside, in order that a new heavenly order of man should be established to enter into the spiritual and heavenly blessings of Christianity.

The passage we refer to in 1 Cor. 15. runs from verse 45 to the end.

Verse 45 contrasts the *first* Adam and *last* Adam. The one a living soul as Genesis states, the other a life-giving Spirit. In this verse clearly the body is not in view. It states respectively what Adam was and what Christ is, viewing both essentially. Not first and second in the verse, but first and last, because "Adam" sets forth the "racial head," and Christ is not only the new and second racial Head, but the LAST, thank God! In that capacity He is perfect—as in all other capacities—

and no further Head will ever be needed to all eternity!

Verse 46 gives the character stamped upon the respective heads, natural and spiritual, and emphasizes the fact that the natural is first as to God's ways, and the spiritual second, though the last was always first in God's purposes, and is the only one to abide and be established.

Verse 47 names the two as the first and second man, and gives their further character as "out of the earth made of dust" and the "Lord out of heaven," (or perhaps "out of heaven" only). Here the thought of the body so prominent in all the earlier part of the chapter, evidently again reappears in connection with Adam.

Verse 48 states the truth, wonderful as far as we are concerned, that those ranged under the respective heads partake of the nature and character of their heads.

Verse 49 tells that "*we*," i.e., Christians, are the subjects of this glorious transference from Adam to Christ, and fully returning to the thought of the body, it declares that as we have in body borne the image of Adam, the man made of dust, so we shall bear the actual physical image of the heavenly Christ.

Verse 50 emphasizes other considerations which connive to show that some mighty miracle of power is needful to transform believers into Christ's image for the day of glory.

Verses 51 to 58 supply us with the special revelation Paul had received on this subject—the change effected in both dead and living saints in the twinkling of an eye, the instant before all are rapt into the air to meet the Lord. Every saint will then have a body immortal, incorruptible and glorious; all together will stand forth as monuments of God's victory.

\* \* \* \* \*

The above sets forth a side of truth which is all too little recognized. Go

to "the Christian in the street"—if we may be allowed thus to adopt a common phrase—and ask him if his sins are pardoned and he has hopes of heaven, and he may probably enough answer affirmatively with certainty and some degree of cheerfulness. Ask him, however, if he daily pursues his pilgrim way in the happy knowledge and consciousness of belonging to that new and heavenly order of humanity of which Christ is the supreme expression and Head, and in the triumphant expectation of sharing His physical likeness and glory as a consequence, and he will probably answer like a man floundering out of his depth, or else gaze upon you as one who has left sober realities behind and gone soaring off into dreamland.

Why should it be thus? Truth of such elevating and transporting power as this must inevitably be eagerly listened to and embraced, we might have supposed, and yet it is not so. Many Christians simply ignore it, others almost, if not altogether, deny it. Again we ask, Why?

In the first place, we are far too prone to judge everything by the standard of our necessities. Pardon of offences and deliverance from judgment we *need*, hence we lay hold upon these favours with comparative ease. To be taken up in Christ, indwelt by the Spirit of Christ, and therefore of Christ's order, this goes far beyond our needs. It is rather a necessity of God's love and of those far-reaching purposes which He has formed for Christ's glory. Pardon and deliverance are negative. This is positive in the highest degree, and we are slow to embrace it. Shall we not humble ourselves and ask help of God concerning this thing.

Further, it is clear that this truth involves the total eclipse and setting aside of the first Adam and his race. "He TAKETH AWAY the first that He may establish the second." No part of God's truth cuts more directly across the grain of human pride and self-sufficiency than this.

The law addressed its prohibitions and instructions to men who were responsible to hearken and obey. No one did perfectly obey; still, while the reign of law lasted there was, in the very nature of the case, a recognition of the human race as being at least worthy of such a time of probation, and of still possessing a status and sustaining relations with God. Christ's death on the cross—hanging there, substantially under the curse of the outraged law, for His people—was the end of law's reign and of man's probation, the disowning of the race, and the destruction of any status it had before God. The Adamic race stands judicially convicted and morally judged at the cross, though the last trace will not disappear until the destruction of the heavens and earth that now are, and the creation of all things new.

The grace of the Gospel comes forth to men on precisely this ground. Instead of appealing to men to "do and live"—in which case they would, in spite of endless failures, still flatter themselves with chances of future success—it sets forth what God has done for those who are *ruined*. The grace of God does indeed bring "salvation to all men," it is the fact of that salvation being brought to them *on the assumption that they are RUINED* that cuts their pride to the quick.

Hence that pronounced tendency on the part of mankind to reject the Gospel. Hence, too, the tendency on the part of those who *are* Christians to tone down the truth to suit their natural tastes and avoid the keen edge of this doctrine of the Bible.

And, lastly, there is the fact that the truth we have before us involves responsibilities of a very high order. If the first hindrance is of a moral order, as springing from the natural selfishness of our hearts, and the second of a doctrinal order, this is of a severely practical nature. It is plain enough, surely, that if we are of Christ's order, and therefore heavenly, a heavenly

line of conduct becomes us while still in this world.

A further illustration of this is found in Romans 5., 6. and 7. In the latter part of chapter 5. the two heads with their respective races are contrasted. Adam, entailing sin, death and condemnation on his race; Christ, entailing justification, life and glory on His. At the beginning of chapter 6. the question is raised as to how we who are of Christ's race shall respond to the wealth of grace bestowed upon us, and we discover that a twofold obligation lies upon us:—

1. "We . . . should walk in newness of life" (chapter 6. 4.).

2. "We should serve in newness of spirit" (chapter 7. 6.).

Much is involved in these two solemn obligations, but we content ourselves here with noticing that the fact of our standing "in Christ," and not in Adam, places us under responsibility to walk in the newness of spirit which is ours as possessing the Spirit of God, and being thus "not in flesh but in spirit" (chapter 8. 9.).

## ANSWER TO CORRESPONDENT.

### "Tarry One for Another." (1 Cor. 11. 33.)

R. B. E.—*In what way would the Scripture quoted apply to the meeting for breaking bread to-day?*

THE first thing necessary is that there should be the utmost consideration for each other by those who are members of Christ's body. And there will be this if the love of which the 13th chapter of this Epistle speaks, is in activity. God has called to the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord all sorts and conditions of men, and this makes forbearance and consideration for each other necessary which can only be manifested as we walk in love one towards the other and recognize that each member of the body of Christ is necessary to all. If this spirit of loving consideration is developed, details will easily be adjusted. Rich and poor, intelligent and ignorant, elder brethren and babes in Christ, will be able to go on together in harmony, subject to the Lord.

Coming to the actual gathering together for the Lord's Supper, the hour ought surely to be one that will suit all the best. Some might prefer it early, but they would waive their preference, remembering that the Lord's Supper is not individual in character, but a matter of communion. It is "the bread which we break." And "when ye COME TOGETHER in one place." Consideration should be shown to those who may not be able to be present exactly at the hour; there are

mothers of families, whose husbands perhaps are not much use at domestic duties, and others upon whom special burdens rest—*tarry for such.*

But "when the hour was come Jesus sat down" (Luke 22. 14) is often quoted, and a very good text, too, to quote to the indifferent and careless. But we must remember that that was the passover feast, and the hour was definitely fixed, it was at even it had to be eaten. The Lord's Supper is not the passover, it belongs not to the dispensation of shadows and law, but to this period of grace, in which the forbearance and love of the Head of the body has to find expression in the members of it one towards another. The spirit in which the Supper is to be eaten, is that of a devoted family which would wait before partaking of a meal until all are assembled.

Yet let all things be done decently and in order. It is sad indeed to see those who would not dream of being late for any other engagement, come straggling in to their engagement with the Lord Himself long after the hour appointed. If we go to meet the Lord, and He has given His word that He is where two or three are gathered together in His Name, we should surely endeavour to be there punctually if possible, and in such a condition of mind and heart as shall be acceptable to Him, and this would include tarrying one for another.

## SCRIPTURE NOTES.

### “Be Careful for Nothing.”

“*B*e careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication. **WITH THANKSGIVING** let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God that passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4. 6).

**T**HIS is a familiar passage, but how many have we seen in the power of it? How much do we know about it? It is well enough to read it in the Word, but how many who admire it there have translated it into practical experience? You say, I have been to God about a matter and have come away quite resigned about it. But that is not it. This passage does not propose to give you resignation, but a peace that passeth **ALL UNDERSTANDING**, the peace of God. You make your request known to Him, and you are no more troubled about it than He is. You do not know how He will arrange the matter for you, you are no longer burdened about that. He who

loves you perfectly has the matter in His hands now, you have put it there. He will not forget it, nor neglect it, and in dealing with it He will bring forth the issue according to His own knowledge of what will be for your present and eternal good.

Nothing may be altered. God may leave you the trial or difficulty, or may let the sorrow run its full course, as in the case of the Bethany sisters. The circumstances are not changed, but you are; and you live through the trial as one who dwells within the circle of the arms of God. In Old Testament language we have it, “In the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion: in the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me” (Psa. 27. 5), and “Thou shalt hide them in the secret of Thy presence from the pride of man: Thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues” (Psa. 31. 20). But greater still is this that the New Testament proposes, and God is able to make good His word to us all.

### “Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.”

**S**OME of you Christians have gone through fire and water; many trials have beset your way, but how have you fared? Can you not say as you look back, “Hitherto hath the Lord helped us?” A Christian woman once said that the Ebenezers which she had set up to commemorate the Lord’s help were so many and thick that they made a wall from the very spot where she first trusted Christ to that which she had reached. So it has been with

you; miracle has been heaped upon miracle, and even in the valley of the shadow of death goodness and mercy has followed you; and He has been with you, whose presence drives away all fear and yields constant and un-failing comfort; and so it shall be until the end. Talk of these wondrous works; it will glorify God, it will help others, and you will be doubly refreshed, for he that watereth others shall himself be watered.

“The Spirit and the Bride say, Come.” Rev. 22. 17.

NO one can invite the Lord to come who is not in practical readiness for Him. And practical readiness for Him not only means that the heart is wholly His, but that His interests on earth are my concern. A true-hearted wife will constantly cast her eye about to see that all in the house is in order for her husband who is coming. Watching for Christ does not mean selfish ease; if we are longing for Him we shall endeavour to awaken in other hearts the same desire that burns in our own; we shall not be satisfied unless all who are to form His bride are also saying “Come”; and to this end shall we labour until the moment of His coming. And not only so, but the heart will long for and go after the benighted sinners around; there will

be the earnest desire for a general awakening on the part of men to the glory of the bright, morning Star. We may test the reality of our interest in the coming of the Lord by this: our desire to see all His saints awakened to long and call for Him, and our activities in calling out of the world's night others to share in the blessedness that we have found in Him. This we believe is covered by the 17th verse of Revelation 22.

There is an energy about the one whose heart is set upon the coming One. He is coming, and we must have all in readiness for Him. If we see one who is not saying, Come, who ought to be, we say, “You say, Come, too.” Then we become evangelical, and we are like the One for Whom we wait.

## GOOD CONVERSATION.

“Sing unto Him, sing psalms unto Him, talk ye of all His wondrous works” (1 Chron. 16. 9).

WE are bidden to sing the praises of God, and the heart that is touched by His grace will not be slow to respond. “Is any merry? let him sing,” says James the practical, but can the man help doing so who shares in the merriment of the Father's house? (Luke 15.). I called to see a man who had yielded to the Saviour a few days before, and he told me that what astonished him most, next to the grace of God that had saved him, was the number of hymns that he knew; they turned out to be the hymns that he had learnt in the Sunday school twenty five years before, and which he had forgotten in his godlessness, but which came back to his memory, and became the expression of his gratitude now that he had returned as a prodigal to the Father's house.

Praise is comely, and if the ransomed of the Lord do not come into His presence with songs the stones of the streets might well tell out their shame. We are told to sing God's praises, and next we are told to talk about His wondrous works. There is a praising for the assembly; there is a talking for the fireside. We are not to say, “We have done with praising God,” when the hymn is over, but throughout our ordinary conversation, in the fields, by the wayside, in the streets, and in the home we are still to praise Him and talk of all His wondrous works.

There is a connection established between the common word “talk” and those glorious, swelling words, “the wondrous works of God.” We wonder to find the little monosyllable in such a place. “Preach ye of all His wondrous works” would have seemed well enough. “Show them,” would have been sound theology; but TALK

ye, talk ye ; in your ordinary, common, everyday conversation, make the wondrous works of God to be your familiar talk ; this is what the text means.

We must talk ; we seem born to talk ; we were wretched indeed if we were forbidden to speak to our fellow-creatures. From the first blush of morning, on through the bustling day and far into the shades of the drowsy night we talk. But how are our tongues occupied ? They run more quickly than our feet ; beware lest much mischief comes from their babble. They are sharper than razors, some of these tongues, and cut deeper than swords ; they kindle fires, some of them, enough to set whole communities ablaze. "The tongue," to quote the practical James again, "is a fire, a world of iniquity ; so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature ; and it is set on fire of hell." It is a grave responsibility to have such a mischievous member to control ; yet it may be done, and it may be consecrated into an instrument for the praise of God ; it will be this if we talk of all His wondrous works. The flow of conversation must be drawn off from the gutters and channels in which it gathers defilement, and be cleansed and purified until it becomes fresh and sparkling. Then, redeemed from common slander and envy, foolishness and vanity, our tongues will

become the vehicle for the fellowship of saints and of blessing to all, as we talk of all His wondrous works.

But "the good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good," and "out of the fulness of the heart the mouth speaketh." We shall not speak freshly, naturally, and with power of God's wondrous works unless the joy of His salvation is in our souls. "Whosoever drinketh," said the Lord, "of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst," but not that only, but "it shall be in him a well of water springing up." **HE WILL SING UNTO GOD ;** and out of him "shall flow rivers of living water." **HE WILL TALK OF ALL HIS WONDROUS WORKS.**

The upspringing song and outflowing talk will not fail if the drinking is continuous. Shall the slave ever forget the moment when the chains dropped from his wrists and he was free, and can we forget the happy day when the chains of our sins were broken by the nail-pierced hand of Jesus our Saviour and Lord. Let us remember when first we were enlightened, and talk of the wondrous work that did it. Let us consider His unchanging love and His present grace, His worthiness and glory, then shall our conversation

"Flow like waters after summer showers,  
And not as raised by mere mechanic powers."

Hold Thou me up, "and I shall be safe." Ps. 119, 117.

**DO** not spoil the chime of this morning's bells by ringing only half a peal. Do not say, "Hold thou me up," and stop there ; or add, "But all the same I shall stumble and fall as usual." Finish the peal of God's own music, the bright words of faith that He puts into your mouth, "Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe" ; for He

"is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy." That is not your joy but His, though a joy in which you will share when you see it. Then "unto Him . . . the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever." Amen.

# THE MYSTERY OF THE GOSPEL. No. 5. (JAMES BOYD.)

(Eph. 6. 19.)

" I THEREFORE, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace " (Eph. 4. 1-3). When pride, selfwill, and bitterness come in, the unity of the Spirit is no more in evidence. Instead of unity divisions take place, and these for the merest trifles, and gatherings of little parties are formed on every other basis than separation to the Lord on account of intolerable evil. A stranger who knows nothing of Christianity would think to-day that there were a thousand spirits in Christendom, and all in some way or other spirits of Christ, for all profess His name, and declare that it is to preserve His truth that they are divided from all others.

The exhortation here is based upon the teaching in the latter part of chapter 2. There Jew and Gentile are made one in Christ, one new man, one body, and through Him both have access by one Spirit to the Father. The proud Jew and the still more proud Gentile would require a great deal of watchful care over their haughty spirits if the unity of the Holy Spirit of God was to be kept. And the danger of contention and division between these, who after the flesh are two peoples, is that which presses upon the mind of the apostle in penning these exhortations, though as the history of the church has proved, schools of opinion can easily be formed and fostered apart from national prejudice. If practical unity is to be maintained, and the unity of the Spirit be kept, we must strive after the things that make for peace, and the only way to do this is to exhibit the beautiful characteristic of Christ, the meekness and lowliness of our exalted Head. Where a loose rein is

given to the flesh, and carnality is everywhere visible, what can be expected but discord and division? And when such things exist in the Christian assembly, what can the world suppose but that there are as many Holy Spirits as there are men to be influenced by them?

But the fact remains, however we may practically deny it, that there is but one body, and but one Spirit, and but one hope of our calling. One body and that the body of Christ; one Spirit resident in the glorified Head, and permeating the members of that body; one hope, the greatness of which so filled the heart and mind of the apostle, that we find him down upon his knees crying to the Father that the saints might by His Spirit be enabled to contemplate the wealth of blessing that was theirs in Christ, and to which they were called by the infinite love of Him who was the Source and Author of it all.

What then is there to contend about? Are the members of one body to quarrel among themselves? Are those who are indwelt by one Spirit to conduct themselves as though each one had a Spirit different from his fellows? Are those who have but one hope to run as though each one was striving to reach something not to be shared in by anyone else? How true it is that "the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light" (Luke 16. 8); and how astonishing it is that our wretched and sinful divisions cause us so little anguish of heart! Alas, they are often rather gloried in than lamented! Do we never feel how applicable the Scripture is to ourselves, that says, "The unjust knoweth no shame" (Zeph. 3. 5).

There is also one Lord, one faith, one baptism. One Lord to whom we all have bowed the knee, and to whom we have professed the most complete

subjection, and to whose Word we confess ourselves ready to yield the most implicit obedience. One faith, which is the revelation of the mind and thought of God, and upon which we profess the desire to have our souls well established, and for which we take the ground of being ready to lay down our lives. One baptism, that places us figuratively on the ground of dead to sin (Rom. 6.), and to the elements of the world (Col. 2.), and which brings us into the profession of Christ's name on earth, as followers of our risen Redeemer.

What room is there here for dissension, dispute, and disunion? Can we lay the blame of our manifest discord upon the Lord, as though His commandments were not sufficiently explicit? Are we all quite sure that our own wills have not been the cause of our hideous separations? And have we not been seeking occasionally to bring the saints of God under the power of our own wills, and thus leading them away from loyalty to Christ? If we seek to lead our brethren into subjection to the will of the Lord, we will bring Scripture to bear upon all that we say to them, for there only is His will expressed. But is it not often our own reasonings upon the Scriptures, and our deductions therefrom, that we force upon one another? To what serious tests the longsuffering of our Lord is put by our carnal behaviour we do not often stop to consider.

And where there is but one faith where is there room for disputations? Have we been perfectly satisfied with the faith that once for all was committed to the saints? What about our creeds, written and unwritten; the unwritten generally more despotic than the written? Have we not been building up our souls upon the thoughts of men rather than upon the truth of God? And have we not sought after novelties, and that with more diligence than we have used for our becoming better acquainted with that which we

have "heard from the beginning"? And what patience have we exercised toward those with feeble minds, who were not able to go on so fast as we imagined we were going?

And "one baptism" leaves us no excuse for the sects and parties that so characterize the people of God to-day. To one Leader only have we all been baptized; and if we all follow closely His leading we shall not find ourselves far apart from one another. He gave up His life that He might gather together into one the children of God that were scattered abroad. But the grievous wolves have scattered the sheep of Christ, and the perverse men have by means of perverted Scripture drawn the scattered flock after themselves; and what such leaders say has more authority over the minds of the people than has the voice of the Lord in holy Scripture.

One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in all believers. He is the Source of all, supreme over all, omnipresent, and *in* all true believers. This is the widest of all unities, though when it comes to "*in us all*" it is narrowed down to the limits of the members of the body of Christ. More than once believers are said to be in the Father, but here only, as far as I am aware, is the Father said to be in believers. He is in them by the Spirit in a vital bond of unity.

The church viewed in its responsibility as the witness to an absent and rejected Saviour is in the most terrible state of division and confusion, and recovery seems out of the question. The coming of our Lord will bring His people together, but that will be in the resurrected and changed condition, and not as His witness in the midst of this Christ-rejecting world. But as in the last and worst days of the departure of Israel from Jehovah, when they that feared the Lord spake often one to another, so in the present and last days of this dispensation remains a plain pathway for the feet

of saints, and also companionship with those who think upon His name. We can always find those who call upon the Lord with a pure heart, and with such it is our privilege to follow righteousness, faith, love, and peace (2 Tim. 2. 22); and if we live in peace with such, we shall find the God of love and peace with us (2 Cor. 13. 11).

And that the unity of the Spirit may be kept in the most evil days in which we are called to walk, abundance of grace is granted to every one of us. It could be said of our Lord when He was here upon earth, that He was full of grace and truth. And is it any less true of Him now that this grace has found through His death a righteous channel in which it can flow to all in unrestricted volume? No, thank God, He dispenses that grace freely, and "Unto everyone of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." And when He gives He gives with no niggard hand, but in measure overflowing.

But not only that the unity of the Spirit may be maintained in a practical way is this grace given, but for the nourishment, building up, and growth of the members of Christ. The grace that resides in the Head becomes, by means of the various members, distributed throughout the body, so that it increases by the infinite fulness that dwells in Him to whom by the Spirit all the members are united into one body.

And this ministration and operation of grace goes on irrespective of the practical state of the church viewed as a faithless witness for Christ. It is presented here as given in the sovereignty of the Lord, and not as in answer to our request for help in regard to the necessities of the wilderness journey (Heb. 4.). In this case He gives all the grace necessary for the furtherance of the work He has in hand, and He gives it in His own initiative, and not in connection with the responsibility of His saints. It is like the dew of Hermon that descends upon the mountains of Zion (Ps. 133.),

free and unsolicited. This grace flowing down from our exalted Head is, by means of the vital impulses received from the Head, distributed throughout the whole body, which is fitted together, and connected by joints of supply, according to the effectual working in the measure of each single part, and which in this way builds itself up in divine love.

Of this our natural body is a figure. It gets all its vital influences from the head; and the various organs, joints and bands being kept in a state of healthful activity, nourishment is distributed throughout the body, and this goes on without any intervention on our part. And in the body of Christ that is just what is before every member, growth up to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of the Christ.

But in addition to this we have gifts given from the ascended Christ. But in speaking of His ascension we are reminded that He first of all descended into the lower parts of the earth. Having been rejected by this world He, in His great love to the church, went down into the lower parts of the earth, in order that He might break the power of death, and set aside the authority of the devil, who had acquired the might of that judgment that lay upon man, and the terrors of which he used to keep man in bondage away from God.

He loved the church, and gave Himself for it. He went down under the judgment which lay upon everyone destined to become a member of that church which is His body, and having exhausted that judgment He rose from the dead, and led captive the whole power of evil, that had hitherto held man in captivity: "He led captivity captive." He has gone down to the lowest level of creation, and of humiliation also, and He has gone far above all heavens, purposing to fill all things. And He shall yet fill all things with the glory of God as revealed in the work of redemption.

## QUESTIONS ON PRAYER.

FROM a letter: "*Sometimes when I try to pray the Lord seems so very far away, and other things come in between. Do you think that a picture of the Lord would make Him a greater reality to me at such times?*"

It should ever be remembered, "The Lord is *nigh* to all them that call upon Him." When the heart is established through faith in this fact, although He may seem at times to be far away, faith will assert itself, and the heart will recognize that "The Lord is *nigh*" and *not afar off*. This must be accepted as fundamental, for "without faith it is impossible to please Him." Where faith is lacking no wonder other things come in between.

Moreover, there is to be energy and perseverance in prayer on our side. Definite things to pray for should be before us also when we approach God; and definite times, as far as possible, for drawing nigh to Him. If we get slack in prayer we lose much. We are not to give up praying. As we draw near to God He draws near to us (Jas. iv. 8). The devil may seek

A PICTURE would not help. Consider these three things:—

1st. There is no picture of the Lord extant. All that purport to be such are traditional and without any basis in fact. We have no authentic records of any kind as to His physical appearance in the days of His flesh. To imagine that anyone or anything can be made *real* by presenting a *fiction* is absurd.

2nd. Even if we had an authentic picture of Him it would not suffice to make Him real to us. It would supply us with His physical likeness as He was, but it would not help us to know Him as He is. Even the Apostles and others who knew Him "after the flesh" knew Him no longer after that fashion subsequent to Pentecost (see 2 Cor. 5. 14-18). To have Him real to you when upon your knees, He must be real to you as He is to-day in His risen life and not as He was nineteen

to hinder us, but if we resist him he will flee from us. Persevere. Supplicate in earnest. Pray without ceasing. The Lord hears our petitions. Doubt not. Ask in faith.

No, a picture of the Lord is of no help whatever. Indeed, the whole drift of Scripture is solemnly against such portrayals, for our Lord Jesus Christ is the image of God, and who shall picture Him (Read Deut. 4. 12, 15, etc.; 5. 8; Isa. 40. 18)? Whilst the Lord was a real Man as well as God manifest in flesh, yet we can never be certain that any man-made picture of Him rightly represents Him. We may be sure it is the opposite. We need to learn what the Spirit portrays of His moral beauty in Scripture, and thus as we see His grace, His love, His holiness, His tenderness, His power and His dependence, we shall find Him increasingly real to our hearts, for Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday and to-day and for ever. His perfection abides.

"His love is as great as His power,  
And knows neither measure nor end."

(H. J. VINE.)

centuries ago previous to His death and resurrection.

3rd. The making of Him real to us—i.e.,—"the substantiating of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" is not by pictures, but by FAITH. See Heb. 11. 1, N.T. This indeed is the crux of the matter. By nature we do so crave for the visible and tangible. Sight, and feeling, and sentiment would indeed entwine themselves about a picture, which is but an outward husk. Faith alone can seize and appropriate the kernel—the living Christ Himself.

To get on your knees to pray before a picture of the Lord, far from making Him real to you, would only effectually hinder Him ever being to you "a living bright reality" by diverting you to and occupying you with that which could be at best but a feeble shadow, and as a matter of fact is a grossly fictitious thing.

(F. B. HOLE.)

# DOES GOD DWELL IN AN UNFINISHED, (E. CROSS), OR A RUINED HOUSE ?

*The Church is spoken of as being God's dwelling place, but it is not yet completed, and it is also spoken of as being in ruins: Does God dwell in an unfinished or ruined house ?*

THIS is a question that creates difficulty to some minds. The answer is more easily apprehended by reference to the New Translation by J. N. Darby, which represents the original more closely than does our otherwise very excellent Authorized Version. In the New Translation by J. N. D., the presence or absence of the definite article in the Greek is marked by the use of brackets [ ] as is not done in our English version. Any of the readers of *Scripture Truth* desirous of pursuing further this very important subject will find much help on it in a paper entitled, "On the Greek article," by J. N. D., either as a separate tract, or in his "Collected Writings," vol. xiii. The substance of his remarks may be expressed in one sentence of his.

"The rule is simply this, that whenever a word, or combination of words, presents the *object* about which the mind is occupied, as objectively present to it, the article is used; whenever a word is merely characteristic, it is not."

The Epistle to the Ephesians presents to us the church according to the counsels of God, in her proper and essential constitution according to God's eternal purposes in respect of her, and the article is accordingly there used in a very emphatic manner. "The church which (has this character that it is, *ἡμε*) His body, the fulness of Him that fills all in all." It plainly is not that yet—nothing at present in existence is that. It will be in result, and for all ages, world without end (Eph. 3. 21). But it is not that yet, though what we rightly call the church is here now, as we shall see.

Moreover, "all the building is growing into a holy temple in the Lord."

That seems to have reference analogously to the temple in Solomon's time, when after the wars of David, the King of glory and of peace will reign "supreme o'er all," with "no evil occurrent." Plainly we have not come to that time yet: but the building is "growing" to it.

Meanwhile there are certain facts effected, all in view of the great final fact—the accomplishment of the purposes of God as regards the church.

1. He is our peace who hath made both one, Jew and Gentile.
2. He hath abolished the enmity . . . to make in Himself of the twain one new man.
3. That He might reconcile both unto God in one body.
4. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.

Here then we have this ecclesiastical unity set forth; and this prepares us for the better understanding of "the unity of the Spirit," *the* unity with the article, as referring to what precedes, and has been already named in the above scriptures, and for enlargement of thought, the extension of unity in concentric circles according to the purpose of God in the redemption work of Christ as centre, and embracing:

1. "One body, one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling."
2. The wider circle of "one Lord, one faith, one baptism," for the testimony of the gospel of the glorified Christ will be carried out to all nations (cf. Matt. 28. 18, 19; Isa. 66. 19).
3. The necessary all-embracing supremacy of "one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in us all," uniting in His own glory all the subjects of His grace.

All this is in the prosecution of His purpose, not in its realized effect,

and is given us for our guidance in spirit by the revelation of the mystery of His will (Eph. 1. 9). The house of God is not yet built as it will be in the coming day of glory, but as "the church has this character that it is the body of Christ" (Eph. 1. 23), so "God's house has this character, *ἡμεῖς*, that it is the church of the living God" (1 Tim. 3. 15), and God dwells therein accordingly. That is, the thing that is has the character fully of the thing that shall be; and, for all present practical purposes, our conduct now as regards it, is the same as becomes it then.

Now when we come to the Epistle of the Corinthians, the apostle there is addressing the local assembly at Corinth, with all who in every place call upon the name of the Lord. This is quite a different aspect from Ephesians. It is not "the assembly" viewed according to the purposes of God, in her heavenly, essential and abiding character, and as the work of Christ that cannot fail, but as the work of human instruments, builders that may build what is precious, what is faulty, or what is positively bad (1 Cor. 3.). Still it all takes its responsible character from what is true; but it is not called definitely the thing that is true—such is not the *object* before the mind, though it has that *character*, and its responsibility is to maintain it.

Accordingly the absence of the article is to be noted. This is quite plain in the original, though to avoid harshness the article may be used in English in brackets. Take, for example, 1 Cor. 3. 9, "We are God's fellow workmen: ye are God's husbandry, God's building." They were not God's building as comprising all of it; others belonged to it as well as they. But they were of that character, just as much as if they composed it all. (1 Cor. 3. 16). "Do ye not know that ye are [the] temple of God." They were not the whole temple of God. Others as well as they belonged to it. But they were God's temple,

not man's; that was their character, just as much as if they constituted it in its entirety; and they were responsible to walk accordingly. That they did not do so, did not alter their responsibility, any more than the servant in Matt. 25. 26 did not cease to be a servant, or escape the judgment of his Lord, because he was a "wicked servant and slothful." So again, 1 Cor. 12. 27, "Now ye are Christ's body and members in particular." They were not the whole of Christ's body. Others are members of it as well as they. But they were as truly "Christ's body" characteristically, and responsible to act as such, as though they alone were it; and yet they were very far from being it, or from walking according to it; although that was their responsible character.

The Jew had turned the temple of God into "a den of thieves"; and yet its true character remained the same, and the Lord called it "My Father's house." So likewise Jerusalem, which is "spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified" (Rev. 11. 8), is called in Matt. 27. 53 "the holy city."

"God's house has this character that it is [the] assembly of [the] living God, [the] pillar and base of the truth" (1 Tim. 3. 15). This is its abiding character. God dwells there by His Spirit, *ἐν πνεύματι*, and the conduct of faith is regulated accordingly. The actual state of it may be like "a great house" with all sorts of vessels in it, some to honour, some to dishonour (2 Tim. 2. 20); but its essential character still remains the same, and judgment must begin at the most favoured spot to vindicate the glory of God (1 Pet. 4. 17; cf. Amos 3. 2). It is not what it was; it is not what it will be: it is not what it ought to be: it is what it is. It is the house of God, and God dwells there by His Spirit until He withdraws His restraining hand and leaves the carcass to the swoop of judgment (Matt. 24. 28).

# "THE TRUE GOD AND ETERNAL LIFE." (H. J. VINE.

(1 John v. 20.)

NO subjects have called forth the energies of profound thought like these two—"The true God" and "Eternal life"; but after long ages of research, men still have to own, they have failed to discover the one and to explain the other. "As touching the Almighty we cannot find him out," is yet the reply to Job's ancient question; and as to eternal life, it is still admitted they know neither the origin of "life" or what it is in itself, much less that which God's Word calls "eternal life."

Is man to be left in utter ignorance then of these most important matters? Yes, certainly, so long as he depends upon his own abilities to discover them. The abilities of man are indeed great and wonderful, given to him by a wise and beneficent Creator; but, at their best, they are incompetent to fathom the depths or scale the heights of the two subjects of which we speak; much less so now that sin has marred those remarkable abilities.

If man be unable to discover them by his own intellectual efforts, is there no way at all by which he may know them? Certainly there is a way. God does not mock us by speaking of them in His Word! He desires that they should be known, even though the knowledge of the true God and eternal life surpasses all other knowledge.

What then is the way? By the revelation of God and not by the attainment of man. Surely God is able to reveal Himself! Why should any question that He is competent to do so? The truth is, If man could attain to this excellent knowledge his pride would exalt itself; and that is why he is so slow and unwilling to admit the only way, that of *revelation*, for then all the glory must be God's.

Nevertheless the man is a superlative fool who still pursues the wrong path when the right one is open to

him. Of such it is written, "Professing themselves to be wise they become fools." Let the learned as well as the ignorant but take the place which is rightly ours—that of fallen, sinful, and dependent creatures, needing mercy, grace, and revelation from God, and there will be a grateful and plentiful supply through the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Salvation for the fallen, forgiveness for the sinful, through Him Who died and rose again, are first made ours; then, the Spirit being given to us, we are enabled to take in the revelation which is made in the marvellous wisdom and grace of God. Salvation and forgiveness in Christ must be ours, and the consequent gift of the Spirit, to enable us to receive that which God makes known, for the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit, for they are folly to him (1 Cor. 2. 14). Eye has not seen, and ear has not heard, neither has it come into man's heart that which God has prepared for them that love Him, "but God hath revealed them to us by His Spirit" (10). Here then is the way. Man is shut up to God, and not left to his own resource and energy of mind. How becoming this is for the creature, and how gracious of the Creator so to order it.

Before the coming of the Son of God into the world the true God was unrevealed, and it was not until the Spirit was given that any were capable of taking in the revelation made by the Son. From the world's foundation the eternal power and divinity of God were to be perceived in the things that are made, but not the true God Himself. Again, He spoke in various ways in the prophets, but it was in the person of the Son He spoke fully and finally. It needed One who was in Himself God to be adequate to perfectly declare God. This assertion is self-evident and needs no argument.

After the Spirit was given, John wrote, "No one has seen God at any time"—how sweeping is such a statement, covering the times previous to Christ's coming in flesh—but, he continued, "*The only-begotten Son, Who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him*" (John 1. 18). Approaching the gospels in the grace and power of the Spirit ungrieved we shall behold in the glorious Son the full revelation of God. What an entrancing unfolding for our anointed eyes to feast upon in Jesus, our Saviour, our Lord, God's beloved Son!

"He was the image, in man's lowly guise  
Of the invisible to mortal eyes;  
Son of His bosom, come from heaven  
above,  
We see in Him, incarnate, 'God is love.'"

Eternal life goes along with this revelation which is made in the Son. We are told in John 17. 3, "And this is the eternal life, that they should know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." These words are spoken by the Son to the Father in the hearing of His disciples. It is to be noticed, the Father is here called the true God, just as the Son is called the true God in 1 John 5. 20. It is not that there are two Gods, but the Son is God and the Father is God, even as also the Holy Spirit is God; but it is in the Son, become man, we see "God manifest in the flesh." Now the believer on the Son has eternal life, as we read in John 3. 36, and the high privilege of such is to know the Father and the Son.

He that has the Son has life (1 John 5. 12), and he "that confesses the Son has the Father also" (2. 23). It is never stated the other way, as though it were reciprocal. "No man cometh to the Father but by Me," said the Son of God. "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life." This excludes all the efforts of man apart from the Son: it shuts out the natural man even at his very best. The Son is *the* Way, not simply *a* way! The Son is *the* Truth, not simply a portion

of it! The Son is *the* Life, not simply a partial manifestation of it. Yea, "He is the true God and eternal life."

Although God excluded man from the tree of life when he fell, it was not originally forbidden him. The way to life is now opened up by the death of Christ for man; as he said, He gave His flesh for the life of the world; again, He that eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life (John 6. 51, 54). The promise of life, however, was given of God before the ages of time (Titus 1. 2), but it was "the Originator of life" Himself (Acts 3. 15, N.T.) who came to make it known, and to open the way to it for man, but they slew Him. Nevertheless God raised Him from the dead; yea, He Himself rose in the power of endless life; and thus victory over death is now seen in Man risen from the dead. Death is vanquished by "the Originator of life."

To those who know these things how precious are the words of 1 John 1. 1—"We have heard, we have seen with our eyes, we have contemplated, and our hands have handled the word of life." The life itself has been manifested, the eternal life which was with the Father, and it is made known to us that the fellowship which was enjoyed at the beginning with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ, might be ours also; and it is added, "These things write we to you that your joy may be full."

How could it be otherwise for those of whom it is written, "We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life" (1 John 5. 20). May our hearts rejoice and revel in all the abiding blessedness of this, and heed the final word of John's epistle, which the next verse gives, that the fulness of joy which is rightly ours may be unspoiled, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols."

# DEMOCRACY IN THE LIGHT OF SCRIPTURE.

(FRANK B. HOLT.)

AT the present time two great ideas prevail in the world, as far as its national, political, and social life is concerned. They are radically different, and upon the surface wholly inconsistent the one with the other, yet the present drift of things would lead us to suspect that a way may yet be found by which they shall be brought together in a certain kind of amalgamation; and the voice of the prophetic Scriptures confirms us in this expectation.

The two great ideas are respectively the democratic and the imperialistic. Both have fairly arrived on the scene.

Democracy presents itself to us as the finished product of the wisdom of the ages. History gives us, it may be said, the long and dismal record of human experiments in the art of government, and profiting by past experience the democratic idea has been evolved, and now holds the field amongst enlightened nations. It is—to use Abraham Lincoln's famous phrase—"Government of the people, by the people, for the people." In practice it comes to this, that the people are to be governed by a *majority* of the people—for they are never unanimous, and hence the minority must give way—and that majority should rule by its accredited representatives for the good of *all* the people and not for the majority's interests only. Whether it really does so is of course another thing.

The imperialistic idea has as its watchword that "union is strength." In national life it leads to groups of nations and powerful alliances and leagues. In politics it expresses itself in groups of parties to achieve together what they cannot hope to enforce singly. Socially it produces giant trusts, federations of industries, unions and alliances of unions. It even

threatens to appear in the religious world in the form of a federation of "churches." It is really a reversion to the old idea which animated the antediluvians in their schemes at Babel. (See Genesis 11. 1-9).

Our present concern is not at all with the political advantages or disadvantages of Democracy; we do wish, however, to get the light which the Word of God sheds upon it, thereby discerning its true character, and anticipating the sure end to which time will carry it.

In the first place then we must enquire of Scripture as to what God's way for the government of the earth may be. He has of course a mind on the subject, and the more clearly we apprehend it the more shall we be in a position to judge of any and every theory that man has proposed.

In the beginning, Adam, as yet unfallen, was placed in the position of sole authority. He was God's image or representative and had dominion over the lower ranks of created beings (Gen. 1. 26). No thought of authority over other men comes in here. This point was not raised until sin had come in. His authority, such as it was, was absolute, and his responsibility was to God alone.

Sin having invaded creation, a long period elapsed during which there was no further authority delegated to man by God, and hence no man had any authority over his fellow men. That age terminated in the flood.

The first post-diluvian age opened, however, with a further delegation of authority. Noah and his sons after him were responsible to maintain God's rights in man, especially as regards the sacredness of human life. (See Gen. 9. 5 and 6). God hereby delegated to certain men authority over men even

to the execution of capital punishment. Patriarchal authority was thus established.

Among those who soon thereafter cast off the fear of God, not liking "to retain God in their knowledge," as Rom. 1. 28 puts it, this authority evidently changed its form. It was no longer patriarchal in character, but fell into the hands of men of prowess and renown, such as Nimrod (Gen. 10. 8-10), and after the confusion of speech at Babel, nations with their "kings" appear (Gen. 12. 15; 14. 1 and 2).

However, those who still feared God adhered to the patriarchal order until God set His hand to deliver Israel from Egypt, and raised up Moses. This marked a new departure. Moses was invested by God with an authority in the midst of Israel far beyond anything that Noah received. True, at first his authority was rejected. The wrongdoer "thrust him away saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us?" (Acts 7. 27) but we read also, "This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush" (verse 35). Moses was indeed "king in Jeshurun" (Deut. 23. 5), but it was a kingship of an informal order. Properly speaking, Theocracy was established in Israel with Moses as the spokesman and mediator, and therefore in that sense king.

For centuries such authority as was administered in Israel was of that order, but the power of it declined; those who wielded it were far inferior in faithfulness and in force. "There arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face" (Deut. 34. 10).

The resultant feebleness led to an outcry for a king like the nations (1 Sam. 8. 5), and after the episode of the wilful king of the people's choice, God raised up David and established kingiy authority on a proper basis. He was

to be ruler over God's people, and the executor of judgment on their enemies (2 Sam. 7. 8, 9). He was also to "feed" Israel His inheritance. So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart; and guided them by the skilfulness of his hands (Psa. 78. 71, 72). David's authority was absolute, and he was to *rule*. He was to *execute judgment* if and as needs be, but also to *feed* his subjects and to *guide* them. His rule was to be absolute but wholly beneficent.

With the failure of David's descendants the glory of it departed, and at last God transferred authority into Gentile hands. It was entrusted first of all to Nebuchadnezzar, as stated in Dan. 2. 37, 38, and though the great king's dream, as recorded in that chapter, foreshadowed the changes that would supervene as to forms of government, yet it showed that the authority that lay behind government, whatever its form, would remain in Gentile hands until the sudden execution of divine wrath on all man's pride and abuse of the entrusted power should be an accomplished fact. Then should appear the kingdom which "shall stand for ever" (Dan. 2. 20), and that kingdom is to be vested in the Son of man, who will wield absolute dominion for the blessing of men (chap. 7. 13, 9). He will be pleased, however, to take up and use in connection with His government the saints "of the Most High" or "of the high places" (verses 18, 22), and also a "people" who will possess the kingdom "under the whole heaven," i.e., on its earthly side. This people of course is Israel.

This rapid sketch of the course of government amongst men is enough to show that one feature marks it all through. The ultimate authority is always God—and God alone.

No man has any prescriptive right to exercise authority over his fellows except he has received it from God. Hence in such passages as Rom. 14. 1-6 and 1 Pet. 2. 13-15 obedience to the ruling authorities is enjoined

upon the Christian. The Apostle Paul tells us "There is no authority except from God; and those that exist are set up by God" (New Translation).

Turning now from government as presented to us in Scripture to the practice of it by those to whom it has been entrusted on earth, we at once see that it has been terribly abused, as has all else that has been entrusted to fallen man. Tyranny and self-seeking have everywhere flourished, and history is a record of the long and painful struggles by means of which nations have turned from one form of government to another, or have introduced modifications into their various governmental systems, in the vain hope of evolving ideal conditions. Of all these changes Democracy is the latest, and its advent is not surprising to anyone at all versed in the abuses which gave it birth.

Comparing it, however, not with its predecessors, but with the ideals of Scripture, which are to be fully realized in the millennial age, we at once see that it is more hopelessly condemned than any other form of government which has yet appeared; for the reason that it frankly and unblushingly deposes God as the foundation and source of authority and puts man—i.e., "the people"—in His place. The gulf between these two is as wide as that between heaven and hell.

To the thoroughgoing Democrat only one question really matters, viz., What is the will of the people? To ask what may be *right*—what, in other words, may be the will of God, is quite irrelevant. What the people desire is to be regarded as the right thing, and the functions of a truly democratic government are to carry out the people's desires, to be the humble servants of the people's will—whether right or wrong.

In this matter, as in all others, the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ provides the Christian with a supreme test. At that solemn hour Pontius Pilate the

governor was the representative of Cæsar, and at his autocratic bar Christ was arraigned. Yet, in an unusual moment of weakness autocracy abdicated its functions. The record runs thus:—

"When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it" (Matt. 27. 24).

"And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that He might be crucified. And the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed. And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required" (Luke 23. 23, 24).

As Cæsar's representative, Pilate washed his hands of the whole business, whilst, acting as executive officer of a democracy which held sway for just a brief hour, he "*gave sentence that it should be AS THEY REQUIRED.*"

Viewed as a setting forth of democratic principles, this might be passed as all *right*. Viewed from every other standpoint, it was the most outrageous *wrong* of the world's history.

Reverting again to Nebuchadnezzar's dream as recorded in Daniel 2, we may now be better able to grasp the significance of the clay which entered into the image when the feet of it were reached.

Daniel's vision in chapter 7, sets forth the course of the four great Gentile empires in their dealings amongst men, and they are pictured as wild beasts in their powers of destruction. Nebuchadnezzar's dream, on the other hand, gives us the same four empires but as setting forth the character and quality of their governments, and hence what marks them is a steady deterioration in the metals that appear.

God started the "Times of the Gentiles" with an ideal form of government, though the man who wielded its power was far from ideal. That it *was* an ideal form is proved by

the fact that God will revert to it for the millennial age, when the ideal Man appearing, by whom He will "judge the world in righteousness," all will soon be peace and blessing.

As the empires developed, men deviated from the golden ideal, and introduced human modifications, and the government became silver, brass, and iron, as more and more divine thoughts were forgotten and human policies came to the fore.

It is, however, in the last stage of the last empire—the Roman—that we find for the first time the introduction of clay—a non-metallic substance. This was an evident prediction that before the end there should be introduced into the prevailing governmental system, a principle which should be not so much a further modification of the old, as one radically and fundamentally different. Because of it "the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly broken" or "brittle"—see margin. Daniel's interpretation of the clay and iron mixed is "they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay."

The "they" of this passage appears to mean those in whose hands authority for the time being rests.

We have no hesitation in seeing here a prediction of the uprising and prevalence of a democracy in the last days. The authority which finds its source in God, and that which finds its source in man, are as different from one another as gold or iron or any other metal from clay. The two things may be mingled—they are in part inextricably mixed in our modern theory and practice of government, but only weakness and brittleness is induced, and soon will come the death-blow administered by the stone "cut out without hands."

If any have difficulty in reconciling what is said above with the prophecies concerning the coming Satan-inspired head for the revived Roman empire,

we would ask them to remember that in practice the transition from democratic to imperialistic forms is very easy. Let a man of transcendent genius appear, who seems to embody in himself the very spirit of "the people," and nothing is easier than for him to assume for himself the powers that theoretically belong to the people, and the people, fickle and easily led, will be glad to have it so. The career of Napoleon I. springing out of the French Revolution is a case in point. The coming "beast" of Revelation 13. rises "out of the sea," i.e., the masses of the people in a state of agitation and unrest.

It is therefore more than likely that this coming "super-man" will quite ardently uphold democratic institutions in theory whilst carrying on autocratic rule in practice—iron mixed with clay.

The reader who has patiently followed us up to this point may be inclined to ask what we hope to achieve in writing all this, if we have, as we say, no political ends before us. We therefore avow without hesitation that our aim is a far more thorough heart-separation from this present evil world for ourselves and all believers.

Full well we know that nothing but an abiding sense of the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord can effectually lift our souls above the level of the world and its thoughts, yet the exposure of world politics and schemes by the light of Scripture has its value, and this has been our present endeavour.

The lamp of prophetic scripture is said in 2 Peter 1. 19 to be shining in a dark or "squalid" place. Let the lamp cast its rays on the much-vaunted principles of social democracy and how squalid they appear. The sticky clay may be gilded but it certainly is not gold! The enlightened Christian will not waste much enthusiasm upon it.

And what clear light it sheds upon the vexed question of whether a Christian should vote and interest

himself in politics generally. We are asked to accept the position of being a little cog in that machine called "the people" which has usurped to itself that function in the sphere of government which belongs to God alone. Shall we do it? YES!—if we believe in the modern humanistic "gospel" which humanizes Jesus and deifies man. But if we believe that salvation is not of the people but of the Lord, NO!

The world system is doomed. Let there be no hesitancy in our witness to this fact. Out of the impending catastrophe souls are being rescued by the abounding grace of our Lord. It is ours to seek them, bearing witness to our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us then

not waste time in vain attempts to shore up the tottering fabric, but let us busy ourselves in that which is the great work which our Lord has allotted to us. To be thoroughly for Him and His interests, is to be thoroughly outside the world system and its hopes.

We look, not for a perfected system of democracy, but for "the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body" (Phil. 3. 20, 21), and as for this earth, we look for the setting up of the kingdom of Christ by the God of heaven, which shall never be destroyed but shall stand for ever.

## GOD'S GOVERNMENT: (No. 4.)

### Preparing the Way for Christ.

*Continuation of Paper No. 3.*

IT may safely be affirmed that it is not possible for the human mind to go further than Elihu goes in accounting for the sufferings of the righteous, and that his discourses are not only in agreement with, but contain the germs of, all that is elsewhere more fully unfolded to us throughout the Scriptures.

While Elihu is speaking, the clouds gather, a storm darkens the heavens and sweeps across the landscape, and the thunder utters its voice. The speakers are all of them awed as out of the whirlwind that passes by, Jehovah speaks, and in magnificent appeals and descriptions declares to Job His infinite unimaginable greatness as Creator, Upholder, Governor of all things. He brings no explanation of the problem under debate, but He shows Himself, and by the revelation of Himself Job is made to feel his own insignificance, his sinfulness, and the fearful presumptuousness that had marked his words in his vehement complaints, and rash reflections on

the divine procedure. This self-manifestation on the part of God is the enforcement of Elihu's words: "Touching the Almighty, we cannot find Him out." It forms the most impressive reiteration possible of Abraham's question: "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" And thus, as by the arguments of Elihu the sufferer had been silenced, now by the appearance and words of Jehovah Himself he is satisfied. The patriarch realizes Him and what He is, meets with God, and is blessed in the meeting.

Having glanced at the debate in the book of Job on its mundane and visible side, we are prepared to consider its place and importance as thus viewed in the scheme of divine revelation.

It is not necessary to dwell upon its value as an exhibition of the religion of the men of patriarchal times, of the doctrines they held, their hopes and fears, their trials and victories. There are other more special uses which this history of Job's afflictions and of the

connected discussion and theophany is fitted to serve. It is a solemn and magnificent protest on the part of the Most High against being measured by the limited standards of human reason, or having His deeds weighed in the slight balances of man's prevailing sentiments and accepted doctrines. "My righteousness," He here virtually says, "is very high; My purposes and ends are too wide and lofty to be scanned and understood by your feeble minds."

Thus early in the world's history, and especially in view of those signal interpositions of judgment upon sin which had previously marked His providence, does God make room for Himself and for the special methods of His future procedure, preparing the stage, and securing free and unchallenged scope for the display of all that in the eyes of just—but finite and narrow—minds should appear anomalous, unaccountable and even questionable, in the distribution of good and evil among the world's inhabitants.

The general scheme of the world's government, as now made manifest, is one that does not admit of exact, visible, retributive measures being carried out on earth. It thus necessarily gives occasion to reflections being cast upon the righteousness of God, and tempts men to cry out: "Where is the God of judgment?"

We remember the perplexity of Asaph, in Ps. 73., the complaint and expostulation of Jeremiah, in his twelfth chapter, and many other corresponding utterances of God's saints. All such reflections should be regarded as having been, of set purpose, foreclosed by God in the revelation vouchsafed so many centuries ago to these ancients of Teman and of Uz. There He impressively warned men that they were not to expect to see on earth what they considered just treatment of the world inhabitants, or a fair distribution of goods, or to find outward condition corresponding to moral desert.

This testimony has a special import-

ance in relation to that other divine manifestation which covers the whole field of human history, and which reaches its highest pinnacle of glory in the life and death of the incarnate Son of God. We see in the afflictions of Job, and the divine interpretation of them, what has a most momentous bearing on the right estimation of the afflictions of Christ. If the justice of the divine government requires us to pronounce that all who are pre-eminent in suffering, pre-eminently deserve suffering, then of course it follows that Jesus was of all sinners the chief, and that His death is no more than that of an offender justly punished. Surely it was fitting that ere the Father sent His only-begotten Son into the world to be subjected to unexampled suffering, He should be careful to give previous warning and testimony that in this world's government, suffering, if related to sin, does not necessarily imply that the sufferer is personally obnoxious to God, or is regarded as peculiarly worthy of condemnation. Evidently the innocent and calumniated sufferer of the land of Uz pointed forward to, and prepared the way for, the holy and still more calumniated Sufferer of Gethsemane and Calvary. Hence it is not without reason that in all ages the one has been regarded as a type of the Other.

It was the more needful that such a preparatory testimony should be raised against the rashness of human judgment, when it was divinely planned that the coming of Christ was to take place in connection with an order of things in which the principle of visible retribution was largely operative.

The Jewish system was, to a great extent, a system of outward and material rewards and penalties. Hence it was likely to give currency to that common sentiment that condition is proportioned to, and indicative of, moral character. We know that this idea was, in fact, very firmly rooted in the Jewish mind, and that certain grievous outward calamities were

regarded among them as a sign of lying under the curse of God. In such circumstances it would have been inevitable that the facts of the Saviour's life and death should be fatally misinterpreted, had not suitable means been provided beforehand to guard against the misinterpretation, and to teach the people the truth that the best and most

favoured of God's servants have sometimes been visited with apparently the most signal marks of His disfavour.

So much for what I have called the *mundane* question, that worked out among men here in this lower world. It remains for us to examine the *supra-mundane* question raised in the book of Job, one of the very greatest importance.

## QUESTIONS ON THE LORD'S SUPPER.

FIRST, "*What thoughts should govern my heart when sitting before the Lord to remember Him?*" These should be thoughts wholly and solely of Himself. His word is: "This do in remembrance of ME." More He does not ask—nor less. He suffices and fully. A heart whose affections are, at that sacred moment, abstracted, in divine power, from everything but Himself, is His request. If such be the case, the youngest disciple or the oldest will find an all-absorbing Object. In that glorious "Me," whatever the measure of his Christian attainment, he will find full satisfaction. Heaven can present none better. His worshipping and adoring spirit may range over the whole realm of love that is covered by that "Me." No rule nor law is prescribed. To do so would be to impose an intolerable yoke on the heart which then longs for the closest possible intercourse with the Lord alone. Abundant room is left for the varied aspirations, thoughts, feelings and renewed affections of the believer. He is thoroughly at home in the company of his Lord and Saviour. He is free to meditate on His life of love and death of shame, free to view Him as Son of God or Son of man—just according to the measure of His knowledge of the Lord. To illustrate: he may look at the picture of his mother, but the special appreci-

ation must be all his own. A thousand endearing thoughts may fill his heart, but he alone holds the key to the charm of her face. And so in conscious association with Christ in heavenly glory we are free to enjoy the memory of all that He was when in death on the tree.

SECOND, "*Can you guide me in the study of the Word; set me in the channel that would carry me on and out into the ocean of His love?*" To read the Word is very important, and that systematically, patiently and prayerfully; to act on it in lowly grace and obedience is also necessary, but to meditate upon it, as in Psa. 1 or 150, is of prime moment. The practice of rumination—chewing the cud, like a cow some forty times—is the mark of a clean animal. Scriptural rumination will ward off spiritual rheumatism, and the colds and chills that are bound to settle down on the indolent and lazy soul.

This, too, is the channel that leads the heart into the true enjoyment of God's wonderful love. Nor may prayer be forgotten; for thereby the worst of all spiritual diseases, that of a swelled head and pride, is prevented. Hence the need of the knee as well as the eye, and the throne of grace as well as the precious Word of God.

(J. WILSON SMITH.)

CORRECTION.—On last line of page 87 (April issue), the reference should be Acts 10. 20. Also the word *kurios* is translated "Lord" about 600 times in the New Testament.

## PSALM 119.

THIS is, as we all know, the longest, by far, of all the Psalms; but it is full of deep interest, and worthy of patient study.

It does not contain either history or prophecy, doctrine or exhortation. It alludes to no nation or people, their past or future.

It mentions the name of "God" but once, and "the Lord" some twenty times. It breathes some sixty prayers—the shortest being in three syllables: "Help Thou me." It draws attention, however, to the Word of God, in one or other of its forms, in every verse except two. It eulogizes that Word.

The writer, however pious, does not stand on Christian ground; that is, he does not enjoy the blessings revealed to us in that glorious system. He never speaks of the Father, Son, or Spirit, nor of an accomplished redemption, with the full assurance and settled peace which it brings to the soul of the Christian. To all this he is, of course, a stranger, for redemption had not yet been wrought.

He mentions heaven but once, feeling that his life was lived on earth, where, on account of the faith which he had, his sufferings, at the hands of his enemies, were forced upon him.

The one thing indispensable was "the Word." Oh! how he loved it! It was his meditation all the day, "Sweeter than honey to his mouth." He clung to it as a drowning man to a spar. His experiences were not altogether dissimilar from those of the case described to us in Rom. 7., though, perhaps, not so deep. He does not call himself "wretched," because his conflict was more with external than internal foes. Rom. 7. treats of the awful discovery of "the sinfulness of sin" (a strange expression) and the learning of the deepest and most humiliating lesson that can, and should, be learned! Here the

depths are not so profound, nor the darkness so great, nor despair so terrible. God is not so distant; and it is just this fact that God is accessible, that His ear is open, and His hand outstretched, that leads to the plaintive, but not hopeless cry: "Help Thou me." Hope counts on help, and, thank God, not in vain. Then, notice that the entire Psalm, save the first five verses, is in the singular. After saying that the undefiled in the way are blessed, and presenting that unquestionable fact as the thesis, the writer exclaims: "O, that my ways were directed to keep Thy statutes"—his personal ways. And so to the end, the same laudable desire, in differing forms of language, expresses itself in the ear of Him Whose name is so seldom used.

Still, all through, the address is direct, immediate, importunate. It is "God and I" dealing face to face. No intermediary nor third party; no auxiliary nor helper. The intercourse is personal, private, precious and prevailing. No wonder that this Psalm, though fragmentary, is so attractive!

I knew an old Christian woman who, soon after conversion when young, learned the whole Psalm by heart. It formed her character right through life, and placed the stamp of the fear and love of God upon her spirit in living power. I knew another who, at seventy-five, did the same. It passed quickly from her memory, but at seventy-seven she learned it again!

"There were giants in those days"! Surely; but, "What man has done man can do."

Do we seek God now as they did? Is His sacred Word as indispensable to us as it was to them?

Let us test our measure of thirst by the eager spiritual tenacity of the language of Ps. 119.

## ELIJAH. No. 5.

CHARLES SMITH.

Carmel: The Fire from Heaven. (2 Kings 18. 16-40.)

OBADIAH having delivered his message, King Ahab went to meet the prophet and at once charges him with being the troubler of Israel. The land may be filled with idols and idol temples; idol groves and idolatrous altars, served by idolatrous priests, may stand on every side; the people may have forsaken the Lord and followed Baalim; the king may be the leader in apostasy, and his wife a heathen murderess; these accumulated evils are no trouble to the king. But is there a drought in the land, and a famine in Samaria which interferes with his pleasures and endangers his stud, then indeed it is a grievous trouble, and the man at whose words the heavens are shut is, in the sight of the king, a troubler. In touch with the power of the living God, Elijah may raise the dead and command the rain, but does he denounce sin and warn the sinner, then forthwith he is a troubler.

The presence of the man who lays sin upon the conscience and brings the sinner into the presence of God, is ever a troubler in this world. At the coming of Christ Himself into the world, Herod "was troubled and all Jerusalem with him." And in a still later day, Paul and his companions were looked upon as troublers, for the enraged citizens of Philippi could say, "These men . . . do exceedingly trouble our city."

The worldly Christian will not be viewed as a troubler, even as Obadiah, in his day, so far from being a troubler, was looked upon as an extremely useful member of society and accordingly made governor of the king's household. It is the man of God as he stands apart from the course of this world—while witnessing to its evil and warning of coming judgment—who will ever be a troubler, even though he proclaims grace and points the way of blessing.

With great boldness and plainness of speech the prophet throws the charge back upon the king, "I have not troubled Israel, but *thou* and thy father's house." In faithfulness he explains how they have done so, and brings home Ahab's personal sin: "Ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and *thou* hast followed Baalim."

Having charged him with his sins, he shows the king there is but one possible way to end the famine and reach the day when the Lord will send rain upon the earth. *The sin that has brought the judgment must be dealt with in judgment.* To this end Ahab is told to gather all Israel to Carmel, together with the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves four hundred, which eat at Jezebel's table. All that have been concerned in this great sin must be present. The leaders and the led are to gather to Carmel. No privileges that any may enjoy, no position, however exalted, they may fill, will be allowed as a plea for absence. Those who feast at the royal table, and those who minister to Baal, must be present with all the people.

Even the abandoned king realises the desperate condition of the land, and hence, without further remonstrance, he carries out Elijah's demand. All Israel and all the idolatrous prophets are gathered to Carmel.

This great host having assembled, Elijah came forth and addresses himself "unto all the people." He makes three distinct appeals. First he seeks to arouse the conscience of the people. He says, "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him."

The audience in whose hearing Elijah makes this powerful appeal was composed of a degraded king, a corrupt

company of prophets, and a fashionable crowd of undecided triflers. Passing by the king and prophets, Elijah speaks directly to the people. The king was the leader in apostasy, and already had been charged with his sins. The prophets of Baal were the avowed opponents of God, and were about to be exposed and judged. But the vast mass of the people were undecided, halting between two opinions. By *profession* they were the people of Jehovah, by *practice* they were the worshippers of Baal. Appealing to their conscience, he says, "How long halt ye between two opinions?"

To-day we are faced with the representatives of these three classes. There are the leaders in apostasy; men who have made an outward profession of Christianity, but who deny the Lord that bought them, and turned back to their wallowing in the mire. Then there are an increasing number in Christendom who make no profession of Christianity, who zealously propagate their false religious systems, and are the avowed enemies of God the Father and God the Son. But there is another class, the vast mass of nominal Christians who "halt between two opinions." Alas, they have no personal faith in Christ, nothing but "opinions." With them, God and His word, Christ and His cross, time and eternity, heaven and hell, are merely matters of opinion—opinions that result in no settled convictions, for in regard to these solemn realities they have "TWO opinions." They would not oppose Christ, but they will not confess Christ. They have no wish to fall out with God, but they would fain keep in with the world. They would like to escape the judgment of sin, but they are bent upon enjoying the pleasures of sin. They would like to die as saints, but they prefer to live as sinners. At times they will talk of morality, discuss social and religious problems, or join in theological controversies. But they carefully evade all personal dealing with God, decision for Christ, and con-

fession of His Name. They halt, they hesitate, they procrastinate, they practically say, "Some day we will turn to Christ, but not yet; some day we will be saved, but not yet; some day we will face our sins, but not yet."

Let such pay heed to Elijah's conscience-reaching question, "How long?" How long will sinners leave unsettled the great question of their soul's eternal destiny? How long will they waste their lives, play with sin, neglect salvation, and trifle with God? Let such remember that God has an answer to this question as well as men, and that God's disposals are usually very different to man's proposals. The rich man of the Gospel story proposed to answer this question according to his thoughts, and God calls him a fool for his pains. "How long shall I live?" said he. And for answer he promised himself "many years." But very different is God's answer, "This night shall thy soul be required of thee."

This solemn question "How long?" brooks no delay. True the grace of God is without limit, but the *day of grace* wears to its end. For long centuries the sunlight of grace has shone upon this guilty world; now the shadows lengthen and the night draws on. The sun of grace is setting amidst the gathering clouds of judgment. Let triflers beware lest when God says "How long?" men halt too long, only to hear at last those terrible words, "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out My hand and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all My counsel, and would none of My reproof, I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon Me, but I will not answer; they shall seek Me early, but they shall not find Me."

In Elijah's day men were silenced by this appeal. They "answered him not

a word." Every mouth was stopped. They stood before the prophet a silent, conscience-stricken, self-condemned people.

Having convicted the people of their sin, the prophet makes his second appeal. He reminds the nation that he alone is the prophet of the Lord, but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. How evil the time when there is but one true prophet to stand against four hundred and fifty false ones. There were indeed seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal, nevertheless there was only one man left to witness for the Lord. It is good to refuse to acknowledge Baal, but there is a vast difference between not bowing down in worship to Baal and standing up to witness for the Lord. Obadiah may fear the Lord greatly, but his unhallowed association has closed his mouth. We hear no word of him on Carmel. The fear of God may lead seven thousand to mourn before God in secret, but the fear of man withholds them from witnessing for God in public. In all that great company the prophet stood alone. And let us not forget that with all his holy boldness, he was a man of like passions with ourselves. The living God before whom he stood was the source of his power.

Alone though he be, Elijah does not hesitate to challenge the crowd of false prophets. He has rebuked the king; he has convicted the nation of trifling indecision; he will now expose the folly of these false prophets and the vanity of their gods. Who is the God of Israel? is the momentous question. Elijah boldly proposes that this great question shall be submitted to the trial by fire. "The God that answereth by fire, let him be God." The appeal is to God. The decision shall not rest with the solitary prophet of the Lord or the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal. It shall be no question of man's reasonings or of the opinion of one man against four hundred and fifty. God shall decide. The prophets of Baal

shall prepare one altar, Elijah shall rebuild the altar of the Lord, and the God that answereth by fire shall be God.

This appeal to reason meets with the immediate and unanimous approval of Israel: "All the people answered and said, It is well spoken." The prophets of Baal are silent, but in the face of the people's approval they cannot evade the issue. They prepare their altar, dress their bullock, and call upon their god. From morning until noon they cry to Baal. It was in vain, there was no voice nor any that answered. Until mid-day Elijah is a silent witness of their futile efforts; then at length, for the first and only time, he speaks to these false prophets, and now it is only to mock them. Lashed by the scorn of Elijah they redouble their efforts. For three hours longer—from noon until the time of the evening sacrifice—they cry aloud and cut themselves with knives until the blood gushed out. Still it is all in vain, "There was neither voice nor any to answer, nor any that regarded."

The discomfiture of the false prophets being complete, Elijah makes his third appeal to the people. He has spoken to their conscience, he has appealed to their reason, now he will speak to their hearts. He gathers them around him with the gracious invitation, "Come near unto me." In response "all the people come near unto him." In silence they watch the prophet as he repairs the altar of the Lord. Having thrown down the altar of Baal, he sets up the altar of the Lord. It is not enough to expose the false; the truth must be upheld.

To maintain the truth he builds his altar with twelve stones. In spite of the divided state of the nation, faith recognizes the unity of the twelve tribes. Every tribe must be represented in the altar of the Lord. Faith sees that the day is coming when idolatry will be judged and the nation will be one, with God in the midst. Such is the word of the Lord by

Ezekiel: "Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation upon the mountains of Israel; and one King shall be king to them all: and they shall no more be two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all: neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols . . . but I will save them . . . and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people and I will be their God" (Ezek. 37. 21-23).

The altar erected, the victim laid thereon, and the time of the evening sacrifice being come, the prophet turns to God in prayer. In his prayer, Elijah makes nothing of himself but everything of God. He seeks no place for himself; he has no desire to exalt himself before the people; he would be known only as a servant carrying out the commands of the Lord. His one desire is that God may be glorified. To this end he would have all the people know that Jehovah is God; that Jehovah is doing "all these things;" that Jehovah is speaking to their heart to turn the people back to himself.

The prayer of Elijah receives an immediate answer: "The fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice." How wonderful is this scene. A holy God who must deal with all evil by the consuming fire of judgment, and a guilty nation steeped in the evil which the holy God must judge. Surely the fire of the Lord must fall, and equally surely, the nation must be consumed. How can they escape? How are their hearts to be turned back to the Lord? Here is an issue that no fervent prayer of a righteous man can meet. If the guilty nation is to be spared, then the altar must be built, and a sacrifice provided that will represent the guilty nation under the eye of God and on which the judgment they have merited can

fall. And thus it came to pass, for we read, "The fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice." The judgment falls upon the victim, the nation goes free.

"And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces, and they said, The Lord He is the God; the Lord He is the God." In the marvellous provision of the sacrifice, the righteousness of God finds a way whereby justice is satisfied, judgment is borne, and the heart of the nation is won.

Who can fail to trace in this scene a bright foreshadowing of the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, when, by the eternal Spirit, He offered Himself without spot to God. Yet, withal, it has its striking contrasts, for while on Carmel the fire of judgment consumed the burnt sacrifice, at Calvary, may we not say, the sacrifice consumed the fire of judgment. Similarly, the Jewish sacrifices were oft repeated and could never take away sins. In their case the judgment was always greater than the sacrifice, but at Calvary One is found Who, as the Sacrifice, is greater than the judgment. There the storm of judgment that was over our heads burst on His head, *and was spent*; the judgment He bore He exhausted. Resurrection is the everlasting proof of this. He was delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification.

But what avail will all this be unless by faith we see it? "*When all the people saw it, they fell on their faces*" and worshipped. In our case, too, faith's sight of the dead and risen Christ will bow our hearts in worship. The very sacrifice by which God has cleared His people from all judgment has so manifested His love that He has won our hearts. "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." Truly we may say of God's people to-day, He has "turned their heart back again,"-and, like Israel, there is nothing left for His people but to fall on their faces in adoring worship. *146*

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

### Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost.

**D. S.**—This sin that hath never forgiveness is plainly stated to be the attributing to Satan the works which the Lord was doing by the mighty power of the Holy Ghost. This is evident from Mark 3, 30, which says, "Because they said He hath an unclean spirit." The works that He did were all good works, and so manifestly of God that only wilful blindness and hatred of the light and of God could have made them say such a thing. Matthew puts it in the same connection; words that they thus spoke revealed fully their corruption, they were a generation of vipers for whom there was no hope. The sin in this aspect of it cannot be committed now, for these works of power are not now being done in the world.

In Luke 12, the sin is put in a different connection; it is not there a question of the works of the Lord but the testimony of the disciples. They were to witness for Christ, but that witnessing was to be in the Holy Ghost's power; verse 11 shows this, as also does John 15, 26, 27. The Jews in Acts 13, 45 and 18, 6 were guilty of this sin from this standpoint, and it is remarkable that in both these instances Paul turned definitely from them: there was no hope, no forgiveness for them. We do not see how this sin can be committed now, for while the power of the Holy Ghost is not one whit less than ever it was, yet the general state of the Church and of Christians individually prevents the full manifestation of that power.

### Do Children survive death?

**LINCOLN.**—*Do children survive death?*

**YOU** have no need to pay any heed to what your Christadelphian friend says as to the fate of your little son. Those who deny the truth of the eternal Deity of the Lord Jesus and the personality of the Holy Spirit are not likely to be safe guides on any other divine subject. Your child has not been annihilated. "Of such is the kingdom of heaven," and that kingdom does not consist of those who exist to-day and pass out of existence for ever to-morrow.

The Lord speaks definitely about children in Matt. 18. "It is not the will of the Father in heaven that one of these

little ones should perish," verse 14, and to fulfil the Father's will the Son of Man came to save them. He does not say "to seek and to save" as He does in Luke 19, where it is a question of sinners who have reached the age of responsibility and gone astray, but to save them; for they need saving, as having sinful natures, and being consequently subject to death.

"Their angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven" is a wonderful statement, and we may be sure that if angels carried Lazarus, when he died, into "Abraham's bosom," angels have carried your little one into the presence of the Lord.

### Children and Cinema Shows.

**W. S. M.**—We have no hesitation in saying that no Christian parent who would bring his children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord could allow his children to go to the ordinary cinema shows. That the cinema may have great educational possibilities we do not question. But if the pictures shown at the multitude of picture palaces are like those posted on the hoardings to advertise them, the world, the flesh and the devil are in them

in full force: and if it were otherwise they would not be so popular. The recreation and entertainment of children of Christian households become more difficult, yet since they need both, the Christian parent can make this one of the many matters for prayer, and we are sure that he will find ways of giving enjoyment to his children upon which he can ask the blessing of God, and which will give them as much or more pleasure than will these defiling things.

# LIFE AFTER DEATH.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

Revised Report of Address, Edinburgh, April 30th.

OUR subject of "Life after Death" is one that ought, and I believe does, command the deepest interest at this time. So many of those whom we have dearly loved have passed away from us of late, and we ourselves are passing onward. And though the Christian is not looking for death; but for the coming of the Lord: for "the sky, not the grave, is our goal"; yet the clock of time is ticking out our days on earth, and every swing of its ceaseless pendulum brings us nearer to eternity, and it is right and proper that we should ask, "What lies beyond this life?" Even the infidel cannot refrain from asking the question. One of the greatest of them of last century, standing beside the open grave of a dead friend, said, "Life is a narrow vale between two eternities. We strain our eyes to look beyond the heights; we cry aloud, and the only answer is the echo of our wailing." The same eloquent man wrote:—

"Is there beyond the silent night a day?  
Is death a door that leads to light?"

We cannot say.

The tongueless secret locked in fate we  
do not know.

We hope and wait."

The infidel asks the great question, but he finds no answer to it in his philosophy; how hopeless is he!

Then to whom shall we turn? The spiritist claims to be able to tell us, and, so persistent is his claim in these days, that we must consider it. But let us be very careful from what standpoint we do consider it. We are pressed by the great apostle of it, Sir A. Conan Doyle, to obey the Bible and "test the spirits." But the way in which he would have these spirits tested is not the way pointed out to us in the Book which will preserve us from every snare if only we are subject to it. We must be careful here, for there is a very great desire to investigate the phenomena of spiritism. It is a fascinating pursuit, and in its

fascination lies its danger. I noticed in the evening paper yesterday that a proposal had been made that a committee should be formed by the churches in Scotland for this purpose, and similar projects are on foot in England. There can be only one end to that. Many years ago the Psychical Research Society was formed by prominent scientists and men of letters for the purpose of putting to scientific tests the phenomena of spiritism, and they have only proved that, though probably the greater percentage is fraud and trickery, yet beyond all that, there is reality in it. The mediums do more or less get into communication with spirits, and many of these investigators have become spiritists—convinced by their tests that communication with the unseen is possible, which we do not deny; they are deceived as to what these spirits are, because they ignore the only test that can bring out their true character.

The question is, Are the spirits with which communication is established, the spirits of departed men and women? They are not. I think I can show that clearly from Scripture. My first Scripture proof is Rev. i. 17, 18. It may not seem, at first, to have any connection with this subject, but I think I shall be able to prove to you that it has. The Lord Jesus appears here in His glory and greatness to His servant, the apostle John. John says, in verse 17: "And when I saw Him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death" (Rev. i. 17, 18). "AND HAVE THE KEYS OF HADES AND OF DEATH." What does that convey to your mind? It ought to convey this, that the Lord—the risen Lord—is Master of the life

beyond death. He has the keys, and none can pass from that world to this apart from His permission. He is Master. No medium is master of the spirits of the departed, nor can any come in answer to their call. The Lord has control there. His "Lordship" is not acknowledged by many who live in this life. There is not a single soul amongst all the millions that have passed to the life beyond, whether to the regions of darkness or light, that does not acknowledge His Lordship. He is Master; He has the keys. Let that great fact sink into your minds. There is immense comfort in it to those who are in Christ. It will settle our thoughts, I believe, in regard to this matter at once if only we see its significance. In Old Testament times God closed the door against any attempt to communicate with the dead, naming such attempts amongst the abominations of the idolatrous nations of Canaan. The keys of that door are now in the hands of the Lord Jesus—the risen Man. Has He thrown that door open, permitting now as a sacred duty that which was formerly an abomination? The question carries its own answer.

In Luke 16. the Lord teaches that those who have died are not permitted to visit the living. Lazarus was there in Abraham's bosom, and the sick man desired that he should be sent to his five brethren to warn them that the lives they were leading could only end in hell, but Abraham replied, "They have Moses and the prophets. Let them hear them." If one rose from the dead they will not believe if they don't believe Moses and the prophets. There is no part of the Bible that spirits hate more than the writings of Moses. And no wonder, because in those writings their practices are most sternly denounced by Almighty God. It is said that spiritism proves that there is a life beyond this, and so must do good in awakening people to that fact; but the 16th of Luke teaches that none will believe according to God who refuse to hear

the Word of God, and the writings of Moses are part of that Word.

These spirits then are not the spirits of departed human beings. Are there any other kind of spirits? Yes, there are fallen angels, demons, spoken of in the Old Testament as "familiar spirits." When our Lord Jesus Christ was here, there were many who were possessed and oppressed by them. He came into contact with these, and in His mighty power delivered them from this terrible oppression. The Acts of the Apostles tells us of Simon the sorcerer (chapter 8.), of Elymas the sorcerer (chapter 13.), men who had communication with spirits. And in chapter 16. Paul and Silas, on the arrival to Europe with the gospel, were followed by a girl who had a spirit of python. She was a spiritualistic medium, and she followed Paul and Silas crying out, "These men are the servants of the Most High God who show unto us the way of salvation." It is very remarkable that the first manifestation of spiritistic power in opposition to the gospel of God on its arrival in Europe should take on a religious turn, and that is the guise it is putting on to-day. It would have been of small matter if it had not put on this guise, but it is putting on a religious guise, and claiming to be able to help Christianity. Let us test it. The Scriptures tell us how to test it. We are to test it, not by the phenomena of the rapping tables and planchettes, but by the doctrines that it brings. Sir A. Conan Doyle tells us that these phenomena, which in themselves seem so puerile, are but the ringing of the telephone bell, and that is just the one sentence in all he has written and spoken in which I am in heartiest agreement with him. These things are the ringing of the telephone bell, and when it rings you enquire, Who is there? That is the question. Who is there that wants to communicate with us? The test is, What kind of doctrines do they bring? "Every spirit that confesseth not Jesus Christ come in flesh is not of God," and they

do not confess Jesus Christ COME IN FLESH. They say, He is a spirit, and He said, "A spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have." Nothing arouses the spiritist more than to insist upon this fact, that Christ is the risen Man in the glory of God. They deny Christ come in the flesh. They deny His deity; they deny His holy, spotless humanity. Sir A. Conan Doyle has the audacity to blaspheme the name of our holy, adorable Lord and Saviour in words like these, "He was a broad-minded man who was always open to new ideas, but he often lost his temper," and I know not whether the faint praise or the censure is the worst blasphemy. His holy, spotless humanity is denied; His sacrificial death is denied; His resurrection is denied. There is no resurrection in the spiritist doctrine, hence there is no true hope, for there is no victory over death apart from resurrection. The doctrines they bring disclose from whence they come. They are not from God; they are not from above. They come from Satan; these spirits are emissaries of Satan; their influence is satanic. Their doctrines strike at the very foundations of Christianity, their purpose is to overthrow the faith. The two things cannot run together. Make no mistake about that. They are in deadly conflict. The gospel of the grace of God concerning Christ has come from God. This is from Satan. One is light, the other is darkness.

But, says somebody, "They say a great many good things." Have you never read that Satan transforms himself into an angel of light, so that it is a small matter that his ministers should be transformed into ministers of righteousness? But does that mean that the end and aim is changed? No, it is the method that is changed, with the hope of reaching the end more speedily and surely. Have nothing to do with it. I beseech of you, especially the young ones here, not to be entrapped into investigating the

phenomena of spiritism, keep clear of the séances, but take the test that God Himself has laid down for us. See what doctrines they bring and we shall discover this, that we have them plainly described in 1 Tim. 4. 1, 2: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron." This is what is spreading itself out over the country. It is nothing new. No! Away back in those distant centuries before the flood, this thing was upon the earth. It was mixed up with all the grossness of idolatry in the land of Canaan by the nations that inhabited that land before God put Israel into it, and all the way down through the history of man, Satan has been working this thing to blind the minds of people. It is not new; a revival, if you will, but it is not new. It is there in China, in India, and it is spreading in this country, simply because the gospel is being given up; the Word of God is being refused, and so darkness is gathering over the minds of people, and in that darkness they think that which is evil to be good, and they think that which is darkness is light, and it is because they have not received the truth in the love of it that they might be saved, and a strong delusion is beginning to lay hold upon them.

Does Scripture speak of the life after death? Most distinctly and plainly. We have no need to go to spiritism to find out whether the dead survive. That has been the faith of God's saints from the very beginning. It is recorded in Matt. 22. that the Sadducees came to Jesus hoping to trip Him up, and they told that "cock-and-bull" story about a woman who had seven husbands. I have no doubt it was an absolute fiction; but they concocted this story in the hope of trapping the Lord, and they said: "In the day of resurrection whose wife shall she be?" And the Lord Jesus

replied: "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures or the power of God," and then He went on to say, "Have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." When did God say that? Centuries after those patriarchs had been laid in their graves, and He said it to them through Moses, whom the spiritists would laugh out of court. He did not say, "I *was* the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." That disposes of the false notion that the dead have no consciousness, or cease to exist until the resurrection of the body. God is not the God of the dead but the living. If they for the time being had been extinct, He would have said, "I was their God." If He looked forward to the resurrection He would have said, "I shall be," but He said neither; He said, "I *am* the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." God is not the God of the dead but of the living. All live to Him. With that agrees most beautifully Rom. 14. 7-9, where we read: "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and living." A wonderful passage, full of the deepest possible comfort to the heart. I shall never forget how in a time of deepest distress and darkness, that one passage sang its comfort into my soul. "Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's." I speak now to those who have trusted in Jesus, those who have come to His feet as poor sinners, and cast their souls upon Him, and can say, "He is my Saviour." "Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's." Yes, those loved ones who have passed out of our sight trusting in our one and only Saviour, have gone beyond our ken, but they have not passed out of the Lordship of Christ. Whether we live or die we are His, He is Lord

both of the dead and the living. John 10. 27, 28, will fit in here: "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand." Have you been confining that to the living saints? Don't confine it to them any longer; it includes those fallen asleep in Jesus, they are in His mighty hand even as we are. And none can pluck us from that hand, and none can pluck them from that hand. They shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of His hand. The hand that broke the power of death holds in absolute and everlasting safety all those who have put their trust in Him. Safe, eternally safe, and in His hand! So near to Him they are in His keeping, and we are also. Thank God, they could not be in a better place, could they? They could not be in safer keeping, for none, either in this life or the next, shall take His blood-bought sheep from Him.

Those who have fallen asleep in Jesus, live. Where do they live? You remember that lovely story in Luke 23. There was the Son of God extended on that centre gibbet, and they had searched in the prisons of Jerusalem that day for the two worst criminals that those prisons contained, and bringing them forth crucified them, one on the right and the other on the left, and Jesus in the midst. By so doing they meant to indicate that He was the worst of the three. But the devil, who put that thought into their hearts, outwitted himself, and one of those malefactors hanging by the side of Jesus put his trust in Him then and there. He may have heard the people say, "He saved others," and he may have added to that, "Why should He not save me?" Whatever happened he owned Jesus as his Lord. He said, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." It did not look as though

He was to have a kingdom—thorny crown upon His sacred brow, spikes through hands and feet, despised and rejected of men. But, blessed be His name, He shall have a kingdom.

“Kings shall bow down before Him  
And gold and incense bring,  
All nations shall adore Him,  
His praise all people sing.  
Outstretched His wide dominion,  
O'er river, sea, and shore ;  
Far as the eagle's pinion,  
And dove's light wing can soar.”

He shall reign. But He would not keep that dying malefactor until the day of His kingdom to be with Him. His reply was, “Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.” We will not juggle with the punctuation of this saying, as some have done who have their own theories to uphold; we read it in the only way in which it can be reasonably read. That poor, guilty sinner, washed whiter than snow in the precious blood of Jesus, passed into the Paradise of God that day; and there was not an angel of God in all those glorious regions that could say he was not fit to be there! Compare that wonderful triumph of Christ with your wretched spiritism, and tell me, which are you going to choose?

As the stones were battering the life out of the devoted body of Stephen, the Lord's first martyr, he lifted his eyes to heaven and said, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” The Lord is yonder in His glory receiving the spirits of His saints, and “precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.” Paul, the apostle, drawing near to the end of his long life of service, wrote to the Philippians telling

them he had a desire to depart to be with Christ, which, said he, “is far better.” He knew he was going, not into an unconscious state, but into the presence of Christ to be most deeply and blessedly conscious of that presence, though perhaps unconscious to all beside. It was to be “far better.” Paul was a happy man. It is true there came upon him many sorrows, and he suffered for the name of Christ as nobody has ever suffered since, but he was always rejoicing, and exhorting the saints to rejoice in the Lord. He knew that of which Peter speaks, “joy unspeakable and full of glory,” and yet he says, “It is far better.” You who sorrow for those who sleep in Jesus, let this thought comfort you, that the greatest possible joy that they could know on earth is as nothing to the joy that they have in the presence of their Saviour. Can you, Christian, conceive anything greater, more blessed, more supremely desirable than to be in the presence of the Saviour; to be in the presence of the One who laid down His life upon the cross to save you, so great is His love. As we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord, but those who are absent from the body are present with the Lord, and that moment is coming of which the apostle speaks: When “the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words” (1 Thess. 4. 16, 17, 18).

## THE SERVANT OF THE LORD.

(H. BONAR.)

THOU must be true thyself  
If thou the truth wouldst teach;  
Thy soul must overflow, if thou  
Another's soul wouldst reach:  
It needs the overflow of heart  
To give the lips full speech.

Think truly, and thy thoughts  
Shall the world's famine feed;  
Speak truly, and each word of thine  
Shall be a fruitful seed;  
Live truly, and thy life shall be  
A great and noble creed.

## THE MYSTERY OF THE GOSPEL. No. 6. (JAMES BOYD.)

(Eph. 6. 19.)

WE have been looking a little at the way in which the knowledge of the mystery should affect us in our relations with one another, for both Jew and Gentile are one body in Christ, and the knowledge of this is the only thing that could enable two such opposite peoples to walk together in peace. And we may well encourage our hearts that if we walked in all lowliness, meekness, and long-suffering, bearing with one another in love, the unity of the Spirit would be kept, and our practical relations with one another would be divinely harmonious.

Then the fact that our Head is in heaven, yea, gone far above all heavens, has, where it is kept in view, the power of detaching us from earth, and causing us to walk as heavenly men through a world of which the devil is both prince and god, for well we know that wherever the Head is, this place belongs to the body. We have also seen that the body is for the display of the Head, and that all the beautiful characteristics of the Head are to be developed in the body, and manifested in it, not only in this world but in redeemed creation. But this we must go into a little more in detail.

I will turn to the Epistle to the Romans, chapter 12. There the Apostle desires to regulate the conduct of the saints with regard to the various gifts with which they were endowed. These gifts were given to them in connection with their individual responsibility, but the body is brought in to show them that however brilliant from a human standpoint some of the gifts might seem to be, he who possessed them was not to think more highly of himself on that account, for everyone else was a member of the body as he was, and in the body the members were all of equal value, otherwise divisions would be the sure

result. But here there is no unfolding of the mystery.

In 1 Cor. 12. the truth of the mystery is more gone into, and there in connection with the manifestations of the Spirit in the assembly. The human body is first of all taken up as a figure of the body of Christ: "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ." The human body is taken up to illustrate this great mystery. Next, we are told the way in which this body has been formed: "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." The Apostle goes back to Pentecost in his thought for the formation of the body. The Spirit of God unites all the members together into one body, and also to the living Head of that body in heaven.

And as every saint is a member of that one body of which Christ is the Head, there should be no divisions in our practical lives down here. Every member of the body has his own special place in the body, and given to him by God, and is necessary to the welfare of all the others. There may be members that are more prominent than others, and that because of the place in which they are set in the body, but such are no more valuable than are the members that seem to be set in a position of less honour; indeed, as to our natural bodies, on these we bestow more abundant honour. And the knowledge and certainty of this preserves us from self-occupation, pride, and envy. If our status in the body seems to have a brilliant character, unless we are very watchful, the vanity of the flesh will be aroused, and instead of being tender and considerate in our attitude toward others, and using that which has been given us for the building up of the body, we will most likely be characterized by

a haughty, hard, and domineering spirit, and be an annoyance rather than a comfort to the saints. On the other hand, if our position in the body be neither prominent nor brilliant, the tendency is to shrink from any service which might be given us to do, and the whole body be deprived of the ministry no one but ourselves can give.

The knowledge that we are all one body in Christ, and that God has set the members in the body as it has pleased Him, will greatly help to preserve us from the miserable jealousies and envies that prey upon the vitals of practical christianity. The clearness of my organs of vision, or the quickness of my organs of hearing, is for the benefit of the whole body, for the body is one, and receives benefit or loss according to the health, or otherwise, of each separate member. In saying this I speak of the members in their activities down here; for, as I have before indicated, there is a way of looking at the body as altogether according to the operations of God's Spirit, into which no failure of any description can enter. But viewed in connection with the responsibility of the saints who compose it, we read that, if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; and if one member be glorified, all the members rejoice with it (1 Cor. 12. 26).

How different from the present state of things in the church would it be,

were this wondrous truth more deeply engraven upon our hearts! Self, that has such a prominent place with us, and whose fancied rights are so zealously safeguarded, would disappear altogether, and the most fervent love and earnest care for the wellbeing of one another would take its place. We would not be looking at one another as separate units, whose prosperity would provoke our envy, and whose adversity might find us without pity, but every member would be viewed as of that body of which Christ is the Head, and all members together as of that spiritual organism; love and unity would take the place of discord and division, the Holy Spirit would be ungrieved, peace would prevail, and the work of the Lord would prosper.

In chapter 13. of 1 Corinthians we have in detail some of the lovely characteristics of the life that animates the body, and without which, whatever else a man may have, he has neither part nor lot in this vital organism. The body is animated by love, love is the nature of the life of the body, for the body lives by the life-giving power of God. This being so we can well understand that, were the flesh kept in the place of death, schism would be unknown, the body would be energized, directed and controlled by the Head, harmony would exist, and Christ would be set forth in testimony.

## OUR FAILURE.

(J. N. D.)

THE whip and the scourge may be righteous, but there is no winning the heart of man with these. Nor is it righteousness which reigns among the saints of God, but GRACE, through righteousness unto eternal life. Alas! how many sins that might have been washed away (John 13.) have been retained! How many brethren alienated for all time, that might have been won back to God and to us, because we have hammered at the *conscience* merely, with the heart ungained—

with the heart, I may say, *almost unsought!*

We have not overcome evil, because we have not overcome it with good. We have taken readily the judge's chair, and have got back judgment; but the Master's lowly work we have little done.

But how little yet do we understand that mere righteous dealing—absolutely righteous, as it may be—will not work the restoration of souls.

## NOTES FOR PREACHERS.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

## Open-air Preaching.

HOW much energy and time we have wasted in preaching the Gospel to those who do not need it, and to empty benches, while the multitudes for whom God intends it, and for whom we are the trustees of it, hear it not! We need moral courage, revived zeal, a new and enlarged conception of 1 Tim. 2. 3-6; and a closer communion with "God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." Then we shall say we must carry the Gospel out to those to whom it is sent. Buildings and halls into which the sinners will not come are a curse to us if we are so bound to them and by them that our energies are spent uselessly in them. "The Son of man is come to SEEK and to save that which is lost." And if we are to have any part in saving them we also must SEEK them, and for this we must go where they are to be found.

"The people won't come in," is a common saying, but why should we expect them to do so? Our commission is to "GO," and to "GO OUT" and more, to "GO OUT QUICKLY."

We have met that high-flown and falsely-called spirituality which says that the day for aggressive Gospel work is passed. Those who talk thus do not read their Bibles rightly, or believe them, or they would see that right on to the end, and consonant with the revived hope of the Lord's return, there must be a revival of the Gospel appeal. How blessed it is! With what music the appeal rings forth, "Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

It is not for us to say when and how

our brethren should carry this message to the thirsty whosoever, but we know no better time than from 6.0 to 8.0 on a Sunday evening. At this time will be found in the crowded residential parts of the towns and villages thousands who never enter a building to hear the Word, and who would not even go to the market-place to hear it. Tired and disappointed women whose lives are a drudgery, and who have no hope for the future. We have seen them at this hour sit at their open doors or windows listening eagerly to the rest-giving message of the Saviour's care for them. And we feel sure that more can be reached in an hour in this way, than in a year by the ordinary method of indoor preaching.

Our absent Lord has entrusted us with the silver pound of the Gospel; it is our business to put it into circulation, to put it out to the best rate of interest, remembering that the day is coming when He will return to see how much each has gained by trading.

Here are a few extracts from the "Journal of John Wesley":—

"I preached at 8 p.m. at an open place. Many were there who never did and never would come to the room. Oh, what a victory would Satan gain, if he could put an end to field-preaching! But that I trust he never will—at least not till my head is laid low."

"I preached near the hospital to twice the people we should have had at the house. What marvel the devil does not like field-preaching! Neither do I! I like a commodious room, a soft cushion, a handsome pulpit. But where is my zeal if I do not trample all those under foot in order to save one more soul?"

"The want of field-preaching has been the cause of deadness here. I do not find any great increase in the work of God without it."

## CONFIDENCE.

CLASS

O THOU that lovest as none else can love—  
 O Thou that knowest as none else can know—  
 O Thou that hast Thy dwelling far above  
 This weary wilderness of want and woe,  
 Teach us true knowledge, heavenly, divine,  
 That we may live in that great love of Thine.

We are the Living Father's gift to Thee,  
 In man's account of less than little worth,  
 But in Thy gracious estimation we  
 The excellent are counted of the earth.  
 This Thine appraisalment is of all that leave  
 Country and kindred, to Thyself to cleave.

We are a little flock, a feeble few,  
 Beset by grievous wolves and men perverse,  
 Who with relentless zeal our souls pursue,  
 And Thy fair fame with lying lips asperse.  
 O guard us safely thro' this moonless night  
 By Thy great grace, and by Thy matchless might.

Thou canst not be indifferent, we know,  
 To all the falsehood that to light is brought;  
 Thou hast Thine eye upon the wily foe,  
 And all the wrong by evil angels wrought,  
 And Thou well able art to deal with all  
 That often does our feeble faith appal.

Called by the Father in His grace supreme  
 Apart from this vain world, we follow Thee  
 To that loved land where fadeless glories gleam,  
 And where Thy face with rapture we shall see:  
 That world from every mortal eye concealed,  
 But by Thy Spirit unto faith revealed.

Each footstep taken thro' this tiresome waste  
 Brings us a little nearer to the goal.  
 We would not hurry with irreverent haste,  
 To satisfy the longing of the soul,  
 For Thou to bring us there wilt not delay  
 One hour when dawns the long-appointed day.

The Father loveth us, for Thee we love:  
 Love, matchless love, in death made manifest,  
 Knowledge-surpassing, by the Heavenly Dove  
 Poured out into the erstwhile vacant breast.  
 O love beyond our measure, yet we know  
 It has been measured by Thy cross of woe.

What shall we ask, then, Saviour, at Thy hand?  
 We ask the power to press upon our way;  
 And that still better we may understand  
 The grace that guards us safe by night and day;  
 Assured that till we reach our home above  
 Our portion shall be love, FOR GOD IS LOVE.

## THE SONG OF DEBORAH.

C. KNAPP

WHILE it is a fact that not one of the sixty-six books of the Bible was written by a woman, nor yet one of the 150 Psalms, it is true nevertheless that three of the most celebrated songs of Scripture were composed by females—this of Deborah, and those of Hannah and of Mary. Thus while debarred, because of her initiative in the Fall (1 Tim. 2. 11-14) from assuming the part of leadership, or teaching in the congregation of the saints, it is still open to her to make use of her poetic gifts for their edification; and it is a recognized fact that some of the sweetest Christian hymns of our modern collections were written by women.

This song of Deborah well deserves to occupy, as it does, a whole chapter in our Bible. She was a prophetess (chapter 4. 4) and therefore spoke by inspiration. The following salutary remarks on Hebrew poetry are from Fausset: "Its peculiar excellence is that, whereas poetry of other nations suffers much by translation (for the versification depends on the recurrence of certain sounds at regular intervals), Hebrew poetry suffers but little, for its principle is the parallel correspondence of thoughts, not sounds . . . a remarkable proof that from the first the Spirit designed the Holy Scriptures for nations of every tongue." He also remarks that, while the lays of Greece and Ancient Rome were largely mythical, the poetry of the Hebrews was never so, but always historical and strictly true.

There is in this majestic epic of Deborah much instruction for our souls. Her name means *a bee*, and this production of her pen must surely yield much sweet honey to our hearts. She was, as has been remarked, a honey bee to her friends, and a stinging bee to her enemies.

The occasion of her song was the overthrow of Sisera and his hosts at the waters of Megiddo, as recorded in the preceding chapter. We read in

verses 1-3 of that chapter: "And the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord, when Ehud was dead. And the Lord sold them into the hand of Jabin, king of Canaan, that reigned in Hazor; the captain of whose host was Sisera, which dwelt in Harosheth of the Gentiles. And the children of Israel cried unto the Lord: for he had nine hundred chariots of iron; and twenty years he mightily oppressed the children of Israel." God heard His people's piteous cry, and delivered them by the hand of Barak, spurred on by the enheartening words of Deborah. And in Hebrews 11. it is Barak's name that is mentioned, not Deborah's. Leadership is not the part of godly women. She went *with* the son of Abinoam, not to command or guide him, but for his heart's encouragement, and to inspire a godly confidence in his soul (see chapter 4. 8, 9).

"Then sang Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam on that day, saying." Song is the divinely prescribed means of expressing cheeriness: "Is any merry (i.e., *cheery*—it is a different word entirely from Luke 12. 19; 15. 23, 24, 29, 32; and Rev. 11. 10)? let him sing psalms" (James 5. 13). Poetry being a form of composition most easily retained in the memory, was much in use among the ancients, when books were scarce and learning not so generally diffused as now. Thus by oral recitation, as with the early British bards, the great facts of national history, especially success in battle, were kept in memory, rather than by the reading of books, as now. It was, with Israel, as another has said, "a very proper expedient for spreading the knowledge and perpetuating the the remembrance of great events. Neighbours would learn this song one of another, and children of their parents, and by that means those who had not books, or could not read, yet would be made acquainted with the works of God; and one generation would thus

praise God's works to another, and declare His mighty acts" (Ps. 145. 4).

Though the name of Barak is associated with that of Deborah here (as it was he who had led the hosts of God to victory) it is she herself who is the author (5. 7). God gives honour to whom honour is due; "and then shall every man have praise of God," is said of a day that now draws near. And then not even a cup of cold water given in Christ's name shall be forgotten or go unrewarded.

Deborah begins her song with a Hallelujah, "Praise ye the Lord." As in the prayer taught by the Lord to His disciples, God's glory takes precedence of all else—"Hallowed be Thy name." "For the avenging of Israel," the New Translation reads, "For that leaders led in Israel;" and then, "For that the people willingly offered themselves." The commanders are mentioned first as having assumed the greater responsibility; and then their followers, the people, who are said to have *willingly* offered themselves. But it is Jehovah, not the officers or their men, who is praised; this is as it should be, "For it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." They offered *themselves*; not their sympathies or their substance merely, but jeopardized their very lives for the deliverance of their beloved country from the power of the hated Canaanite.

She calls upon kings and princes to hear her praises of Jehovah. As Matthew Henry quaintly puts it, "She calls to the great ones of the world, that sit at the upper end of its table, to attend to her song, and to take notice of the subject of it: 'Hear, O ye kings! give ear, O ye princes!'" So too in Psalm 2. 10, it is the kings and judges of the earth who are specially addressed; it is they, so naturally haughty, who require specially to be reminded that there is One above all gods and monarchs of the earth, even "the Lord God of Israel."

The prologue finished, Deborah extols

God's power and majesty as displayed in the giving of the Law and the destruction of the Gentile Og and Sihon (verses 4, 5: compare Ps. 18. 7 and Hab. 3. 3, 4). Even "that Sinai melted (quaked) from before the Jehovah the God of Israel." The remembrance of past deliverances furnishes a most fitting introduction to the celebration of a present and a "so great salvation."

The abject condition of the people previous to their deliverance through the interposition of God by Barak is first described:—

"In the days of Shamgar the son of Anath,  
In the days of Jael, the highways were unoccupied,  
And the travellers walked through byways.  
The villages ceased in Israel, they ceased,  
Until that I Deborah arose,  
That I arose a mother in Israel.  
They chose new gods;  
Then was war in the gates:  
Was there a shield or spear seen  
Among forty thousand in Israel?"

It is a good and a profitable (if not exactly a "pleasant") thing to look back to the rock from whence we were hewn, and to the hole of the pit from whence we were digged. And Israel's deep degradation in the dark days of Shamgar and Jael provides a suited background for their happy freedom from fear and the peace enjoyed in the land later, since the deliverance celebrated here by Deborah.

It may seem strange that the name of the Kenite Jael should be introduced thus early in the narrative; but she was probably a woman of considerable prominence in the midst of Israel, though not of them. And Shamgar, though he "delivered Israel," it was from the Philistines, towards the south; and the condition of the country here described applied specially to the north, where the seat of Jabin's power lay. Hence, too, the omission in the song

of any mention of the names of either Simeon or Judah, whose inheritance lay to the remote south. Such was the insecurity of the times that the caravans ceased from the highways; there was no commerce consequently, and those compelled by necessity to travel, took the bye paths to avoid being seen. The villages were deserted, as their inhabitants would naturally repair to the walled and fortified towns for protection. It was as God had threatened them: "Thou shalt be only oppressed and spoiled evermore, and no man shall save thee" (Deut. 28. 29). The prophetess does not spare to expose to them the cause of their state of servitude: "They chose new gods," she says, or "chose obstinately," or "continued choosing," as some would render it. They had brought it upon themselves by their idolatry and apostasy from Jehovah; this was the open secret of their humiliating subjection to the galling yoke of the oppressor Jabin.

"Then was war in the gates," or, as some read it, "pressed to the very gates." They were shut in by the enemy, so that none went out nor could any come in. The weapons of war ceased, not because there was no need for them, but for the reason, probably, that their enemies had disarmed them, as happened later in the days of Saul under the Philistines; or because they had no heart to fight. There was found neither spear nor shield among forty thousand in Israel—faith was gone, and with faith went all courage.

"My heart is toward the governors of Israel,  
 Who offered themselves willingly  
 among the people.  
 Bless ye Jehovah!  
 Ye that ride on white asses,  
 Ye that sit on rich carpets,  
 And ye that walk by the way, con-  
 sider (or sing);  
 Far from the noise of archers,  
 In the midst of the places of drawing  
 water:—

There they rehearse the righteous  
 acts of Jehovah,  
 His righteous acts towards His  
 villages in Israel.  
 Then the people of Jehovah went  
 down to the gates."

Here she calls upon the governors—the leaders, who so willingly offered themselves to praise Jehovah. Those, too, of distinguished position—who rode on white she-asses, and who sat on carpets (the officials or judges, some think them to be), with the more humble classes, who went on foot by the way—all are called upon by the prophetess to unite with her in her magnificent to Jehovah. The victory won and the oppressor ceased, they could in quietness and peace by the cooling waters of the wells rehearse together the righteous acts, or benefits, of Jehovah towards His villages in Israel. There was once more order and the administration of justice in the land. This is what going down to the gates (the place of judgment) implies, though some in their arrangement of the ode make it the beginning of another section, and understand it as referring to the muster of the tribes to the battle.

"Awake, awake, Deborah! awake,  
 awake, utter a song!  
 Arise, Barak, and lead captive thy  
 captives, thou son of Abinoam!"

The prophetess here, like the psalmist in Psalm 108. 2, calls upon her soul to arouse itself for the task of celebrating adequately the victory secured to them by Jehovah's power. "It needed and well deserved the utmost liveliness and vigour of soul in the performance of it; all the powers and faculties of the soul in their closest intensity and application ought to be employed in it." Barak, too, must celebrate a triumph, leading those captive whose captives they were.

Then follows the part taken in the conflict by the several tribes concerned. They little thought on that day of their opportunity that their attitude towards

the cause of God and His people would go down in the imperishable annals of inspiration for time and all eternity.

“ Then came down a remnant of the nobles and the people ;  
 Jehovah came down for me against the mighty.  
 Out of Ephraim came down they whose root is in Amalek ;  
 After thee, Benjamin among thy peoples ;  
 Out of Machir came down governors,  
 And out of Zebulun they that handle the marshall's staff.  
 And the princes of Issachar were with Deborah ;  
 As was Issachar, so was Barak ;  
 Into the valley they rushed forth at his feet.  
 By the watercourses of Reuben  
 There were great resolves of heart.  
 Why satest thou among the sheep-folds,  
 To hear the pipings for the flocks ?  
 At the watercourses of Reuben  
 There were great searchings of heart.  
 Gilead abode beyond the Jordan :  
 And Dan, why did he remain in ships ?  
 Asher sat still at the haven of the sea,  
 And abode by his creeks.  
 Zebulun was a people that jeoparded their lives unto the death,  
 And Naphtali, upon the high places of the field.”

A remnant only of the nobles came down. The faithful five (patriots, they would be called to-day), are mentioned first, Ephraim, Benjamin, Manasseh, Zebulun and Issachar; then the “ slackers ” are named, Reuben, Gilead, Asher and Dan. Zebulun being mentioned twice has “ double honour ” put upon him ; and it is to the praise of Naphtali that his name is linked with his.

The mustering of this remnant would have meant nothing to Deborah (and only disaster to Barak) had not the almighty Jehovah “ come down ” with her. Said the man Moses to the Lord, “ If Thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence ” (Exod. 33. 15) ; and

“ Without Me ye can do nothing,” says the great “ Captain of our salvation.” The foe against whom we war is indeed mighty, but “ God for us ” and “ with us ” is *almighty*, and we shall come out therefore “ more than conquerors.”

Ephraim heads the list of the loyal. “ Out of Ephraim their root is against Amalek,” Young reads it ; this would lead us to believe that Amalek was associated with these northern powers against Israel. This same implacable and ancient enemy of Israel was on a former occasion, more than a century before, in offensive alliance with Moab and Ammon against the people of God (Judges 3. 13). Ephraim here appears to have intercepted these Amalekite allies of Jabin, thus preventing them from joining forces with Sisera. Such an act of strategy would well deserve first place of “ honourable mention ” in this commemorative ode of Deborah's. Ephraim had not always so distinguished himself : “ The children of Ephraim, being armed, and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle ” (Ps. 78. 9). Neither did Peter always speak with that holy boldness used before the Sanhedrin when commanded by them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus (Acts 4. 19 ; Mark 14. 66-72). John Mark, too, “ turned back ” but afterwards became “ profitable ” to Paul “ for the ministry ” (Acts 13. 13 ; 15. 38 ; 2 Tim. 4. 11) ; “ For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again ” (Prov. 24. 16).

“ Little Benjamin ” follows ; there is a grace in following, as well as in ability to lead—and if all were leaders, where were the following ? Led on by the warlike Ephraimites, the less bold Benjamites were encouraged to come after.

Machir furnished governors and represented the tribe of Manasseh. Fausset says (of Machir), “ So powerful was the family that ‘ Machir ’ supplants the name of ‘ Manasseh ’ in Judges 5. 14, 17 ; Joshua 13. 31.” See also Num. 32. 30.

From Zebulun came they that wielded "the staff of the ruler," or "drawing with the reed of the writer" (*Young*). Whichever way we take it, "writer," or "ruler," they were men of distinction, for God's cause ever claims the choicest.

"The princes," too, in Issachar, were with Deborah. And it was the princes, the nobles, who with their labour digged the well at Beer (*Num.* 21. 18). "Yea, Issachar is right with Barak," *Young* translates. They were not partizan either to Deborah or Barak, preferring one before the other; both to them were God's instruments, they were equally worthy of honour. This was as it should be; and we read the spirit of it in the words of Paul: "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?"

"They were sent into the valley at his feet" (*N.T.*). They were willing to obey and to go where sent, even if into the valley. It is comparatively easy to the spirit to scale the heights—to climb the mountain; but to enter "the valley," to experience humiliation, to "endure chastening," aye, to taste even the sentence of death itself, this is another thing, and something from which the most valiant frequently shrink.

Reuben, "unstable as water," sat undecided in his sheep pens; the peaceful pipe of the shepherd was more agreeable to his ears than the blast of the war bugle. Self-interest ruled him; great were his resolves, or searchings of heart, by the watercourses, fit emblems of his own unstaidness, now full and flowing, again empty and dry, and disappointing to the weary, expectant and thirst-tormented traveller.

Gilead abode safely beyond Jordan. Gilead is Gad. He follows Reuben here as the two tribes were in close confederation (see *Num.* 2. 10, 14; 32. 1). They were later, in David's day, "Men of might and of war, fit for the battle, that could handle shield and buckler, whose faces were as the faces

of lions, and as swift as the roes upon the mountains" (*1 Chron.* 12. 8). Their war, too, against the Hagarites, in concert with Reuben, evidences a better spirit than they here display (see *1 Chron.* 5. 18-22). Time, with grace, frequently works changes for the better, and the last are sometimes first as the first are often last. Jephtha was a Gileadite, so too was David's friend Barzillai (*Judges* 11. 1; *2 Sam.* 17. 27).

Dan, too, occupied with his commerce on the coast, guiltily neglected to join in the struggle for national and religious liberty. "A serpent by the way, an adder in the path," his conduct is not to be greatly wondered at. He is omitted from among the number of the sealed in *Revelation* 7; and the suggestion of *Arethas* of the 10th century that the Antichrist is to come of Dan, seems not without foundation (see *Deut.* 33. 22, also *Lev.* 24. 10, 11; *Judges* 18.).

Asher, belying his name (*happy*), "sat still," in self-indulgent inertness, "at the haven of the sea." Commercial intercourse with the enterprising Phœnicians had corrupted them. "Selfishness and faintheartedness in the Lord's cause became their own punishment. From being more numerous at Mount Sinai than Ephraim, Manasseh, Benjamin, in David's time they had become so few that Asher's name is omitted from the chief rulers" (*1 Chron.* 27. 16-22). (*Fausset*).

Naphtali is modestly noticed last; Barak was of Naphtali, and this unobtrusiveness is beautiful to see in him. The bulk of his forces, 10,000 men, were also men of Naphtali and Zebulun. Together they jeopardized their lives "upon the high places of the field." Associated in war, their names are in like manner linked together in the blessings of the gospel of peace (*Matt.* 4. 15, 16). These associate tribes in the risking of their lives for Israel remind us of the two apostles, Barnabas and Paul, "Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (*Acts* 15. 26).

The battle is next described.

“The kings came and fought :  
Then fought the kings of Canaan,  
In Taanach by the waters of Megiddo :  
They took no gain of money.  
From heaven fought the stars,  
From their courses they fought  
against Sisera.  
The river Kishon swept them away,  
That ancient river, the river Kishon.  
O my soul, thou hast trodden down  
strength.  
Then did the horsehoofs clatter  
By reason of the prancings,  
The prancings of their strong one's  
steeds (N.T.).”

There was evidently a confederacy of a considerable number of the kings of Canaan against Israel and Barak's ten thousand. They were not mercenaries —“they took no gain of money.” Man's hatred of God is such that he needs not the incentive of gold to fight against Him. These petty kings of the Canaanites were in almost constant strife among themselves ; but their differences are for the moment forgotten, and they unite their forces to defeat and destroy the covenant people of God. In this they are like Pilate and Herod, who though before at enmity, were made friends over their refusal of the Son of God.

But how vain is man's resistance ; how puny are his efforts to contend with the Almighty ! The allies suffer a most miserable and crushing defeat. The stars from heaven above and the waters of the earth beneath unite at the command of their Creator to overcome these enemies of His Israel. The river Kishon, rising suddenly by reason of a storm, it is supposed, swept the hostile hosts away. Fausset says : “The upper Kishon swells into a torrent with deep mud in the sudden rain storms in winter and spring ; here in the swamps, where the main stream of the Kishon rises, the Canaanites fleeing perished in numbers.” Thus God used the inanimate elements to encompass their defeat. “A horse is a vain thing for safety,” a seasoned

warrior of the Lord once wrote ; and here their hoofs were broken as they galloped off in full and confused retreat. Barak's “noble ten thousand” went *on foot* ; and so sure and easy was the overthrow of Sisera to be accomplished that the prophetess speaks of it to Barak beforehand as a “journey,” merely (Judges 4. 9). Verily, it is nothing with God to save, whether by many or with few !

Cursing and blessing come next—a curse upon Meroz for their criminal neutrality, and a blessing upon Jael for her loyalty to Jehovah.

“Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of  
Jehovah,  
Curse ye bitterly the inhabitants  
thereof,  
Because they came not to the help  
of Jehovah,  
To the help of Jehovah against the  
mighty.”

From that day Meroz disappears from the map, and to this day its site is not even conjectural, so effective was God's curse pronounced upon it.

“Blessed above women shall Jael be,  
The wife of Heber the Kenite ;  
Blessed shall she be above women in  
the tent.  
He asked water, and she gave him  
milk ;  
She brought him butter in a lordly  
dish.  
She put her hand to the tent-pin,  
And her right hand to the workmen's  
hammer ;  
And with the hammer she smote  
Sisera,  
She smote through his head ;  
Yea, she pierced and struck through  
his temples.  
At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay ;  
At her feet he bowed, he fell :  
Where he bowed, there he fell down  
dead.”

Jael's act in slaying Sisera was approved of God ; the *manner* in which it was done is another thing. A deed may be done in faith, and yet much of

the flesh mixed with the act, as in the case of Rahab, Samson, and others. Some say Sisera, according to Eastern custom, forfeited his life when he entered the tent of a woman, even if invited; others suggest that she may have received him with the sincerest intention of protecting him, but overcome by a sudden impulse from the Lord, she changed her mind and slew him. Be that as it may, her act is lauded by the inspired prophetess—and for faith this is enough. God's ways are not as ours, nor are our thoughts as His. He is not answerable to any creature, "vain man" not excepted; and He will see to it that He is justified when He speaks and is cleared when He judges.

Another woman is now brought on the scene—the mother of Sisera.

"Through the window she looked forth, and cried,  
The mother of Sisera cried through the lattice,  
Why is his chariot so long in coming?  
Why tarry the wheels of his chariot?  
Her wise ladies answered her,  
Yea, she returned answer to herself,  
Have they not found, have they not divided the spoil?  
A damsel, two damsels to every man;  
To Sisera a spoil of dyed garments,  
A spoil of dyed garments embroidered,  
Of dyed garments embroidered on both sides,  
for the neck of a spoiler?"

Comment here seems hardly necessary. The miserable mother of Sisera appears in marked contrast with Deborah, the happy "mother in Israel." Her expectations were great and such as might be expected from a daughter of idolatry—spoil of gaudy garments for herself, and Hebrew maidens for her son Sisera and his men. The victory seemed sure; what were Barak and his almost unarmed band of volunteers compared with the allied forces of Jabin, with his nine hundred chariots, and his "multitude" of trained and fully equipped warriors under the skilled generalship of her darling son?

But she was doomed to disappointment; instead of returning in triumph with the spoils of war in his train he fled ingloriously on foot from the field of defeat to meet an ignominious death at the hand of a woman.

"So let thine enemies perish, O Jehovah:

But let them that love Him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might."

There is doubtless enfolded in the malediction of Deborah a prediction also; the defeat of Sisera and his allies prefigures, we believe, the final defeat and destruction of the Gentile powers gathered against Israel in the last days. This battle will take place in the same famed plain of Esdraelon, the Armageddon of Revelation 16. 16. It is a triangular shaped open valley extending across the centre of Palestine from the Jordan to the Mediterranean. It is drained by the Kishon which flows westward past Accho (Acre) into the Great Sea. Here Gideon defeated the Midianites; here, too, both Saul and Josiah met their death; it is the most famous battle ground of the East, and admirably suited to meet the conditions of the last great conflict between Christ and the Antichrist with the Beast. And when the enemies of God and His people have met their utter and irretrievable defeat, "then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." "Let them that love Him be as the rising of the sun in its might," is the conclusion of this stirring song of Deborah, and it probably looks on to the time of the end and the shining forth of the righteous predicted by our Lord. Happy conclusion, glorious end! And praise everlasting be to Him through whom it is secured. Amen.

"And the land had rest forty years," type fitting though feeble of the millennial rest that awaits the earthly people, the Israel of God.

*Note:* The Revised Version and the New Translation of J. N. Darby are the renderings used chiefly in this paper, with an occasional word or phrase from others.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

INTO the Editor's letter box come all kinds of communications, some encouraging, some critical, some condemnatory, some which reveal deep exercises that nothing but the truth can meet, and some which show how bitter and deep-seated is the natural enmity of the heart to God and His Christ—some very blasphemous, and *of these there has been an increase of late*. When the enemy unmask's his guns it is not difficult to see what it is that he is anxious to destroy, and it is sometimes well to meet his attacks. A letter recently received charges God with "hypocrisy," because He holds men guilty of the slaying of His Son, when He intended according to the Bible that they should do it; so that they could not help doing it. The answer to such a charge is very simple.

## IS GOD RESPONSIBLE FOR MEN'S SIN ?

God is not responsible for the evil that is in the hearts of men, and the hatred with which they hate Him, but knowing that all this was and is there, and that it would show itself continually, He has so ordered things as to turn it into that channel in which it would result in their blessing and His praise, thus overcoming evil with good. Hence in the due time, according to "the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God" (Acts 2. 23), Jesus came and was taken by the wicked hands of men and crucified and slain. Man was fully tested in this way, and his sin fully declared. The presence of Christ in the world, sent of God, did not create the sinful hatred of men against Him, but showed it up in all its sinfulness, and it was God's intention that it should, that man's condition might be completely laid bare by a perfect test. But He so ordered it that this test which disclosed man's hatred should also declare His love, and that in such a way that those whose hatred seemed to be the most virulent, might be first blessed. So the word of

salvation was preached first in the very city where the Lord was crucified. God was not responsible for the wrath of man, but He has so controlled the manifestation of it, that Satan has been defeated, *all men may be saved*, and God glorified. "He maketh the wrath of men to praise Him, and restraineth the rest."

## WHY SHOULD MEN WHO ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR BEING BORN SINNERS SUFFER FOR THEIR SINS ?

A young Christian writes, "I am troubled and distressed," and he is sure that many others must be also, about such questions as this. They have "no voice in their entrance into the world," says he, "and it seems unlikely that any will get a change of heart unless it is given by the Spirit of God." We sympathize with any who are thus troubled and distressed by such questions, which are really the fiery darts of the wicked one, but we would warn such against endeavouring to discover the reason for things that are entirely beyond our grasp. As to our natural minds we move in a limited sphere, though many "vainly puffed up" endeavour to search into things outside that sphere, and by so doing put themselves into the power of the enemy. To *faith* a boundless sphere is opened up, for God has revealed Himself to faith, but faith rests confidently in the justice and grace of God, without doubtings and disputings, and consequently is not "troubled and distressed."

The origin of evil? why sin was allowed to enter the world? why it is allowed still to vaunt itself? all these and kindred questions we must leave until "the mystery of God is finished" (Rev. 10. 7). Then we shall clearly see, as will every intelligent creature in the universe, that, judged by the standard of eternal and inflexible justice, and not by our imperfect thoughts as to what is right, God is absolutely just

and that all His ways are justified. David, whose sins our friend quotes, expresses this in that wonderful Psalm 51, "*That Thou mightest be justified when Thou speakest, and be clear when Thou judgest.*"

We must accept things as they are. A man may not be responsible for his house being on fire, but if the fire escapes in at his window, he will be wise to take advantage of it and leave the question as to how the fire started and how to remove it with safety, and with all the evidence available. So we are wise when we see our danger and confess our need, confess our sinfulness also, not merely that we were born into the world with natures that are sinful, but because in spite of our sincere belief in and God's Word without, we have loved our own sinful way: "we have turned every one to his own way"; and then in the fear of God, having owned our state and conduct, accept His way of salvation in Christ, which is so blessedly suitable to our need, and which has been provided for all. Millions have done this and have never regretted it, and have discovered such wonders in God's redeeming love that it has been their constant theme and joy. Here it is the trouble and distress fly away.

As to all being lost eternally who do not accept Christ, this will not be because having heard of Him they CANNOT accept Him, but because they WILL NOT. It is the will that is at work in opposition to God. There are forces in the universe of which we know nothing, all of which Christ must subdue to God; there are questions of which we have very little conception which will all be solved in due time. The business of the Christian is to leave these things in God's hands, knowing that He will make all clear in His own time, and in the meanwhile read the Word and believe it, and walk in the light of it, then he will be kept from stumbling at these questions; he will know how to use the shield of faith with which to quench these fiery

darts of the enemy; he will be kept from being troubled and distressed, and he will be able to raise his doxologies to God as he sees the depths of the riches both of His wisdom and knowledge.

## TO WHOM SHOULD PRAYER BE ADDRESSED?

A Correspondent in Newcastle asks the above question.

(1) It is clear from the New Testament that prayer is addressed to both God the Father and to the Lord Jesus Christ, and a glance at some of the passages may be helpful. When it is a matter entirely personal to the servant of the Lord, **THE LORD JESUS** is addressed. So Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," and "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge" (Acts 7. 59, 60). Saul prayed, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" (Acts 9. 6). And again Paul prayed the Lord thrice that the thorn in the flesh might be removed from him (2 Cor. 12. 8). The Lord takes a special and personal interest in all His servants. He directs them (Acts 9. 6, 10-16); He encourages them (Acts 18. 9); supports them (Acts 23. 11); and is everything to them that they need; hence in all personal matters and questions of service we should go to the Lord for direction, and in prayer and communion with Him we shall find the needed help. He sits upon the throne of grace also, so that in all our personal difficulties and trials we may draw from Him grace and mercy for seasonable help. The Lord Jesus has this sole right over us as His servants, and it is both right and blessed to acknowledge it in our prayers.

(2). We are not only the servants of Christ, but through grace the children of **GOD** also, and He cares for His children, He considers us, knows what is best for us, and delights to have us make our requests known to Him, with thanksgiving, so that as to circumstances and trials in this life we should

direct our prayers to God, that instead of being burdened by these circumstances we might be without anxious care, but have instead His peace keeping our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Phil. 4. 6, 7, 1 Pet. 5. 7, Luke 12, 22-30, are Scriptures that direct us in these matters to pray to God, who is our Father.

(3). Then what is highest of all, prayer in connection with the Name and interest of the Lord upon earth; this is directed to THE FATHER. In this we are carried outside ourselves and our circumstances, and we take up the high and honourable privilege of being here in the name of the Lord Jesus as His representatives. This side comes out specially in John, chapters 14, 15, and 16, where the Lord is defining to His disciples this favoured position which was to be theirs during His absence. No petition made from this standpoint in the Lord's Name to the Father is denied. It is as though the Lord Himself were asking it, for this His Name implies. Such prayer will be entirely for His glory, and so according to the will of God (see chapters 14. 13; 15. 16; 16. 23). We have to confess how little we know and see of prayer of this sort. Paul prays on these lines in Ephesians 1. 16-26; 3. 14-21.

These three are broadly the spheres in which we are called to move and pray, and while no hard and fast rule can be laid down, yet it is helpful to have direction as to them from the Word.

We do not find prayer addressed to the Holy Spirit, but we are exhorted to pray in the Spirit (Eph. 6. 18; Jude 20).

### SHOULD WOMEN PRAY AND PROPHECY IN THE ASSEMBLY?

B. L. enquires as to the Scriptures which forbid women to teach and speak in the assembly, and cannot reconcile them with 1 Cor. 11. 5 which seems to sanction this.

1 Timothy 2. 11, 12 is a very definite word on the subject; the Epistle is written to instruct us as to our behaviour in the house of God (3. 15), which does not mean a building that may be so named by men, but includes all the saints of God. The Epistle gives instruction as to that which should characterize them in their approach to God, their relationships with one another, and place of testimony in the world. Women have their place of favour in the house of God, but it is not that of teaching but of learning, not of authority over the man, but of subjection, and the reasons for this are clearly given. That may not suit the spirit of the age, but it is better to be subject to the will of God than to be conformed to this present evil world.

1 Cor. 14. 34 is also emphatic; silence is enjoined upon them in the assemblies, and silence means silence. It is said that this was only meant for the Corinthians, but we may not treat the Word of God like that. These things were "*the commandments of the Lord*" (verse 37), and they are addressed to "*all that in every place call upon the name of the Lord.*" Creation (1 Tim. 2. 13), the law and the assembly (1 Cor. 14. 34), i.e., everything in which God has given testimony to men gives to women this place.

We now come to 1 Cor. 11. 5, and it will help us to notice that there is a division of the chapter at verse 17. There the Apostle begins to speak of their coming together in one place, so that what precedes this in the chapter does not refer to the assembling of the saints together. The earlier part of the chapter speaks of the relative places in which God set the man and the woman before Him in creation, which though disturbed by the fall, abides, and is to be recognized and maintained by those who are restored to God in Christ. The man is the head, or representative of the woman, so that she is subject to him and looks to him for guidance, as the man should

look to Christ. So that whether the woman approaches God in prayer, or speaks to others, this is recognized by the covering of the head; but this praying and prophesying must be in private or at home, and not in the assembly, nor is it said that they ought to do it, but if they do it uncovered they dishonour their head. We believe that this refers to the home and intercourse with others in the home, for God thinks of the home as well as of the assembly, and the households of the saints have a very great place in the thoughts and ways of God. There is that which is becoming in them, and angels unseen by us are taking note of it all (verse 10).

“MY FATHER IS GREATER THAN I” (John 14. 28).

*E. N. asks how this statement can be reconciled with the doctrine of the Trinity.*

There is no thought of inferiority in this statement, as some have falsely supposed and taught, but there is subordination. The Lord took the place of the Sent One; though eternally co-equal with the Father, He subordinated Himself to the Father's will for the fulfilment of all the Divine counsels. When He uttered these words He was going back to the Father to receive glory from Him because of the blessed way in which He had finished the work which the Father had given Him to do, and He wished His disciples to understand and rejoice in this. He will abide in this subject place which He has taken for ever, as 1 Cor. 15. 28 teaches.

## ANSWER TO CORRESPONDENT.

### The Meal and the Leaven.

**BUCKS.**—In Luke 13. 18–21 the Lord is describing the development of the kingdom of God in the world. It is not the work of the Spirit of God as we have it spoken of in John 3. 5 that is here described; that must be altogether of God, and so according to His mind; but it is what the kingdom of God has developed into under man's responsibility. From its small beginnings at Pentecost it has grown into a great tree, the great tree symbolizes vast political power (see Daniel 4. 11–14), and the professing church claims the right, and has acquired it, to wield political power. The fowls of the air that lodge in the branches of it are evidently evil spirits, emissaries of the devil (see Luke 8. 5–12). This has come true, for this is the state of Christendom to-day; not only have perverse men and grievous wolves crept in, spoiling the flock and speaking perverse things, but the time has come of which the Spirit speaketh expressly when some shall depart from the faith giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons. So we have within the circle of Christendom, all kinds of heretical

teaching denying the great foundation truths of the faith. Christendom has become the home of these. When bishops, deans and clergymen openly patronize spiritism, which is really demonism, it is evident that we have reached that development of the profession when the fowls of the air are being welcomed to a lodging in the branches of the great tree.

The leaven sets forth the corrupting power of evil doctrine which is to continue until the whole mass becomes leavened. This is all but fulfilled, for where can we look to-day without finding the purity of the word leavened by evil doctrine? It is true that as long as the true church, the body of Christ, is here, the measures of meal will not be wholly leavened, but when it is taken out of the vast system of profession at the coming of the Lord for His saints (see 1 Thess. 4.), there will be nothing to prevent the whole mass becoming leavened; then the Lord's judgment will come upon it as is described in Rev. 3. 16 and ch. 18.

## ELIJAH. No. 6.

(HAMILTON SMITH.)

## Carmel: The Coming of the Rain. (1 Kings 18. 41, 46.)

**JUDGMENT** prepares the way for blessing, and thus the fire from heaven is followed by the rain from heaven. The opened ear of Elijah catches "a sound of abundance of rain." A going in the tops of the trees, trouble on the waters—the low moaning of earth—told the listening ear of Elijah that at last the day was at hand when the Lord would send rain upon the earth.

If by a closer walk with God our ears were more attuned to catch His faintest whispers, and our minds were more enlightened to interpret them aright, should we not often, in the low sad moans that rise from this troubled world, hear His voice telling of coming blessing? In the sigh from some sick bed, or the wail of a bereaved one, or the cry of a disappointed heart, should we not discern the sound of coming blessing for the grief-stricken soul?

No such sounds reached the ear of king Ahab. Absorbed with his own selfish pleasures, his heart was waxed gross, and his ears dull of hearing. Only faith can read the signs of the times and enter into the secret of the Lord. When all seems dead among the people of God, when there is no apparent result from the preaching of the Gospel, when there are few conversions among sinners, and little growth among saints, it needs indeed a close walk with God to see His hand at work.

However, when God's voice is heard and His hand seen, it produces immediate results. Is the rain coming, then Ahab will go up to eat and drink, while Elijah—the man with the opened ear—will go up to the top of Carmel to pray.

For three and a half years the rain has been withheld and the famine has been sore in the land. Now the rain is coming, the famine is over. Surely Ahab will turn to God with

thanksgiving. He has seen the vanity of idols, the exposure of the false prophets, the fire from heaven, and the awful judgment of the prophets of Baal. Alas, no impression is made on the king; God is not in all his thoughts. Little he cares for Jehovah or Baal, for the prophet of the living God or the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal. His one thought is: this tiresome famine is over, the rain is coming; I can now enjoy myself without hindrance. So he goes up to eat and drink, celebrating the occasion with a feast. It is ever thus with the world. God lays His hand upon men in government and, for a time, they are afflicted with war, or famine and pestilence. No sooner is relief afforded than they return with renewed zest to their feasting, drinking, and pleasure, and God is forgotten.

How different is the effect upon the man of God. He hears the sound of coming rain and he knows it is no time for feasting with the world, but for drawing apart from men—to get alone with God at the top of the hill. When the world goes up to feast it is the time for God's people to go up to prayer. Nature might say if there is the sound of abundance of rain there is no need to pray, but for the spiritual man it is a divine summons to prayer.

For prayer to be effectual, however, there are certain conditions with which we must comply. These come before us in this great scene. First, effectual prayer demands that we withdraw from the hurry and press of this world into holy retirement with God. Like Elijah we must go up to the top of the hill. As the Lord Himself instructs us, "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father" (Matt. 6. 6). How often our prayers are unavailing for lack of the "shut door." To be consciously in the presence of God we need to compose

our spirits, call in our wandering thoughts, and shut the door on the world. Holy separation and retirement is the first great requisite for effectual prayer.

Then, again, we must take our true place in the dust before God, and this we see strikingly set forth in the prophet. Arrived at the top of the hill he goes down into the valley of humiliation. "He cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees." A few short hours before he had stood for God in the presence of the king, the false prophets and all the people of Israel, and *the people had fallen upon their faces*. Now, the false prophets are dead, the crowds have dispersed, the king has gone up to the feast, and Elijah is left alone with God. At once he casts himself down upon the earth and *hides his face*. Before all Israel God will support and honour His servant, but, alone with God, he must learn his own nothingness in the presence of God's greatness. Then, he was witnessing for God before sinners, commanding king, prophets and people ; now he is alone waiting upon God as a suppliant, and, as such, he, too, must remember that he is but dust, entirely dependent upon the mercy of God. "Behold, now," says Abraham, "I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes" (Gen. 18. 27). An old divine has said, "The lower the heart descends the higher the prayer ascends. God accepts broken expressions when they come from broken hearts."

The story discloses to us another of the secrets of effectual fervent prayer. We must not only pray but "*watch and pray*." As the apostle exhorts us, "Persevere in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving" (Col. 4. 2). Again we read, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance" (Eph. 6. 18). In Elijah's prayer we see this watching, for he said to his servant,

"Go up now look toward the sea." And he went up, and looked and said, "There is nothing." He watched, but at first he saw nothing. He heard the sound that summoned him to prayer, and he prayed, and he watched, but at first he sees nothing. How often it is thus with God's people to-day. They pray and watch thereunto, but for a time God sees fit to keep them waiting. God has lessons to teach us, and so for a while He may keep us waiting at His door. We watch to see God's hand at work, and lo, we see nothing. Is it to teach us that *nothing of God* is seen because *something of self* fills our vision. We must learn our own nothingness before we see God at work. We think God will hear us because of the urgency of the case, the fervency of our prayers, the justness of our cause. But God keeps us waiting until we are conscious that, though before men we may indeed have a just cause, before God we are unworthy supplicants, having nothing to *claim*, but only God's grace to *plead*. Moreover, God will teach us that prayer is not some secret charm that we can use at any moment and forthwith obtain our requests, but that the power of prayer lies in the One to whom we pray.

But apart from cause of delay in ourselves, God has His time and His way of answering prayers. If then we pray and watch, and yet have to own with Elijah's servant, "There is nothing," what more can we do? This question receives a very definite answer from Elijah. He says, "Go again seven times." In other words, we must *persevere*. Not only does the apostle exhort us to pray, but to watch thereunto "with all perseverance." We cannot hurry God. We think of what is agreeable to ourselves ; God thinks of what is for His glory and our profit.

In the light of this scene we may well challenge our hearts as to whether we are near enough to God to hear His summons to prayer, though all

the world may be feasting? And are we prepared for the holy separation for prayer, for humiliation in prayer, and for watching thereunto with all perseverance?

These conditions complied with, may we not count upon an answer to prayer, even though to sight there is little or no sign of the coming blessing? It was thus with Elijah; his perseverance was rewarded. He knew his prayer was about to be answered, though to sight there was but "a little cloud" and that no bigger than "a man's hand." But behind the likeness of a man's hand faith could discern the hand of God. With the greatest confidence Elijah at once sends a message to Ahab saying, "Prepare thy chariot and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not." To natural sight there was no sign of rain: the sky was perfectly clear save for a little cloud no bigger than a man's hand. But faith knew that God was behind the cloud, and when God is working a little goes a long way. A handful of meal and a little oil with God, can feed a household

for a full year. Five barley loaves and two small fishes with God can feed five thousand people, and a little cloud with God behind it can cover the whole heavens. So it came to pass that while Ahab was preparing his chariot "the heavens were black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain."

"And Ahab rode and went to Jezreel." But "the hand of the Lord was on Elijah." The hand of the Lord was with the man who had been with God on the top of the hill. And when the hand of the Lord is upon a man, he will do all things rightly and at the right time. Guided by the Lord, Elijah had stood before the king to rebuke him for his idolatry, and now, still guided by the Lord, the prophet runs before the king to honour and maintain the authority of the king in the eyes of the people. Elijah is instructed to maintain what is due to God while showing the proper respect to man. In season he will manifest his fear of God, and in season he will honour the king.

## THE PALESTINE SETTLEMENT.

(J. T. MAWSON)

IN regard to the settlement of the Palestine question, Dr. Weissmann, Head of the Zionist organization, has said: "Two decisions have been reached which are of the utmost importance; the first is the embodiment of the Balfour declaration regarding Palestine in the Treaty, thus giving it International sanction. We have always considered Mr. Balfour's declaration as the charter of our liberty, and the International sanction is a turning point in Jewish history. The two decisions are: That the British Government, as the mandatory power in Palestine, has agreed that the civil administration shall be set up in Palestine immediately, to carry the Balfour declaration into effect. We are most anxious to begin reconstruction, for the last two years in Palestine have brought about general demoralization. This painful period is over, and the beginning of reconstruction work will be

held both by Jews and by Arabs as delivery from the nightmare."

The news of this San Remo decision has caused great rejoicings in Zionist circles. There was a great gathering of Jews in London, the Union Jack and the Zionist banner were hung out at the window, and it was noteworthy that the Hatikvah, the so-called Jewish national anthem, was not sung. Hatikvah means the "Hope," and it was agreed that the day of hope had now passed into the day of reality. At another meeting in London, Dr. Maxnordau said: "Now a glorious ray of light had been shed upon their sorrow, the dream of their lives had become true. Israel is again a nation amongst nations. For two thousand years we have been severed from our own land, now we are going to return to it."

These Jewish rejoicings at the decision

of the Allies to affirm and carry out the Balfour declaration, bring very forcibly to our minds the 18th chapter of Isaiah. In that chapter a nation is addressed as the land shadowing with wings. The "Woe," which is the first verse of the chapter, should be "Ho," and the land which is addressed is one that has given protection to the Jewish people. For this surely is the meaning of "shadowing with wings." It is a land that lies beyond the rivers of Cush, that is, beyond the Nile and the Euphrates. These rivers form the boundaries of two great nations that had been troublers of Israel, and nations upon which Israel had leaned on different occasions, seeking the aid of one against the other, and *vice versa*. The land in this chapter lies beyond these rivers, it is a distant land which espouses the cause of Israel. There seems little doubt that Britain is the land in question, for what land sendeth more ambassadors across the sea than Britain? and what land has been more earnest in its desire to help the Jews—"a nation scattered and peeled, terrible from their beginning, hitherto. A nation meted out and trodden down whose land the rivers (that is, great armies passing through) have spoiled?" But the question is: Are the hopes of the Jewish nations to be realized? and the glowing prophecies of the Old Testament Scriptures which speak of their peace and blessing to be fulfilled? "No!" The 18th chapter of Isaiah is very emphatic as to this, and the reason why these prophecies are not to be fulfilled at present is because these Jews about whom the prophecies are are returning to their land without any reference to their Messiah or their God.

They are placing great confidence in the power of the nation that has befriended them, and in their own wealth and energy, which they say will begin to flow towards Palestine to be devoted to the development of the country. But God and Christ are left out of their thoughts, and there can be no prosperity either to the individual or the nation that does that; least of all to the Jews, who can have no blessing in the land given to their fathers apart from their Messiah. So we read in Isaiah 18., that though all the world is to take notice of the return of the Jews to Palestine, yet it will not prosper. This

enterprise, while fulfilling the Word of God, which foresaw and foretold that the people would thus go back to Palestine, will not have the blessing of God, for the Jews and all nations have to learn that there is no salvation in any name but the name of JESUS. It all promises well, yet all will result in bitter disappointment. How graphically described is this in the 18th chapter of Isaiah.

"Before the harvest," we read, "when the bud is perfect and the sour grape is ripening in the flower, He shall both cut off the sprigs with pruning hooks and take away and cut down the branches. They shall be left together unto the fowls of the mountains and to the beasts of the earth, and the fowls shall summer upon them, and all the beasts of the earth shall winter upon them." There are rumblings of this in the enmity shown by some of the Arabs against the Jews, but that of which that verse speaks is the attacks made upon them by great and powerful foes. It describes the great tribulation through which they have yet to pass. All that they have passed through hitherto, will be forgotten in the horror of that tribulation, called Jacob's Trouble. But God has blessing in store for them and He will bring it about in His own way. That way is described by the Prophet Zechariah, for they are to see their Messiah whom once they pierced, and to Him they shall say: "What are these wounds in Thy hands?" Then He shall answer, "Those with which I was wounded in the house of My friends." God will pour the spirit of grace and supplication upon them, and as they look upon Him Whom they pierced, they shall mourn for Him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him as one for his first-born. It is when their eyes are opened to see their own sin in their long rejection of their one and only Saviour, that they shall see that His wounds have opened a fountain for sin and uncleanness, and they shall exclaim, "This is our God for Whom we have waited; He shall save us." Then the last verse of Isaiah 18. shall be fulfilled. "In that time shall a present be brought unto the Lord of hosts, of a people scattered and peeled, whose land the rivers have spoiled to the place of the name of the Lord of hosts, the Mount Zion."

## “CHRIST OUR LIFE.”

(J. WILSON SMITH.)

THE subject of life is enormous and most interesting. It may be viewed from many different stand-points and in varied relations all of which call for thoughtful consideration. There is, however, one on which I would briefly touch, which has a voice to the child of God, as to no one else. Christ is the life of the Christian. As a man living on earth he has natural life—one which gives character to his condition as such; but beyond that, he is, as a Christian, animated by another life, which, in the very nature of things, produces a display of its own special features and qualities, quite distinct from those of natural life. Not that there need be any clash between them, for the natural life may, and should, be dominated by the spiritual, or, rather, by the Spirit of God who is its power.

It is a wonderful thought that, while Christ is the life of the Christian, the Holy Spirit of God is the energizing power of it. We are, alas, aware of the degrading tendencies of the nature common to us all, as fallen—tendencies which are abhorrent to every right-thinking man, and still more so to the Christian who alone has learned, to his cost, that “in the flesh there dwells no good thing,” nor ever can. That nature—“the flesh”—he detests, because he finds that it lusts, unintermittently, against the Spirit, in an antagonism that never ceases, although, thank God, the Spirit wages war—and victoriously, if only we allow Him—against the flesh, so that we should not yield to our natural depravity. Here are complexities which the truly

exercised soul alone can understand, though in different degrees they are familiar to all God's children.

None the less, Christ is our life!

This is largely the theme of the Epistle to the Colossians, and is worthy of study. It is a victorious life, because it is that of Christ risen, and ourselves raised with Him. We stand on the right bank of the river in triumph, while the conquest of the land lies before us. As risen with Christ we are to seek the things that are above—that is our sole occupation—for “Ye are dead and your life is hid [where?] with Christ [but where?] in God.” That life is therefore perfectly and for ever secure, without the faintest possibility of its being lost; so completely so, that “when Christ, our life, shall appear, we shall also appear with Him in glory”! Solid facts these! Christ risen, victorious, triumphant, all powerful in the life of the Christian!

Well, but what follows? What should inevitably follow? “Mortify therefore your members.” You have a life all powerful—one that should and can put to death—mortify—the uprising of every internal and rebellious power, as assuredly inferior to the power of the Christ who, as life, dwells in us. This will produce the display of the life of Christ—none so exquisite—in all who love and are loyal to Him.

“Oh! teach us so the power to know  
Of risen life with Thee;  
Not we may live while here below,  
But Christ our life may be.”

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Scripture unfolds itself when you look to God and study it.

There is no true Christianity where Christ is not everything.

It is by the Word that we live in this passing world, and it clearly reveals to us the things that are not passing, the heavenly things.

# THE REVIVAL OF SPIRITISM.

(H. J. VINE.)

## What it Indicates.

THOSE who are instructed in the Word of God by the Holy Spirit are not surprised at the present-day recrudescence of Spiritism; rather would they be surprised did not such a revival of this ancient cult take place; because it has been long foretold in the sacred writings as that which would take place in the midst of Christendom in these days; and the forewarning is divinely given for the sake of those who are redeemed in Christ—who are truly of “the faith”—that they might be forearmed when it appeared.

### THE FOREWARNING.

Note first what is said to Timothy, a young servant of our Lord Jesus Christ: “The Spirit speaketh expressly”—laying special emphasis on the matter—“that in the latter times some shall depart (or ‘apostatise’) from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils” (1 Tim. 4.). Here Spiritism in its deceptive and its doctrinal forms is plainly foretold; and after indicating other accompaniments, the apostle adds, “If thou put the brethren (those who are truly the children of God) in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ.” Now notice, this is apostasy from “the faith.” We are not told to expect this in heathendom. Nor is it the remarkable activities of spirits in the midst of Confucianism, of which we have reliable records from China. Neither is it the strange phenomena so frequently observed amidst the dark superstitions of India and Ceylon. It is not Buddhist, Brahman, or Mohammedan. It is an apostasy specially indicated to take place in Christendom, for it is an apostasy from “the faith,” seducing spirits and their teachings being turned to instead.

Other Scriptures show us that this is a sign of the near return of our

Lord Jesus Christ, when He will come again and take all true believers out of the world to be “for ever with the Lord”; and, then, for a while, before He takes up the direct government of the nations and peoples of the earth, Spiritism will have almost unlimited sway; but, first, as we have said, all the saints of God will be translated from earth to heaven like Enoch before the flood—in the twinkling of an eye. The moment the one Holy Spirit who indwells us quickens our mortal bodies, and we are gone, Spiritism, which is spreading so rapidly now, will have no check, and the “strong delusion” foretold in 2 Thess. 2. will seize upon those who “received not the love of the truth that they might be saved” (10). These deceiving spirits may easily say, —when men are at first in fear because of the disappearance of so many— We told you that something extraordinary would happen. Men’s minds will be enslaved in gross darkness, for there will be “works of power and signs and lying wonders” done by these Satanic agencies. It will be a marvellous imitation of what the Lord did, and His apostles, whose preaching of salvation was also accompanied by “signs and wonders and with divers miracles” or “acts of power” (Heb. 2. 4). We can therefore understand how those who have not “the love of the truth that they might be saved” now, will be carried away then; but the march from earth to heaven of all the redeemed will have suddenly and swiftly taken place before that awful day has arrived. At the Victor’s shout—for the Lord will call us away with “a shout” (1 Thess. 4. 16)—we shall rise and leave the world behind.

### SPIRITISM NEW AND OLD.

There is nothing edifying in the smallest degree in the writings of spiritists. Much is very paltry, and the editors themselves admit this, but they are lured on and their records

contain a great deal which has been rightly termed "trash." It is freely admitted that the messages received from the spirits are frequently deceptive, and that lies are often told. It is just what the Spirit of truth "*expressly*" foretold in the Scriptures. There is much fraud and trickery by so-called spiritualists, but the Holy Word of God leaves this alone and deals only with the actual working of spirits which come to deceive, impersonating the departed it may be, or professing to reveal something to those who heed them. It is certain that no unfallen spirit, angel or other, would transgress by seeking to gain the attention of men and women. The fact that some do so proves that they are fallen spirits, and are working to seduce and turn souls from the truth, as Scripture shows.

One spirit, professing to be that of F. W. H. Myers, the poet, said: "I feel just as lonely. Lodge, it is just as they say, you *grope in fog and darkness*" (*Survival of Man*, by Sir O. Lodge, p. 295). One would expect a godly man to turn from these things after hearing such words; but the temptation seems to be tremendous to an inquisitive mind; and it is pursued notwithstanding the serious warnings of God's Holy Word. I read Isa. 8. 19-22 to one psychic student who was deeply immersed in it. He seemed to be interested in these solemn words when a violent rapping startled him, and hurrying from the room he seized his hat and went out into the night.

I could give many other instances from experience, but it is unnecessary. What the inspired volume says is of greater importance to us. I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer, said one of old, by taking heed of Thy Word.

#### IN EGYPT.

When God, on the ground of redemption by the blood of the lamb, was about to deliver His people from

Egypt and march them from the land of their slavery, the masters of the psychic sciences were called in to oppose Moses and Aaron, who demanded the freedom of Israel. In more ways than one we have a type in this of our own deliverance through the blood of Christ; but let us follow the actual facts; for they reveal a remarkable development of psychic powers. The present students of these things are a long way behind. When Aaron threw down his rod it became a serpent. God thus gave a sign to Pharaoh—the greatest monarch of that day. This powerful king, however, had in his colleges men of extraordinary learning—unearthed writings and monuments show this. Among them were those who were familiar with "enchantments." They were the spiritualists of that time, called in Exodus 7. 11, "The wise men and the sorcerers," "the magicians of Egypt."

These men were acquainted with supernatural powers, and had access to the royal presence. They cast down their rods also and they became serpents in like manner as Aaron's, but his rod swallowed up theirs. Satan is called that old serpent "which deceiveth the whole world" (Rev. 12. 9). By deception he brings about the fall of men and nations, as he did with Adam and Eve at the beginning; and it is striking that God should give this serpent sign to Pharaoh. God's people and representatives were a despised minority, but the power with them was greater than that with their opponents who sought to keep them in Egypt. It is the same to-day. In the oft-quoted passage as to trying the spirits in 1 John 4. it is said to the children of God: "*Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world.*" Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods!

Their imitations, however, still successfully followed Moses and Aaron and steeled the king against Israel, until Aaron brought life out of the dust of the earth. "Then the magicians

said to Pharaoh, *This is the finger of God.*" The Holy Spirit is thus named in the gospels. It is He Who is in the children of God and greater than he that is in the world. At this sign the psychic men were brought to the dust before God literally. It is striking again to notice what was said to the "old serpent" at the beginning: *"Dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life."* These signs were given in view of the deliverance of God's people; and again, when He brings Israel back to their land by and bye, it is said, "According to the days of thy coming out of Egypt will I show unto him (their enemy) marvellous things . . . *they* (those who oppose) *shall lick the dust like a serpent*" (Micah 7. 15, 17). The power of God must triumph over every other power, and He shows it victoriously through the salvation of those who believe. Spiritists may imitate. Their familiars may say, God is unknown; but that is untrue. He is fully revealed in our Lord Jesus Christ.

The exceeding greatness of His power, too, toward those who believe, has already been shown in the resurrection of Christ, their representative Head as well as Lord. "*Out of dust*" man was made at the first; "*out of dust*" life was brought through Aaron's rod, and this baulked Egypt's magicians. *Out of "the dust of death"* the mighty power of God raised Jesus our Lord, the Head of the assembly from among the dead; and this secures the eternal overthrow through man of every opposing force, and the complete triumph of good over evil, of light over darkness, of Christ over Satan. The children of Israel marched out in triumph! They sang of the Lord's victory on the far shore of the Red Sea! The magicians had not helped the great Pharaoh, nor had they secured prosperity for his great country by their enchantments. It was severely smitten, the mighty monarch's power was broken, too, and the Egyptians themselves were spoiled. God's righteous judgment fell upon

that land of dark practices, and His down-trodden people were delivered with songs of gladness on their lips from the tyranny which had made them groan in cruel bondage.

#### IN PALESTINE.

When Israel marched toward the land of promise, fear took hold of the inhabitants of Palestine. God had waited long centuries before punishing them for their wickedness (Gen. 15. 16; Deut. 18. 9-14). Diviners, enchanters, and those with familiar spirits, had plunged the nations of that land into darkness and degradation. "Because of these abominations," it is distinctly said to Israel, "the Lord thy God doth drive them out before thee" (Deut. 18. 12). Pharaoh tried to hold God's people in his power, and, now, as they approach the land, Balak seeks to oppose them by means of that extraordinary clairvoyant Balaam. Needless to say, it failed. Even the *donkey* was more clairvoyant than the master; yet, in spite of the angel with the sword (forespeaking Balaam's own punishment) on he went in his folly, only to have to declare, "Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel." Balaam was a man of repute in those days; a man who could also entertain nobles and princes; "the man," as he himself said, "whose eyes are open, who heard the words of God, who saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open" (Num. 24. 3, 4); nevertheless he had to own to Balak that he was unable to curse God's people, and "Balak's anger was kindled against Balaam, and he smote his hands together; and Balak said unto Balaam, I called thee to curse mine enemies, and, behold, thou hast altogether blessed them these three times." The wickedness of Balaam's heart, however, comes out afterwards, when he advised Balak to corrupt the Israelites though he could not stay their possession of the Land of Promise.

In the closing books of the Bible we are warned concerning the successors of this remarkable man of such extraordinary psychic attainments. The "way" of Balaam, the "doctrine" of Balaam, and the "error" of Balaam, will again be pursued, we are told; but just as God's people came out of Egypt and entered the Land of Promise, so will the elect be safely and surely brought through to their heavenly inheritance, in spite of all the workings of fallen spirits and of those who are deceived by them. Indeed, their special activities always seem to indicate some near and special intervention on their behalf by the Lord, as we have seen. In Palestine itself the cult had developed to a very high degree, and the propensities of the race seemed to severely demand that the men, women, and children should all be exterminated. Righteousness might require this, but mercy also, lest they should enslave God's people likewise by their practices. In measure, that is just what happened; for Israel did not carry out fully God's command; and many were led away by idolatry and familiar spirits. King Saul sought to rid the land of them, yet he himself fell away and consulted a witch at the end, but only to hear his own doom solemnly pronounced.

The progress of these dark sciences in the centres of learning reached at least nine distinct branches:—

1. *Fire traversing.*
2. *Divination.*
3. *Observing of times.*
4. *Enchantment.*
5. *Witchcraft.*
6. *Charming.*
7. *Spiritism.*
8. *Sorcery.*
9. *Necromancy.*

These various branches of occultism might seem imposing to the students of that day, but the Scripture saith: "All that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord" (Deut. 18. 12). In God's sight those who practise these things are ABOMINABLE, and the

things they do are ABOMINATIONS. Ruined body and soul themselves, they had ruined the kingdoms of the land; and this seems to be always the outcome of this "falsely-named science."

Notwithstanding, however, all the solemn warnings of God, the Israelites themselves fell under the allurements of these things, and in King Manasseh's day we read, "He made his son pass through the fire, and observed times, and used enchantments, and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards . . . and Manasseh seduced them to do more evil than did the nations whom the Lord destroyed before the children of Israel" (2 Kings 21. 6, 9). God therefore gave them over to captivity.

At the time when the Lord Jesus came to men, many in the land of Israel were possessed by spirits, and on nearly every other page of the Gospels we read of them being cast out by the Lord and His disciples. He spoke of *Israel's national condition* in relation to this, as "when the unclean spirit is gone out." It is striking that Israel, so prone to this thing, has been free from it since their dispersion, but they are going back to Palestine in unbelief, and the unclean spirit will return. When he is come, he findeth his house "empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there." Thus spake the Lord, showing that there is to be a terrible revival of this spirit-possession in the land, and that the last state of Israel will be worse than the first.

#### IN BABYLON.

Before the overthrow of the vast Babylonish empire we find psychic and similar sciences very advanced. The monarchs of that day looked upon them as of the very first importance. The great Nebuchadnezzar had about the throne of the empire "the magicians, the astrologers, the Chaldeans and the soothsayers." The last king, Belshazzar (a deputy king), of Babylon,

was exceedingly profane; and amidst a great feast, which he made to a thousand of his lords, he abandoned himself to insult the God of Israel, the true God. Automatic writing is common in modern Spiritism, and sometimes there is seen the appearance of a hand or arm; and at that impious feast, "*in the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand.*" and wrote upon the wall of the king's palace. But this was God's writing, and the king saw it, and fear seized him, as well it might (Dan. 5.). He called in the scientific men—"the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers"—"the wise men of Babylon," as they are named in Daniel 5. 7. The king offered them great rewards if they could explain the writing, but they failed to do so. Then forgotten Daniel, in whom was God's Spirit, was called in. He read the writing and gave the interpretation, which pronounced the doom of the monarch. In that very night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was slain.

It has often been said that the book of Daniel gives us principles that obtain during "the times of the Gentiles," before Israel is restored to her city and land. The failure of these scholars to read and interpret God's writing was not confined to that day; we see it to-day; these things are hidden from the wise and prudent, but the forgotten children of God still read and benefit by the unfoldings of the inspired Volume, for the Spirit who indited its words dwells in them. Soon after the overthrow of the Babylonish empire the restoration of God's people to Jerusalem took place. It will be so again, when the future "Babylon" of Revelation is destroyed; but before that time, every true believer on our Lord Jesus Christ will leave earth for heaven, at the coming of Christ into the air, as 1 Thess. 4. shows us.

The way for the present revival of dark sciences, so long forbidden in God's

Word, has been prepared by the higher critics, men who boast in their scholarship, but who by their destructive criticism of God's Holy Word have made it easy for men to be deceived.

But this revival indicates the near intervention of the Saviour for the deliverance of the elect of God, when they will surely, and suddenly, leave the world, being "*caught up together in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.*" We have seen God's intervention in Egypt in the presence of the psychic men of that day, and how He marched Israel out of the land in triumph. We have seen how he overthrew the intentions of Balak and Balaam, the clairvoyant. We have seen what has happened, and will yet happen, in Palestine through the workings of familiar spirits and sorcery; and lastly, we have seen what happened in Babylon when its last king was slain. The more developed these phenomena become, the more apparent is the divine intervention when that takes place; but, on the other hand, it seems that the advance of these cults brings a tremendous influx of fallen spirits into a nation or empire, and precedes its overthrow. If this be so, the present popularizing of them in this land speaks badly for the future of the nation and empire. It would be well if these things could be swept away before it is too late. There is an empire spoken of in the Bible that goes to pieces, like a ship "*in the midst of the sea.*" One hopes it may not be the British; but the practice of forbidden sciences would expedite such a catastrophe. The question for the true believer is not whether wonderful things are done by these spiritists—Satan can and will do these—but *does God's Word sanction or forbid these practices?* He forbids them! He names them "*Abominations,*" and those who do them *Abominable!* That is enough for any true believer (Deut. 18. 12).

## LIFE AFTER DEATH.

Now as to life after death, it is not only that the spirit of a child of God is absent from the body, when he falls on sleep—as Scripture speaks of death for such—and goes away to be “present with the Lord,” but his body also, every particle of its dust, is watched over by God and will be raised again from among the dead. The scientist says no atom can be destroyed though it may be changed. God says of the body, “It is sown,” and “It is raised.” We have the words of the Apostle Paul, divinely inspired, that to be thus “with Christ” is “far better” than the best we have known here in the body. Nevertheless the body is also to be raised in immortality and incorruptibility, in honour, power, and glory, at the coming again of our Lord and Saviour. He Himself was raised from among the dead, and that is the pledge of our resurrection. “Christ the Firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at His coming” (1 Cor. 15. 23). He is “*The Firstfruits of them that slept.*”

After His own resurrection, seven times, it is said, He was “seen” in the resurrection chapter just referred to. When He, the risen Man, came into the midst of those gathered together at Jerusalem they were confounded and frightened. They supposed they beheld a spirit (Luke 24. 37). But it was not a spirit but a real Man who stood before them; a Man who had vanquished death, Satan (who had wielded its power to keep in bondage God’s children), and the grave; a risen Man, whose physical resurrection involved their eternal salvation, redemption and glory. Still, they were troubled! He had robbed death of “*its sting*,” Satan of his “*power*,” and the grave of “*its victory*.” He was their victorious Saviour and Lord. Their eternal blessing was secured in Him as well as the glory of God, though they knew it not then.

“Why do thoughts arise in your hearts”? He asked of them. “Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself: handle Me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have” (Luke 24. 39)! They saw Him thus; and it is recorded in the Scriptures of truth, and yet so-called scholars, modernists, would have us believe that they know better than the disciples, and that it was only an apparition they saw! What folly! What senseless reasoning! Surely Scripture is correct when it says, “Professing themselves to be wise they became fools.” The spiritists say, Christ is the supreme Spirit in the unseen! but God says, He is a Man, in a raised, glorified body at His right hand! He died! He rose! He ascended! and He will yet return! He said, referring to His holy body, “Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up” (John 2. 19). When therefore He was risen His disciples remembered that He had said this. Why did our risen Lord say “flesh and bones,” and not “flesh and blood”? His blood had been poured out for our eternal redemption.

Spiritists deny the truth as to Christ. They do not acknowledge Him as the exalted *Man* at the right hand of the throne of the greatness in the heavens, much less are they prepared to own His deity. To own Him as Man raised from among the dead would overthrow their whole system. It did so with the psychic students at that seat of learning in Ephesus, when they received the gospel preached by Paul (Acts 19. 18).

The letter, too, sent to the assembly at Ephesus afterwards, emphasizes the exceeding greatness of God’s power which raised Christ as a Man from the dead; and that set Him above every intelligence—principality, authority, power and dominion,—and every name named! What a triumph God has secured in Man—in Man raised and exalted above all!

# GOD'S GOVERNMENT : (No. 5.)

## The Supra-mundane Question.

WE turn now to the supra-mundane or invisible action of the book of Job, which imparts to it its chief momentousness, involving issues deeper and wider than that which we have already reviewed regarding the mystery of human suffering. This is the question of **THE POSSIBILITY ON EARTH OF IMPLICIT FAITH IN, AND DISINTERESTED LOVE TO, GOD.**

In this department of the history the actors are God and Satan, the Ruler of the world of light and the ruler of the world of darkness, the Author and Guardian of all righteousness and goodness, and the adversary of all the good in heaven and on earth.

Job now appears as occupying a still loftier position than before. Like the apostles of Christ, and doubtless like all God's faithful servants, he is "a spectacle to angels," as well as to his fellow-men. Now we learn that his character is praiseworthy in the sight of men, but that he is the object also of divine commendation. He is one whose heart the Most High has won for Himself, of whom, indeed, He makes, so to speak, His boast, as a notable trophy of His grace.

In token of the complacency of Jehovah in this His tried and faithful servant, He calls the attention of the adversary to him, as His living witness on the earth, challenging Satan to discover any unsound element in his spiritual character.

But the adversary does not willingly allow that his resources are baffled, that his power is on the wane, or that any serious breach has been made in the defences of his empire. He acts his accustomed part as the accuser, alleging that if Job serves God it is not for nought, that his piety is false, resting not on love, but on calculation and self-interest. It is a most serious and pregnant accusation, from which, if it

can be established, three results of the most portentous nature may with certainty be deduced.

The first is that **TRUE PIETY IS A THING NON-EXISTENT ON THE EARTH**, and that all apparent godliness is pretence and imposture, that genuine love to God is unknown, and that the reign of sin and Satan is yet undisturbed. If the best of God's servants be a hypocrite, then Satan may truly claim to have triumphed.

The second conclusion is still more tremendous. If the goodness of God to men in general, and to Job in particular, has only resulted in the production of a new form of selfishness, then **THE WAY OF GOD AS A GOD OF GRACE IS FORECLOSED.** For if grace be found ineffectual to subdue sin, if the fruit of goodness in God be only the *appearance* of goodness in man and the course of things be, the more grace, the more hypocrisy, then what remains of resource for God, and of help or hope for men? What other instrument has God to use? By what other appliances than those of love (love so marvellously manifested in later ages in the gift of the well-beloved Son) can love be called forth?

If Satan's accusation can be established, then shall he have this taunt to cast in the face of the Almighty:—

"Thou hast withheld Thy grace from me, and I continue Thine adversary; but at least I am an adversary open and declared, surely better than what Thou hast made of these men, Thy favourites, to whom Thou showest such partiality of kindness, yet whom all Thy bribes have failed to win from my side, and have only changed from enmity open and honest to enmity secret and fawning, who have not ceased to be servants of mine in pretending to servants of Thine. And from

more grace what fruit will spring but a more deep-rooted and calculating selfishness? No doubt religion will luxuriantly flourish when it is made to pay so well. Treat me as Thou treatest Job, and I too will serve Thee."

Satan, in challenging the disinterestedness of Job, would show that true piety is an impossibility; not only that it had no place in the world then, but that it never can have place; that the heaping of benefits on creatures naturally selfish can have no effect but to confirm their selfishness, and thus that those who have sinned are doomed to be Satan's slaves for ever.

Even this is not all that is implied in the adversary's impeachment of Job's professed piety. Another still more dire consequence is involved. If it be true that God by His best gifts is unable to touch the hearts of men and draw forth their love, it is proved that **GOD IS ONE THAT CAN NEVER, AT LEAST BY FALLEN CREATURES, BE LOVED.**

This challenge of the enemy is a virtual assertion in regard to the Most High, that His very greatness dooms Him to be for ever without a friend, and to dwell, with His creatures all around Him, in eternal loneliness, flattered for His gifts, dreaded for His power, but desolate in His dreary altitude, yearning in vain for the joy of true, unbribed affection.

Such is the envenomed arrow which Satan shoots at the thick bosses of Jehovah's buckler, a dart which, were it possible for it to reach its aim, would pierce the very heart of Him who sits upon the throne, and in destroying the blessedness of God, would quench the light and glory of the universe. The charge against Job was really a charge against Him who had made Job what he was, and had honoured him as His friend; a charge against the grace, the wisdom, the power, the love of God.

But the question arises, Why give any heed to the false and vile insinuations of the evil one? Can it become the All-sufficient to be influenced in

His procedure by the malicious inventions of the father of lies? Might not the charge of the accuser have been permitted to fall back into the oblivion of the pit whence it sprung?

A little consideration will show that it could not be thus disposed of. Job was, in the world and before his contemporaries, a representative man, the foremost among God's saints, a type of those delivered from the power of sin by divine grace. Moreover, among His sons Jehovah has publicly declared His satisfaction with Job's piety and His complacency in his obedience. And in the same presence Satan has appeared with his suspicions and accusations.

Now, though the truth is perfectly known to the Omniscient, it is not so known to His creatures. In their hearing His servant has been defamed and His glory aspersed. For their sakes, and for the establishment of their hearts, there must be vindication. And there are no means by which this may be effected save by the demonstration of actual trial. Just as in his original unfallen condition man had to be tested, and was actually put to the proof by the trial of Adam in the garden, so men in their state of recovered communion with God had also to be tested, and were actually put to the proof in the trial of the patriarch Job.

It is evident that in this latter case the trial could not be accomplished by means so simple, and to the individual so easy, as in the former. To prove that love is disinterested and real, all the boons that love confers must be withdrawn, and frowns and harshness must take the place of smiles and benefactions. Since the sincerity of Job's affection toward God, and not his only, but that of all true saints in all time, is publicly challenged and must be publicly attested, it is indispensable that God should withdraw from him for a season the light of His countenance, and that Job should be treated as if He had no special interest in him, and had left him to suffer without divine comfort, and bereft of the support of the enjoyed presence of God.

## ELIJAH. No. 7.

(HAMILTON SMITH.)

## Jezebel : The Flight into the Wilderness. (1 Kings 19. 1-7.)

ELIJAH had witnessed the good confession before the wicked king, the false prophets and the idolatrous nation ; now he is called to face the opposition of a very different character, that of the wicked Jezebel. The king was selfish and indolent, seeking only the gratification of his lusts and pleasures and quite indifferent to religion. Jezebel, on the contrary, was a woman of intense energy, a religious fanatic, pursuing idolatry with untiring zeal, protecting the priests of Baal, and persecuting the servant of the Lord. In order to attain her religious ends she sought to wield the secular and regal power of her weak husband.

For this reason Jezebel is used by the Spirit of God as the impersonation of a corrupt religious system, energized by Satan, pursuing its way with intense and persistent zeal, always persecuting or endeavouring to seduce the servants of God, and seeking to wield the secular power for its own ends. And just as Jezebel sought to gratify the whims and lusts of Ahab in order to bring him completely under her power, so the papal system for which Jezebel stands has sought throughout the centuries to gratify the lusts of kings and statesmen, as well as the mass of men, pandering to their avarice, vanity, and pride, in order to bring both States and individuals under its power. Just as the alliance of Ahab with this wicked woman wrought such trouble in Israel, so, too, the union of Church and State has wrought ruin in that which professes to be the Church of God on earth to-day (Rev. 2. 10-13).

It was the persecuting zeal of this terrible woman, that Elijah had now to meet. His courage failed before the threat of her vengeance, and he flees for his life. Passing through the land of Judah he came to Beersheba, in the extreme south, on the edge of the

wilderness. Hitherto he had moved at the word of the Lord, as indeed he could say of Mount Carmel, "I have done all these things at Thy word." On this journey, however, he was moved by no directing word from the Lord, but rather by a threatening word from a woman. For the moment Elijah had allowed the wicked and powerful Jezebel to come between himself and God. Thus it comes to pass that the man who had stood for God before the king, the false prophet and all Israel, now flees before the threat of a woman. Truly James may say he was a man of like passions with ourselves. In all this Elijah is not thinking of God, or the people of God, but simply of himself. God had led Elijah into the place of public testimony, but for the moment his faith quailed before the opposition that the place entailed. He abandons the path of faith and walks by sight. We read, "When *he* saw that, he arose, and went for his life." Hitherto Elijah had been sustained in the great dramas in which he had taken part, by faith's clear vision of the living God, but under this fresh trial his failing faith loses sight of the living God and he sees only a violent woman. In the presence of her murderous threat, the God that had led and preserved him, the meal that never wasted, the oil that never failed, the power of God that had raised the dead, that brought down the fire from heaven, and that sent the rain, all is in a moment forgotten, and the prophet can only see an enraged woman and the immediate prospect of a violent death. "And *when he* saw that, he arose, and went for his life." Peter in his day, "when he *saw* the wind boisterous, he was afraid," and began to sink. Walking by sight the greatest of the apostles sinks, and the greatest of prophets flees. Looking at things seen, the man of God is weaker than the man of the world. Only as we

walk by a faith that sees Him that is invisible, shall we endure amidst the increasing difficulties and the terrifying circumstances of the day in which we live.

“He went for *his life*.” It was not for his God, or for the people of God, or for the testimony of God—but for his life he went. Having only himself in view he fled as far as possible from the place of testimony. He leaves the land of promise, turns his back on the people of God, and flees to Beersheba.

Alas! in the presence of a trial, how quickly we, too, can forget all that the Lord has been for us in the past. The way He has led us, the grace that has preserved us, the heart that has loved us, the hand that has held us, the word that has directed us, all are forgotten in the presence of a trial that is so very real to sight and sense. We see the trial, we lose sight of God. Instead of standing before the living God we flee before some passing trial. We seek to escape the trial, rather than seek the grace of God to sustain in the trial, and to learn God’s mind through it.

Arrived at Beersheba, Elijah left his servant and went a day’s journey into the wilderness. In this solitary place he betakes himself to prayer. But how different this prayer from his former requests. Before, he had prayed for the glory of God and the blessing of the nation; now “he requested *for himself*.” And what a request! He cries out, “It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.” He has only himself before his eyes. His flight from Jezebel, and his prayer in the wilderness, are full of self. It is “his life” for which he fled, it is “himself” for whom he prays.

All this speaks of the intense despondency of the prophet. He had seen the magnificent display of the power of Jehovah on Mount Carmel, he had seen the people with their faces

bowed to the earth owning “the Lord, He is the God.” He had executed judgment on the prophets of Baal, he had seen the coming of the rain in answer to his prayer, and doubtless he had expected a great revival of the worship of Jehovah, and blessing to Israel, through his ministry. Apparently it had now all come to nothing. Elijah was not prepared for this. He had thought that he was better than his fathers, and that under his powerful ministry there would be a true and widespread turning to the Lord, but such was not the case. The years of famine, the destruction of the prophets of Baal, the rain from heaven, all appear to be in vain; so much in vain, indeed, that Elijah—the man that has stood for God—has to flee for his life. Poor Elijah, he could face the king, the prophets of Baal, and all Israel, but *he was not prepared to face the failure of his mission*. In the presence of this overwhelming defeat, crushed by the failure of all his hopes, he now only wishes to end his troubles by death. His supreme effort to recall the people to God had been in vain. There was nothing further to be done, his life was a failure. The happiest thing, therefore, would be to die. Thus might he find some rest from fruitless toil and hopeless conflict.

How good to turn from the servant to the perfect Master, and to see His infinite perfection shining out in the day of His rejection. After all His miracles of grace, His words of love, His acts of power, He is despised and rejected, called a gluttonous man and a winebibber, and counsel taken to kill Him. In that moment of utter rejection and the apparent failure of all His ministry, He turns to the Father and can say, “I thank thee, O Father . . . even so, Father: for so it seemed good in Thy sight.”

Elijah did not die, and never has died. God had another plan for His beloved servant. It was no part of that plan to let His servant pass from this world a disappointed man, under

a cloud of depression, dying in some lonely desert. His passage to heaven shall be very different. God's chariot is waiting God's due time to carry him to heaven with glory and honour. In the meantime he is the object of God's tender care. He giveth his beloved sleep; angels shall wait upon him; food shall be provided for him, and his thirst shall be quenched.

In the day of faith, the ravens can feed him, and the widow sustain him; in the day of his depression angels wait upon him and God Himself shall feed him. What a God we have to care for us. "His compassions fail not." "Though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies" (Lam. 3. 22, 32). And this was Elijah's experience; awakened by the angel "he looked and behold, there was a cake baken on the coals, and a cruise of water at his head." Moreover, Jehovah of Elijah's day is Jesus of the gospel day, and in like circumstances the wandering disciples may turn aside to fish all night and catch nothing, only to find in the morning the Lord of glory waiting on the needs of His failing servants with the fire of coals, and fish laid thereon, and bread, and a loving invitation to "come and dine."

Thus, too, it is with ourselves. Our faith may grow dim; we may be downcast by reason of the apparent failure of all our service, and in our moments of depression and disappointment we may lose heart and think bitter thoughts, pray unadvisedly, and even murmur at our hard lot, yet God's tender care never ceases; His mercies never fail. Well may we sing:

"O hope of every contrite heart,  
O joy of all the meek,  
To those who fall how kind Thou art!  
How good to those who seek."

Having refreshed His servant with sleep and food, the Lord gives him fresh directions. He learns that he is

on a journey, but, says the Lord, "*the journey is too great for thee.*" What a journey was Elijah's through this world. Cherith, Zarephath, Carmel, Horeb, mark the stages of his journey, and the chariot of fire is ready to end it in power and glory, but every stage was "too great" for Elijah. The power displayed, the courage demanded, the faith required, the opposition to be encountered, the privations to be endured—all were too great for a man of like passions with ourselves. If for one moment Elijah loses sight of the living God; if he fails to walk in daily dependence upon God, immediately he will find that he is no better than his fathers and that the journey is "too great" for him.

It is good for us, as Christians, when we see that our rest is not here. We, too, are on a journey that ends in glory, but a journey in which there are trials to meet, difficulties to overcome, testimony to be borne, and opposition to be faced. For ourselves, also, we may say the journey is "too great" and we are too small for the journey.

But if the journey was too great for Elijah, it was not too great for Elijah's God. In tender love God provides for the need of His servant; and "in the strength of that meat"—the meat that God had provided—he went on his journey of forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God.

With God all things are possible. As we view the greatness of the journey and our own littleness, we may well cry out, "Who is sufficient for these things?" But at once the answer comes, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." And so, if all the grace and power of the risen Christ are at our disposal we may well press on "**STRONG IN THE GRACE THAT IS IN CHRIST JESUS**" (2 Tim. 2. 1). 179

# DIVINATION—Ancient Spiritism.

**DEFINITION.**—The act of divining; the foretelling of future events, or the discovery of things secret or obscure by *alleged converse with supernatural powers* or skill in the interpretation of omens.

1. An abominable practice (1 Sam. 15. 23. marg.).
2. All who practised it, abominable (Deut. 18. 12).

Practised by—

3. Diviners (Deut. 18. 14).
4. Enchanters (Deut. 18. 10; Jer. 27. 9).
5. Witches (Exod. 22. 18; Deut. 18. 10).
6. Charmers (Deut. 18. 11).
7. Wizards (Deut. 18. 11; 1 Sam. 28. 3).
8. Consulters of familiar spirits (Deut. 18. 11).
9. Magicians (Gen. 41. 8; Dan. 4. 7).
10. Astrologers (Isa. 47. 13; Dan. 4. 7).
11. Sorcerers (Jer. 27. 9; Acts 13. 6, 8).
12. Necromancers (Deut. 18. 11).
13. Soothsayers (Isa. 2. 6; Dan. 2. 27).
14. False prophets (Jer. 14. 14; Ezek. 13. 3, 6).

Effected through—

15. Enchantments (Exod. vii. 11; Num. 24. 1).
16. Sorcery (Isa. 47. 12; Acts 8. 11).
17. Observing times (2 Kings 21. 6).
18. Observing heavenly bodies (Isa. 47. 13, marg.).
19. Inspecting the inside of beasts (Ezek. 21. 21).
20. The flight of arrows (Ezek. 21. 21, 22).
21. Cups (Gen. 44. 2, 5).
22. Rods (Hos. 4. 12).
23. Dreams (Jer. 29. 8; Zech. 10. 2).
24. Connected with idolatry (2 Chron. 33. 5, 6).
25. Books of, numerous and expensive (Acts 19. 19).

26. A lucrative employment (Num. 22. 7; Acts 16. 16).

Those who practised—

27. Regarded as wise men (Dan. 2. 12. 27).
28. Regarded with awe (Acts 8. 9, 11).
29. Consulted in difficulties (Dan. 2. 2; Dan. 4. 6, 7).
30. Used mysterious words and gestures (Isa. 8. 19).
31. A system of fraud (Ezek. 13. 6, 7; Jer. 29. 8).
32. Frustrated by God (Isa. 44. 25).
33. Could not injure the Lord's people (Num. 23. 23).

The law—

34. Forbade to the Israelites the practice of (Lev. 19. 26; Deut. 18. 10, 11).
35. Forbade seeking to (Lev. 19. 31; Deut. 18. 14).
36. Punished with death those who used (Exod. 22. 18; Lev. 20. 27).
37. Punished those who sought to (Lev. 20. 6).
38. The Jews prone to (2 Kings 17. 17; Isa. 2. 6).

Miracles through evil agents—

1. Performed through the power of the devil (2 Thess. 2. 9; Rev. 16. 14).

Wrought—

2. In support of false religions (Deut. 13. 1, 2).
3. By false Christs (Matt. 24. 24).
4. By false prophets (Matt. 24. 24; Rev. 19. 20).
5. A mark of the apostasy (2 Thess. 2, 3, 9; Rev. 13. 13).
6. Not to be regarded (Deut. 13. 3).
7. Deceive the ungodly (2 Thess. 2. 10-12; Rev. 13. 14; Rev. 19. 20).

Exemplified—

8. Magicians of Egypt (Exod. 7. 11, 22; Exod. 8. 7).
9. Witch of Endor (1 Sam. 28. 7-14).
10. Simon Magus (Acts 8. 9-11).

## THE MYSTERY OF THE GOSPEL. No. 7. (JAMES HOVD.)

## Ephesians 4.

**B**EFORE the day comes in which the whole universe shall be cleansed from the presence of sin, and a new heaven and a new earth created in which righteousness shall be made to dwell, the almighty power of the Lord, which to bring this about shall have to be expressed in judgment, is manifested through the gifts given by Him for the building up of His body. He gave to this end some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.

This is not the self-building up in love referred to in verse 16, but the Word of God ministered in the power of the Holy Ghost; first, by apostles and prophets who are in the foundation of the building, and whose authoritative communications we have in the Holy Scriptures; so that in this sense these continue throughout the dispensation, though the servants themselves have long passed away out of this scene. The evangelists by the proclamation of the gospel gather in those who are to be members of the body, and the shepherds and teachers build them up in the faith. The work of assimilation and the self-development of the body by means of the impulse derived from the glorified Head are of a different nature from the service rendered by the gifts.

But all this work is to continue until we all arrive at the unity of the faith and of the Son of God, at the full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fulness of the Christ; in order that we be no more babes, tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of that teaching which is in the sight of men, unprincipled cunning, with a view to systematized error; but holding the truth in love, we may grow up to Him in all things,

who is the Head, the Christ. The source of supply remains undiminished, the vital connection between the Head and the body continues undisturbed; and though, viewed from a human standpoint, there may seem to be hindrances to the development of the various members on account of the carnality and self-seeking of the saints, nevertheless in the end the body will be found to be all that it was intended to be at the beginning, for the failure of men cannot alter the purpose of God.

But it may be asked, How does the knowledge of this great mystery bear upon the practical lives of the saints down here in this world? The answer to this question can only be found where we find the truth of the mystery itself, and that is in the Holy Scriptures. We must not allow our own imaginings the slightest place in the consideration of such an important subject. They must be mercilessly nipped in the bud. We are here seeking after the things that belong to full growth, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world for our glory (1 Cor. 2.). We are here occupied with things the eye has not seen, nor the ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things that God has prepared for them that love Him, and which are only made known by the Spirit of God, and only by the spiritual are discerned. The ability in which the natural man prides himself is worthless here.

From Eph. 4. 17 till verse 21 of chapter 5., also in Col. 3. 1-17, we get instructions as to the way in which the true life of the body, which lies in the glorified Head, is to manifest itself in this world. The life derived from the first Adam is corrupt and unmendably evil, and whatever is pleasing to God we must learn in the life of Jesus down here on earth.

God has quickened us together with Christ, and that with the life that is in Himself, and we have to learn to distinguish between the characteristics of this life and those of the life of flesh. In the school of Christ we learn how to do this, and *Jesus* is the object lesson set before us that we are to imitate. But this involves for us the putting off of the old man, all that we were morally as of Adam, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and the putting on of the new man, which according to God is created in truthful righteousness and holiness. This is professedly done by all who have been baptized to Christ (Gal. 3. 27); but it is done in a much more real way when we learn that our old man has been crucified with Christ (Rom. 6. 6), and that we have our standing now in Christ risen (8. 1), and in Him are alive to God.

Lying also is to be put away; and it is not only that we are to cease to deceive, but the truth of God is to be the subject of our conversation when we find ourselves in company with one another. Nothing could be more horrible than one member of the body attempting to deceive the others, and no one could be guilty of such wickedness had he any right sense of the oneness of that spiritual organism. As begotten of God we are all of one family, possessing one life and nature, and that life and nature divine; but in earthly relationships we are not unaccustomed to see members of the one family at war with one another, and however grievous and sinful it may be, it prepares us for seeing the same thing in the family of God. But who ever saw the members of a man's body striving together in bitterness and wrath? If I deceive the members of the body I deceive myself, and if I quarrel with them I quarrel with myself; for though we be many members, the body is one, and we are all one body in Christ. It is the privilege of each member to look upon all the other members as himself. It is the way in which the Head views

the whole body, for no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but he nourishes and cherishes it, as Christ does the church. We should, therefore, take pattern from Him, and by means of whatever grace He may have given to us seek to nourish, cherish, build up, and encourage those who form part of this great mystery.

We are to be careful also not to grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom we have been sealed for the day of redemption, for if He be grieved, He has to occupy us with the evil that has grieved Him, and until we judge ourselves, and get back into our normal condition, that is, filled with the Spirit, we can make no spiritual progress, but are useless for the service of Christ, and have become a source of weakness to the whole body. We can only serve one another as we derive nourishment from the Head, and as the Spirit is the link between all the members, uniting them into one body, and also is the link between the whole body and the Head, our service is useless while that Holy Spirit is grieved. Therefore in order to be of any practical service to the saints, we require to be on our guard against the intrusion of the flesh, for if the flesh is allowed a place, the Spirit cannot be other than grieved.

Therefore we have the activities of the flesh pointed out. "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice." Where such things as these are allowed, and to a certain extent they are found everywhere amongst saints, how can the comfort of the Spirit be realized? The allowance of such things paralyzes all spiritual perceptions, the gravity of having given the flesh such a loose rein is not seen, and discord and division take the place of harmony and integration.

But these things are only pointed out to be abandoned, and another line of conduct altogether is indicated for us to pursue: "Be ye kind one to

another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." These are the things that make for peace, the things that are pleasing to God, and which never grieve His Holy Spirit. They are the things that would always be pursued by the saints of God, if the flesh were kept in the place of death, for they are the characteristics of the life with which the body is instinct.

We are to be imitators of God, because it is by His life we have been quickened out of death in sins. He has communicated His own life to us, for the life of flesh, the old Adam life, is corrupt, and in its nature enmity against God, and never can be anything else, therefore there was nothing for it but the judgment of the cross, and now we live in another life altogether; and only in that life are we in relationship with God, and therefore are we to be His imitators. But as this life

had its manifestation in Christ when on earth, for God is love, we are to keep our eye upon Him, and walk in love as He also loved us, and gave Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour. In fact, all our ways are to be regulated by that high standard of practical life which is set before us in the mystery. Husbands are to love their wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; and the wives are to be subject to their own husbands, as the church is subject to Christ. Seeing the mystery is entirely outside the whole earthly order of things, one might be prepared to find that earthly relationships would be left out of all the teaching connected with it. But this is not so. Instead of the revelation of this wondrous mystery setting aside those relationships, it does not in the least weaken or disturb them, but it gives a practical character to them, that is supremely beautiful.

## THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

### Law and Grace.

*To the Editor of SCRIPTURE TRUTH.*

DEAR BROTHER IN CHRIST. Having recently received through the post a series of controversial publications by an American author, dealing with such subjects as "The Kingdom of Heaven," "The Sermon on the Mount," "Law and Grace," it occurs to me that others of your readers may also have received them, and that therefore a few remarks on these subjects may not be out of place in your columns.

First, then, I would like to point out that where the word "law" occurs in our Authorised Version of the New Testament we have to draw a twofold distinction.

To begin with we must distinguish between "the law" and "law" without the definite article in the original Greek. If we possess the "New Translation" of the late Mr. Darby we can pretty easily do this, even though we are unable to handle the Greek text. "The law" is

specific, and indicates the law of Moses; whereas "law" is characteristic, and sets before us rather that principle or feature which characterized the law of Moses, viz., God formulating and codifying His righteous demands upon man, and then basing His attitude towards man upon man's attitude towards Him as revealed by his response thereto.

Then we have also to distinguish between both the above meanings and the use of the word in such a passage as Romans 8. 2. Here it bears the same sense as it does when we speak of the laws of the universe, or more specifically of the law of gravitation, and indicates some controlling force which operates with uniformity of action upon all under its power.

Bearing these things in mind; let us proceed to a few distinctions of a practical nature.

Adam was set in responsibility under law, though *the* law was not instituted

until 2500 years later. In his case there was but one prohibition, but his attitude towards that one prohibition regulated God's attitude towards him. For so long as he kept it he lived, when he broke it he died.

Consequent upon his fall, Adam and his posterity became subject to the dreadful tyranny of "the law of sin and death" of which Romans 8. 2 speaks. Yet for many centuries no further laws were given by God, and hence what characterized mankind was not law-breaking, but rather lawlessness. This was the great feature of the antediluvian age.

With the call of Israel out of Egypt the law was given through Moses to them. Henceforward there was a people possessing *the* law and, of course, "under law" as to the principle of their relations with God. The law of Moses only proved how thoroughly they were dominated by "the law of sin and death."

Meanwhile the Gentiles remained, up to Christ, openly dominated by the law of sin and death, though quite lawless as to their relations with God.

Now Christ having come, redemption having been accomplished, and the Spirit having been given, believers are not under *the* law, nor are they even "under law," as to the principle of their relationship with God. They are rather "under grace" (Rom. 6. 11), and "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" sets them free from "the law of sin and death." Thus they are kept "under law to Christ" or "legitimately subject to Christ" (1 Cor. 9. 21), and enabled to fulfil all the righteous requirements of the law (Rom. 8. 4)—not as thereby attaining or maintaining a position before God, but rather as the fruit of the grace that has set them already in the position of richest favour.

If these things are clearly grasped we shall have no great difficulty in settling various points which have been raised as to "the sermon on the mount" (Matt. 5.-7).

*Is the sermon on the mount law?* This is one question which is much agitated. What is the answer?

Clearly it is not the law of Moses, and yet in those chapters we hear the voice of the original Law-giver, setting

before us, as has well been said, "not a new code but a new edition of the old one," "clearing up His own intentions and disallowing the perversions of men." This is particularly marked in verses 17 to 48 of chap. 5. He announces Himself as the One come not to destroy the law, but to fulfil, or give the fulness of it. Hence the repeated words, "Ye have heard that it was said . . . But I say unto you . . ." Note verses 20, 22, 26, 28, 32, 34, 39, 41 of chap. 5., and verses 2, 5, 16, 25, and 29 of chap. 6.

But if these chapters are not *the* law, are they *law*? In other words, did our Lord base His teaching in them on grace previously known and received which had established His disciples in their relationships with God; or did He lay down these further and more spiritual instructions as being themselves, if kept, the basis of such a relationship? Were they based—in a word—upon the principle of "do and live" which is law, or "live and do," which is grace?

Other Scriptures will help us here. Your readers will remember that wonderful statement in John 1. 17. "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." This prepares us for what we find in Matt. 5. 7. A definite strain of grace runs through those chapters. Under the Lord's teaching, thus early in His ministry, God appears to the disciples in a new light as "your Father which is in heaven." Pretty clearly there is nothing legal about such a conception as that.

And yet we have equally to remember Gal. 4. 4, 5, which tells us that "God sent forth His Son . . . made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." Here the striking fact meets us that though our Lord Jesus came into the world "full of grace," yet He came "under the law," though indeed His object in so coming was to accomplish redemption from law and bring His saints into a position where they might be able to rejoice in the grace He brought.

Allow me to propound a question! When did our blessed Lord Himself cease to be under the law? He came into this world under it; did He, for instance, cease to be under it when He left the seclusion of Nazareth and launched

forth in public ministry? Or when? The answer is, He ceased to be under it when He redeemed His people from under it by DYING on the cross under its curse (Gal. 3. 13). Hence the ground on which Paul was "dead to the law" was simply this, "I am crucified with Christ" (Gal. 2. 19, 20).

Your readers must also bear in mind the drift of the great argument of Heb. 9. and 10. Let them particularly consider verses 11-14 of chap. 9., and verses 1, 2, 9-17 of chap. 10. Nothing can be plainer than that such a great fundamental blessing of grace as a conscience purged "from dead works to serve the living God" or, "no more conscience of sins," consequent upon being "once purged," could only be known and enjoyed AFTER the death and resurrection of Christ.

The sermon on the mount is Matthew's record of the early teachings of the Son of God come full of grace and truth, and yet come under the law. As yet redemption is not accomplished, the blood that purges the conscience and sets the soul in the liberty of grace is not shed. There is no proper release from law and its claims until He DIES, and the whole ministry of our Lord was transitional and progressive up to that point. The sermon on the mount then is *law*, but in it the clouds of Sinai are wearing thin and we discern the glow of the sun of grace behind them. With His death and resurrection the clouds rolled away and the sun shone forth in its strength.

Another much-discussed question is the following: *To whom is the sermon on the mount addressed?* or to use the words of another, "Are the commandments found in the sermon on the mount the law which God has given to His own children in this dispensation, or are they the law of a yet future kingdom?"

Taking the question in its latter form and giving a matter-of-fact answer, we have to reply, "They are neither one nor the other," for, answering the question, as first stated, we can only reply—It was addressed to *the disciples* (see chap. 5. 1, 2). Subsequently some of these disciples became apostles, and later still, when the Lord had died, risen, and ascended, these disciples became the nucleus of the church of which Matthew 16. 18 speaks, and they

were definitely incorporated as such by the baptism of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. But at the time when the Lord addressed to them the sermon on the mount they were not in the Church position, nor had the Lord even announced His intention of building His Church. The first intimation of this was as recorded in chap. 16.

A contrast has been drawn between Matthew 5. 7. and John 11.-16., and very justly so. The former gives us a set discourse of the Lord to His disciples in the early days of His ministry, the latter a set discourse to the same just at the close of it. The contrast is most marked. The former discourse in all its parts dwells on what the disciples were to be for God; the latter on what the whole Godhead—Father, Son, and Spirit—would be for them; and the obedience to the Lord's commands and the keeping of His words that is enjoined, is clearly based upon the revelation then made of the disciples' new position before the Father and their relation to Christ as branches sharing the life and nature of the vine.

Your readers will indeed do well to carefully and prayerfully ponder these two passages, as an appreciation of the true character of the sermon in the upper chamber and afterwards will greatly help in a correct appreciation of the character of the sermon on the mount. It will not be difficult to see that *law* is the prevailing feature of the one in the light of the *grace* which is the chief feature of the other—always remembering that law sets before us what we should be for God and grace what God is for us.

In pondering the sermon of the upper chamber, let chaps. 13. and 17. be read. The one gives the preface and sets the scenes for the discourse, the other gives its grand conclusion in the great "High-priestly" prayer of our Lord. It is in these two chapters that we find the standpoint from which the Lord spoke. The cross was actually a few hours ahead of Him, but He spoke as one in spirit beyond it, treating it as something already accomplished (see 13. 3, 31, 32; 17. 1, 4, 11). It is this that accounts for the wonderful nature of the discourse, and for the fact that He now spoke of things of which He had *not* spoken at

the beginning of His ministry (see chap. 16. 4).

To sum up: The sermon on the mount was addressed to the disciples in their then character as a godly "remnant" or "seed" in the midst of Israel. They were, in the parabolic language of John 10., "His own sheep," who recognized the Shepherd when at last He entered the Jewish fold. The Shepherd did indeed purpose to die out of the Jewish fold and thereby make a way of exit for them, but that great event was not yet.

I hasten to conclude, but before doing so I would again beg your readers to carefully weigh the closing part of John 16. 4, because the question which underlies all these discussions is simply this: *Have the synoptic Gospels a transitional character?* John's gospel is quite distinct, as they know, and starts with Christ's rejection at the very outset (chap. 1. 5, 10, 11); but it supplies us with this important word of our Lord in which He claims a progressive character as stamping His ministry. To this verse we may add verses 25 and 26 of chap. 14., and verses 12 and 13 of chap. 16., wherein He promised His disciples further teaching beyond anything we have in the Gospels. These promises were fulfilled in the Spirit's teaching in the Epistles, when the disciples had reached the full and proper Christian state. How striking the contrast between the "*these things*" of the Lord's earthly teachings and the "*all things*" of the Comforter's teaching—then future. Each of the other three Gospels has a clearly-marked transitional character, and the transition from a dispensational standpoint is most distinct in Matthew. In that Gospel chap. 12. recounts His definite rejection by the leaders; and their blasphemy against the Holy Ghost—the unpardonable sin. It also recounts the fact that He commenced to recall the testimony to Himself as the Christ in the midst of Israel. He made this more definite in chap. 16. 20. He denounced the unbelieving mass of the people, and symbolically, at the end of the chapter, broke all the old links with them.

In chapter 13. He commenced His parable teaching and indicated the new form under which the kingdom of heaven should be established during the period of His rejection. Enough had been said

in the Old Testament to show that the kingdom so long promised should have its centre of authority and direction in the heavens; but these "mysteries of the kingdom of heaven" (verse 11) which are unfolded in the parables are things which had been "kept secret from the foundation of the world" (verse 35). Indeed in keeping with these *new* revelations is this *new* meaning connected with the kingdom (verse 11); a *new* method of divine working, viz., not seeking fruit from the existing vineyard but sowing seed to produce fruit (verses 3-8); and a *new* method of teaching, viz., by parables (verse 10). Hence the scribe instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, brings forth out of his treasure "things new and old" (verse 52).

The first parable of the chapter, then, sets forth that Christ's rejection as Messiah involved a change of dispensation, and the introduction of a period in which man's probation being over God would Himself work to produce the fruit He desired. The remaining six parables, which are similitudes of the kingdom, give us first what the kingdom is like viewed in its external system as seen by men (verses 24-43), and then what it is like in its internal condition as known only to faith (verses 44-50). Thus the kingdom of heaven is set before us in two ways, one in which it embraces all profession of Christ, the other in which it only embraces what is really and vitally the fruit of God's work.

Later chapters of the Gospel give us further similitudes of the kingdom of heaven, as well as the first intimation of the building of that which the Lord calls "my Church" in chapter 16. The transitional period covered by the gospels being over, that Church is seen formally inaugurated in Acts 2., and the truth concerning it fully developed in the epistles.

This is a very brief survey of these important matters, but it may serve to awaken interest, and increase among your readers the number of those "scribes" who are "instructed unto the kingdom of heaven."

Affectionately your brother in Christ,

F. B. HOLE.

## THE MANDATE IN JERUSALEM.

Our readers who are interested in the Jewish nation because they are beloved for the father's sake, and are the subject of so large a portion of the prophetic Scriptures, will read with interest the following account of the reception of the news from the San Remo Council that the British should be the mandatory power to carry out the Balfour Declaration.

We know, however, that the factions that divide them will not be obliterated in one great joy, nor the sorrows that have overwhelmed them cease until the once nail-torn feet of their long-rejected Messiah stand upon the Mount of Olives. Until then they will be still oppressed, as saith the Scriptures.

*"Therefore My people shall know My Name: therefore they shall know in that day that I am He that doth speak: behold, it is I. How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of Him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth! Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion" (Isa. 52. 6, 7, 8).*

THE following is from the Jerusalem Hebrew daily, *Haaretz* (*The Land*):—

The day began with a fast. The Rabbis of Jerusalem, Ashkenasic, and Sephardic, had decreed a day of fasting for "The destruction of the Temple, and the burning of the scrolls and the desecration of the name of God." Jews rose in the morning depressed and heart-broken. Many shops were closed, the synagogues were filled with worshippers. They read prayers, sang psalms, and waited for the sermons of the Rabbis which were to be given at three o'clock.

We knew that our defenders had returned from mid-way, they had not gone down to Egypt, but instead they went up to Acre. Why? To serve their sentence. We were aware that many men, charged with murder, were

set free, because their guilt was not established, or because they had absconded, or had not appeared at all, as they were out on parole; we were aware that a young Jew, Malcha, was sentenced to fifteen years' penal servitude because he did appear before the Court and his guilt was proven; we heard throughout the day the evidence of Arabs before the Court of Inquiry, the evidence of the standard-bearer on the day of the pogroms, the evidence of an Arab policeman, the evidence of an Arab director of a school, the evidence of Reuter's Agent.

Who had a thought for San Remo on that day? Who could think, on that day of fasting and mourning, of help coming from a distant sphere?

Bloody battles were raging throughout the country. Our Upper Galilee was in danger, and war with the Bedouins was now extending to Lower Galilee. A colonist of Milhaniah was killed—our skies were drawn with red stripes, our hearts were quivering with fear and uncertainty. And at two o'clock a telegram bearing a happy message was received by the Zionist Commission. At three o'clock Mr. Ussishkin arrived at the Synagogue of Yehuda Mahassid to announce to Jerusalem that the redemption of Israel was at hand. But even before Mr. Ussishkin arrived at the synagogue the news had spread throughout the city. In an hour's time all sorrow and sadness disappeared, all came back to life, every eye glistened, every gloomy face brightened, and the people swarmed after Mr. Ussishkin to the "Hurva."

The "Hurva" was chosen as the place from which the message was to be announced. In the "Hurva" a thirsty public was waiting, people who had fasted all day, old, tired, exhausted, praying, reading, "Veyahel." Suddenly a new public stormed the "Hurva," the synagogue was filled with Jerusalem youth, Zionists, new Jews from among

all parties. As the Rabbi was finishing his sermon, the party entered led by Ussishkin.

"I am a bearer of an historic message to-day, brothers, children of my people. Rabbi Kook spoke to you of the Diaspora, our sufferings and distress, of all you have borne and seen during the last days—and I am bringing you news of our redemption of the future, of new life and great hopes, and our deep faith which to-day has been vindicated."

The worshippers, old and young, rose and read psalms, sang Halleljah, Rabbi Kook chanting "You have turned my day of mourning into a feast." Then a quiver passed through the congregation, a moment's fearful silence ensued, then the crowd braced up, orthodox and freethinkers alike, stood motionless and sang "Hativah."

From the Ashkenasic synagogue "Hahurva" they proceeded to the Separdic Rabbi Yohanan Ben Zacai Synagogue, and as the crowd arrived there the sounding of the Shofar was heard, and the intonations of the worshippers.

The new crowd entered the synagogue and Ussishkin stepped on the platform: "The sounding of the shofar over our misery is silenced; together with you, let the shofar of the Messaiah, of the near redemption be sounded. The Galuth has dispersed us, has divided us into families—Ashkenasic, Sephardic, Yemenites, etc. From henceforth, with the beginning of the new epoch in our life, we shall again become one united, working, living people."

Unlimited exultation drew out tears of joy. The procession then wended its way to the Wailing Wall, to the mute stones, barren for two thousand years. . . . The people marched forward without singing or chanting, but maintained a solemn silence. Through those very paths which, a short time ago, were closed to us, the procession continued on those very stones which, a few weeks previously, had been stained with our blood. It seemed as if we could still see the red stains, that we could still hear in the air the sighing of the wounded who had rolled down those steep steps. At the wall we stood before the ancient remnant of our former glory, and we were struck dumb. Absolute silence reigned. Jews were praying and chanting. We also stood and prayed. Dr. Burgrachov was the reader—"May our eyes behold Your return to Zion." The services were over. One of the worshippers remembered in his "Elmale Rahamin," the victims of the pogroms, and also the soul of Dr. Herzl. While the eyes were still wet with tears, "Hatikvah" broke the silence at the Wailing Wall. We stood there excited, and the stones seemed to look at us as if asking in bewilderment, Is this the hour of miracles?

When will they proclaim a fast for the rejection of their Messiah? When Zechariah 4. 10, 13. 6, shall be fulfilled. Then, and not till then, will they be able truly to chant in joyful harmony "You have turned my day of mourning into a feast."

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

### THE SINS OF GOD'S PEOPLE IN OLD TESTAMENT TIMES.

A CORRESPONDENT is much disturbed because of the grave sins of such men as David; he cannot understand how such a man could be called a man after God's own heart; and is unable to give any answer to scoffers who cite these cases to discredit the Bible and the God of it.

It is not our business to defend David or to make little of his great sins, but this we would point out, that while he sinned more terribly than any other whom God had blessed in Old Testament days, his repentance was correspondingly great. Of this, Psalm 51. is witness. David was a great sinner, but his

attempts to cloak his sin ceased when once he discovered that God's eye searched him, then he showed, as the enormity of his guilt forced itself upon him, the broken and the contrite heart which in God's sight is of great price. And who that has passed through the bitter but wholesome experience of learning the evil that lurks in his own heart has not thanked God for Ps. 51. ? How perfectly it expresses the feelings of one who, appalled at his own evil, realizes that his only hope is in the mercy of God. Thus the outpouring of David's deep repentance has become the cry of every broken and contrite heart since his day.

Put this Psalm alongside the 22nd, read them together, see in the latter the path of deepest suffering and woe that the sinless One passed through, that great sinners such as David was—and such as everyone confesses himself to be who has felt the searching eye of God upon him—might tread the path of repentance, and discover in God's holy presence that where sin abounded grace much more abounds, and that God has found in the blood of that thrice holy Sacrifice the means by which He can make the greatest of sinners whiter than snow in His sight.

But though Nathan, as God's messenger, said to David when he confessed his sin; "The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die." Let none suppose that God thought little of his sin or passed it by lightly. The enemies of the Lord blasphemed His name, and still do so because of it. The evil in the lives of God's people is not less evil in His eyes than in the lives of others. Hear what the prophet of the Lord said to him: "Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in His sight? Thou hast killed

Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. Now, therefore, the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised Me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife" (2 Sam. 12. 9, 10). "God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6. 7). And David reaped a terrible harvest in his own family as a result of this sowing to the flesh; the sword never departed from his house. Though the grace of God pardoned his great sin, yet the holy government of God had its own just way with him to the end of his days, and he had to feel the smart of the chastisement of the Lord.

What a book the Bible is. Human biographers exaggerate the virtues and minimize the vices of their heroes, but not so God's book. The lives of those He takes in hand are written according to truth, all is laid bare with an absolute impartiality for the learning of those who were to come afterwards. If those whom these things distress would read them from this standpoint, they would learn the solemn lessons: that no reliance can be placed upon the evil flesh which is within us all; that our only safety from falling, lies in the One who is able to keep us from it (Jude 24.); that while God in His exceeding mercy can forgive the sins of deepest dye, yet His ways of government are uncompromising, and He specially chastises those who are His own sons (Heb. 12. 5-11). As to David being a man after God's own heart, he was this characteristically, the whole bent of his life was after God's will and for the glory of His great name. It was when he forgot his life's purpose and the high calling of God that he fell so low.

## THE TEMPTATION OF THE LORD IN THE WILDERNESS.

THE question reaches us: If there was no possibility of the Lord's yielding to the temptations of the devil in the wilderness, of what value was His triumph, and wherein lay the temptation?

Our questioner views temptation from one standpoint only—and we find that the thoughts that he expresses are very prevalent—that is, in the way in which

James speaks of it in the 1st chapter of his epistle, verses 13-15: "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is

finished, bringeth forth death." The Lord Jesus could not have been tempted in this sense, for there was no sin in Him. But temptation has another meaning in Scripture, namely, testing; and in this sense of it the Lord was tempted to the uttermost. It was necessary that He should be tested before He could go forth into public ministry in which He would have to deliver those who were oppressed of the devil. David's strength and purpose were tested by the lion and the bear behind the scenes, before the tried conclusions with Goliath before the eyes of all Israel. So the Lord alone before the eyes of His Father and the holy angels withstood the devil, "bound the strong man," and consequently was able to "spoil his goods." He proved Himself to be stronger than the devil. Let it not be supposed that he gained this victory in the might of His divine personality. He gained it as a man—a man entirely dependent upon and obedient to God. It has been said that He never used His divine power for His own relief, and this was true in regard to the temptation. It was the Man, Jesus Christ, who was tested and triumphed. Then consider the reality of the temptation. Satan came upon the Lord after His forty days' fast, when, as the Scripture says, He was "hungred." The temptation was, "Relieve your hunger." It was a question of relief or continued suffering, and the greater part of the temptations that come to men are on that line. To yield means relief from immediate pressure or suffering, and self-gratification; to resist the temptation means still to suffer. The Lord stood firm. All His directions came from His Father, and He would not act for His own relief

apart from direction from Him. He was altogether and always obedient. In His victory the Lord used no weapons that we cannot use. "It is written," was all His defence; and by His complete dependence upon God and obedience to Him He marked out the path that we may also tread.

Then suffering came upon Him from another standpoint. He loved righteousness and hated iniquity, and Satan undertook to urge Him to take up a course of iniquity for His own personal relief and aggrandisement, and the very presentation of such a course must have caused intense suffering to His righteous and holy feelings.

Our correspondent concludes that the offer of all the kingdoms of the world could have had no attraction to Him, since being God all belonged to Him. But again the temptation is viewed from the wrong standpoint. The Lord was not tried as the One to whom all belonged, but as the poor man who had nothing. "He was rich, yet for your sakes became poor." He made Himself of no reputation. He was there to claim and take nothing except what His Father gave to Him. It was not the Father's time to give Him the kingdoms of the world. He had first to tread the rough road that led only to the cross, and Satan stepped in and offered the kingdoms and the glory without the suffering. The Lord would not take them from Satan. He would have nothing except from God's hand, and in this His great triumph lay. Satan was foiled because he met a Man to whom the will of God was good and perfect and acceptable, who sought no glory for Himself, but delighted in glorifying the One who sent Him.

## COULD ADAM HAVE RESISTED THE DEVIL?

THIS question is also raised in connection with the foregoing, but again the question is viewed from the wrong standpoint. We refuse to admit that Adam was an imperfect creation, made to be the toy and puppet of the devil. He was made in the image and likeness of God. "Lo, this have I found, that God hath made man upright; they have sought out many inventions" (Eccles. 7. 29). And God was his resource. God did not put him in any place of responsibility that He was not able to

maintain him in, and when tempted, had he said, "Yea, God hath said, and I will obey His Word"; if he had turned to God for direction and acted in dependence upon Him, Satan would have failed. But he opened the door deliberately, and "by one man sin entered the world, and death by sin." God according to His foreknowledge has made this turn out to the fulfilment of His own eternal purposes, and here faith alone can help us; we walk by faith, not by sight.

## STUDIES IN PREACHING. No. 6.

THE lesson we learn from Acts 5. 12-28 is that no hatred or force of men could stand in the way of the Gospel of God when His servants were walking in the truth and in the fear of God. It is not the enemy without, but failure within, that is the cause of the feebleness of the testimony to the grace of God and the glory of the risen Christ in these last times. This we do well to own, for only in the confession of the truth is there any measure of recovery.

The cultured rationalists of that day with the high priest at their head might treat the servants of the Lord as common felons, but their contempt of them received a rude shock when they discovered that the angel of the Lord had a key that could open the prison doors, and that these lowly fishermen were not afraid of their threatenings.

"GO, STAND AND SPEAK TO THE PEOPLE ALL THE WORDS OF THIS LIFE." This was the command, and still is; the failure of the servants of the Lord down the centuries has not changed this. The people still need "the words of this life," and they need all the words of it. It is only by the complete Gospel concerning the risen Saviour that men can be turned to repentance and to the knowledge of the truth. Who can tell "the words of this life" to them? Only those surely who know it, and they must be careful to speak it as they find it. "You make no concession to modern thought," was said to me the other day. No, these servants of Christ did not in their day; they had their message to deliver, and it was a message of life; they had themselves proved its power and blessing, that was enough for them. God has sent no other message to men, no other is needed. We must not change it, for men have not changed since then; sin and death and Satan's power are just the same, and God is the same, and no other name than the name

of Jesus has been found by which men can be saved. Modern thought in all ages has been against the truth of God; the wisdom of this world never yet led a man to God, and until a man is brought to God he is without light and hope, and it is God alone who can meet the deep questions that arise in the hearts and consciences of men, and He does this by "the words of this life," the Gospel of the glory of Christ. If we would serve God and bless men we must stick to that.

The rulers felt that a crisis had been reached and this preaching must be stopped at all costs; what they did not understand was that their quarrel was not with these unlearned fishermen, but with God; and Christ was the test; and not Christ only but His blood also, which they had wickedly shed. Would that blood be upon them to their everlasting condemnation, or for the cleansing of their awful guilt? Peter and the apostles gave their last united testimony to these leaders ere they finally and irrevocably sealed their doom by the stoning of Stephen. While they fearlessly pressed home their guilt as on former occasions, for only thus can the conscience and heart be prepared for the Gospel, yet what wonderful grace there was in their testimony. God had raised up Jesus to be a Leader and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and the forgiveness of sins. This Leader and Saviour is given for all men, and apart from Him all, like sheep, will go astray and be for ever lost; but He leads in the paths of righteousness on to the house of the Lord.

Most men seek leaders who will lead them out of bondage into liberty, but it is the bondage of sin that they are in and only Jesus can deliver them from that, and they must be led to God before they can enjoy true freedom. This was the apostle's message and it is ours also.

## EDITORIAL NOTES.

## THE NEED OF THIS DAY.

WE give an extract from the letter of a valued contributor to these pages. "Truly things everywhere are spiritually weak. The reason of it is lack of heart-occupation with Christ. We are occupied with the work of the Lord more than with Himself. It has been so in the failure of all dispensations. There never was a time in history when men were more energetic in a religious way than when our Lord was here, and yet it was the most energetic that led in His rejection."

These words are worthy of the consideration of all who are exercised about the state of things in the assemblies to-day. To the minds of many *activity means power, and is the one sign of a healthy condition of things spiritually; but it may be the evidence, if not the cause of weakness and failure.*

Now while we believe that none who are right with the Lord will be idle, yet we remember that the activities of Martha (Luke 10.) did not command the Lord's commendation, and her manner and spirit only proved that she was out of communion with Him.

We long to see the work of the Lord prosper; it is not right that any labourer should stand idle in the market place, but if there is lacking what our friend describes as "heart-occupation with Christ," all labour must lose its beauty and fragrance in His estimation. This comes out in the Lord's address to the church at Ephesus. They had left their first love. That is, heart-occupation with Him had ceased, He was no longer—

"The object bright and fair  
That filled and satisfied the heart."

Consequently, while He speaks of their works, and labour, and patience, and zeal for the truth, the divine spring of all is wanting. Their activities are not described as works of FAITH, labours of LOVE, and patience of HOPE, as were the activities of the

young assembly at Thessalonica. These Christian graces were missing under His eye because that which only could produce them was missing.

Let us exercise ourselves as to this. And if there is a revival of this we shall have no need to deplore lack of power, for we shall be in living contact with the One in whom is all power, and our strength or weakness will matter nothing at all. "Thou hast a *little strength,*" said the Lord to the assembly at Philadelphia. Yes, but He was the One who opened, and no man could shut. He stood for them in all His invincibility, thence their witness for Him had an eternal value. And though they might be despised by those who boasted in their activities, and organization, and wealth—loving His word and name, they were producing that which will stand the test of the fire, and abide for His praise and their joy.

We need to learn the lesson that true power lies in devotion to Christ, to His name and word. This is better and more effectual than great activity. There was great activity in the ranks of Israel on the field of Elah, a great show of valour and determination to overthrow the enemies of the Lord, but when Goliath of Gath appeared the chief thought in every man's mind was to save his own skin. And all the apparent power and activity went for nothing. But David appeared, a weak stripling, with no armour buckled upon his undeveloped frame, and no flashing sword in his youthful hand—just a sling and a stone and THE NAME OF THE LORD. Weakness that made the laugh of the giant ring out scornfully! Weakness that must have filled the ranks of Israel with dismay! This weakness in the lad whose heart was devoted to the Lord, and who stood forth in and for the name of the Lord, proved to be the power of the Lord. And as it was then, so will it be now.

If heart-occupation with Christ is our joy, we need fear nothing except those things that will turn us from Him. Activity in religious things can only injure us and all amongst whom we labour apart from this. But if there is this there will be no lack of activity, for the love of Christ will constrain us. The man who knew Christ in glory the best, loved Him the most, and He tells us that he laboured more than all others.

It was heart-occupation with Christ that brought Mary to His sacred feet to break her alabaster box of ointment there, and pour out its precious contents in adoring worship upon Him. It was heart-occupation with Christ that made John lean upon His bosom at the supper table and forget himself henceforward except as "the disciple whom Jesus loved." It was heart-occupation with Christ that made Paul cry: "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ" (Phil. 3. 7, 8). It is heart-occupation with Christ that makes the assembly sing: "To Him that loves us, and hath 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" (Rev. 1. 5, 6, N.T.). And it is heart-occupation with Christ that leads to the cry which all but closes the Book. "Amen, even so, come, Lord Jesus."

This that is above all things desirable is described in John 1. 14. "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth." *That was His life on earth.* In John 6. 56, 57: "He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent Me and I live by the Father; so he that eateth Me shall live by Me." *That is His death.* And in 2 Cor. 3. 18: "But we all, looking on the glory of the Lord with unveiled face, are transformed according to the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit." *That is His present exaltation and glory.*

Heart-occupation with Him is the need, and so much more as the day of His coming approaches. It is the spring of worship and all true service and helpfulness; and to produce it we may count upon the unwearied activities of the Spirit, for His mission as the Comforter is to take of the things of Christ and show them to us.

## IS THE LORD'S HAND SHORTENED?

(J. WILSON SMITH.)

THE crisis in Num. 11. is striking:—

1. The people complained at the very moment of conscious divine leadership, of the peaceful return of the Lord to the many thousands of Israel. They had no cause of complaint.

2. The mixed multitude fell a-lusting like a pack of untrained mongrels, who make no attempt to keep their bodies under, nor bring them into subjection.

3. Moses, in the day of great

adversity, utterly broke down, and prayed God to kill him out of hand, adding, "Shall the flocks and herds be slain for them, or all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them (a thing impossible) to suffice them?"

4. But (and here is the magnificence of grace), the Lord said to Moses: "Is the Lord's hand waxed short?" Blessed hand!

5. Then a miracle of food, and quails covering the camp!

And Israel's God is ours!

# TRIED GOLD.

(T. OLIVER.)

IN the refining process for gold, the impure metal is heated with lead and the resultant alloy is then heated in a stream of air on a bone ash hearth. The lead is oxidized to litharge which is partly blown from the surface and partly absorbed by the bone ash. If silver be present, silver and gold alloy remains; these are separated by boiling with acid, the silver is dissolved leaving the gold intact.

In writing the following well-known passage in his epistle, the Apostle Peter evidently had the first part of the above process in mind. "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire" (1 Peter i. 7).

The acid treatment was unknown to the ancients, and thus their gold was usually adulterated with silver. Since the trial of faith from its inception is compared with the purifying and testing of gold by fire, there is by analogy with the above process something in the present-day conditions of life which corresponds to the modern acid treatment of impure gold.

In the process of testing, lead may be taken as representing that part of us which murmurs. We are frequently similar to the children of Israel under test in the wilderness. They murmured and loathed the manna. But in testing us it is God's desire that we should be purified from lead-like re-pining.

The silver may be taken as representing the patient resignation which may take possession of us in trial, while the gold may correspond to the condition in which we reach the top note of praise as Habakkuk did when he pictured the fig tree, the vine, the olives and the fields in general failing, the flocks and the herds being cut off, yet in these conditions he would rejoice in the Lord.

Visitors wishing to condole with such lose their speech and stay to learn the secret of the Lord. These golden ones

do not ask for comforters but for sharers of their joy.

In the Apostle's vocabulary, "Precious" is a favourite attribute of various things, viz., Faith, the trial of faith, the Blood, the promises, the Living Stone, the Corner Stone, are all styled precious, while to those who believe "*HE* is precious." The apostle contrasts indestructible faith and perishable gold and emphasizes three points about the former. Its reality, its testing, and its preciousness. It is the only kind of wealth which cannot be lost by its possessor. The result of tried faith is immune from "moth and rust" (symbols of animate and inanimate natural processes). Theft and accident cannot deprive us of such lasting wealth. But the display of the Christian's real wealth is not evident at present, and hence many are found striving for what the worldling fights and toils. Men are fond of quoting Omar Khayyam, the Persian philosopher, but the following lines in his Rubaiyat are little heeded though oft repeated:—

"The worldly hope men set their hearts upon,  
Turns ashes—or it prospers, and anon  
Like snow upon the desert's dusty face,  
Lighting a little hour or two—is gone."

How different to this worldly hope is the *lively hope* of which the Apostle speaks, which causes him exultantly to cry: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Peter i. 3, 4). The Scripture tells us that the infallible stock-taking of the Christians' spiritual substance will take place at the "appearing" or "unveiling" of Jesus Christ. Praise, honour and glory will be rightly apportioned then by a Judge who is unerring to those who, refusing the worldly hope, have held by faith to the lively hope, and come through every trial, kept by the power of God.

# THE LOVE OF CHRIST WHICH PASSETH KNOWLEDGE.

(HAMILTON SMITH.)

ITS BREADTH. John II. 1-6.

THE sisters at Bethany were in great sorrow, and in their sorrow they did the right thing. They turned to the right person. They turned to the Lord, and they brought their sorrow before Him in a very beautiful way. In the whole of Scripture there is not a more perfect example of how to spread our trials before the Lord. Mary and Martha did not plead the love of Lazarus to the Lord, however real that might have been. They do not plead their own love to the Lord, but they plead the Lord's love to Lazarus, "He whom Thou lovest is sick." They do not dictate to the Lord. They do not suggest that the Lord should do anything. They do not ask Him to come and touch the sick one. No. They just spread the matter before the Lord, and say, "Lord, he whom Thou lovest is sick." I am not suggesting that when we pray for those whom we love that we should not ask for definite things. That must be according to the individual's faith. All I say is that their faith rose to such an extent that they could spread their sorrow out before the Lord, and leave it.

The Lord abode still in the same place for two days. Human love would have rushed off at once. Human prudence would never have gone at all, because the disciples said, "The Jews sought to stone Thee, and goest Thou thither again?" Divine love takes another way. Divine love tarries two days. I draw your attention to the 5th verse, lest we should think it was indifference that made the Lord tarry two days. "Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." That statement is not needed for the sense of the story; the story would have read perfectly well without it, but it comes in to show us that behind all the Lord was doing was perfect love. There is a great lesson

in that for us, in all our sorrows and trials. Appearances at times may be against us; it may seem as though the Lord had forgotten us; it is not so, love is behind all that the Lord is doing.

If any of us had written this verse, we should probably have said, "Now Jesus loved Mary, and her sister, and Lazarus," having in our minds the fact that in Luke 10 the Lord approved Mary more than Martha. The Holy Spirit has put it otherwise. Mary's name is not mentioned. Now there I see an example of the breadth of the Lord's love. It takes in all His saints, from the most failing and feeble to the most devoted. The Lord Jesus may approve of one saint more than another, but we may truly say He does not love one saint more than another. His love is alike for all, but his approval may be far greater in the case of one than another.

I might just turn aside to say a word or two about the way the Lord's love takes to comfort sorrowing hearts. We see here how the Lord comforted these sorrowing sisters. He walked with them; He talked with them; and He wept with them in their sorrow. Mary, every time we read of her, is at the feet of the Lord. In Luke 10. she is at His feet as the learner; in John 11. she is at His feet as a mourner; in John 12. she is at His feet as a worshipper. The fact that she had been at His feet as a learner enabled her to sit still and wait for the Lord in her sorrow. In the days before the sorrow Martha was restless; in the days when trial came she was still restless. We read that as soon as she heard of Jesus she went to meet Him, but Mary sat still in the house. The Lord Jesus wept with them in their sorrow. Martha and Mary were weeping for the loss of their brother. But the Lord Jesus did not weep for Lazarus; He wept for the living. They wept in

sorrow ; He wept in sympathy. It is very beautiful to see that the Lord Jesus comforts us in that way in our sorrows. He sheds His tears to dry ours, and breaks His heart to heal our broken hearts. That is the way He sympathizes with His people. The sympathy of the Lord is very real, very sweet and precious. It may be expressed to a large extent through His people. If we draw near to one another in our sorrows, it is really an expression of the sympathy of the heart of Christ coming out in His people. Apart from that remember His heart is the same to-day as it was when He was down here. He knows how to sympathize with, and succour His people in their sorrows to-day, for He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

#### ITS LENGTH. John 13.

Here is given another dimension of the Lord's love. "Now before the feast of the passover, Jesus . . . having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them till the end." This is the length of His love. It is a love that goes on right through time, right on to the end, into eternity. He does not love His people only until they fail. Peter was going to break down and deny the Lord. The Lord did not love Peter only until Peter denied Him. He loved Peter right on to the end. In spite of all our failure, and breakdown, and weakness, and all that we have to mourn, we know that we can count upon the Lord's love, which will never fail. Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them till the end. That lasts right on into eternity ; until we are past everything that can turn our hearts aside from Christ, He will go on loving us. You cannot count on your own love to Him. You cannot count on your brethren's love, but there is one thing you can count upon—you can count upon the Lord's love. It will be with us right on to the end. Whatever failure we may have to

lament in ourselves, or in the church, or in our brethren, the love of the Lord, in all its unchangeability, will go on into eternity.

#### ITS DEPTH. John 15. 13.

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Here we have the depth of that love. We know that His love was told out by His going into death for us. His love has been expressed in this, that it took Him into the awful distance into which sin had put us. Love took Christ where sin had put you and me. His love has been down into those depths, and measured the awful distance from God which had come in as a result of sin. There we have the depth of His love.

"No man of greater love can boast,  
Than for his friend to die ;  
Thou for Thine enemies was slain,  
What love with Thine can vie !"

#### ITS HEIGHT. John 17. 23.

The Lord, in this wonderful prayer, prays, "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am." Here I think we have an example of the height of divine love. It puts us with Christ where He is. The depth of His love brought Christ down, and put Him where we were, and the height of that love takes us from the far distant depth, and puts us into the height of glory where Christ is, to be with Him and like Him there. Christ has measured the whole distance, and He has gone into the nearness. He fills everything. I see the great depth of His love, and the immense height to which it reaches.

In these four Scriptures we have the love of Christ, in its breadth, length, depth and height. It is a love that passes knowledge. If you think of its breadth, it takes in all the saints, the vast host of the redeemed. If you think of its length, you know it reaches on into eternity, but you cannot tell the immensity of that. So with the depth. You cannot measure the

depth that Christ measured when He went into the place where sin had put us. You can bow your head and worship in the presence of the fact. Again it transcends our power to take it in. So with the height of glory to which it takes us. What saint on earth has fully entered into the meaning of these words: "And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are one: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me. Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world" (John 17. 22, 23, 24). It is love that passes knowing.

This love, if we are to know it, is not merely a beautiful sentiment. It is something which is to be of use practically. Take chapter 13. 23 for example. We have in this chapter three disciples—Peter, John, and Judas. Judas had the bag at his side, and the devil in his heart, but no love there: within the circle of the disciples, he was outside the circle of life and love. Then we have Peter, impulsive and warm-hearted. He always seems to say to us, "See how I love the Lord." He did love the Lord, but the trouble was that Peter rested in his love to the Lord. He had great confidence in himself. John, on the contrary, does not describe himself as the disciple that loved the Lord, but as the "disciple whom Jesus

loved." Here is a man who avails himself of the love of the Lord. He is leaning on the bosom of Jesus. The effect of this is very beautiful to see. He is able to bring every single difficulty to the Lord. Peter could not. Why does he not ask the Lord this question himself? Peter is not near enough to the Lord to do it, therefore Peter beckons John to ask. John is an example of a man who was leaning upon this mighty love of the Lord, of which we have been speaking. The result is that when a question arises, he is able with the utmost confidence to take it to the Lord. Every single thing that crosses his path, he can put into the hands of the Lord. There is something else we have to remember, before John could lean on the bosom of the Lord, the feet-washing, of which we read in the early part of the chapter, had to take place. In other words, before we can lean with confidence upon the love of the Lord, we must know what it is to have been in His hands, to have every defiling influence judged and removed. Then, with simple, child-like confidence, we can rest in His love, and resting in His love we shall be able to take everything to Him, and receive everything from Him. John presents himself on five occasions as the "disciple whom Jesus loved," and if you look at these different occasions you will find each one carries with it some different lesson. May we know what it is to have our hearts stirred up by the love of Christ, and then know what it is to rest our souls upon it in all its blessedness in its breadth and length, and depth and height.

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*"His is love, 'tis love unbounded,  
Without measure, without end;  
Human thought is here confounded,  
'Tis too vast to comprehend.  
Praise the Saviour!  
Magnify the sinner's Friend."*

## NOTES FOR PREACHERS.

**YOU** must come from God to man ; you cannot go to man beyond what you are to God. The lack of this is the cause of the weakness in a great deal of ministry. A man who is growing in ministry begins by prayer. He must begin with God. What has he to bring to men if he does not come from God ? The Lord could say, " I came from God." He is our pattern ; and of John it was said, " There was a man sent from God whose name was John."

" The Gospel you have to preach is not a pinch of sacred snuff to wake people up, or a bottle of ardent spirits to excite their brains. It is news, good news ; you have something to tell them, something that concerns them, upon the knowledge and belief of which their eternal salvation depends. It is not enough to cry, ' Believe, believe,' you must tell them what they are to believe. ' That the soul be without knowledge is not good,' and the Lord's servants must enlighten men as to the truth, and turn them from darkness to light."

The majority of the people do not know the Gospel at all ; you must unfold it to them and keep on unfolding it. I called to see a woman the other day at her own request. She had attended a certain sort of revival service for years, and had many times gone out to the front, she told me, and had cried all the next day. At last she had said, " If that's religion I want no more of it." Hers is but a sample of the appalling ignorance that abounds, and we must unfold the Gospel to the people and continue to unfold it.

But if we are to keep on stating the truth, we must do it with freshness and fervour. It is not enough to be sound ; this is of course of the first importance. The preacher who turns away from the truth does the devil's work and not God's, but a man may be sound in doctrine and yet preach the great facts of the Gospel in such a listless

way that his hearers may become sound asleep to all the truth that he preaches. Of old " they so spake that many believed." The preachers of to-day need to be greatly exercised in heart as to this.

Give your best. The wise farmer does not sow tail corn ; as Isaiah says, he casts in " the principle wheat." The word of the living God is living seed, it liveth and abideth for ever ; this seed must fill our baskets, all other is useless. When this living seed, the Gospel concerning Jesus Christ, God's Son, is sown as seed in the hearts of men, God watches over it.

" And grace ensures the crop."

**" WHOSOEVER SHALL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD SHALL BE SAVED. HOW SHALL THEY CALL ON HIM IN WHOM THEY HAVE NOT BELIEVED, AND HOW SHALL THEY BELIEVE IN HIM OF WHOM THEY HAVE NOT HEARD ? AND HOW SHALL THEY HEAR WITHOUT A PREACHER ? AND HOW SHALL THEY PREACH EXCEPT THEY BE SENT ? . . . SO THEN FAITH COMETH BY HEARING, AND HEARING BY THE WORD OF GOD."**

Don't wait for some work to turn up, but go and turn up some work.

You may work without praying, but you cannot pray without working.

The very fact that you are still here and not in heaven proves that you are still to labour on. Yet the more earnestly you work for the Lord, the more you need times when what you are doing for Him passes totally out of your mind, that you may think only of what He has done and is doing, and will yet do for you ; and more than all, what He is in the blessedness of His own person and love.

Like begets like : a lazy preacher will have an indifferent audience, but

fervency and faith that worketh by love in the pulpit will beget warmth and earnestness in the congregation.

Seek no honour for yourselves. Consider that the highest possible honour is already yours, that you are messengers of God, sent into the world on His errands, and that the results of your work will be eternal if that work be rightly done with the right material.

Think nothing worthy of your notice in books or study but that which will give you a fuller knowledge of the glorious Saviour whose name you are privileged to proclaim.

Truth in the memory will not make you effectual soul winners, but Christ as a living present reality will. The sons of Korah in Ps. 42. were not joyful heralds of a joyful message; they had nothing there but a memory of good days in the past and a hope that these might be restored to them in the future. But in Ps. 45. they were not thirsting but overflowing; they had a song to sing and a tale to tell. "My heart is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made touching the King; my tongue is the pen of a ready writer. *Thou art fairer than the children of men.*" Preachers whose hearts bubble up after that fashion do not fail.

## HAVEN OR HOME?

(H. A. WOOLLEY)

THERE is all the difference between a haven and a home!

A haven is a place of refuge eagerly sought in danger's hour. A safe anchorage amid the storm. In foul weather a haven is steered for with all possible speed, but on fair-weather days it is simply passed by.

What a vastly different thought does the word "home" convey! A haven is a temporary shelter only; but home is where we *abide*. Home is the centre of our affections—our *dwelling* place. In storm or calm home is home, and there is no spot like it!

Now think of the Lord Jesus Christ and our relation to Him. What is He in our daily walk and experience?

A haven? He is that. Thank God, His people do have a place of refuge (Prov. 14. 26). Through His grace we know the Man who is the hiding-place from the wind, the covert from the tempest (Isa. 32. 2); and with the Psalmist we say: "Thou art my hiding-place" (Ps. 32. 7), and so we flee into Him to hide us (Ps. 143. 9).

We have proved the Lord Jesus Christ to be a haven, indeed—a refuge in the time of storm. But there is

something better, far better, than that. He wants us to find in Him not a temporary shelter merely, when waves beat high, but—a Home! Do we know anything of this? Do we know what it is to have the Lord Jesus Christ Himself as our Home—the seat and centre of all our affections? For this His heart yearns, and nothing less than this should be the aim of every believer—to make Christ the Home of the soul, to have Him for our Home!

If He be but a refuge in trouble we shall leave Him as soon as the dark clouds are past; and only when fresh trouble comes shall we run to Him again. It is not enough to come to Christ in times of special need or stress; He desires—and is it not our desire, too?—that we should *abide in Him*, be always with Him, ever in sweet communion, as glad to be with Him in the sunshine as in the storm.

May it be our portion, too, as the days go by, to *stay* with Him, to abide under His shadow with great delight; yea, to have within us the holy joy, the deepest of all joys, which is and can be only known to those who find in Him their Home.

# GOD'S GOVERNMENT : (No. 6.)

## God's Workmanship.

IT is evident from what has already been said, that the trial of Job was one most important and indispensable in relation to the procedure and glory of God Himself. One of our poets has said, "An honest man's the noblest work of God," an expression aiming at, though falling far short of, a sublime truth. It is a redeemed man, a man delivered from the dominion of sin and brought under the sway of love, a man loving God with undivided heart, and serving Him with devotion, who unquestionably forms His noblest work.

But no *fiat* can call such a man into being. It is a law impressed upon the nature of intelligent creatures that love is only inspired by love. Like all the laws of the moral universe, this is supreme over the acts of moral beings, and God Himself acts in accordance with it. Thus He sets Himself by deeds of love to win back to Himself the hearts of revolted and selfish men.

It is a man's highest honour and satisfaction to gain the love of others, and all who do so attain their end by first showing the love they seek. We need not scruple to affirm that if the Almighty had no power at His command but the power of creative might and material force, He would be a Being poorer than the feeblest child who loves his mother and is loved in return.

But such weakness belongs not to the Omnipotent. He too loves; He too wields the power that love gives, and seeks and gains the satisfaction which love imparts. It is in this high moral way that He proceeds in the world now that man has fallen, and through his fall has come under the dominion of selfishness and of Satan.

This is distinctively the glory and the joy which God is now engaged in seeking: to subdue enmity by undeserved kindness, to melt hard hearts by the coals of fire, and so to save and recover for Himself that which is lost. This is

the work of God upon the earth, that of which the Son of God spoke when He said, "My Father worketh hitherto and I work," that which the Son has done so much to promote and to glorify in giving Himself for us, "to redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify to Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

In calling in question the disinterestedness of Job's piety, and thus claiming him as his own, Satan was really casting contempt upon that delivering work, in prosecuting which, God has set His glory above the heavens, and to which the richest powers of the divine nature are bent.

It is worthy of remark that the trial of Job is not unexampled in Scripture. We read of another patriarch who, like Job, was distinguished for the strength of his faith and the integrity of his obedience. Of him we are told, "God did tempt Abraham" (Gen. 20. 1), and in his case too, the trial bore upon the same point, the disinterestedness of his seeming love to his divine Friend. The question was, Does Abraham love God better than himself, nay, better than that son for whom he would willingly lay down his own life?

In these two illustrious examples, and by the demonstration of these trials, does Jehovah attest His moral power and vindicate His own glory, while at the same time He justifies the method which, throughout the course of the world's history, He is pursuing. And in these examples, too, He brings forward to the view of all intelligences a handful of the first ripe fruits of the world's harvests, sprung from that seed of love which he is sowing in the world's hardened soil, a sample of the glorious results which shall by and by fill the heavenly garner. For in such men God exhibits for the instruction of others what that is in which piety essentially lies, and what characters by His grace He seeks to form in His saints.

It is plain that there was a divine propriety in transactions like these, so rich in spiritual meaning, and so momentous in relation to the vindication of the plans and glory of Jehovah, being assigned to one of the earliest periods of the world's history. Selfishness may draw nourishment, not only from the bestowments of the present, but also from the promises of the future. And it is one main distinction of the dispensation of promise. The present good bestowed by God on His servants is constantly represented as but the foretaste of the better things to come. In the patriarchal age, this future and happier life was veiled. The holy men of old were sustained by no clear and express assurance as to the heavenly inheritance, nor was their hope nourished by symbols and pictures, full of glory, of the things behind the veil. They were left to build their faith simply on a general conviction of the all-sufficiency of Him who had said, I am your God.

But this age of comparative dimness was about to be replaced by another, and still another, in which, in the experience of the people of God, both the privileges of the present and the promises of the future life were destined to be greatly augmented. It lay in the purpose of God that richer blessings should be conferred on men, and still brighter revelations of the future inheritance be given, all with the view of subduing the souls of His enemies, winning them to faith in Himself, and encouraging in their hearts the growth of holiness.

But should Satan's insinuation be found to be well founded, then evidently it would be proved that the Omniscient had miscalculated, and all His purposes would be disannulled. Then His gifts, whether present or future, would be certain to abound, not to the ends of holiness, but simply to those of self-indulgence. Hence the need for a public clearing of the ground. It was indispensable, in order that the growing development of God's

gracious designs might not yield fresh occasion to the adversary, that it should be shown once for all, by a conspicuous living example, that God's chosen method of procedure, the method of subduing enmity by love, is a method feasible and successful, adequate to the inspiring of new and strong affection, affection so genuine that it survives the withdrawal of all present comforts, while it is, at the same time, sustained by no bright prospects in the future, and sees in the grave only a land of darkness and of the shadow of death.

Thus the trial of Job was the trial of all profession of love to God, the trial of the possibility of the production of the principles of genuine piety in human lives, the trial of the efficiency of the methods of divine grace, and the operations of divine love.

I have indicated also the suitability of this great trial being instituted in the world's spring-time, while God was but preparing the soil and sowing the seed, and ere the harvest of the world had begun to ripen. Evidently a trial so important and so critical had to be of the most rigorous character of which, in the circumstances, it was capable. And such the trial of Job actually was.

First, all his possessions, as we have seen, are taken from him, and that by such sweeping strokes as to render the pain of the bereavement the intensest possible, and also forcibly to impress his mind with the conviction that the bereavement has come upon him by the express ordination of the will of God. Yet, though thus suddenly reducing him from pre-eminent affluence to utter destitution, the succession of crushing calamities has no power to shake his confidence in God, or to detach him from His service.

Satan, however, refuses to own himself baffled, and says, "Put forth Thy hand and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse Thee to Thy face." This too is granted to the adversary.

Job is stricken by a horrible disease. Like an outcast leper, separated from men, shunned by all, he is left in solitary wretchedness to brood upon his fall. His wife, apparently the only near relative left to him, who, when property and children were reft away, seems, like himself, to have humbly submitted to the divine hand, now at last, when he himself is smitten, becomes distracted by her misery, is no longer able to maintain her faith in

the Most High, and unconsciously plays into the adversary's hand by urging him to abandon the God who appears so unmistakeably to have cast him off. But though his one dearest earthly friend thus also becomes his tempter, and assails the stronghold of his faith, yet he remains in soul unconquered, and meekly replies: "What! shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?"

*(To be continued.)*

## ELIJAH. No. 8.

### Horeb: The Mount of God. (I Kings 19. 9-18.)

ARRIVED at Horeb, the Mount of God, the prophet seeks a hiding-place in a mountain cave. Again the word of the Lord comes to him with the searching question, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" The prophet had fled from the place of public testimony and active service—fled at the threat of a woman, fled for his life. He had left the path of service with its suffering, opposition, and persecution, and sought a place of safety amidst wilderness solitudes and mountain caves. Now conscience must be probed and account rendered to the Lord for his actions. One has well said, "At Horeb, the Mount of God, all things are naked and open; and Elijah has to do with God, and with God alone."

How hard it is to continue in the path of service when all apparently ends in failure. When there are no immediate results from our labours, when ministry is neglected, the servant slighted and even opposed, then it is we are ready to flee from our brethren, give up active service, and seek rest under some juniper tree, or retirement in some lonely hiding-place. But the Lord loves us too well to let us rest in quiet places of our own choosing. He raises the question in our conscience, "What doest thou here?"

No such question was raised in the solitudes of Cherith, or in the home at Zarephath. The prophet was led to the lonely brook and the widow's home at the word of the Lord; he had fled to the cave at Horeb at the threat of a woman.

Elijah gives a threefold reason for fleeing to the cave. First, he says, "I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts." He implies that his zeal for the Lord was all in vain, and hence he had given up all public testimony. Occupation with our own zeal will ever lead to disappointment and discontent with the danger of giving up the path of service.

Then he complains of the people of God. They have forsaken God's covenants, thrown down His altar, and slain His prophets. This implies that the hopeless condition of the people of God made it useless to continue labouring in their midst.

Lastly, he says, "I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life to take it away." The prophet pleads that he is left alone and the very people before whom he had given such a mighty testimony had turned against him. Hence he had turned his back on them and sought rest and shelter in the lonely cave.

The Lord's question brings to light the true condition of the prophet's soul, but the prophet has yet to learn the real motive for his flight. It was not at all because his zeal had failed to effect any change; nor was it because of the terrible condition of God's people, nor yet because they sought his life.

Never was zeal like the zeal of the Lord. He could say, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up," and yet He had to say, "I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought and in vain." Never, too, was the condition of Israel more terrible than when the Lord laboured in their midst. Again, how truly the Lord could say in the day of His humiliation, "They seek My life to take it away." But in spite of His zeal and His labour being in vain, in spite of the condition of the people, and though again and again they sought to take His life, yet He never for an instant swerved from the path of perfect obedience to the Father. He never sought the safe retreat of some lonely cave. He held on His perfect way in the path of obedience to the Father, and unselfish service to men. Do we wish to know the secret of that lovely life? We learn it when we hear Him say, "I have set the Lord always before me: because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved" (Ps. 16. 8). Moreover He looked not at the rough ways He had to tread, but at the glorious end of the journey. "My flesh also shall rest in hope . . . thou wilt show me the path of life; in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."

Elijah had fled, therefore, just because he had failed to keep the Lord always before him; and he looked at the roughness of the way rather than to the glorious end to which it was leading. The failure of his devoted life to effect any change, the evil condition of the people, and the persecution to which he was subjected,

would never have moved him from the path of service had he kept the Lord before him. And what matter the roughness of the journey if it ends in being rapt to heaven in a chariot of glory.

So the Lord again speaks to Elijah, "Go forth, and stand upon the Mount *before the Lord.*" These words disclose the secret of his failure. Elijah may give many plausible reasons for fleeing to the cave, but the true reason is that he had failed to keep the Lord before him. The secret of the bold witness before Ahab, his power to raise the widow's son, the power to bring down fire from heaven and command the rain, was simply that he moved and acted in faith before the living God. The secret of his flight, on the other hand, was that he acted in fear before a dying woman. When addressing the apostate king he can say, "The Lord before whom I stand"; when he contemplates the wicked queen it is rather, Jezebel before whom I flee.

Elijah has to learn another lesson if he is to be consciously brought into the presence of the Lord. He had seen the fire descend on Carmel, he had seen the heavens "black with clouds and wind" at the coming of the rain, and Elijah had connected the presence of the Lord with these terrifying manifestations of nature. He had thought that, as a result of these mighty displays of the power of God, the whole nation would turn to God in deep repentance, and for the moment, indeed, they did fall upon their faces and own, "The Lord, He is the God." But no real revival had taken place. Elijah has to learn that wind and earthquake and fire may indeed be God's servants to awaken men, but unless the "still small voice" is heard, no man is really won for God. The thunder of Sinai must be followed by the still small voice of grace, if the heart of man is to be reached and won. God was not in the wind, the earthquake, or the fire, but in the still small voice.

"And it was so when Elijah heard the still small voice he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entering of the cave." Elijah is in the presence of the Lord, with the immediate result "he wrapped his face in his mantle." Away from the Lord he talks about himself, in the presence of the Lord he hides himself. But there is still pride, bitterness, and anger in his heart, so again the Lord searches him with the question, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" God will have everything laid bare in His presence. Elijah again unburdens his spirit. All that he says is true as to fact, but the spirit in which it is said is wholly wrong. It is easy to discern the wounded pride, the embittered spirit, that lurk behind his words and lead the prophet to speak well of himself and nothing but evil of God's people.

The prophet, having repeated his complaint and shown what is in his heart, has to hear God's solemn judgment.

First the Lord says, "Go, return on thy way." The prophet must retrace his steps. Then he is to appoint other instruments to carry on the work of the Lord. Had Elijah complained of the evil of the people of God? Now it shall be his sorrowful mission to appoint Hazael king over Syria—an instrument to chastise the people of God. Had Elijah fled from before the threat of the wicked Jezebel? Then he must appoint Jehu to be king over Israel—the instrument to execute judgment upon Jezebel. Had

Elijah spoken well of himself, and thought that he only remained? Then he must appoint Elisha to be prophet in his room. Had the prophet, in his complaint, so forgotten God, and all that God was doing in Israel, that he thought he alone was left and that he was the only man by whom God could work? Then he has to learn that God had seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal. Elijah had indeed been very jealous for God, but he had not been able to discover God's seven thousand hidden ones. He could see the evil of the mass, he could see what God was doing in judgment, but he was unable to discern what God was doing in grace.

In the presence of this solemn message the prophet is reduced to silence. He no longer has a word to say for himself. On Carmel he had said before the king and all Israel, "I, even I only, remain a prophet of the Lord"; on Mount Horeb he had twice said in the presence of the Lord, "I, even I only, am left." But at last he has to learn the wholesome lesson that he is only one amongst seven thousand.

Finally we may notice another touching feature in this incident, and that is the *considerateness* of God's dealings, even at the moment of rebuke.

Another has said, "God acted towards Elijah as towards a beloved and faithful servant, even at the moment in which He made him sensible of his failure in the energy of faith; for *He did not make others aware of it*, although He has communicated it to us for our instruction." 211

## CHRIST AND HIS APPROVAL.

(J. N. D.)

THE intelligent consciousness of Christ, as the heart's object, of His presence, of the seal of His approval when one thinks of Him, cannot be confounded with anything. There is nothing that resembles it: nothing that can appear to take its place. When He reveals Himself to our heart, and the heart walks with Him, and

communes with Him in all things, and seeks only the light of His countenance, the seal of His favour on the soul in all things, then He is known, well known. There is none but He who thus communicates Himself to the soul, when it walks in the way of His will, as expressed in the Word.

# THE MYSTERY OF THE GOSPEL.

(JAMES BOYD.)

## Ephesians 5. 25-33. (*Conclusion.*)

LET us contemplate for a brief moment the activities of the love of Christ for His church. We are told He loved the church. Before it had any actual existence He saw it in the divine and marvellous plan of redeemed creation. It was portrayed in the volume of the book of eternal counsel. It had its unique and glorious place in the purpose of the Father. It shone at the centre of that universe of blessing, that would be the final result of all the activities of everlasting love, the one all-glorious and irradiant orb that far eclipsed every other luminant. He saw it in all its beauty. He beheld it as His body, His complement, in the day when His humiliation would be at an end for ever, and in the day when the satisfaction and gladness of His heart would be come. He contemplated it as the vessel in which all His moral excellencies would be everlastingly displayed. In His estimation it was the perfection of beauty. It was His bride, His beloved and constant companion. It was the one woman that was perfectly the glory of the man. It was the "help-mate" for the last Adam, the "*Ishshah*" that was derived from "*Ish*." In divine counsel the Father had given everything to the Son, but in His supremacy as the glorified Man and image of the invisible God, it was not good for man to be alone, a companion must be found for him. An Eve must be found for the last Adam.

But if Christ is to have His church, He must tread a path of humiliation, sorrow and gloom. He must go into a sleep infinitely deeper than that into which Adam went to get his bride. Hatred and rejection at the hand of His rebellious creature must be endured, infernal forces must be encountered, devilish treachery, and miserable cowardice, must be manifested amongst His most intimate companions. He must be numbered with the transgres-

sors, and be impaled upon a gibbet; and above all, He must suffer the abandonment of God. But to secure this pearl of great price, this treasure hid in the field, He will sell all that is His, yea, the giving up of His life will not be considered too great a sacrifice. He knew all that He must undergo to make this treasure His own. Before ever He left the encircling light, in which the Godhead shrouds Himself from the gaze of the creature, He was well aware of all the sorrows that He must suffer in order that to this pearl of great price He might have undisputed right.

But His love will bear Him up above all the evils He may have to encounter. He loved the church, and gave Himself for it. And it is this church that is nearest to Him, and dearest to Him. Of all that is His in the creation, nothing is so precious to Him, for it is part of Himself. His thorn-crowned head, His pierced hands and feet and side, proclaim in our ears and in the ears of the universe His great love for her. The darkness, the forsaking, the death, the burial—all publish with one voice His unfathomable love. Truly the love of Christ surpasses knowledge.

Having given Himself for it, He devotes Himself to it. He sanctifies it, purifying it by the washing of water by the word, His object being to present it to Himself glorious, having no spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, for all these things speak of the old creation, of which the church is no part. No spot of defilement or wrinkle of decay shall ever be found upon her. She shall abide for ever in all the beauty and youthful vigour of her bridal day. May the power of this be ever in our souls.

All saints upon earth in this dispensation are in this unity, however it may be practically denied. Ostensibly there seems to be a great variety of

bodies in Christendom, with believers and unbelievers inseparably mixed up together, but in Christ the one body remains to-day as ever, incorruptible, undefiled and perfect. There is no change whatever in this great mystery. But if this truth were in power in the hearts of the saints of God, we should be preserved from the sects and parties, which are the result of a fearful allowance of the flesh. The knowledge that believers are brethren together in the family of God, in the same relationship to God as Christ, and in intimacy with the Father and the Son, might have kept them together as one flock; but when we have the truth of the one body added to this, divisions are seen to be horrible wickedness. In faithfulness to Him who is holy and true, evil must be always refused, but, alas, we have seen evil where nothing but good exists, and separation from evil has been sometimes made the excuse for getting rid of certain of the true people of God. God and the word of His grace are sufficient for us in the worst days that can come upon us, but who cares for either, once the will of the flesh is aroused?

On the ground of the one body, we come together to eat the supper of our Lord, for it is the only revealed ground upon which Jew and Gentile could be together in unity. The one loaf on the table represents the body of the Lord, which was given for us; and in partaking of it we become identified with it, and though many we are one body in Christ (1 Cor. 10.). Therefore to refuse the supper to a member of that body (unless he can be rightly charged with wickedness) is to practically disown the unity of the body, and to break the unity of the Spirit, by whose indwelling that body has been formed. May we be preserved from this evil.

Paul alone speaks of the body and the bride in this way. John speaks

of the bride, the Lamb's wife; but there it is the saints in a governmental aspect, and as that which was formed by the ministry of the twelve apostles. Their names are in the twelve foundations of the wall (Rev. 21. 14). In connection with the city Paul has no mention. He was not of the twelve. But, as we have seen, the mystery which was hid in God, and for which Christ is said to have given Himself, and which is His body, is altogether by the ministry of Paul: none of the other apostles mention it. I am not denying that it is composed of the same saints. I only speak of it in the way in which the Spirit presents it as the work of the twelve; and the absence of the name of Paul in the foundations is the clearest proof of the difference between the mystery and the city.

I do not see that I should say more. The mystery is great, as everything is great that is of God. But it has been made known, and the terms in which it has been revealed are simple enough. The thing for us is to get on our knees before the Father, who is the Author of all those secrets of infinite wisdom, and to cry to Him that in this day of confusion, in which we require to be well fortified with divine truth, to give us to understand the greatness and the glory of that which was in His heart when He laid the foundation of the earth, and which He hid from every creature until the time had come when He in His great wisdom deemed it necessary to bring the great secret to light, that His people's hearts might be filled with the greatness of it, and that principalities and powers in the heavenlies might know His all-varied wisdom. Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

Love to all the saints is a necessary ingredient in the heart's communion with God.

# THE RESURRECTION PROVED.

(H. T. VINE.)

EVIDENTLY the apostle had been very diligent in his enquiries as to the resurrection of Christ as a Man from among the dead. It was a serious matter; and he writes to the Corinthians, "If Christ be not raised your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins"; but he marshals his witnesses, to show that without a shadow of doubt He *was* raised. Any solicitor would be glad to have a case with such abundant witness. Here are the witnesses who saw Christ as a Man in resurrection given in 1 Cor. 15. :—

1. "*He was seen of Cephas.*"
2. "*Then of the twelve.*"
3. "*After that, of above 500 brethren.*"
4. "*After that, He was seen of James.*"
5. "*Then of all the apostles.*"

Moreover Paul adds, "He was seen of me also." This would be at his conversion, when he was persecuting the assembly of God. Examine those witnesses and give up all questioning! Others could have been called, but all these have some exceptional and distinctive features. Just think of 500 witnesses, "at one time" too—and most of them living when the apostle wrote his document! Think of James, born of the same mother, who questioned his wonderful claims when on earth (John 7. 2-5)! There was no question left after Christ's resurrection! How earnestly he served the Lord after that we see in Acts and elsewhere. How reverently He owned His Lordship we find in his epistle (James 1. 1), where he speaks of himself as "a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ." There is no room for questioning the resurrection! Nothing but wilful perversity or the seductions of fallen spirits would lead any intelligent person to do so. We may well take up the exultant language of the apostle after he had brought forward his irrefutable witnesses, "*Now is Christ risen from the dead, and*

*become the Firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by MAN came also the resurrection of the dead*" (1 Cor. 15. 20, 21).

Moreover, if Christ be not raised, where is His justification? Men treated Him as one unfit for decent society, unfit even to live in this world. They treated Him with every indignity. Is He left without any justification whatever? No; certainly not! Man crucified Him, but God raised Him. His resurrection is His justification, for by it God has declared that man's treatment and judgment of Him was wrong. In Isaiah 50. the Spirit of Christ speaks in the prophet. He is smitten; the hair is plucked from His cheeks; shame is heaped upon Him; they spit in His face. Then He says, "*He is near that justifieth Me*" (8)! So He was, and God raised Him from among the dead. He is declared to be the Just One, the Holy One, yea, the Son of God by resurrection. Men treated Him as a malefactor, but He was raised "by the glory of the Father."

If His resurrection be the pledge of ours, as we have seen, so His justification has secured ours also. Indeed the words of Isaiah 50. are used in Romans 8. 34 to show there is no condemnation for true believers. Christ was the elect One of God, and those who are His are elect also; and, it is asked, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? *It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth?*" It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God." Yes, He is in the seat of power and glory, and a day of great rejoicing is coming for all who believe; a day of honour for the One who was so dishonoured—a day of great gladness to the heart of God—the whole universe shall be ranged in perfect order in relation to the One whom God has highly exalted; every family

of the blessed in the heavens shall be placed in relation to Him as Head and Centre of all; every family upon the earth also; and all those also who inhabit the infernal regions "prepared," not for men, but for the devil and his angels (though the unsaved go there), must own Him too; for God has decreed, "*that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of heavenly, earthly and infernal beings, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.*" That will be a great day. It is a great day, too, when a soul confesses Him as Lord now; for it is written, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. 10. 9).

The "saved" are those who will leave earth for heaven when He comes again, like Israel marching out of Egypt, only more swiftly—"in the twinkling of an eye." The world will be left behind. "*The shout*" of the Lord—as that of a commander (for

the terms used are military)—will call us away. "*The archangel's voice*" will be uttered, "the trump of God" will be sounded, and "the redeemed" will be gone. The dead in Christ raised first, and the living changed, with triumph we shall rise to realms above! We are told that the power, by which the Saviour will transform our bodies like to His own body of glory is the power which He has to subdue all things in the universe to Himself (Phil. 3. 21). Our hearts are longing for that time. We look forward to that supreme moment when we shall "*see His face*"! Oh, glorious day! Ah! but *He shall see* the result of His soul's travail and suffering on Calvary's cross, and He shall be satisfied. Notwithstanding all that He has gone through, and all the attacks made upon Himself and His finished work, He will never have a regret. He shall be satisfied. We shall be satisfied, too, and praise and worship Him for ever. Meanwhile may we be waiting, watching, and working for Him, serving the Lord with gladness.

## What thoughts should govern my heart when sitting before the Lord to remember Him?

IT is difficult to answer a question of this kind without assuming a position of controller and director of the thoughts and affections of the heart which is altogether beyond one, and thus touching upon a prerogative of the Holy Spirit of God. He alone is the source and energy of all responsive thoughts and affections in the heart of a believer. He is the "unction from the Holy One" by whom we "know all things" and "the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie" (1 John 2. 20, 27).

But on the other hand we have the Word of God, and particularly those passages in the Gospels and in 1 Cor. 10. and 11. which refer to the Lord's supper, its institutions, and meaning, and we can safely submit our thoughts to its guidance, knowing that there will never be any clashing between the Spirit's unction

*within* and His inspiration *without* us in Scripture.

We are safe therefore in saying that when remembering the Lord our minds may well be governed by such thoughts as are brought together in 1 Cor. 11. 23-29, for instance.

We think of the Lord Himself—"in remembrance of Me."

Of the "night in which He was betrayed." Its circumstances and all involved in it.

Of His body given for us symbolized in the loaf.

Of His blood shed symbolized in the wine, and of the new covenants connected with it.

Of His coming again—the grand terminus to which all leads.

F. B. HOLE.

# THE COMING OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.—1 Thessalonians

(JAMES GREEN.)

*"YE 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. 9, 10).*

In the early part of this epistle we get the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in relation to God the Father. The saints are viewed in the light of the precious truth of the revelation of the Father to their hearts. When we think of God in all the revelation of His love, we need to remember, for our own practical conduct, that everything which would command the affection of the heart outside that affection is an idol. I need scarcely remind you of that verse in the epistle of John, where the apostle has been unfolding by the Spirit the wonderful place that the saints have in the love of the Father, that which is truly eternal life; he ends up with "Little children, keep yourselves from idols." I think that the first effect of the expectancy of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ should be this, that the Father has the whole of the affection of our hearts. We may say, Is it possible that we in so-called Christian lands are in danger of idolatry? Surely these things belong to darkest Africa, or idolatry is found in India and other places in the heathen world? If we know our own hearts, we must be aware of the necessity of such an exhortation. How many things there are, which seem to come in almost unbidden, and work so subtly that the heart goes after them, and almost before we are aware of it we are pursuing some earthly object, and the hope of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ grows dim in our souls. If we find the hope growing dim, it is well to exercise ourselves before God as to whether some object other than Himself has not taken possession of our hearts. We have to do with a God of all grace, a God who,

if we return to Him, knows how to revive all the preciousness of His love in our hearts, and how to recall us to Himself, so that this Scripture may be true of us in a very practical way that we have turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven.

Of what worth will anything be, other than the love of God and the things of God, when our Lord Jesus Christ comes. I believe it is being pressed home upon the people of God very much to-day, that the coming of the Lord is very near. It is not enough to simply say that one to another, but if we believe it, and it is pressed upon our hearts, should there not be a practical turning aside from everything that would claim the affections of our hearts, to the things that are of God, and to seek by His grace to have Himself as the one absorbing object before us? Is that not the only suited answer to the love that has bought us, love that knows us, love that cares for us, love that keeps us, and love that will presently translate us in a moment from earth to heaven? What better answer to such love could there be than the single-hearted affection, which is fixed only upon Himself? It is that which He values.

*"We were gentle among you, as a nurse cherisheth her children, and being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us. . . . 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" (2. 7, 8, 19).*

If that single-hearted affection for God possesses our hearts, it will follow in the course of the Spirit's grace with us, that our hearts will go out to the whole circle of His own here on earth.

Is there not need in this day, when the people of God are so distracted, and so many difficulties beset them, for this gentle care one for another? How the heart of the apostle went out to the people of God, and how he sought to minister all the grace of Christ to them, in order that they might walk worthy of God, who had called them to His kingdom and glory. There is nothing surely which will so draw out our affections to the people of God as to think of that calling wherewith God has called them. We, too, if our hearts are drawn out in affection towards Him, will look upon everyone of the dear saints of God as His children, and become, as His love fills our hearts, affectionately desirous of them, that they might walk worthy of the Lord, who has called them to His kingdom and glory.

Then there is the gentleness and grace of Christ. How wonderful that grace is, the grace that can look at the saints from His own side. How much He put to the account of His disciples which you and I, reading the Gospels, would say they were not up to. You remember that passage in John 16., where they say, "Now we know . . . by this we believe Thou camest forth from God." They had not taken in the thought of the Father at all. They had not understood that He came forth from the bosom of eternal love, that the Father had sent Him. But in John 17., the Lord says to the Father, "They have known surely that I came out from Thee, and they have believed that Thou didst send Me." Think of the grace of it! He put to their account what was in His own mind for them, and into which they would surely be brought by the Spirit. Should not we be affectionately desirous of His beloved people? May we look on to that coming of our Lord Jesus Christ as that blessed, precious moment, when He shall have His own with Himself. Our joy and His joy, to see them gathered home to Him.

*"And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you : To the end He may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints."* (3. 12, 13).

In the third and fourth chapters he speaks of another thing, and that is the question of holiness, flowing out indeed of this love to the saints. Is there not a call to more practical separation from the spirit of this present age? How easily we may be caught in that! How easily we become entangled in the snares of the world, and affected in our spirits if things do not go exactly the way we think they ought to go. Is not God calling us to a more intense separation to Himself from the spirit of this present age? If we could suppose that an angel from heaven were here upon some business in the world for God, what part would he take, and what would be the relation of his thoughts to what was happening in the world? I have no doubt that holy messenger would have deep sympathy for the scene of sorrow through which he would be passing. If he were able to alleviate some of the sorrow, he might be willing to do so, but his heart would be outside the scene altogether. The saints of God are holy by generation and heavenly by calling. It may be that we contradict this in our walk, but the fact remains that we are heavenly as He is heavenly. The apostle could write to the Thessalonians about the holiness that became them, the holiness of separation from the world, the holiness of desire for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

*"The Lord establish your hearts in holiness . . . at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints."* It seems to me that three things are presented; first, a single affection for God from all idolatry; second, this intense affection going out to the saints of God wherever they may be

found; and, thirdly, a very narrow path for each one of us, as we walk through this defiling world, that we may be treading the path of holiness while we wait for the Lord.

*“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”* (4. 16, 17).

Next, things are viewed in relation to the Lord Jesus Christ. When we look at it from that point of view, the first thing he brings out is the sorrow that was upon the hearts of the saints there in Thessalonica, as many of their loved ones were taken from them. They were not acquainted with the fact of the rapture, as we are acquainted with it. Perhaps this precious truth may have lost some of its power with us. Some of us can look back to the time when the thought of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ was a very present thing with us. It was the thought every morning, and throughout the day, and the thought of everyone of us as we took up each fresh piece of work, that, perhaps before the day was over the Lord might be here. The years have rolled by, but the hope should not have been dimmed in our hearts, for “now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.” This is a world of sorrow, and the deep sympathy of the Lord’s heart goes out to His sorrowing saints. He knows their sorrows, and He measures them all. What does He first mention to every sorrowing soul? Just that precious passage. The Lord Himself is coming, and “they who sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.” Not one will be forgotten. Many a saint of God, gone forth from home and country, has fallen in the great war. Their graves are perhaps unknown to those who love them, but known to Him. “The Lord Himself, with assembling shout,

with archangel’s voice, and with the trump of God, shall descend from heaven.” I think this way of reading the passage brings the Lord more prominently before us, because it does not separate the archangel voice and the trump of God from Himself. It is Himself who brings these three things to raise the sleeping saints, change the living, and to bring in all the purposes of God.

He is coming Himself. He will descend from heaven with a shout. It was with a shout that He finished that work on Calvary’s cross, when with a loud shout He cried, “It is finished.” It was with a shout that He went up to the right hand of God, as we read in the Psalm: “God has gone up with a shout, the Lord with a sound of trumpet.” It is with acclamation that He has been received in that place on high. It is with a shout of triumph that He will come again to take His church to be with Himself. Zion shall shout for joy when He will take to Himself His great power and reign. When we look at the Lord’s coming in relation to Himself, it is all triumph. It is a triumph that will comfort sorrowing hearts now, with the knowledge that it is but a little moment, and He will have it all His own way. When we look round on the sin-stricken world, we can remember that it is but a little moment, and He will take things into His own hands, and make this wilderness scene to blossom as the rose with all the perfume that belongs to Himself.

*“And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ”* (5. 23).

In the 10th verse of the chapter we read, “Our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep we should live together with Him.” He is going to have His saints for His own joy and pleasure. We shall gladly leave this world of sorrow and death and sighing behind, but

there is something for Himself. "We shall live together with Him." I think that is for His own heart. He in that scene of glory will be the happiest to have us with Himself, there to live for ever. We shall be for His joy and delight.

"He and we in that bright glory  
One deep joy shall share;  
Ours that we are with Him,  
His that we are there."

What is the next thing? "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly, and I pray God your whole spirit, soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He that calleth you, who

also will do it." That is the practical side of it. We think of the body first. God thinks of the spirit first. I pray God that your spirit—that which rises in worship to Him—your soul, which is the seat of affection, and your body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. If it were not for the next verse we might faint, and say, "Who is sufficient for it." Faithful is He who calls us. He will do it. God never turns us in upon ourselves. He presents these things that we might be cast upon Himself for the ability to walk the path of holiness, and to hold ourselves, spirit, soul and body, wholly to Him.

## THE EASY YOKE.

(A. E. WALKER.)

"For my yoke is easy and my burden is light" Matt. 11. 30.

"EASY," "Light." I have often thought how strange these words seem! We do not usually associate them with the Christian path. To walk with God is our highest privilege on earth, and the happiest condition possible under the sun—but we consider it difficult to walk worthy of God, and the apostle admonishes us again and again as to "Walk." How then can it be easy? Just before uttering these words the Lord had been passing under deep sorrow of heart, all were turning away from Him, and He looks up to heaven and says, "Father, I thank Thee" (v. 25). He was not in the least perturbed that things were all crooked. "Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and has revealed them unto babes." "Even so, Father," He goes on to say, "for so it seemed good in Thy sight" (v. 26). Easy! Yes, to Him, for He only had one desire, and that was granted—His Father's pleasure. Well might the prophet say, "The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand." We should have thought that "all was against Him." He said all was good! We look at things from below; He looked at them from above. It was a joy to Him to be in the

Father's will. His meat was to do the will of Him that sent Him and to finish His work. What a happy path; no wish, no aim, no care, but joying in His Father's will! But He says, "My burden is light." He carried no burden of care as we do! no wishful anxieties! no earthly schemes! He lived a day at a time! "He wakeneth morning by morning. He wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned" (Isa. 50. 4). But one Counsellor, but one voice to hear—obedient, directed and prosperous, because of "Truth and meekness and righteousness" (Ps. 45. 4). "Thy Word is truth" (John 17. 17). Could He not say, "My burden is light"? And we, beloved brethren, are called into fellowship with all this! "To walk as He walked"! What serene peace in a tumultuous world! What a calm amid tempestuous seas of unrest! What "rest" amid the changing scene around! He changes not. From what side of things do we look? He looked down from the mountain top and scanned that stormy sea of Galilee, and the disciples were "affrighted." Do you wonder? But His presence brought them into the calm that He was in, and "it was a great calm."

## SEPARATION OR COMPROMISE, WHICH? (F. W. G.)

WHEN God would bring His people out of Egypt, Pharaoh wanted to compromise—of course by that compromise to keep the people as his slaves. Three separate offers he makes to Moses, each of which would have prevented salvation being, according to God's thought of it, salvation at all. The first compromise was, "Worship in the land."

"And Pharaoh called for Moses and for Aaron, and said, Go ye, sacrifice to your God in the land."

And still the world asks, Why need you go outside it? You are entitled to your opinions, but why be so extreme? Why three days' journey into the wilderness? Why separate from what you were brought up in, and from people as good as you? Ah, they do not know what that three days' journey implies, and that the death and resurrection of Christ place you where you are no more of the world than He is! Egypt—luxurious, civilized, self-satisfied, idolatrous Egypt—and the wilderness! What a contrast! Yet only in the wilderness can you sacrifice to God.

Then he tries another stratagem:

"And he said unto them, Go serve the Lord your God; but who are they that shall go?"

"And Moses said, We will go with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds we will go; for we must hold a feast unto the Lord.

"And he said unto them, Let the Lord be so with you, as I will let you go, and your little ones: look to it; for evil is before you. Not so: go now ye that are men, and serve the Lord; for that ye did desire."

By their little ones he had them safe, of course—a perfectly good security that they would not go far away. And so it is still. How many are brought back into the world by the children they did not bring with them out of the world.

One last hope remains for Pharaoh:

"And Pharaoh called unto Moses, and said, Go ye, serve the Lord; only let your flocks and your herds be stayed: let your little ones also go with you."

"Leave your possessions," he says: and how many leave their possessions! Themselves are saved; but their business, their occupation, these are still not sacred things, they are secular: what have these things to do with the salvation of the soul? But God says, No: bring them all out of Egypt: yourselves, your families, your property, all are to be Mine. And, in point of fact, His they must be if we would ourselves keep them, for we cannot keep them of ourselves.

Until you are clean delivered in these three respects you cannot be happily with God, or even safe. Of course, I am not talking about reaching heaven: you may be safe in that respect. But whatever you have that is not Christ's, that is the world's still, will drag you back into the world. Can you go to your business and shut the door upon Him and He not feel it, and you not feel it? Can you say to Him: Lord, Sunday is yours, and Monday is mine; or, Lord, there is your tenth, and these nine are mine—and feel perfectly satisfied that all is right with Him?

Who that looks around, with a heart for Christ, upon all the abominations practiced in His Name, but must be led to ask, Did not all this evil spring out of the failure of His own people, of those who at heart loved Him? And further, how far are we perhaps now, unsuspectingly, helping on the very evils we deplore? Do we not pray for Him to search out our hearts, and shall we shrink from having them searched out? If the search detects nothing, we need not fear it. If it shows us unanticipated evil, it is well to realize that the truthful judgment of the evil is ever the truest blessing for our souls.

## ANSWER TO CORRESPONDENT.

Why do wicked men prosper while the godly often suffer?

A CORRESPONDENT asks us to explain, if we can, why the wicked prosper while the children of God seem to have many trials, as he himself has.

This is no new difficulty; at some time or other it arises in every mind; even those who know not God have marvelled at it, as one has said:—

“But virtue in distress and vice in triumph,  
Make atheists of men.”

In Ps. 73. we have recorded for us the exercise through which Asaph passed in regard to this very matter; his faith was shaken by it; he was envious of the prosperity of the wicked. In his manifold trials he cried, “Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain”; his feet were almost gone; he almost became an atheist. But his unrest and perplexity arose from the fact that he tried to solve the problem by men’s standard instead of God’s; he was looking upon the seen and temporal things instead of the unseen and eternal. When he went into the sanctuary he understood. In the presence of God he was able to look under the surface and to take the long view, and everything became clear, and he confessed that he was both foolish and ignorant, a veritable beast before God.

An easy life in this world is no mark of God’s favour, nor does the fact that the wicked prosper prove that God has forgotten the world and the ways of men in it. He takes notice and recompenses every man according to his deeds. Who would have riches gained unrighteously if the curse that James describes rests upon them? (James 5. 1–5); or who would make haste to get rich if by so doing he should “fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition (1 Tim. 6. 9). None would envy Dives or commiserate Lazarus when it is seen that the riches of the one made him independent of

God and brought him into the torment of hell at last, while the sorrows of the other turned him to God, who brought him out of his trials, when they had served their purpose, into the place of eternal blessing.

The feet of those who gain power and wealth, who follow pleasure without a check, and who seem to get all that their hearts desire, are set in slippery places, and the end is destruction, and God does not set the feet of His children in such places as these; He leads them in the paths of righteousness for His Name’s sake; He proves His love to them by chastening them, and this is for their profit, and if any are without this chastening, they are not sons of God at all (Heb. 4. 5–13). If a man gain the whole world and lose his own soul, of what profit will that be to him? But in the trials of children of God there is profit; it does not always appear in the present, but it will in the end, as in the case of Job, for the end of the Lord is the blessing of His own. Asaph was wrong when he said: “Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocence. For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning” (Ps. 73. 13, 14). And he discovered how wrong he was when he saw things from the standpoint of God’s presence. He discovered that there was present as well as future profit for such as he; for God was his portion, and that was better than millions of money. Mark well his assets as he recounts them, and judge whether the child of God has not now a better portion than the wicked, even if tribulation and poverty be also his.

“Thou hast holden me by my right hand.”

“Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel.”

“God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.”

And the conclusion of the whole matter is, "Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean

heart"—and their very trials are a proof of His goodness, and "it is good for me to draw near to God."

## "HE SAID ... GO ..... AND THEY WENT!"

(W. BRAMWELL DECK.)

THERE is something peculiarly challenging in the closing verses of St. Mark's Gospel.

Just risen from among the dead, in all the joy of resurrection triumph; and about to be "received up into heaven"; the blessed Lord met His disciples.

"And He said unto them, GO ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. . . . And they went forth, AND PREACHED EVERYWHERE, the Lord working with them, and confirming the Word with signs following" (Mark 16. 15, 20).

We have no hesitation in saying that to all disciples the Lord is still saying, "GO." He is calling some to Africa, to China, to India, to South America, and to other distant lands. Can it be placed on record of them—"AND THEY WENT"? Others He is calling to "GO" to the unconverted members of their household; to those with whom they work; to their next door neighbour; to those who live in the same street, etc. It may be that in this way He would seek to train some for service further afield. In some places geography is now taught by what is known as the "Regional" method. The teacher speaks to the class about the school, the playground, the village or town, the county, the country, the empire, the world. In that way their minds expand, their ideas broaden, and they are educated to think imperially. So we commence each in our own little corner, gradually extend our sphere of interest, and

ultimately, think, and pray, give of our substance, and perhaps later work for the Lord, with the whole range of His interest in view, ever keeping Himself as the centre motive and object of our labours (Acts 20. 27). "Oh, but the difficulties are so great." They are; and if the Lord leaves us here, they may become greater, but He is with us.

When "they went forth," *not before*, they found that they had "the Lord working with them, and confirming the Word with signs following." With them was the unseen but irresistible power of the Lord Himself. Before that power nothing could stand. Satan is already a defeated foe; against the power of the Lord he has no chance; and that power is at our disposal as soon as we go forth. What marvellous grace is this that the Lord who might have chosen other means of blessing His creatures, places Himself by the side of the humblest disciple, and deigns to work with him or her for the carrying out of His purposes.

Beloved fellow-believer, the day of grace will soon close; the "coming of the Lord draweth nigh"; our moment of opportunity will soon be past; shall we listen to His call to-day? and whether it be to our family; to our business associates; to our neighbours; to the bedside of the sick and dying; to a Sunday-school class; to the street corner; or to the ends of the earth; shall we hear Him say, "GO"; and shall we give Him the joy of saying, "AND THEY WENT"?

# THINK!

WHAT losers many of us are by not cultivating the habit of THINKING! We read the Bible, its words become familiar to us, and we pass them by without asking ourselves questions concerning them.

In ordinary affairs the man who does not habitually observe and think for himself is seriously handicapped. It is the same in spiritual things. Some Christians are content to be *spoon-fed* all their lives, hearing the thoughts of others expressed in Bible-readings and addresses, but not thinking out things for themselves. IF they read books, it is more with the idea of seeking information than of finding fresh food for thought. I emphasize the word "if," for in this superficial day there are many who do not read books at all (except story books). They read magazine articles, if not too "solid," and snippets from the papers, but have no appetite for well-written books that treat their subjects exhaustively.

But even solid reading will be of little real use to us unless accompanied by *thought*. We are exhorted in the Word of God to meditate and to ponder, and these are but other ways of saying, THINK!

Our thinking faculties need to be exercised, just as really as our muscles. The Christian's brain is one of the members that are now to be yielded unto God (Rom. vi. 13). If we can use our feet to run on His errands, and our lips to proclaim His messages, so we can use our brains to ponder and meditate on His Word. And for this training and exercise are needed.

In saying this, let no one imagine that we are overlooking the necessity of whole-hearted dependence on the Spirit of God to give us understanding in divine things. Human intelligence is not sufficient, just as the possession of a pair of lips does not suffice to make a man a preacher of the gospel. He needs the help and power of the Spirit of God. But still, he *does* need his lips as well, and he has to use them. Otherwise he would be no preacher.

Even so with our minds. The greatest of intellects will not *of itself* enable us to understand the teachings of the Word. We need the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit. But still, we must use the intelligence that God has given us, and must cultivate it. Otherwise we shall make but little progress in the understanding of the Scriptures.

This paper is not intended as a mere exhortation, and these prefatory words would not have been written, save for the necessity of removing misconceptions. It is the writer's desire to *help* his younger brethren and sisters to cultivate habits of thought, and to this end he proposes to set them some exercises.

The exercises that follow are not meant to be merely read through. That will do you no good at all. They are set with the object of getting you to think. And it will help you to have a pencil in your hand, and to write down in black and white the result of your thinking.

I am going to set three problems before you, and for the sake of variety one shall be purely Biblical, one dispensational, and one dealing with the service of the Lord. Let us take the one dealing with the Lord's service first.

## PROBLEM NO. 1—MISSIONARY.

A servant of the Lord in Brazil, in a letter home, says: "As I write, my mind goes back eighteen years to the wise precept of Dr. Wilson: 'Be more anxious to bring Christ to the Brazilians than to bring the Brazilians to Christ.'"

Now do a little keen thinking. Do you, or do you not, agree with this precept? Is it more important to bring Christ to souls than to bring souls to Christ? Can the one be done without the other? Be very definite in your conclusion as to what Dr. Wilson actually meant by bringing Christ to the Brazilians. Then write down what your considered judgment is as to the wisdom, or otherwise, of the precept in question.

## PROBLEM NO. 2—BIBLICAL.

Have you thoughtfully worked out Problem No. 1? Please do not proceed with this one until you have.

Here is Problem No. 2. An able Bible Student, in a conversation at lunch, made the following remark: "God has been pleased to make a revelation of Himself in *words*, therefore I devote my life to the study of those words."

The following extract is culled from an American magazine: "The Bible is like a telescope, and a telescope is not merely to be looked at, but looked through."

Do you discern any divergence of thought here? Does my friend or the American writer view things from the right standpoint? If a father makes his son a present of an astronomical telescope it is not that the boy may make a minute study of the instrument and get to know all about lenses, but that he may study the stars. To know how lenses are made, and to be able to classify them and distinguish between different sorts may be very interesting, but one can study the stars and learn much of astronomy without doing that.

Is it altogether true to say that God has made a revelation of Himself in words? Suppose that never a word had been written, would not the revelation which God gave of Himself in *Christ* still be perfect and complete? But without the words, would it be a revelation to us? Think keenly here.

The words of God are divinely inspired. They are like silver purified seven times. (Ps. 12. 6). Are they not then worthy of our profoundest study? But if God had given us a telescope wherewith to scan the heavens, would not that telescope, like all His works, be absolutely perfect in all its details? Yet the divine intention would be, not so much that we should study the instrument as that we should use it as the means of studying His handiwork in the skies.

But, after all, is the Bible like a telescope? Is it given to us as the means whereby we may study CHRIST, and become acquainted with the great and wonderful things of God, things that He has done, things that He will do; things that He has given, and things that show us what He is? And can we use the Bible to arrive at a knowledge of these things without studying the very words which the Spirit of God uses to tell us about them?

Consider these questions. Ask yourself others. The more you think, the more questions you will find clamouring for an answer. Think what the answers should be. And after you have thought definitely, and without undue haste, write down your conclusion in not more than twenty words.

Do you say that I am setting you a hard task? But you do not want to be doing *baby* lessons all your days, do you? You ask, perhaps, why you should do the task at all. If you feel like that, then shirk it. There is no compulsion. But in shirking it you will miss a wholesome stimulus to what you cannot do without, if you are to be a robust Christian, and not a spiritual weakling—*concentration of thought*.

## PROBLEM NO. 3—DISPENSATIONAL.

The Author of *God's Methods with Man* says: "I solemnly protest against the common mistake concerning the calling of Israel to God's service, that God abandoned the world, and took but a few people for Himself."

Is the Doctor right in saying this? In thinking out this question, first collect your data on which to base your conclusions. Your data, of course, will have to be passages of Scripture. What Scriptures bear upon the point? Is it enough to remember that God's promise to Abram was that in him all the families of the earth should be blessed? Has the argument of the apostle in Rom. 3. 29, that God is not the God of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles, any bearing on the

matter? Must we take into account the thrice-repeated statement as to the Gentiles in Rom. 1., that "God gave them up"? What other Scriptures must we have before us before we can begin to form our conclusions? And when all the necessary data are before you, what do you deduce from them? Think! Did God abandon the world and take but a few people (Israel) for Himself?

Now if you have honestly and conscientiously worked out these three problems (and I hope you have not attempted to do so at one sitting!), you will have done a good deal towards strengthening your powers of thought. But do not be content with this. Set other problems for yourself. When you are reading, ask yourself questions. If it is any book but the Bible, no matter by whom written, frequently

ask yourself, Is this indeed so? Is the writer correct in his statement?

In reading the Scriptures your questions will be of a different kind, but *let there be questions*. Ask yourself, Do I really understand this? How should I explain it if asked as to its meaning? Why should this follow that? What connection has it with what goes before?

If you will thus *exercise* your thinking faculty, you will be surprised to find how soon you begin to think almost instinctively, and what an immense difference it makes in your reading. It will make the Bible a new book to you. Fresh beauties will thrust themselves upon your notice. Pray earnestly for the help of God, and ask Him to guide your thoughts into the right channel, so that the meditation of your heart may be acceptable in His sight (Ps. 19. 14).

## THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST.

CONSIDER the One who came into the world in Luke 2. Everything that He did was perfect and worthy to be recorded, and on the holy mount God glorified Him, BUT HE DESCENDED FROM THAT MOUNT TO DIE. Nothing shows me more how unfeeling we are than when we speak of the cross. Ah! we are like sons who live on the means their father toiled to procure without feeling it. Look at Psalm 22. All the accumulation of evil pours itself out on the head of our blessed Lord. The power of Satan is there and all the malice and inveterate hatred of hell. Men are there in open revolt against God, without pity for the lonely Sufferer, heaping shame and dishonour upon Him; every phase of man's hatred of what is altogether holy finds its expression there, intensified a thousandfold under the unrestrained influence of Satan. Sin was there, sin laid upon our holy Substitute, and the judgment of God. No one ever knew the extent of offences against God but the Lord Jesus Christ. How can we understand what sin

against God means? Nothing can tell it to us but the cross. No one could possibly know the distance that sin had put man away from God but the One who ever abode in His love. There are two things which Jesus alone knew, the sin of man and the heart of God. He was forsaken—the solitary One, with all the force of sin and Satan upon Him. Oh! how unfeeling we are to live and walk about the earth with such a small sense of the death of Christ. People walking in a cemetery where a mother lies buried have more feeling.

He who propounded the law and fixed the penalty bears the penalty Himself and maintains its inviolability. God has been glorified in His Son paying the penalty, and He who paid it is raised from the dead by the glory of the Father; and now we see A MAN IN THE GLORY who bore our penalty on the cross. There is now a ministration of righteousness from the glory. I look up and see that I have a Saviour in the very place from whence I had no right to expect anything but judgment.

## CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP.

(H. HUNNERLEY.)

THE original word meaning to share a thing in common is used in the New Testament nineteen times. Twelve times it is translated "Fellowship," four times "Communion," once "Communication," once "Contribution," and once "Distribution."

We propose running briefly through several references, trusting it may lead to a study of Scripture on a subject which is surely a matter of the deepest importance to every Christian.

## FELLOWSHIP IN THE LIGHT.

*"If we walk in the light, as He (God) is in the light, we (Christians) have fellowship one with another"* (1 John 1. 7).

No longer hidden behind a veil, God is now in the light, He has been fully revealed in Christ. His true nature and being, His perfections and excellencies, His counsels and purposes, have all been manifested. And in this marvellous light all believers are set, having been made perfectly fit to be there in virtue of the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, which cleanseth us from all sin.

The light in which Christians walk is the revelation of God as He truly is. All that was in His heart for His people before the worlds were made has come to light. "That which eye had not seen, nor ear heard," is now made known. Blessings great and many, such as life and incorruptibility, are now disclosed.

All that has come to light is the joint privilege of all who are Christians. Just as the sun's beneficent rays shine equally for prince and peasant, so the light is the common portion of all believers. It is *in it* they have fellowship one with another. They all have an equal share, a mutual possession, and can rejoice that whatever differences of spiritual growth there may be, whether they are babes, young men, or fathers, no believer has better title than another to all that is found in the light.

A father may bequeath a property, making his children joint possessors, so God our Father has called every one of His children to share equally the portion He has given to His saints. The light is the *sphere* of their common participation. All Christians are in the light; all that is in the light is theirs equally; they partake in common, and thus have "fellowship one with another."

## APOSTOLIC FELLOWSHIP.

*"They continued stedfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. . . all that believed were together, and had all things common"* (Acts 2. 42, 44).

Here we see an answer to our Lord's prayer in John 17., that all who believed through the apostles' word might be visibly one, with a view to the world believing that the Father had sent the Son.

The apostles' "word" (their doctrine, or teaching) had been believed, resulting in the formation of a fellowship, the gathering of a company of persons who outwardly expressed their identity with each other by breaking bread and praying together. This fellowship became a powerful testimony to the world; for the first time there existed a perfectly unselfish company, having tender consideration for each other; knit together in heart and soul, seeking each other's spiritual welfare and caring for each other's bodily needs.

Here is the perfect model of Christian fellowship in display. Here we see the "great grace," the reciprocal love, the practical holiness of fellowship in its inception and inauguration. Holiness, love, self-renunciation marked the gathered company and distinguished their fellowship. An exalted Jesus, made Lord and Christ, was the apostolic theme; of Him they spoke in public, to His God and Father they prayed in private.

These early Christians knew not the great doctrines of the Church; they were not yet acquainted with the divine counsels afterwards made known through Paul, but they were held together in a marvellous way. How was this? It was in consequence of the advent of a divine Person. They were in the fellowship of the Holy Ghost. This was the true secret of their practical oneness. He had baptized them into one body, united them to each other and to their living Head in heaven, flooded their hearts with God's love, and witnessed with their spirit that they were the children of God. He was the earnest of their glorious inheritance; the seal, marking them as belonging to God: their unction and power.

Sent from the Father and the Son, He had come to be the link of union between the children of God, the uniting bond to hold them together. His presence formed a unity, He dwelt in each individually and in the whole corporately. It was one and the same Spirit in all, hence He produced thoughts and feelings in common. Thank God, the bond which bound together those Pentecostal saints remains. The Holy Spirit dwells in the Assembly. He is still the power of unity.

#### THE FELLOWSHIP OF GOD'S SON.

*"God is faithful, by whom ye were called into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ, our Lord"* (1 Cor. 1. 9).

The preposition *of* reminds us that this fellowship emanates from the Son of God. He is its producing cause. John writes of a fellowship Christians have *with* the Father and the Son; Paul speaks here of the fellowship of Christians *with each other*, God's Son being the bond of union, the centre of attraction, the powerful magnet which draws them together. They have in Him an equal partnership, a common interest, a mutual share.

By the call of God *all* believers are saints, and they are also "called" to

share together all that is treasured up in His beloved Son, Jesus, the Christ, our Lord.

A right understanding of that which is implied in these names and titles thus becomes of paramount importance, for a denial of the deity of the Son of God, of His eternal relationship with the Father before all worlds, of that which He became in time, would invalidate anyone's claim to be in the fellowship of God's Son.

Jesus in His personal name. No name has charms like this. It speaks of the lowly grace of that blessed One who sorrowed and suffered all through His pathway here, and then gave up His life for us at the end. His spotless humanity, His absolute freedom from either inherent or acquired sin, enabled Him to offer Himself without spot to God. Holy and perfect in nature, words, and works, His earthly life was a sweet odour to God from the manger to the cross.

His absolute perfection as a Man, His atoning work on the cross, form an integral part of the faith of all who are in the fellowship of God's Son. Only those can be truly said to be in this fellowship who hold the doctrine of the Scriptures of truth, concerning the Person and work of Him Who is Son of Man and Son of God.

Lord and Christ are acquired titles. Christ means the anointed of God, the Vessel of God's purpose and counsel, the Centre of that blissful universe which, in the fulness of times, shall be headed up in Him. He is the exalted Head over all things, and is also Head of His body, the Church. In Him she is blessed with great and boundless blessings, with Him she soon will share all the glories that await Him in the day of glory soon to dawn; she is His body, the complement of the Head, the bride who engages the affections of His heart.

A word as to the title "Lord." In the world there are lords many; to the Christian there is but one, the

Lord Jesus Christ. In Him they have righteousness and redemption, wisdom and sanctification. He is the all-sufficiency of His people, their powerful resource at all times.

To His name they are to gather; it is their Lord's death they commemorate; of His table they partake. Their bodies are His; their victory over sin, Satan, and death they ascribe to Him. In Him their labour is not in vain; it is His authority they own; for Him they look, the Lord from heaven; in His name they are set apart; for His pleasure they are to live. His will has to be consulted; His authority maintained; His pleasure sought; His word obeyed.

David's servants kept rank because all were of one heart to make David king. Their mind was set on one object, thus their feet were kept walking in unison. Herein lies the secret of true Christian fellowship. When the Lordship of Jesus is owned, when His glorious Person as "God over all, blessed for ever," and yet perfect Man, becomes the commanding, absorbing object, the centre of attraction, then we enter into the true bond, which unites those called of God into the fellowship of His Son.

It is *HIMSELF*, not a creed, not an organization, not correct church principles, but God's Son, that blessed One who shall shortly be the centre of heaven's joy, the adored object of the redeemed, who alone by the Holy Spirit binds Christians together in true association with each other.

Their fellowship has its expression in the remembrance of their absent Lord, hence the next fellowship of which we read is

#### THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" (1 Cor. 10, 16).

What a precious expression of association! We share the same bread at the Lord's Supper, for we being many are "one bread," one body. The poured-out cup, the broken loaf, recall that precious Saviour, the SON OF GOD, who gave Himself for us in death, a death which has glorified God, revealed His love, and put away our sins.

Breaking bread together we call Him to mind; we do not come together to recall our sins, but to remember Jesus our Lord, who HAS PUT THEM ALL AWAY, to think of Him, to show forth the death of our Saviour. We think of His love; it is Himself who fixes the eyes of our heart as we drink the cup and break the bread.

In His death all Christians have a common interest, an equal share in its far-reaching effects. It has made peace, brought us nigh to God, atoned for our guilt, loosed us from our sins, purged our consciences. For all this we are profoundly thankful, but He whom we call to remembrance, who engages our thoughts, is the slain Lamb, the Son of God, the Lord of glory, the revealer of the Father.

One with Him where He now is, as we eat and drink together commemoratively, WE RECALL HIM WHERE HE ONCE WAS. We do this, if our act is intelligent, in the recognition of the truth that by one Spirit we are baptized into one body. It is expressive of common membership of the body of Christ. "We being many are one bread, one body."

Responsibility also flows from this. The table of the Lord and the table of demons cannot be connected with each other, for breaking the bread and drinking the cup commits us to all that is involved in the death of Christ; it is the outward and visible expression of fellowship in a death which has severed us from the world and separated us to God. Hence we are to be careful not to imperil that fellowship, nor compromise it, as they

did at Corinth, by evil conduct or unholy associations.

There is also a family bond in Christian fellowship, and this we are privileged to enjoy.

#### FELLOWSHIP WITH THE FATHER AND THE SON.

*"Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ"* (1 John 1. 3).

Eternal life had been manifested, the apostles had seen, heard, handled the Word of Life. That eternal life which was with the Father they bore witness to, in order that others might have fellowship with them. Their fellowship was with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ.

The Son, who ever dwelt in the Father's bosom even when in this world, has unfolded its most profound secrets. In the Word become flesh and dwelling among men, a glory shone forth never before expressed, the glory of the **ONLY BEGOTTEN OF THE FATHER**. The relationships which had existed from all eternity were now declared in time, its intimacies and affections were brought to light.

Over and over again the Father expressed His delight in the Son whilst here, a Son who always afforded Him pleasure in every act and word, to Whom He showed all things which He Himself did, and with Whom there was abiding, unbroken fellowship. We Christians are privileged to have community of thoughts, feelings, joys, with the Father and the Son. Wonderful grace! We live now in, and of, the Son, have His life and His Spirit, are thus empowered to share in the joys of fellowship with the Father and the Son.

The manifested life was beheld by the apostles; their writings set before us what they saw, in order that we may have fellowship with them. In contemplating the excellencies and perfections of Jesus they found their joy. In proportion to the occupation

of our affections with Him, we have fellowship with them, and our joy is full.

#### FELLOWSHIP WITH SAINTS IN NEED.

*"Praying us with much entreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints"* (2 Cor. 8. 4).

Need had arisen at Jerusalem. Macedonia and Achaia, acting under the influence of brotherly love, recognizing that all saints were one, even if locally separated, determined to send them relief.

Paul and others were entrusted with the contribution, and thus had "fellowship" with them.

This gave occasion to Paul to tell them that God loved a cheerful giver, that reaping is according to sowing, and that the effect of their loving service was fourfold. It supplied the needs of the poor; it drew from them thanksgiving to God; bowed their knees in prayer for the givers; and proved subjection to the gospel, by the grace of God manifested in the givers. He also assured them that God was able to make all grace abound, so that always having all sufficiency in all things they might abound to every good work, and recalled the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who left all His wealth in glory to become poor in order to enrich us, and concluded in a burst of thanksgiving to God for a gift which no words could set forth, no language describe, **UNSPEAKABLE!**

We may well challenge ourselves as to "fellowship" in this way, whether we practically know that "it is more blessed to give than to receive."

These Macedonian saints were poor, but those at Jerusalem were poorer still; so, seeing their brethren and sisters in need, they did not shut up their bowels of compassion. Out of their *deep poverty* abounded the riches of their liberality, and "beyond their

power" they ministered to them, first giving themselves to the Lord. Practical, very practical fellowship, this. It did not button up its pockets and say, "Be ye warmed and filled," but liberally distributed to them and to all, thus glorifying God and comforting His tried and suffering people in their extremity.

#### FELLOWSHIP OF SAINTS WITH SERVANTS.

*"I thank my God . . . for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now"* (Phil. 1. 3, 5).

The saints at both Corinth and Philippi had been called into the fellowship of God's Son, but there was a fellowship at Philippi to which they of Corinth were strangers. The latter had to be reminded that God had "ordained that those who preached the gospel should live of the gospel." The former needed no such reminder. Lydia's heart was opened by the Lord; she then opened her house to His servants, and the company of saints with which she was locally connected opened their purse, and sent "once and again" an expression of fellowship. It took this very practical form. Nor did it wax dim when Paul could no longer visit them; it lasted from the "first day" until he was at death's door.

The Holy Spirit lets us know that fellowship of this kind is an acceptable sacrifice, and that it ascends as an odour of a sweet smell to God. But it needs cultivation. He that is taught is exhorted to communicate temporal good things, in return for spiritual ministrations (Gal. 6. 6).

#### FELLOWSHIP IN SERVICE.

*"James, Cephas, and John . . . gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision"* (Gal. 2. 9).

Paul goes forth to the regions beyond, to carry the glad tidings

where Christ had never been named, to evangelize the nations. Peter shepherds the lambs and sheep of the circumcision, ministers among the gathered out of Israel, writes to the scattered flock, tells them Paul has written some things "hard to be understood," but attributes it all to the "wisdom he had given to him," speaks of him as "our beloved brother."

What a difference in the character and sphere of their service! Yet what hearty co-operation, what fellowship between them! Both recognized that they were serving one Master and ungrudgingly gave to each other the right hand of fellowship. There was no depreciation of each other, no setting up one character of ministry as more elevated than another, no vaunting of the gospel as being more important than shepherding the flock, nor, on the other hand, setting up teaching and pastoring as more excellent than evangelizing.

#### FELLOWSHIP OF HIS SUFFERINGS.

*"That I may know Him . . . and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable to His death"* (Phil. 3. 10).

The sufferings of Christ were many and varied. There were sorrows that He endured, which His followers might also pass through; others He alone could taste. Who but Christ could bear the heavy burden of our sins, atone for our guilt, endure the judgment of God? In His vicarious and atoning sufferings **NONE CAN SHARE**; but there were others, endured at man's hand, fruit of the natural enmity of man's heart to God, that others could feel with Him.

The Pharisees and scribes had dogged His steps until they wrung from the unwilling governor an undeserved condemnation, and the faithful and true Witness sealed His testimony with His blood, and died a Martyr to the truth. Paul, in the Lamartine

dungeon, also had been persecuted to the death of these religious bigots, but he welcomed the prospect of conformity to the death of his adored Master, knowing full well that resurrection awaited him beyond the tomb.

China and India, Africa and Madagascar, have added to the list of those who in fellowship with the sufferings of their martyred Lord, followed Him into the regions of death, sure of a glorious resurrection, cheered by the One who could say, "I am He that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

#### FELLOWSHIP OF THE MYSTERY.

*"The fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God"* (Eph. 3. 9).

There are many "mysteries," but the one referred to here is, that out of Jew and Gentile, "one new man" has been formed, livingly and indissolubly united to a glorious Head in heaven. All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in this mystery; principalities and powers in heavenly places behold in it the all-various wisdom of God. Every Christian is a component part of Christ's body. As Eve was of Adam, so the Church is of Christ, part and parcel of Himself, "of His body, His flesh, and His bones."

It is easy to discern how all-important it is, in determining the question of Christian fellowship, to weigh this secret now made known, that the "Gentiles should be fellow heirs and of the same body" (Eph. 3. 6). It takes believers out of Judaism, with its earthly system of religion, on one hand, and out of Paganism, with its idolatrous worship, on the other. It sets both in a new relation to Christ and to each other, as one body united to a heavenly Head.

This mystery is variously referred to in the Ephesian epistle. In chap. 1. it is spoken of as the "fulness of Him that filleth all in all." In chap. 2. as "one new man," and the habitation in which God now dwells on earth by the Holy Ghost, and as that which "groweth into an holy temple in the Lord." Chap. 3. views it as the vessel in glory in which all the excellencies and perfections of Christ will be displayed, and this not only in the world to come, but throughout eternal ages. Then in chap. 4. a victorious Christ, having ascended on high, has given evangelists and pastors and teachers for its edification and perfection. In chap. 5. the Church is nourished and cherished by Christ, as His body now; and as His bride she will be presented to Himself all glorious, for His eternal satisfaction.

## CHRIST AND HIS ASSEMBLY.

THE Sanctifier and the sanctified are all of one; it is complete identification with His people; He loves them because they are the objects of the love of God, and the gift of His Father to Him during His rejection, before He receives the kingdom. Have you affection for Him? Are you glad to be in His company? Are you pleased to be in the assembly where He meets His saints? If you are dull in the assembly, you have not in the affection of your heart got to Him, and we only have affection for Him in the

measure in which we are under the influence of His love. The assembly begins with the Lord's supper, which sets forth that which was the expression of His love, and thus we are led into it by the Spirit. If we really understood the privileges of the assembly, where He is pleased to be, I do not think we could bear the thought of being absent. If we knew more of the love of Christ we should be more ready to respond to it, and our love would go out to those who are the objects of His love, to all the saints.

# THAT DAY. 2 Tim. 1. 12, 18 ; 4. 8.

(JAMES BOYD.)

We do not usually connect finding "mercy" with "that day," i.e., the day of the Lord; what does 2 Tim. 1. 18 mean?

WE are accustomed to connect with the closing days of this present age two distinct movements of our Lord and Saviour—the rapture of the Church, and His appearing to this world, when He shall set up His kingdom; and this is not in itself altogether wrong. But if we hold these great truths rigidly, as isolated actions, having no bearing upon one another, we are certain to find ourselves at a loss to understand passages of Scripture in which saints are viewed with relation to these two events.

For instance, we expect our Lord to come into the air and remove us from this world unnoticed by those who are left behind, and then to appear with Him at His manifestation to the world (1 Thess. 4. 13-18; Col. 3. 4) when He will come in judgment (2 Thess. 1. 7-11). We shall be with Him in heaven when the judgments prefatory to His appearing shall be poured out upon the earth. I refer to the opening of the seals, the sounding of the trumpets, and the emptying of the vials upon the earth (Rev. 5-18). We have not been appointed to wrath (2 Thess. v. 9), and therefore like Enoch we are translated before the judgments are let loose upon this rebellious scene.

But the Corinthians were awaiting the *revelation* of Christ; that is, His appearing to the world. And Peter writing to the dispersion reminds them of the grace that is to be brought to them at the revelation (1 Pet. 1. 13). And Timothy was to keep the commandment spotless until the appearing of Jesus Christ (1 Tim. 6. 14). This is puzzling to some who divorce the rapture of the Church from the appearing.

In John 6. we have the Lord saying four times to the Jews, regarding those that should believe on Him: "I will raise him up at the last day"; that is,

the last day of this present age, which introduces the Messianic age, or reign of Christ. But we look for the resurrection of such at the rapture of the Church, and not at His appearing. I have thought that this might be explained by the fact that at the revelation of our Lord, when He appears to the world, those who have died between the rapture of the Church and His appearing are then raised (Rev. 20. 4-6), and that this completes the first resurrection, and then is fulfilled the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor. 15. 51-57), and I am confirmed in this thought by the quotation, which is from Isaiah 25. 8, 9, for there it clearly refers to the presence of Christ, and millennial blessing.

Paul also speaks of the ability of the Lord to keep that which he had committed to Him against *that day*, clearly the day of the Lord. His desire for Oresiphorus was that he might find mercy of the Lord in *that day*. His confidence was that the Lord would give to him, and to all who love His appearing, a crown of righteousness in *that day*. James exhorts saints to be patient unto the *coming* (*presence*) of the Lord (James 5. 7). Peter says that, however ignorantly scoffers might deride the hope of believers, "The *day of the Lord* will come as a thief in the night" (2 Pet. 3. 10).

I gather from all this that the short period from the translation of the Church to heaven until the appearing of the Lord with the Church in glory is *one* in nature and character, and that in the mind of the Spirit the various events are grouped together as forming but one dispensation of God, any one of which can be taken up and made to apply to the state and circumstance of His people upon earth at any time. Even the removal of the Church from

this scene may be viewed as the beginning of God's dealings with the earth, for whatever the failure of the Church may be, it is the greatest light ever found upon earth, short of the presence of the Lord Himself. Besides, its removal is only preparatory to the letting loose of the judgments that will increase in intensity until the last and most terrible judgment of all, the revelation of the Lord with the angels of His might in flaming fire. Therefore this whole period may be spoken of as "The last day"—"That day"—"The revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ," for the beginning of "That day" is the removal of the Church from the earth.

Therefore we are looking for the appearing of the glory of the great God our Saviour Jesus Christ (Titus ii. 13). And therefore, though we know that the profession of Christ upon earth has become so corrupt that judgment must first begin at it, we look for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life (1 Pet. 4. 17; Jude 21). The desire of Paul for Onesiphorus was that he might find mercy of the Lord in "that day" (2 Tim. i. 16-18). The mercy would be shown in his translation to heaven at the very earliest glimmer of the morning of that day. Where that which has been set up on earth as a witness for a rejected Christ has become unfaithful and corrupt, the faithful can only look for mercy from the Lord in view of the judgment of that with which he is connected.

There is great danger in making too great a separation between what we speak of as the rapture of the Church and the appearing of our Lord in glory. In one way it is all one coming of our Lord. When He rises from the right hand of God His objective is the earth and the kingdom. But when He comes into the air He calls us up to meet Him, and the point where He meets His saints is the point where He reveals Himself to the world in His majesty and power. I do not see that that point is ever surrendered. We have a fairly good illustration of

the rapture and the appearing in Paul's journey to Rome. When he was on his way to that city the brethren met him at Appii Forum and Tres Tabernæ, and with them He went on to Rome. And therefore do we look for His appearing, for on His journey to earth we shall meet Him in the air, and eventually come the rest of the way with Him, for when He shall appear we shall appear with Him in glory (Col. iii. 4).

If we see things in the way in which they are presented in the Word of God we shall see nothing but infinite perfection, and we shall be able to admire the beauty and grandeur of God's Revelation.

We would add a further thought in answer to the foregoing question. In our life of responsibility on earth we need mercy, and grace has brought us to know God who is rich in it, so the first glimmer of light as to what He is makes the sinner cry, "God be merciful to me." Thus is our misery met at the beginning by His mercy, and full forgiveness is ours. But having obtained mercy we still need to obtain it day by day and hour by hour, for as to our responsible life we are weak and imperfect, thence we have the High Priest and the throne of grace, and at that throne we can obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need (Heb. 4. 16). It has been pointed out that in the epistles addressed to individuals, mercy is generally introduced into the salutation (see 1 and 2 Timothy; Titus; and 2 John). This emphasizes the individual need in the responsible life. "That day" will bring into clear manifestation of what sort the responsible life has been, all our works will be tested there, and as all are conscious of failure even in that which has been done solely from love to Christ, all will feel the need of mercy. The judgment seat of Christ will be the winding up of the life of responsibility as the Lord's witnesses, and as we found mercy at the start and all the way through, so shall we find it at the end.—(Ed.).

# THE MIGHTY MEN OF DAVID. No. 1. (H. J. VINE.)

DAVID was the anointed of God, and the throne of Israel was his; but it was during the time of his rejection that the sterling qualities of his mighty men were tested and proven in hardship and warfare. So it is to-day; our Lord Jesus Christ, the Anointed of God, is rejected by the world, He is not yet owned as universal Lord, and to us "it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake" (Phil. 1. 29). We know that His final exaltation is assured, and that, like David, He will reign supreme; then those who suffer with Him now will reign with Him.

Before David was enthroned, Saul was ruler. He proved himself to be an oppressor, and illustrates what the flesh is to-day; and yet though he was the king of the people's choice, they afterwards owned that they gained more through David than through Saul, even when the latter was king (1 Chron. 11. 2). The world owes infinitely more to our Lord Jesus Christ than to the men of its choice, even though He is still rejected by it. Saul owned Jehovah, but persecuted the chosen of the Lord; and though at one time he attempted to rid the country of the spiritists of that day, as the word of the Lord commanded, yet, when a time of testing fell upon himself, he turned to spiritism for aid, thus asking for punishment according to his own dealings with others; so he died for his transgression, and also "for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit to enquire of it" (1 Chron. 10. 13). Christendom, too, will hasten its doom by a revival of this dark science as we are "expressly" told in 1 Tim. 4. 1; 2 Thes. 2. 9, 10; Rev. 18. 2; and numerous other passages; but just as this preceded the day of David's public exaltation, so will it be also before Christ shines forth in majesty and splendour. "David waxed greater and greater; for the Lord of hosts was with him" and he

sat upon the throne and ruled the people as the king of God's choice.

## "WITH DAVID."

The mighty men of David shared in his glory even as they had shared in his rejection. They had suffered with him, and now they reigned with him. That is the divine order. Before the day dawns of Christ's glorious reign, it is granted to us to suffer with Him; and thus, like David's soldiers, we shall know our Lord Jesus Christ and His perfections in a peculiar sense, and prove Him indeed to be "our life, our all." Then "when Christ who is our life shall appear, we also shall appear with Him in glory." The knowledge of Christ and His love will make us "more than conquerors" in all the trials and conflicts of the present time. The mighty men were David's. They knew the one to whom they belonged. They had confidence in the one they served and suffered with. That is the secret.

Before speaking of the devoted service of these men we must point out that previous to David's reign at Jerusalem he was anointed king at Hebron. Now Hebron means alliance, or friendship. There "David made a covenant" with the elders before the Lord, "and they anointed David king over Israel, according to the word of the Lord by Samuel." "Behold," they said, "*We are thy bone and thy flesh*" (1 Chron. 1. 11). That is very striking, for the assembly, which is presented to Christ, the anointed of God, before He publicly takes up the kingdom, is said to be "of His flesh and of His bones" (Eph. 5. 30). It says of those who went to David, They came with a perfect heart to Hebron, and they were "*with David*" three days eating and drinking, and there was joy in Israel. Who shall tell "the exceeding joy" that shall fill every heart when we are presented blameless before Him to whom glory, majesty, might and authority belong.

Afterwards David took Zion, the true earthly centre of rule—for God's Anointed is to be set as King upon His holy hill of Zion (Ps. 2. 6); and Jerusalem is to become the city of the great King. There Christ is yet to be worshipped by all the nations and all the families of the earth (Zech. 14. 16, 17). David's greatness, and prosperity, and name was sounded abroad; "and the fame of David went out into all lands; and the Lord brought the fear of him upon all nations." What a day of supreme splendour will it be when that which faith substantiates to us now, actually lights up all with its radiance! Mount Zion, the city of the living God, heavenly Jerusalem; myriads of angels, the universal gathering; the assembly of firstborn ones, enregistered in heaven; with our Lord Jesus Christ the Sun and Centre of all—rising as this does from the earthly to the heavenly—like the ladder Jacob saw, set up on earth and reaching to heaven, ascending far above the earthly glory of David to that of our Lord Jesus Christ,—in Whom shall be headed up all things in heaven and earth.

### "THE FIRST THREE."

David reached the throne to which God had appointed him at last. Through suffering, misrepresentation, rejection and conflict he was sustained by the Lord, who brought him through all his afflictions triumphantly and made him ruler over His people. The sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow are wonderfully illustrated in David; therefore lessons of great value are to be learned from the records of the Holy Spirit concerning those who shared in David's suffering and glory. Three are singled out specially, and are called variously—"The first three," "The three," also "These three mightiest" (1 Chron. 11. 19-21). Then we have mention of a second three mighty men; and others too are spoken of in the same chapter.

David's three nephews — Joab,

Abishai and Asahel—were bound to the anointed of God by ties of relationship and affection, and they shared his trials when all seemed to go wrong with David. Devotedness to Christ (known and loved in closer and abiding relationships) will keep us in the path which leads to glory during the present period. Joab was the "chief and captain" (11. 6) of all; and his brother Abishai was chief of the second three (20); while Asahel's career was cut short through overmuch zeal, unbalanced by the necessary grace and wisdom; and what might have been a brilliant path of service was ended suddenly by the spear of one of God's own people, a distinguished soldier, whom he insisted upon pursuing, notwithstanding timely warning. It is not for the servants of Christ to seek the hurt of any of God's children. Let a lesson be learned from Asahel's sad mistake. David never chased Saul, though Saul often sought David's life. We must learn of our Lord and Leader. Learn of Me, He said, and for this we must be with Him in separation.

Joab, the chief and captain of all, had a path of extraordinary success. Among the mighty men of David he stood head and shoulders above every one for military prowess and zeal. The Jebusites held the key position in the land. The fortress of Zion was in their hands. Joab took it from them; and, according to the word of David, this secured for him the chief place among the mighties. The importance of this capture was great, for it is the chosen centre of government on earth; and, in a future day, which will eclipse the brightest of the past "out of Zion shall go forth the law," and then men shall "learn war no more." Along with government, joy and songs of praise are to characterize Zion. Strange to say, it was the stronghold of the "treaders down," for that is the meaning of the name *Jebusites*. The "blind and the lame" were there, and they became the hated of David's soul, for he was taunted that *they*

could defend the castle successfully against him, because of its strength. There are always those who hold key positions that *tread down* God's heritage; and they are usually accompanied by those whose sight and walk are both wrong. Government they may attempt like Diotrefes and others, but joy and praise wither away under their oppressive influence.

Even with Joab himself there was a serious lack. Zeal, ability, diligence, devotedness to David's interests and quick perception plentifully marked him; but he never learned anything of David's grace. He conducted many a brilliant campaign, and often marched from victory to victory; but whoever stood in the way of what he thought necessary for David's honour, had to go under at all costs. The greater conquests he did not understand. His repugnance to numbering the people of God was right, but He was a stranger to moral triumphs over self; and David's victories through forgiveness, reconciliation and grace, he was therefore sadly in opposition to. He killed Abner after his reconciliation to David; and when he had slain Absalom contrary to his father's wish, he reproved David's grief over the death of his son. The feelings of the king's heart Joab never seemed to appreciate. He slew Amasa whom David had called to his service, and ended his days by being slain himself at the command of Solomon, after rebelling against David's wishes concerning his successor to the throne. Up to that time he had been a tireless soldier for David—a mighty man indeed, but he was graceless. "*Too hard!*" were the words of David concerning Joab and the other sons of his sister Zeruah. Their father he did not mention. The natural element seemed to dominate; for this appears to be the force of David's language: "*These men the sons of Zeruah be too hard for me.*"

Zealous, able Joab, the mightiest of David's mighty men, showed no grace

to others, and he found none for himself at the end. He was truly *too hard*, and often thought that his chief (a greater soldier by far than he) was *too soft*; therefore he ran counter to the wishes of David several times; and thus too he unhappily finished his course. Ah, the mind might reflect, how different it would have been had Joab learned of David as diligently as he served him! God grant that we may learn of the One who is greater than David, of the One who is meek and in heart lowly, of the One we desire to serve more devotedly, till the day breaks in splendour when He shall reign over all.

Jashobeam, an Hachmonite, is one of the three mightiest mentioned in 1 Chron. 11. He lifted up his spear against three hundred of David's enemies, and he slew them in one tremendous fight. This is the triumph that brought him into distinction, and he became "the chief of the captains"; nevertheless the true secret of his success was his attachment to David, whose rejection and sufferings he shared. Afterwards we find him still with David in the glory of his kingdom, and "over the first course for the first month was Jashobeam" (1 Chron. 27. 2). There may be something distinctive in our service for the Anointed of God now, as there will be in the kingdom rewards by-and-bye, but it is as we ourselves are constrained by the love of Christ to cleave to Himself, that faithful and fruitful service will result, service that will benefit *all* the children of God, for it must be remembered that David's soldiers served David in view of the good of *all Israel*, and not a mere section only.

Eleazar is the next named after Jashobeam. "He was *with David* at Pas-dammim"; and when all "the people fled from before the Philistines, they set themselves in the midst of a parcel of ground full of barley," and defeated their enemies so completely that they delivered it from them.

This victory is divinely put to Eleazar's credit; and he was one of the first three of the mighty men of David; but the two words "with David" explain why he was so successful. Others might flee in a time of stress, but not Eleazar—he was with David at "*Pas-dammim*," which means the "*boundary of blood*." There David first defeated the enemies of the God of Israel and slew the giant. It speaks of Calvary, where Christ overthrew the giant enemy that would have enthralled us in misery for ever, and saved us with an everlasting salvation. To serve Him well we must ever remember that the "boundary of blood"—"the blood of His cross"—is the ground of our eternal triumph and divides us from all that is against our Lord Jesus Christ.

"These three mightiest" shared together in one of the most touching incidents which is recorded of those hard and trying times. They were with David in the cave of Adullam, while the host of the Philistines held the valley, and had a garrison at Bethlehem. It was then that David's thoughts turned to the sweet water of the well which is at the gate of Bethlehem. His thirsty soul was set longing for a drink from its refreshing spring; and, without addressing any of his hardy, trusty companions, he exclaimed, "*Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, that is at the gate!*" The three mightiest caught the exclamation! They brake through the host of their enemies! They drew the water from the well and safely brought it to David! He "would not drink of it, but poured it out to the Lord."

His pious act revealed two things: he esteemed its value as too high for him and becoming the Lord alone; also that the fear of the Lord was always before him. A greater than David, however, the Son of God (David's Son according to the flesh) does drink of the springing water

which is brought to Him now, before He takes the throne of His glorious kingdom and dominion.

His enemies will be made his footstool! Every foe will be overthrown! Kings, and kingdoms, and nations will be overturned to make way for His reign of righteousness, peace and joy! but, meanwhile, we are told, "*He shall drink of the brook in the way, therefore shall He lift up the head.*" The three mightiest needed no command! David desired the water, that was enough! Is there not something He desires from our hearts? Shall we not be found with those who share His rejection—in "the cave" it may be (figurately speaking)—where His mighty men learn in His company what He longs for? Someone asks, "*What is that?*" Did He not say to the sinner at Sychar's well, "*Give Me to drink*"? and was it not to her also He spake of the water that should be in us springing up to eternal life, and likewise of worship? Does He receive the worship we bring? He does! for He is David's Lord as well as his Son, his Root as well as his Offspring. Do we gather with those who worship our Lord Jesus Christ? Do we seek to win others too, who also may become worshippers?

The three mightiest served David long and earnestly, but there is a sweet sense of devotedness to himself expressed by bringing the water of Bethlehem's well, that surpasses all else recorded of them. When we share in the kingdom and glory of Christ the opportunity of doing what this signifies will have passed for ever, even though we worship Him eternally, for there will be no enemies to break through then—no difficulties to overcome! Mary's alabaster flask of precious ointment cost a great deal, but the One she brought it to unasked set its price above silver and gold! If we serve Him together on the field of battle, let us not neglect to worship Him together in the sanctuary.

## GOD'S GOVERNMENT : (No. 7).

### The End of the Lord.

THE trial of Job did not end with the loss of his property and his children, his loathsome affliction and the apostasy of his wife. It took another and severer form. For thoughtful men the struggles of the mind are the fiercest of all; the fight with the doubts and questionings of one's own restless reason and troubled heart is harder than any merely outward "fight of affliction." This struggle might, and certainly would, have come upon Job in his misery, even had he been left to himself; but it was precipitated upon him, in an intensified degree, by the visit of his three friends.

These are, like himself, of the best, noblest, wisest, most respected of the land. They had been his intimate and trusted associates; and now, like his wife, they come to him, doubtless with the most upright intention, messengers of Satan to buffet him. In them, and in their words, Satan assails Job under the guise of an angel of light.

The temptation to which the sufferer is now subjected is enforced, not merely by the weight of the approved integrity and distinguished wisdom of his friends, but also (and here especially lay its overwhelming power) by the deepest convictions of his own mind, and the clearest dictates of his own conscience.

We are not to suppose that Job was beyond the wisdom of his time. It is evident from his utterances that he and his friends were fundamentally at one in their views regarding the principles of the divine government. Like those who came to comfort and to counsel him, he was persuaded of the justice of God's rule. Like them, he believed that this justice was, upon the whole, made manifest on earth, and that moral character might safely be estimated by outward estate. The eloquence of his friends, so long as it revolved round the general principles

of the providence of God, found an echo in his own breast, and thus aggravated his perplexity.

"God," they say, "is just." "Assuredly," replies the sufferer's heart.

"God," they continue, "cannot act capriciously, still less unrighteously, in His various allotments to the children of men." "It is not to be supposed," rejoins the reason of the patriarch.

Then, going on to apply their principles, "He cannot be acting unjustly or capriciously towards *thee*": to which suggestion what response can spring up in the secret of his bosom but this—"I suppose not"?

But when the friends, still basing their argument upon the principles common to Job and themselves, proceed to state the manifest conclusion: "Therefore thou art, whatever fair semblance thy life and character may have borne during these many years (for God cannot be unjust), a vile hypocrite, cherishing in secret some unholy lust," then the sufferer's conscience loudly protests against the charge, and his whole soul rises up in honest indignation as he exclaims: "Thou knowest that I am not wicked," "My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go" (10. 7; 27. 6).

But in this inevitable revolt of his own conscience, maintained so strongly by his truth-loving heart, lay the very pith of the terrible inward temptation to which he was subjected. The certainty of the inference drawn by his friends on the one hand, and the assured convictions of his own consciousness on the other, seemed to shut him up to the one conclusion, that he must abandon all faith in the Most High. The dilemma, between whose opposing points he was tossed, was obvious and awful; either I am what my friends allege, or else God is acting

towards me capriciously and unjustly. And the conclusion to which conscience and reason alike seem to drive him was this: But I know that I am not what these allege, therefore it must be that towards me at least, God is capricious and unjust in His dealings.

It cannot be denied that the bodily pain and outward wretchedness formed but the symbol of the more terrible spiritual misery felt within; and that the "slings and arrows" of his outward calamity called forth another more awful assault in his inner nature, in the form of abhorred thoughts and dark suggestions. The tempter availed himself of the mental disconcertment and the upheaval of all the settled principles of his heart, to suggest that God was unworthy of His servant's confidence. "Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Canst thou pretend to believe that God is acting righteously to thee?"

The severity of the trial was aggravated by the utter darkness in which his reason was left to grope. Reference has been made in a preceding paper to the absence of all explanation of the providential visitation that had overwhelmed him, and this, it is apparent, was in the circumstances a necessity. What we read in the first two chapters had to be kept secret from Job and from his contemporaries. The special reason of his sufferings had to remain hidden if those sufferings were to accomplish their destined purpose. If the least hint of the purpose had been allowed to reach the sufferer's mind, the trial would have been nullified; for the adversary would then have had it in his power to say, "It is still not for nothing that Job holds fast his integrity; he knows that God is using him for His own ends, and he expects reward." Evidently, in order that his confidence in God might be put to unchallengeable proof, it was essential that he should be in ignorance as to God's special reasons, should be left to walk in darkness, and should have nothing but his faith in God to sustain

his soul under the overwhelming visitation.

No explanation was possible. The dispensations of God towards him thus remain an utter mystery. His conscience accuses him of no change of conduct from the days when the candle of the Lord shone upon him, and he basked in the sunshine of His favour; the change seems to him to be all in God Himself. Even such knowledge as he may have possessed as to the profitableness of affliction when rightly borne (such knowledge as is set forth in the words of Elihu), was, we must suppose, obliterated for the time from his mind by the fierceness of the mental assault, so that in his own understanding he could find no stay or help wherewith to sustain his soul. The terrible directness of the charges of his friends drove him to face the alternative of either abandoning truth or abandoning God, and we mark the fierceness of the struggle in the daring directness of his speech to the Most High.

Yet, though driven upon the horns of this dilemma, he cannot commit himself to either of the seemingly contradictory courses. He cannot abandon conscience, and all through his utterances, even when most wild and unrestrained, we mark the noble candour of a truth-loving heart.

Just as little can he abandon God. His very contendings, his vehement and even irreverent appeals to Him for consideration and justice, are tokens that God is still more to him than any other. His complainings show his deep appreciation of God's smile: his very charges prove that the honour of God is still for him the chief interest. The thought of a world without God, or with a God not just and good, is a thought that he cannot bear. And so his faith in God endures, and his hope in God is the one sheet-anchor for his soul. He has lost hope in regard to all other comforts; life for him is over; restoration to health and prosperity is regarded as impossible, but he says, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust

in Him" (13, 15). And he is sure that some time or other, when worms shall have consumed his body, God will yet appear on his behalf, to vindicate his integrity, and to own him as His friend.

From this point begins his deliverance from the deep waters into which he had been plunged. After this expression of resolute hope in his Redeemer-God, his spirit grows calmer and his speech becomes more measured. By the words of Elihu he is convicted of his errors, while he begins to realize some of those happy fruits of affliction which Elihu so well describes.

The appearance and words of Jehovah Himself complete the work of spiritual restoration. Job comes to himself in coming to God and in realizing His presence and His glory. The sin that he frankly confesses is freely forgiven, and God attests that he has conquered in the trial by declaring His satisfaction with him rather than with the three others, who seemed more forward in pleading God's cause, and by enjoining him to offer sacrifices on his friends' behalf. Thus both the supra-mundane and the mundane actions of the history find their suitable termination in the one finale. The two problems are solved together. Job, though he had spoken rashly and violently, had never really lost faith in God. Zeal for the glory of God, and jealousy for His honour, mingled with

his outbursts of self-vindication. He had emerged from his great trial, if not scatheless, yet a conqueror; and Jehovah in thus appearing, correcting his errors and calming the surgings of his troubled soul, seals His approval of his steadfast faith, and crowns him victor in the fight.

Such an example as that of Job gives us some idea of the value in this world, and in all worlds, of the life of even one genuinely God-fearing man. He stands in the sight of angels and of demons, as well as of his fellow-men, a witness for the Lord. He presents in himself a pledge of the reliability of the divine existence, and of the faithfulness of the divine promise—the living proof that God is, and is love.

By Job's illustrious example we are reminded also of the importance of the place occupied by man among the other intelligences of God's creation. Problems have been wrought out in this world which could not find the materials for their practical solution in any other—at least in any unfallen world. This, for instance, brought forward by Satan's challenge of Job's disinterestedness could not have been fully and becomingly decided elsewhere. Do God's servants and worshippers serve Him for nought?—how could this be practically demonstrated among those beings who have never sinned, and who deserve no suffering?

## THE WORD OF GOD.

"NOT as a critic dare I approach this Book as if it were an ordinary book which I may hope to master and fathom.

"It is above me, and I cannot exhaust its fulness; it knows me, even the hidden things of the heart, and judges me, bringing me into contact with the all-seeing God. I enter with reverence into the temple of Scripture which, from the height of God's eternal counsel and out of the depth of God's infinite love, beholds and comprehends all ages, and is sufficient for the

guidance and perfecting of souls in all generations, praying with trustful hope that out of Christ's fulness the Spirit will minister unto me also grace upon grace.

"But while I thus stand in awe, beholding the grandeur and infinite depth of the Scripture as one organic Spirit-built Temple, and the beauty and perfection and exquisite skill which characterize the most minute portion of this structure, I feel at home, and as in a peaceful and fragrant garden."—*Saphir*.

## ELIJAH. No. 9.

(HAMILTON SMITH.)

## Ahaziah: The Message of Death. (2 Kings 1.)

AS the public ministry of Elijah had opened with a message of judgment to king Ahab, so it closes with a message of death to his wicked son king Ahaziah. Of this man we read, "He did evil in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the way of his father, and in the way of his mother, and in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin" (1 Kings 22. 52). His character combined the self-indulgence of his father with the fanatical idolatry of his mother. The three and a half years of famine, the exposure of Baal on Mount Carmel, the judgment of the false prophets, the solemn dealings of God with his father, all must have been well known to Ahaziah, but, as far as he was concerned, were all in vain. Heedless of all warnings, "he served Baal, and worshipped him, and provoked to anger the Lord God of Israel, according to all that his father had done."

It is, however, impossible to harden oneself against God and prosper. Troubles gather around the wicked king. Moab rebels, and he himself is prostrated by a fall from an upper chamber in his palace. Will this sickness sober the king and turn his thoughts to the Lord God of Israel? Alas! in prosperity he had lived without God, and in trouble he despises the chastening of the Lord. In health he had served idols with all the fanatical zeal of his mother, and in his sickness his depraved mind is unable to escape from their demoniacal power. Instead of turning in contrition to the Lord God of Israel, he inquires of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron, whether he will recover.

Ekron was the great heathen oracle of that day—the shrine of the Sidonian god Baal-zebub, literally the god of flies. By his devotees he was reputed to possess power to heal diseases and to cast out demons. Hence, in New Testament times, the Pharisees accuse

the Lord of casting out demons by the power of Beelzebub. Generations before, Saul, in his extremity, had turned to demons, only to hear his immediate doom pronounced by the prophet Samuel. Ahaziah, in his day, repeats the awful sin of king Saul. Overwhelmed by troubles, he too, in the most blatant and public way, affronts the living God by craving the help of demons, and in like manner hears his doom pronounced by the prophet Elijah.

Alas, the men of our day and generation have not taken warning by the solemn example of these royal sinners. On every hand, in the midst of their sore troubles and overwhelming calamities, men are once again stretching out their hands to demons. Having lived without God in the days of their ease and prosperity, unrepentant in the days of their calamity and refusing to own God, they fall under the power of demons. Scientists, novelists, and religious professors are eager in their pursuit of spiritualism. Neither intellect, imagination, nor human religion can save from falling under the spell of demons, only to find once again that to trifle with the devil is to seal their doom. "The mystery of lawlessness doth already work." Men, having abandoned God and despised the gospel, are preparing to range themselves under the leadership of "him whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness to them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, that they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

Apostasy is making way for spiritualism, and spiritualism is preparing the way for the man of sin whose coming is after the working of Satan.

But men forget, even as Ahaziah forgot, that our God is a consuming fire, and that, if men despise His grace and affront His majesty, He will at length bring them into judgment and vindicate His own glory. Ahaziah finds this to his cost. Instructed by the Angel of the Lord, Elijah intercepts the servants of the king with a message from Jehovah that pronounces his doom. The king shall not rise again from his bed "but shall surely die." As another has said: "Death must vindicate the truth and existence of God when unbelief disowns and disallows all other evidence."

This, then, is Elijah's last message before he is taken from a scene of guilt to a scene of glory. To the humble widow in her lonely home he had been a "savour of life unto life"; to the apostate king in his godless palace he was a "savour of death unto death."

Having delivered his message he retires to the top of a hill. In moral separation from the guilty world of his day, and spiritually above it, he was unassailable by the hatred of men and the power of demons. Holy, happy separation that witnesses how completely the man of like passions with ourselves has been restored to that quiet confidence which is the proper portion of the man of God. Apostate kings, persecuting Jezebels, Captains and their fifties no longer have any fear for Elijah, as, in calm confidence in the living God, he sits on the top of the hill, waiting for the last great scene in which he shall pass to a home of glory.

How blessed the position of those who in the midst of the fast-approaching apostasy of Christendom can, like Elijah in his day, calmly rest morally apart from this present evil world, waiting the great moment when, at the shout of the Lord, they will pass into a scene of glory to be for ever with the Lord.

In this position of moral separation Elijah is not only unassailable by his

enemies, but the fire of God is at his disposal for their destruction. He finds in very truth that the Angel of the Lord who sends a message of judgment to the godless King is also the Angel of the Lord who "encampeth round about them that fear Him and delivereth them" (Ps. 34. 7). Accordingly, two Captains and their fifties are destroyed by the fire from heaven. The king, realizing that he has to do with a man of no mean power, sends his captains well equipped to make one man comply with his peremptory command. Perfectly unmoved by this military parade and display of numbers, Elijah calmly replies: "If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven and consume thee and thy fifty." If Elijah is a man of God, then God is with Elijah, and Ahaziah has to learn that kings, with all their hosts, have no power against one man if God be with him.

There is, however, a deeper lesson in this great scene. Twice in Elijah's history the fire descends from heaven, but how different the occasions. At Carmel "the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the sacrifice." The fire fell upon the victim as an atonement for the sins of the guilty people, and the people go free—not an Israelite was touched by that fire. In result the people were brought to God: "They fell on their faces: and they said, The Lord He is the God." A foreshadowing of that transcendent moment when Christ also "suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God." Years have passed since the fire fell on the victim at Carmel, and the grace of God that provided a sacrifice, and sheltered the guilty people from the fire of judgment, has been forgotten. The sacrifice has been despised, and now, once again, the fire falls on the hill top. God will again vindicate His glory by the consuming fire. But this time there is no victim between a holy God and a sinful people. The sacrifice has been neglected, and instead of the fire falling upon the

victim it falls upon the guilty people in overwhelming destruction.

This indeed is but the dim foreshadowing of the doom that awaits this guilty world. For long centuries the good news of forgiveness of sins has been proclaimed through the mighty sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. Men have despised it, until at length, in these favoured lands of Christendom, it is held in all but universal contempt. God is not to be thus mocked; if men despise the judgment of the cross and trample underfoot the Son of God, "there remaineth no more sacrifice of sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries" (Heb. 10. 27). If men will not learn, through the judgment that fell upon Christ when made the great sacrifice for sin, that God is a God of grace who can forgive, they will have to learn through the judgment that falls upon themselves that God is a consuming fire who takes vengeance upon all those who despise His Son. Yes, let despisers remember that the One who bore judgment upon the Cross, is the One who will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire-taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In this last scene, God publicly owns and uses His restored servant, who fearlessly witnesses for God, and that too in the very city from which he had fled at the threat of a woman. In obedience to the word of the Lord, without trace of fear, this solitary man, escorted by the host of the hostile king, goes down into the stronghold of the foe, there to vindicate the glory of God by repeating the message of death. The apostate King is there, the wicked Jezebel may be there, but no hatred of kings, or threats of violent women, awaken any fear in this restored man who once again walks in confidence in the living God with the world behind him and the glory before him.

Centuries later this last public act in the history of Elijah is recalled by the disciples of the Lord Jesus (Luke 9. 51-56). His earthly pathway drawing to its close, the time came that Christ should be "received up." Setting His face stedfastly toward Jerusalem, His road lay through the land of Elijah, and, just as of old these Samaritans had rejected the Lord's servant about to be received up, so now, in like circumstances, they reject the Lord Himself. The everlasting doors were about to open to the King of glory. From the victory of the Cross heaven was ready to receive the Lord mighty in battle, but on earth, we read, "they did not receive Him." The disciples resent the insult put upon their Lord and Master. Little they realized the height of glory into which He was going, little could they see the vista of blessing opened out by His new place in glory. But they loved the Lord and, as Elijah called down fire from heaven on the insulting Captains, so they would destroy with the fire from heaven these insulting Samaritans.

Their request was not morally wrong; affection for the Lord prompted it; righteousness towards Christ's rejectors demanded it, and indeed, as we have seen, the time is coming when the Lord shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire taking vengeance on a Christ-rejecting world. But that time is not yet; between the day when the Lord is received up to heaven and the moment when He comes from heaven in judgment there exists the most wonderful period in the history of the world—the period during which God dispenses grace to that same Christ-rejecting world. It was of this the disciples knew little or nothing. They had not caught the spirit of the Lord. They could understand judgment meted out on earth, but they could not rise to the thought of grace dispensed from heaven. Such, however, is the glorious truth; through the risen Christ, God is proclaiming grace to a world of sinners. 254

## DAYS OF DIFFICULTY.

A VESSEL will buoyantly sail in a floodtide regardless of the difficulties of the channel and the mud banks beneath, but when the tide ebbs, the need of a pilot is felt. When a company of Christians are walking in the fulness and freshness of grace, and occupied with the love of Christ, they rise above difficulties and imperfections, but as soon as they turn the eye from Jesus, they immediately discover that evil in one another which had not affected their selfish hearts in the time of spiritual blessing.

With regard to difficulties, where there is faith and Christ is looked to, He will care for us. The Lord cannot

fail His church. We may forget it, but He is ever anxious for it. It is true He may exercise our faith, but His eye will never lose sight of His sheep. Satan has scattered the sheep, but he cannot take them out of the Shepherd's hand.

I feel deeply how only One can keep His church, even humanly speaking, for we all know (it is always true) it out-reaches one's hand. But what a comfort to be able to apply to Him for its blessing, whose ear is ever open, who can in grace reach all, and whose interest in perfect love is far deeper than any interest of ours, only that He graciously allows us to have a part in it.

J. N. D.

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## THE WAY TO HELP.

A BROTHER'S spirit is more edifying than his communication. We experience that every day. And let us take a hint from another, "to aim to gather knowledge more from meditation than from study, and to have it dwell in us, not as opinions, but as the food of communion, the quickener of hope, the husbandman of divine charity, and the blessed refreshing of the kingdom of God within us." I esteem it holier to confess difficulties than to grapple with them in either the ingenuity or the strength of intellect. And surely it is bad when some fond thought or another is made

the great object. It soon works itself into the central place, and becomes the gathering point. The order of the soul is disturbed, and the real godly edifying of the saints hindered. For we have to remember that knowledge is only a small part in the wide field of our husbandry. (2 Pet. 1. 5-7). An appetite for it needs to be regulated rather than gratified. And many who in their husbandry have raised far less of it than others, have more abundantly prospered in bringing forth richer fruits in service, and in charity, and in personal love to Jesus.

J. G. B.

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## THE LORD'S COMING AGAIN.

TAKE the three angelic announcements about the Lord in the New Testament, and observe how striking they are. (1) "Unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2. 11). Was it true? Why, it is an acknowledged historical fact, and Christendom acknowledges it every Christmas Day. (2) "He is not here, He is risen" (Luke 24. 6). This likewise is a

recognized fact, remembered every Easter Sunday, and the very basis of Christianity (1 Cor. 15. 14). (3) "He will so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven" (Acts 1. 11). And this will be accomplished as surely as the other two. The New Testament opens with the announcement of His first coming (Matt. 1.), and it closes with the announcement of His second coming (Rev. 22. 20).

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

## Ecclesiastes 7. 15-18.

E. N.—It is necessary to bear in mind in reading the Book of Ecclesiastes that it does not contain a DIVINE REVELATION of truth, the words are not exactly God's words. It is rather a GOD-GIVEN RECORD of the conclusions that the wise man reached after carefully considering everything "under the sun," i.e., he was inspired to record his own view and experience of what he saw and tried. He possessed a wisdom given to him by God for dealing with things "under the sun"; and clearly and definitely, without the prejudice that partial knowledge produces, he lays bare the unsatisfying character of everything that he saw and tried in this worldly sphere. The book has its place in the Holy Scriptures, and is very wholesome reading, for it makes us feel that if the heart of man is too great to be filled with any or everything "under the sun" or that the natural life can yield, God must have had some greater purpose in view in bringing us into being. It was the learning of this lesson that made Jenny Lind, the great songstress, write,

"In vain I seek for rest  
In all created good,  
It leaves me still unblest,  
And makes me cry to God.  
And sure of rest I cannot be  
Until my soul finds rest in Thee."

In turning to God we find that the revelation He has made of Himself in Christ satisfies the heart; the heavenly instead of the earthly sphere becomes our true home; we set our "affections on things above, not on things of the earth" (Col. 3. 2), and in these things there is no vexation of spirit or vanity.

To come to the verses specially indicated in the inquiry—Solomon saw that in the world as it was the righteous man often suffered for his righteousness, while the wicked escaped his just dues (v. 15); that the moderate man who avoided extremes had the easiest life, he lived the longest and had the least trouble (vv. 16, 17); but to fear God was the great safeguard from a thousand snares that might otherwise destroy a man (v. 18). Solomon would not have agreed with the quatrain that is causing a flutter in the literary world at the moment.

"Sound, sound the clarion, fill the fife,  
To all the sensual world proclaim,  
One crowded hour of glorious life  
Is worth an age without a name."

The "crowded hour of glorious life" is also worthless and only vanity. The knowledge of God alone is worthy to be described in the superlative, and this David knew when He spoke of God as "God, my exceeding joy."

## Should unleavened bread be used at the Lord's Supper?

A CORRESPONDENT asks if unleavened bread was used at the institution of the Lord's supper? and if so, ought we not to use it now?

It was certainly unleavened bread that the Lord used at the institution of His supper, because that was available, it being instituted at the passover feast at which only unleavened bread was to be used, but this has no significance for us now. The Lord's supper is not the passover. The latter belonged to the dispensation of types and shadows, and the unleavened bread

had its place in this connection. What is important for us is that we "keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." "For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. 5. 7, 8). As we do this we are in the benefit of that of which the unleavened bread was the shadow.

What we need at the supper are simply the one loaf, and the cup of wine; what these signify is simply stated in 1 Cor. 10. 16, 17.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

## The Jews in Jerusalem.

DEAR MR. EDITOR,—I am greatly interested in the article in the June number of Scripture Truth entitled the Settlement of Palestine. May I take leave to suggest that Isaiah xviii. may perhaps bear a little different interpretation from that you have given. I am under the impression that verses 4-6 refer to the present period, that is, since the rejection of the Lord, and that verse 5 corresponds to Isa. 40. 1, 2 and Mark 1. 15.

Jehovah by the mouth of the prophet appeals to the nations to take warning that He is going to take action with regard to Israel. But to the prophet He confides, verse 4, that the warning will not take effect till a time as yet remote. But at "that time," the time to which His warning refers, the restoration shall actually take place.

It appears to me from the predictions in Ezekiel, Daniel, Zechariah, and Revelation, as to the conditions that will prevail in Palestine, that there is no time for such a protracted period as verses 4-6 seem to describe. The time of "Jacob's trouble," sharp as it may be, will be brief, as the Lord says, "except those days be shortened," and adds that "for the elects' sake they will be shortened."

Although there is an extraordinary amount of political and national change to take place after the Day of the Lord sets in with the Rapture, yet I believe things will move with strange rapidity.

With regard to the Jews, they have to be re-established in Palestine in a national condition, and the temple built, and the services set in order, and going on.

The restored nation will be important enough to cause the rising head of the restored empire to seek their countenance and to enter into an alliance with them.

After this there is but a seven years all told, and the time of Jacob's trouble does not begin till it is quite half over,

and before it is ended all the movements that eventuate in Armageddon have to take place.

If you take all these things into consideration, I think you will agree that verses 4-6 must refer to the present period now fast drawing to a close.

As a matter of fact I believe we are so far advanced in the dispensational overlapping between Laodicea and the Rapture, as to be witnessing the efforts of Zechariah's "four craftsmen." How long God will allow them to labour before success crowns their endeavours we cannot tell. Whether the Rapture will take place before Zechariah's third vision we cannot say either, but I should think it will, for the great spiritual movement symbolized by the sealing of the 144,000 it seems must synchronize with it, and that comes after the Rapture. At any rate one thing is quite clear, and that is that the Lord's Coming *is near*, and saints would do well to really *wake up* to that.

I am glad you have introduced even to a small extent a prophetic subject, and I think if you opened your pages to a sober and godly correspondence it would not only be interesting, but at the present time most edifying.

Yours affectionately in Christ,

W. H. DORMAN.

Bournemouth,

June 7th, 1920.

We gladly insert this letter. Verses 4 and 5 of Isa. 18. may possibly cover the whole period from the time of the dispersion of the Jews to the time of their repentance in the land; for they describe the non-public intervention of God on their behalf, and at the same time His constant consideration of their condition; but we are persuaded that verses 1-3 are only beginning to be fulfilled, and verses 5, 6 seem clearly to point to the blasting of great but false hopes. Such hopes the Jews have not had since the dispersion until now.

# FELLOWSHIPS NOT APPROVED OF GOD.

(H. NUNNERLEY.)

WHAT fellowship (partnership) hath  
 RIGHTEOUSNESS with UN-  
 RIGHTEOUSNESS? What commu-  
 nion hath LIGHT with DARKNESS?

What concord (harmony) hath  
 CHRIST with BELIAL?

What part (portion) hath a BE-  
 LIEVER with an INFIDEL?

What agreement (classing together)  
 hath the TEMPLE of GOD and  
 IDOLS? (2 Cor. 6. 14-16).

Righteousness is to characterize a  
 Christian. It is to mark him person-  
 ally and relatively. Therefore, at what-  
 ever cost, one who is made the right-  
 eousness of God in Christ Jesus must  
 keep clear of association in which  
 unrighteousness is allowed to defile.

Some time darkness, the Christian is  
 not only called into God's marvellous  
 light, but is himself light in the Lord.  
 He comes to the light that his deeds  
 may be manifested in their true  
 character. How, then, can anything  
 of the nature of the darkness out of  
 which he has been called be in commu-  
 nion with light? What communion  
 hath light with darkness? Business  
 relationships, social bonds, religious  
 associations, have all to be weighed by  
 this standard. Is the bond one that  
 will bear the scrutiny of light? If  
 not, at all costs it must be broken.

The Christian is not only a member  
 of the body of Christ, but his body is  
 a member of Christ. Shall I, then,  
 asks the apostle, take the members of  
 Christ and make them the members  
 of a harlot? (1 Cor. 6. 15). God  
 forbid! What concord hath Christ  
 with Belial?

Is the believer to be associated with  
 an infidel for any purpose whatever,  
 political, philanthropic, or religious?  
 Scripture answers that question by  
 another: What part hath he that  
 believeth with an infidel?

The body of Christ is also the house  
 of God, and the temple of God. Holi-

ness becomes God's house for ever,  
 and every part of the temple is marked  
 by the glory of its Builder. How, then,  
 shall we make agree, or "class to-  
 gether," idolatrous worship and this  
 holy abode in which God dwells?  
 Whatever community is marked by  
 idolatrous worship, whether of the  
 demons of heathenism, or the products  
 of a debased Christianity, that fellow-  
 ship must be shunned, "come out  
 from," left. All is summed up in the  
 words, "touch not the unclean."  
 False doctrine and unholy practices  
 are fatal barriers to fellowship with  
 the Holy and True. There never was a  
 day when we Christians were in greater  
 danger than the present. Pulpits are  
 used to disseminate anti-Christian  
 doctrines; wolves in sheep's clothing  
 are rending the flock; and teachers  
 are setting their dogmas above Holy  
 Writ. Let us get our Bibles, test  
 afresh all we hear, and cleave only to  
 that which bears the hall-mark of  
 God's imperishable Word.

There is a danger to which the chil-  
 dren of God are exposed. The very  
 atmosphere—morally—by which we  
 are surrounded is a peril to us. The  
 constant and unavoidable contact with  
 "the spirit of the age" affects us more  
 than we may be aware of. We ever  
 need to be cleansed by the washing  
 of water by the word, and by prayer  
 and communion with our Lord, or we  
 shall be found among the—

## LOVERS OF THIS PRESENT WORLD,

and turn aside from the path of  
 witnessing for Him who was cast out  
 and crucified by it.

Demas appears to have been caught  
 in its toils. He had been a fellow-  
 labourer with the Apostle (Phil. 24.),  
 but now he forsook him (4. 10) in the  
 hour of his trial. He is left as a  
 beacon for the people of God in all  
 time.

(I. F.)

# SUFFERING SAINTS.

(A. J. POLLOCK.)

WHOSOEVER addresses himself to suffering saints is sure to have a large and attentive audience, for sorrow, suffering and trial are universal in this sinful world, and saints are no more immune than sinners.

This subject has a large place in the Word of God, and in meditating in what is written we may experience the "comfort of the Scriptures."

\* \* \* \*

## GENERAL AFFLICTION.

Scripture is plain as to the way testing comes to saint and sinner alike. The wise man wrote: "All things come alike to all: there is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked; to the good and to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not" (Eccles. 9. 2).

We are in a world where certain laws as the result of the entrance of sin operate as part of God's government, and these laws know no distinction between saint and sinner. There is no respect of persons. Saint and sinner are visited with strict impartiality. An epidemic rages. Christian and unbeliever alike fall victims. The use or abuse we make of our bodies help to make us immune from disease, or render us easy victims, and this is true of either saint or sinner.

But above these *general* laws we find Christians have a *special* place with God, and faith and prayer come in to help in this connection. God is a merciful Creator. We read: "We trust in the living God, who is the Saviour [*literally* Preserver as a Creator] of all men, *SPECIALLY* of those that believe" (1 Tim. 4. 10). And further: "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but **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, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. 10. 13).

Of course temptation here has something special in view, but the general truth remains. Let the worst come, God can and will sustain, and even if He does not effect a way of escape *from* the trial, He does promise a way of escape *in* the trial, so that in the comfort of His support and the ministration of His grace, the trial may be borne to the glory of God. Even Job of old, with but a tithe of our light and blessing, could cry out, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him" (Job 13. 15); and Hezekiah could say of his sore trial, "By these things men *live*, and in all these things is the life of my spirit" (Isa. 38. 16). Nature would say, "By these things men *die*," but life, truly life, and blessing are but the outcome for the believer.

\* \* \* \*

What a comfort to poor and suffering saints are the words:—

"**GOD IS FAITHFUL.**"

The trial is sometimes very severe. For instance a fatal disease, throwing the patient into paroxysms of pain night and day, and making death a sure thing in the immediate future, is fairly testing to both the afflicted one, and to the relatives, who watch with breaking hearts the long-drawn-out agony, and in anticipation endure the bereavement. Often the cry is wrung from hearts, Why does God allow all this?

Paint the picture as black as you like, yet the limit of endurance is not reached, and never will be, for our text goes on to say: "**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, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. 10. 13).

Mark, God does not promise a way of escape *from* the trial, but a way of escape *in the trial* for the deeply tried mind and heart, so that in this ministration of grace the trial may be borne to the glory of God. What a

stay then for poor suffering saints are the words :

“GOD IS FAITHFUL.”

\* \* \* \*

AFFLICTION IS sometimes, alas ! THE RESULT OF OUR OWN FOLLY. We constantly reap what we sow. And yet how graciously God can bring blessing out of even such circumstances. Where He does not directly rule, He can and does over-rule for our blessing. God did not rule Peter's fall, but He over-ruled it for signal blessing to His impulsive warm-hearted servant.

Our bodies are the Lord's, and they should neither be pampered nor abused. One may push the body to breaking-down point ; another may pamper it. Both are wrong, surely.

We have the class in our mind whose whole interest lies in their health. They have a cold ; that is more serious than a European war. They bought a remedy ; that is more important than famine in India. This picture is scarcely overdrawn. It is true of too many excellent Christian people.

And the other class. They defy the elements. They scoff at ordinary precautions. Sleep and food may be necessary to ordinary mortals, but not to them. For a time—it may be a long time—their strength holds out. But in the end collapse comes, and they can trace their afflictions to their own folly. And yet even in this case in the Lord's tender mercy they will find His consolations abundant, and spiritual blessing will be reaped by them in the government of God.

I know one instance of a very promising servant of Christ, who wrecked his body by his excessive zeal in God's service. For years he has been like an eagle with its wings clipped. Where he might have served the Lord freely he is tied to a special climate and a restricted service.

Again, affliction may be the result of excesses committed before conversion.

All this has its place in God's government. But whatever the circumstances, whether those which are ordinary to man, or alas, the result of our folly, we can trust our gracious God to use these circumstances in the best possible way that love can devise.

To what wonderful heights confidence in God can go, when Job, without a tittle of the spiritual advantages we have in this marvellous Christian era, could say : “ Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him ” (Job 13. 15).

\* \* \* \*

#### THE FATHER'S PURGING.

This is a line that accounts for much of God's ways with us. It does not stand in the light of punishment. It is rather the Father's gracious design by which a fruitful branch in the true vine may bear *more* fruit ; in other words, the way in which a fruitful Christian may become more fruitful.

The branch may be making too much wood, and the husbandman's skilful hand purges the branch, and effects the desired result, more fruit. How often the Father has brought in some physical trouble, family bereavement, reverse in circumstances, etc., and the result has been the weaning in spirit from the world, greater devotedness to Christ, greater zeal in His blessed service, more abundant fruit for God.

How the Father knows just the way to take, the right time, and the right method, and how sweet it is to take all our circumstances from His hand, or by exercise get the desired result.

\* \* \* \*

#### GOD'S CHASTENING HAND.

Heb. 12. 5-11 gives us information as to this line of things. “ Chastening,” however, carries with it the general thought of discipline and training, including punishment, but that is only a part of it, and possibly a small part of it.

The discipline of an army includes its whole training and system of which punishment is a last resource. Our

passage, in way of illustration, speaks of the discipline or training our fathers in the flesh gave us.

It is the disposal of circumstances by God in such a way as to train us with the result that we may be partakers of His holiness.

At the moment such chastening is not joyous but grievous. Take as an illustration the training of a hedge or a tree. It means clipping and pruning and restraining luxuriant growth. If the tree could feel and express its feelings, it would tell us such training was not joyous but grievous.

Now there are two dangers in connection with us, either (1) *despising* the chastening of the Lord, or *fainting* at His rebuke. To make light of circumstances, and not to be exercised as to what is meant, is to court severe discipline, and it may be in the end punishment. To faint under it is caused by a lack of confidence in God, to fail to benefit by the support He surely gives to those who are truly exercised.

The path of safety and ultimate happiness is that of godly exercise, carrying us through the grievous discipline in confidence of soul before God, and in a right concern to know God's will and mind in these things. Happy is the result, even the peaceable fruits of righteousness.

\* \* \* \*

### SUFFERING THE RESULT OF TESTIMONY.

One has only to mention this line of suffering to carry the reader's conviction. The life of the blessed Lord, the life of the apostle Paul, illustrate it. Joseph's discreet conduct, testifying to his walking in the fear of God, entailed many a grievous day of suffering in prison. Paul and Silas with bleeding backs in the Philippi prison, Daniel in the den of lions, the three Hebrew children in the fiery furnace, are cases in point. Happy and honourable is this form of suffering.

Missionaries often entail years of suffering, and shorten their lives by labouring in unhealthy climates. One can only stand in thankfulness before devotedness of this high order.

\* \* \* \*

### WHAT IS THE SIN UNTO DEATH? (1 John 5. 16.)

This is no particular sin, but sin of such a nature, having in view the person who commits it, and the circumstances leading up to it. We have instances of it in Scripture. For instance, Moses by uttering a few hasty words sinned unto death. Many of the Israelites uttered hasty words and it did not constitute a sin unto death in their case, but the peculiar position of Moses and the circumstances in which he uttered these hasty words, led his action to be treated as "a sin unto death," and debarred him from entering the promised land. Samson's letting out the secret of his strength to Delilah; the prophet turning aside to eat bread and water, when expressly told not to do so; Ananias and Sapphira telling a lie to the Holy Ghost; the unrepented-of intemperance of some of the Corinthian saints at the Lord's supper, constituted "a sin unto death."

But even in this gravely serious case we can discern the love of the hand, which removes the saint, judged to be unfit to maintain a godly testimony on earth. If unfit by his own sin for earth, he is fit for heaven through the grace of God and the efficacy of the atoning work of Christ, and government does not shrink in love from removing such an one from the sphere of his failure, and bringing him into the presence of the Lord on high. Solemn way to get there, but oh, the grace that puts him, or any one of us, there.

Very briefly and simply we have put forward a few thoughts in connection with the suffering of saints. May God be graciously pleased to use them for instruction and encouragement.

# “TO ME TO LIVE IS CHRIST.”

(H. R. U.)

Oh mystic truth! Oh miracle of grace!  
 Can it be wrought within a ruined race?  
 A mortal man be emptied of himself,  
 And fused with life divine his inmost soul,  
 To flow from thence through all his feeble frame?  
 Will God thus stoop to breath in him anew,  
 To ope the sightless eyes to see the sun,  
 Unstop the ears, and loose the silent tongue,  
 To heal the helpless feet to leap and walk?  
 And will He let the withered hand, restored,  
 Inscribe such words: “To me to live is Christ.  
 And while I live, 'tis not myself who lives,  
 But in me dwelleth Christ the Son of God.  
 The life that I am living day by day,  
 I live by faith of God's beloved Son,  
 Who loveth, and who gave Himself for me”?

With head uncovered and with feet unshod,  
 And longing heart and eager hands, oh haste!  
 Fling open wide the portals of the soul,  
 To welcome Him who comes to claim His own.  
 For, having purchased with His precious blood,  
 Our gracious Lord now condescends to dwell  
 Within this tenement of human clay.  
 He'll warm the chilly chambers of the heart,  
 And purify the life-spring working there,  
 Give it an impetus to pulse for Him,  
 Till every member moved with one desire  
 Shall act in union with His perfect will.

With gentle hand He'll cool the fevered brain,  
 Renew with power divine the inner man,  
 Till plastic, yielded to His blessed will,  
 The narrow heart shall open and enlarge  
 Till He Himself can fully enter in—  
 The centre and circumference of all,  
 The shining Sun, whose ever glorious rays  
 Can fill a universe with life and song!

Where death and darkness dwelt, He'll break the spell  
 With floods of light and life and joyous love,  
 Till from the silent soul shall swell a song  
 Of glad thanksgivings to the Source of all!  
 Like some stringed instrument, so still and cold,  
 Till caught by master-hand, and tuned—and tuned—  
 Shall burst into a brilliant melody;  
 He'll tune the soul to sweet accord with His,  
 And play upon the strings of daily life,  
 Sweet music for the Father's listening ear!  
 Adoring worship: Notes of love and praise,  
 Shall still pour forth through Heaven's eternal days!

# LOVERS.

(INGLIS FLEMING.)

THE condition of things prevailing in the professing church to-day is clearly portrayed by the prophetic pen of the Apostle Paul in his Second Epistle to Timothy. We are forewarned to be forearmed. A comparison of chapters 3. and 4. with the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, will show that the corruption of Christendom is only second to the pollution of the Gentile world, before the light of the gospel came to man.

And there is this added: "Having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof." The light has come. The truth has been professedly received. But its whole power is denied. The "black list" of chapter iii. is a serious one indeed. There are nineteen characteristics given. And while the expression of some of these may be localized, yet nearly every Christian will find not a few evidenced in his own surroundings.

1. Lovers of their own selves.
2. Covetous (lovers of money).
3. Boasters.
4. Proud.
5. Blasphemers.
6. Disobedient to parents.
7. Unthankful.
8. Unholy.
9. Without natural affection.
10. Truce breakers.
11. False accusers.
12. Incontinent.
13. Fierce.
14. Despisers of those that are good (not lovers of good).
15. Traitors.
16. Heady.
17. High-minded.
18. Lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.
19. Having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof.

Who can contemplate such a catalogue without sorrow, that the fair name of Christ should be linked with that which is so unlike Him. And yet, alas, it is so, and "the form of godliness" is considered a sufficient

cloak to cover it all, in so-called Christian lands, and multitudes are satisfied to drift on because after all they are connected with a "Christian" church.

Space will not be available to speak of all the varieties of evil in the category, and perhaps Nos. 1, 2, and 18 are more generally manifest than the others, so I will limit my remarks to these, adding a few words upon part of the 4th chapter in closing.

## LOVERS OF SELF.

Clearly this is seen on all sides. "Look after the main chance"; "Take care of yourself"; and similar expressions are current. "*My* welfare," "*my* advantage," "*my* good," "*my* health," these are prominently before the minds and on the lips of people. How will it benefit me? How will it affect my interests? are the questions asked. And in conversation self-love asserts itself without shame. The pronoun "I," which English-speaking people write with a *capital*, is heard in nearly every sentence. All seems to revolve around it as a centre. (It is the central letter of the word sin, too.) Men and women seem impatient while others are telling of their exploits as they are longing to narrate their own. *They* desire to be the centre of interest to others, because they are this to themselves. Thus the human heart—essentially the same in all—tells itself out in self-occupation, self-adulation and self-ministration.

## LOVERS OF MONEY.

The golden god is uplifted high to-day and its votaries are countless. It is said that at the time of one of the great Chicago Exhibitions a store-keeper collected the gods of the heathen from every land possible and exhibited them for the public gaze. Above the hideous forms of many of the debased and debasing conceptions of the deity,

at the very top of the case, was seen a coin. The profane description of it was attached, the words being, "The Almighty Dollar: the God of the American Nation." Multitudes who read the words would tacitly agree, and according to the spirit of the age would continue to bow to the false god. Whether it be the dollar or the sovereign, the franc or the mark, it matters not; in every civilized land there is a headlong rush to be rich. "Is there money in it?" is the cry, and if there is, all haste is made to secure the advantage.

### LOVERS OF PLEASURES.

Probably the love of pleasure is emphatically the characteristic of the present hour. The pains and privations which have been known during the long-drawn-out tragedy of almost universal conflict are cited as the excuse for hurrying after this or that form of excitement and entertainment now that the war-circumstances are passing. And instead of standing aloof the professing churches are leavened, and increasingly seek to cater for the amusement of the masses. Thus instead of the glorious gospel of the happy God—which alone can give true peace and joy and satisfaction—"Fancy Balls," "Amateur Theatricals," "Dances," and "Whist Drives," are advertised as "draws" for the perishing around.

Dark indeed is the picture of the so-named, "*Christian World*," which hastens on thoughtlessly to its near approaching doom. Can we look for alteration or improvement? What do we read in verse 13 of our chapter? "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." The Lord has warned us that "As it was in the days of Noah," and "As it was in the days of Lot," so shall it be also in "the days of the Son of Man" (Luke xvii. 26-30). Things will go on as they are until He comes again. He alone can set them right. The luke-warm

Laodicean mass which has falsely taken His holy name as its title will be spued out of His mouth and fall beneath His judgment rod.

### LOVERS OF GOD.

But, amidst the darkness, God in grace carries on His work, and hearts are opened to receive Christ. The love of God makes its way into such and produces responsive love to Himself. "We love Him because He first loved us," cries the Apostle John (1 John 4. 19). Here and there are found those who "set the Lord" before them and seek "to walk so as to please God."

They may be scorned, and despised by those who love not good; but what matters that? They have the knowledge of sins forgiven—of their relationship with God as their Father, of their present and eternal association with Christ as His co-heirs, of the dwelling in their hearts of the Holy Ghost and of Christ's ministry on their behalf until His glory is reached and conformity to His image there is conferred. This brings abiding contentment and causes their hearts to well-up in praise. They seek not their rest here, they look for the Saviour's return. With the Apostle Paul they are lookers for and

### LOVERS OF CHRIST'S APPEARING

(4. 8). In the light of "that day" they live, and are willing to be counted the dross of the world, as they wait for His manifestation. Then for their service here "a crown of righteousness" will be bestowed, and His "well done" will more than compensate for all the loss they may have suffered for Him.

How small will all else appear in "that day." All the glory of man will perish, all the glory of the world will pass away, and—

"Like the base fabric of a dream,  
Leave not a wrack behind."

He that does the will of God will abide for ever.

## NOTES FOR PREACHERS.

" I THINK if I felt the privilege God gives me in allowing me to speak of Jesus at all, I should enjoy it more largely. But indeed I oftener think I am doing something for God when I am going to preach, than realize that He is doing something for me. We would rather serve man than be served ; rather confer obligations than submit to receive them."

The above quotation from a letter by a devoted servant of God is worthy of our earnest consideration, for every one of us naturally becomes cumbered with our service, we get engrossed in what we are doing, and our preparation for doing it. Our prayers reveal that it is so ; we have only to consider them afterwards to be convinced of this. Self-importance and impatience with others develops and grows on this line.

But the thought expressed in this extract puts us upon another line entirely. Let us see how this is. We begin by seeking to realize the privilege that God gives us in allowing us to speak for Jesus. It is grace, wonderful grace ! We did not choose this. We only wished to please ourselves and serve our own desires. God's holy will was nothing to us. But God saved us ; He made Christ precious to us and put

His Spirit into our hearts. We begin here and learn that we are nothing, but God in His grace is everything. Then He is carrying on His work of saving grace in others, and His way is to send preachers to them, for how shall they believe except they hear, and how shall they hear without a preacher ? But it is God's work, not ours, and it must be done in His way and not in our way. Happy are they whose hearts are constrained by a sense of God's grace so as to say to Him, " Here am I, send me ; " for how shall they preach except they be sent ? But those who are sent are immensely privileged. The calling is a high one, the trust a precious one, and it can only be taken up and carried out rightly as this is understood. If the Lord has chosen us and bestowed this high privilege upon us, He only can equip us, and we need to be intimately near to Him to learn all that He means by it. We must know Him who sends us ; be conversant with His thoughts about those to whom we are sent, and clearly understand what we have to say. But it will be with sober thoughts of our part in the matter, and with exalted thoughts of His grace that we shall serve Him if we keep in mind that in allowing us to do it He is bestowing on us a priceless favour.

## THE LORD'S COMING.

TO me the Lord's coming is not a question of prophecy, but my present hope. Events before His judging the quick are the subject of prophecy ; His coming to receive the church is our present, heavenly hope. There is no event between me and *heaven*. There are between this time and Christ's judgment of the earth. Now we are blessed *with* Christ as His bride and His body ; we appear with Him, reign with Him. The great peculiar blessing of the church is being associated with Christ Himself. The government of the world is another thing ; prophecy lights up that as a candle in a dark place, but I am of the

day. It is this especially *Christians* have to learn, that they are one with Christ, blessed with Him. And this applies to everything. " *My* peace I give unto you "—" That they may have *my* joy fulfilled in themselves "—" The glory thou hast given Me I have given them "—" That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them "—" I have given them the words which thou gavest unto me "—" I go to my Father and your Father ; my God and your God." This brings perfect love so close to our hearts that it is very precious, and thus we nourish ourselves with that love.

J. N. D.

*Letters, Vol. 1., p. 401.*

## DEATH AND LIFE.

(JAMES BOWD)

NO creature has life in himself ; God alone has that. Man was made a living soul by God's breathing into his nostrils the breath of life (Gen. 2. 7). Therefore man is "*The offspring of God,*" and that no mere animal is. "In Him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17. 28). As to the lower creation, the waters brought forth the creatures that move in them, and the earth brought forth the living creature, the cattle, and the beast after its kind. In this way they were brought into being by the power of God. But man is the subject of Divine counsel. The Godhead consult together regarding his creation. God said : "Let us make man in our image." Man is placed in intelligent relationship with God. The word of God is addressed to him. He is set in responsibility to God. He is God's offspring. The lower creation is under his authority ; he is under the authority of God. God names him ; he names the animals. These are to look up to him ; he is to look up to God. He was the link between God and everything that God had made upon the earth. He was to bear rule over the fish of the sea, the fowls of the air, and over everything that moved upon the earth ; God was to have rule over him. There was affinity between him and God ; and there was affinity between him and the living creatures.

The life of man was derived directly from God, from contact with Him, and was to find its employment in the doing of His will. His work was assigned to him, and he was to find his delight in doing that which was marked out for him to do by his beneficent Creator. His natural life was maintained by the provision made for him in the fruit of the trees of the garden in which he was placed, and his spiritual life was to find its sustenance and supreme happiness in the God who had made him a living soul. His cup of joy was full, his delight in God unbounded and unruffled by ex-

ternal circumstances. His mind was not engrossed with his environment. He had no need to ask where to-morrow's bread would be found, the fruitful trees held out their hands to him laden with the good things of God. He had no need to seek happiness ; he had it to the full. It was an innocent creation, and his innocent life was perfectly free to rejoice in his Maker.

The moment he sinned all this was changed. He found himself in another sphere. His joy in God was at an end. Fear filled his heart. The poison of his guilty attempt to grasp at Divinity coursed through the channels of his sin-bitten soul. Death now lay upon him as the judgment of God, and he was also in a state of *moral* death toward God. He had broken with God, and he had no desire to have anything more to do with Him. To his guilty conscience God had assumed the character of a righteous, inflexible Judge, and was no longer to be viewed as a beneficent Creator.

He was dead, dead morally ; and so is all the race that springs from his loins. Happiness is lost. It has now to be sought. But man will not seek it in the place in which only it can be found. He has gained knowledge of good and evil, but he has lost the good, and the evil clings to him. He has now become an object to himself. Pleasure he finds, but it is the pleasure of sin, which lasts but for a moment, and leaves behind it the pains of an outraged conscience. He walks in thick darkness, and the riddle of his existence he is ever trying to solve, but gets no nearer to the solution of it by all his efforts. He has a thousand remedies for the ills of life, but the remedies are provokingly impotent even to ameliorate his condition. He has built up the world, but under the inspiration of his inveterate enemy the devil, and in it he has everything calculated to keep him from taking a serious view of his condition as under the eye of God, and of the death and

judgment to which he is fast hastening. He will not believe in the goodness of God, but judges Him to be a hard Master. He thinks that, if he had the power, he could do a great deal better for himself than God is doing; that is, if there be a God at all, a question that he would prefer to solve with a blunt and decided negative. He hates God, and out of his world God is rigidly excluded. Man's world is a dark, Christless, Godless scene of sin, hatred, jealousy, envy, lust, pride, falsehood, and every abomination that the fallen nature of man is privy to. It is, as I have said, a scene of moral death.

I have drawn a dark picture, but of this I am certain, no one who knows anything of the state of this world will say that I have exaggerated the wretched condition of the human race. Is man not away from God? Is it not a fact that many of the world's leaders question the very existence of a Supreme Being? And where His existence may be admitted, how few there are that believe the revelation He has been pleased to make of Himself! Has it not been torn to pieces by His professed servants? Have they not charged the inspired Apostles of our Lord with so adulterating the great thoughts of God with their own silly ideas that we are unable to distinguish between truth and error, and therefore we have no reliable revelation from God at all? Christianity has been thus largely given up by Christ's professed servants.

Are men, the leaders even more than the led, not in gross darkness? Is this fact not admitted by themselves? If they know the truth, why are they professedly searching after it? If the Bible has told them the truth regarding man's state after death, why are they anxious to get into contact with the spirits of the departed, and to learn from them? If one is found searching after truth it is evident he has not yet arrived at it.

Look at the upheavals industrially and socially. We are told that men

are beginning to feel their power, and they are using it. True; and therefore you have lawlessness on the part of the people, and helplessness on the part of the rulers. Look at Russia; and how soon the same state of things may be in this land. "The sun turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, and the stars of heaven cast down to the earth." The supreme power without light that would enable him to control the populace, and all is in darkness and chaos; and the subordinate authorities turned into blood, or cast down from their high position to fall in the general massacre.

The disease is not difficult to diagnose. Man is away from God, and his very efforts to make a fine world without Him infinitely increase the disaster. He will educate the people, he will lift up the masses, he will make the world a fit place to live in, he will work wonders, but he will do all this without God. It shall not be God's world. Men will have none of His interference. He must keep to His own sphere. They are very well able to attend to their own happiness. The level-headedness of man will yet assert itself to his salvation, and in good time everything will right itself, and peace and safety will be everywhere enjoyed.

Such are some of the drivellings of men in their alienation from God. They pride themselves in the fiction that the race is advancing toward perfection, because men have got a smattering of education, wear clothes, do not always tattoo their bodies, nor eat human flesh unless they are dying of hunger. But are men less covetous than the painted savage? Are they less cruel? What about Russia? What about the inhabitants of the German Empire in the late war? What uncivilized people have ever resorted to greater atrocities? Is this world not more like a jungle of wild beasts than it is like creatures who are the offspring of God?

And they call this life! And one

nation pits itself against all others for morality, for intelligence, for endurance, for philanthropy, for honesty, and for honourable conduct! And though in some instances the surface may, as compared with others, be in measure blameless, the superficiality of it cannot be hidden, for the veneer will crack, and the rottenness of its depths will too often be discovered. As the smooth and placid ocean seems to deny that in its innermost recesses no rival forces fierce to death contend, but while you look, the huge and shiny bulk of the sea monster breaks through the smooth surface, engaged in deadly combat with a foe that neither takes nor gives quarter; so occasionally there is a lull among the nations, but not for long does the sword rest in the scabbard. The noise of battle must be heard again, and the earth be dyed with the blood of those that fall.

How can it be otherwise with a creature wandering from his Creator, and seeking to fill his unsatisfied heart with the husks that the swine eat? And all the unrest of this miserable world arises from a search after happiness, a thing that the whole world could not give. If the whole universe were given to one man, what good would it do him? Would it satisfy the craving of his degenerate heart? It would do nothing else than burden him with cares, and make his existence a misery to himself.

Man has lost God. He has lost that in which life really consists. He is away from the fountain of living water, and is digging in a desert for that which he never can find. And the worst feature of his case is that he is unaware of his utterly hopeless condition. In a few words of Holy Scripture is his deplorable state described: "*Without God in the world*" (Eph. 2. 12). And how true the word of the Lord addressed to that which is called by His name on earth: "Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased in goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that

thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Rev. 3. 17).

Alive to sin, alive to the satisfying of his carnal appetite, alive to the pleasures of this world, alive in his rebellion against God; but dead toward God, estranged in heart and mind from his Creator, his ear deaf to the call of God in the Gospel, his eye blind to the glory that invites him, his conscience often past feeling, and the energy of his whole moral being put forth to keep God out of his existence. Such is man's dreadful condition—dead in trespasses and sins. This is the sphere of death.

### THE SPHERE OF LIFE.

But as there is this sphere of death, blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, there is also a sphere of life. And just as in the sphere of death men have their objects, objects which can never satisfy the craving of the heart, so in the sphere of life men have their objects, objects which are infinitely great, and which make the cup of happiness overflow. God revealed in Jesus, the Father and the Son. What heart could contain all the joy that flows from the knowledge of such Persons? The people that dwell in this sphere do not need to seek happiness—they have found it. They have reached the spring and fountain of all life and perfect felicity. Here they have everything that in the whole universe is worth having. They no longer have the sense of need. They hunger no more. Their thirst is for ever quenched. They have come into the region of satisfied desire. They have got within them a fountain that springs up into eternal life. And "This is the life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent" (John 17.). Such were once in the sphere of death, but they have "passed out of death into life" (John 5. 24). They have reached the true Centre and Source of all content.

They have reached the Fountain of all lasting pleasure, and their joy is full.

They know that their many sins are all forgiven. They are justified from all things. The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, has cleansed them judicially before God. They have got a perfect standing in Christ before God. They have been taken into favour in the Beloved. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is their God and Father. They have the Spirit of God's Son in their hearts giving them the enjoyment of sonship, into which they are brought in Christ. They are born of God, are His children, have His nature, and bear His moral characteristics. But above all, they know Him, they know His love, and they know that they cannot be separated from it. Added to this they have the bright prospect of being for ever with the Lord, when He shall come to raise His saints from their graves in incorruption, power, and glory, and to change the bodies of the living, fashioning them like to His own, and calling all up to meet Him in the air; and should the earthly tabernacle be taken down before this takes place, they have the certainty of being, though absent from the body, present with the Lord.

If they look back they see the grace that met them in their sinful condition, when fulfilling the lust of the flesh and mind, that grace that brought the Son of God from the highest heaven down to the lowest depths of dishonour, and which led Him to take their place under that judgment that lay upon them on account of their sins, and to glorify God when made sin, that they might become the righteousness of God in Him. There the whole love of God was brought to light, and there the whole question of their guiltiness was gone into, visited with the judgment of God, and closed for ever, never to be reopened.

If they look forward the glory awaits them. It beckons them heavenward with its brilliancy. In the brightness

of that world to which they are called the glitter of this garish scene seems ghastly indeed. In that world of everlasting light there is fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore. It is the Father's world, the invention of eternal love. Sin cannot enter there, sorrow has no admittance, death is unknown. There supreme satisfaction is realized by every heart, and the cup of every inhabitant runs over with joy unspeakable.

This life was the thought of God for man before this world came into being. Paul speaks of being "in hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began" (Titus 1. 2). It is not the life of fallen man purified and eternalized. That cannot be, for the life of all flesh is corrupt, and unmendably evil (Rom. 8. 7). Nor is it the life of innocent man in the Garden of Eden. It is the life of the last Adam, the Son of the living God. It is not creature life, though creatures have it in possession. It is a life the source and nature of which is divine. This life is in the Son, who is "the true God, and eternal life" (1 John 5. 20). It is the life of all who are born of God, for the life of the One who has begotten is in those who are begotten.

It is viewed by the Apostle Paul, as we have seen, as the eternal purpose of God for man, and promised in Christ Jesus (2 Tim. 1. 1), but the Word of that life has in this present dispensation been manifested in the glad tidings of God (Titus 1. 1-3). It is not in evidence in His *ways* with His creature, either in innocence or guilt, but has to do entirely with eternal counsel. It is not dispensational, though only come to light in this present dispensation. John views it as the present possession of the believer down here in this world: "He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, *hath* everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but is passed out of death into life" (John 5. 24).

In the Gospels we have that life delineated in its infinite perfection in the Son, as He walked down here to the delight of the Father's heart. In this scene of contrariety were all its graceful characteristics developed and brought to light; the blasted, corrupt, and selfish life of the fallen creature forming the dark background of the picture. Here was brought to light its meekness, lowliness, obedience to the Father's will, unselfishness, kindness to those unthankful and unholy, righteousness, holiness, goodness, truth, purity, and every other grace that was the delight of God.

What man born of the first and fallen Adam would take pleasure in a life like that? Where is the pride, the boldness, the self-respect, the haughtiness, the self-reliance, the contempt for enemies, that constitute a man a hero in this world? No one acquainted with the things that find appreciation with the men of this world will be surprised to learn that when He was manifested, there was no beauty in Him that would make Him acceptable to the people. We cannot be astonished to read that "He was despised and rejected of men" (Isa. 53.), or that in His public testimony He could not be tolerated longer than three and a half years; or that His life was ended on a gibbet. Who that knows what man is can be really astonished?

His life is the life of the children of God. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life" (John 3. 36). They know the Father, and Jesus Christ His sent One. They still have the Adam life, which is corrupt, for by the body they are still connected with the old creation. But at the coming of the Lord their bodies will be changed, and fashioned like to Christ's body of glory, and then the last link with the old creation will be severed.

It is only in this divine life that we can live to God. And nothing but the beautiful characteristics of this life should be seen in us. And the

manifestation of these characteristics indicates those that are born of Him. The thing that was true in Christ, and manifested in Him down here, is now true in believers: "Which thing is true in Him and in you" (1 John 2. 8), and only the characteristics of that life should be seen in them.

This life is the life of the Father's world of glory, in which the believer lives, the power of the Spirit of God uniting itself to that life, and energizing it; so that that life which was exhibited in all its infinite perfections in the Son is continued in the midst of this world of death in those who are born of God. It is life in the midst of death, light in the midst of darkness, the eternal in the midst of the temporal, that which is heavenly found in the sphere of earth, and love divine in the presence of human hatred.

Everything in the Father's world is eternal. In that world nothing had beginning, neither shall anything there have end. Believers were chosen in Christ before the foundation of this world (Eph. 1.). God calls those things that be not as being (Rom. 4. 17). Our minds are finite, and from our standpoint we cannot see things in connection with eternity, we are compelled by our own limitations to connect all things with time. We are certain that everything we see had a beginning. We can better understand a thing having no end, because this thought does not compel us to force our thoughts out of the stream of time. With us it is still time lengthened out indefinitely. If we think of God, we know that He cannot have had a beginning, and yet we find in our reason a substratum of rebellion against this thought, for it is utterly foreign to our mode of thinking, and entirely beyond our comprehension. And yet the conviction is forced upon us that there must be a first cause of all things, and here again our finite minds rise up against the Infinite, which we cannot understand. But how could the creature understand the Creator?

Thank God, we know Him in a better way than this, for we know Him in His nature, and "*God is love.*"

But the difficulty with us is, that we connect time with God, and I suppose we cannot do anything else. Yet God has made a revelation of Himself, and by means of that revelation, and aided by the Divine Spirit, we are led to see that when God calls things that be not as being, it is no exaggeration or overstraining of precious truth, but the simple truth itself. The life believers have is the life of God, and we have it as born of God, just as we have human life by being born of human parents. And this life is in His Son (1 John 5. 11). But it was ever in the Father and the Son, though it is now in the Son in manhood, in the Mediator, the Man Christ Jesus. And this life is now the life of our souls, as it shall be one day the life of our bodies, for the life-giving power of God shall be applied to our bodies at the coming of Jesus for His church (Rom. 8. 11; Phil. 3. 21). All that we are, then, in the Father's world, all that we are in new creation power, is eternal, and disconnected from time altogether.

Personally, individually, and experimentally, we have had our beginning even as sinners, which we can never forget, and as subjects of the grace of God, for which we shall praise Him for ever. We can look back upon a time when we were not; as our Lord says, "Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8. 58). And no person is eternal, that is, had not a beginning, but the living God. But in the mind and purpose of God that which He determines to accomplish in time has reality.

All this may seem contradictory, but the only contradiction there is in it is the contradiction that exists between time and eternity, that which is finite and that which is infinite. We can truly say that the Son of God loved us and gave Himself for us, and yet we had no actual existence at the time of His

death. Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it, but it had no existence actually when He set His love upon it. But it is another thing to say it had no existence for Him. It did exist in the mind and purpose of God, and as to actual fact it was evolved from Himself; for just as surely as, in our sinful condition, we all derived from Adam, had our life and moral nature from him, so as in Christ do we derive from Him our life, our moral nature, and in the end our changed bodies—all are by His life-giving new-creative power. The incarnation of the Son, and the revelation of the Father in Him, have made a complete change in the conception of the intelligent and unfallen creation, and certainly not with any darkening of the understanding. The grace manifested toward mankind in the gospel has to them a wondrous interest (1 Pet. 1. 12); and to the principalities and authorities in the heavenly places is made known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God (Eph. 3. 10). This fresh unfolding must have, as it were, lifted them up to a higher plane, and have even given their service to God a lustre that it had not previously, however perfect it may always have been.

But as regards man, it was a light too bright for the eye of innocence, and utterly abhorrent to the eye of guilt. Just as our mortal vision had been given to us, and perfectly adapted to take in the light of the sun, so had there been a work wrought in us by the power of God, that enables us to receive and appreciate the revelation of the Father in the Son, so that "we know that the Son of God hath come." We know it because we are in the light and enjoyment of that Revelation, for "He hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true." The sun is not a light to the eyes of a blind man. To enable him to take in the light, sight must be granted to him. And this is just what has been done in our case, so that we

know that the Son of God hath come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God, and eternal life (1 John 5. 20).

The believer is partaker of this life by the quickening power of the Word of God. He has passed out of death into life. He no longer lives to himself, but to Him that died and rose again. He feeds upon that living Bread, that gives life to the world (John 6). He appropriates Christ given in death as a sacrifice for sin. He appropriates Him as thus given. He eats His flesh, and drinks His blood; that is, by the appropriation of the death of Christ he eats and drinks death to all that he is as a sinner alive in the life of flesh; he makes that death his own by faith. As our Lord has said: "Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." And again: "He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him." The true believer is in Him for acceptance with God, and He is in the believer as life. We are in Him before God, and He is in us before men. We are out of the darkness of death, and in the light of life.

And we do not come into judgment (John 5. 24). Judgment has no application to those who are partakers of that life. Believers who have passed away before the Lord comes for His Church shall be in the resurrection of life, not in that of judgment (John 5. 28, 29). And those who remain until that hour shall have their mortal bodies quickened by the power of that same life in which they now live to God. The dead in Christ are raised in glory (1 Cor. 15.), and the living saints are changed; and all are caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and to be ever with Him (1 Thess. 4).

To give the believer perfect assurance that this life is his, three witnesses are

given, "the Spirit, the water, and the blood" (1 John 5). The water and the blood came forth from the side of Christ when He had died upon the cross. A soldier with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water (John 19. 34). The Spirit came down from Christ glorified. The blood and water testify of the value of His death for us. The blood is the witness to us that by that death our sins are for ever gone out of existence. The water bears witness, that by means of that death we are morally cleansed. That death has not only made an end of our sins, but has made an end of sinful flesh; so that we have, by means of that death, our sins made an end of, and that which committed the sins brought to an end also. The Spirit's witness is to Christ glorified, and life only in Him, but that we are partakers of that life by His quickening power, and by His indwelling. "God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath this life, and he that hath not the Son hath not this life." All without this life are in the sphere of death.

Nothing is of more importance for us than is the realization that we are in that sphere of life. The Spirit of God has been at a great deal of pains to bring us to apprehend that sphere in the faith of our souls, and to enable us to live in that holy sphere. The measure in which we enter into it is according to the measure in which we cultivate divine affections: "We know that we have passed from death into life, because we love the brethren" (1 John 3. 14). That which is ecclesiastical has broken down in its outward form and manifestation, though everything that is vital subsists in the power of God. But when through the worldliness of believers, and the carelessness of bad builders (1 Cor. 1. 19-31; 3. 11-17), that which professes the name of Christ has lost its pristine glory, and become utterly corrupt, we are by the Spirit of God

being turned to that which is neither dispensational nor subject to the corruption that has invaded the Christless profession; that is, life in the Son, and in the believer by the power of the Divine Spirit.

Let us then seek to cultivate those divine affections that belong to that life: "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God: for God is

love" (1 John 4. 7, 8). We cannot expect to be in the enjoyments that are found in the sphere of life while miserable jealousies, backbitings, bitterness, and evil speaking exist among us. All these belong to the sphere of death.

Let us keep ourselves in the love of God, for it is in that holy atmosphere that the divine nature receives the nourishment that is necessary for its growth. The Lord direct our hearts into the love of God.

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## THE LORD'S SUPPER.

(H. J. VINE.)

THE supper of remembrance was instituted by the Lord, that His own might have a very definite way of remembering *Himself* together during the time of His rejection, and of announcing His death until He returns.

The special instruction in regard to it, given by the Spirit to us who are called out from among the Gentiles, is found in 1 Cor. 11. 17-26; and it was received from the Lord by Paul to deliver to us, so that we might know how to carry it out when we are "together in assembly" till He comes.

Those who know the Lord as risen, ascended, and as present in the midst of His own when thus together, will, as they sit thus before Him, be led by the Spirit to think of all that His great love endured for us and for the glory of God. The Lord and His love will fill the thoughts of our worshipping hearts. Those thoughts mature and deepen as we grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we never outgrow all the grace and

love and perfection seen in Jesus, but rather cherish them the more.

The study of the Word in relation to the remembrance of the One who loved us and gave Himself for us should be approached in the sense of the greatness of that love, and of the greatness and grace of the One who so loves us. "The night of His betrayal," when the supper was instituted, will utter volumes to the heart then. The meaning of the broken bread and the poured-out wine will deeply speak to our hearts of His body given for us and His blood shed for us, as we remember Him Who did this, the One we now know as victorious over death and the grave, and ascended to the right hand of God. All the Scriptures may be studied in view of this. All point to the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. The burnt offering, the peace offering, and the others in the early chapters of Leviticus point very wonderfully to the precious death of our Lord, and help us in the understanding of its profound import, as well as giving us a richer sense of His perfect love told out there.

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Our Spiritual life needs to be cultivated. If this is neglected there can be no true testimony.

# THE LORD'S WORK IN HEATHEN LANDS.

## Copy of an Old Letter.

(WM. HV. WESTCOTT.)

Inkongo, Nov. 15, 1913.

My dear —,

It is a rather difficult thing to answer a question such as you ask. In case the form in which you put it is not retained in your memory, and also in order that question and answer may be in juxtaposition, I quote it as you gave it.

You enquire, "Has your experience as a missionary at all modified the thoughts which, as a mere "at home" Christian, you might have had with regard to Church organization? For example, the necessity of oversight, advice, and authority, on the part of the missionary in relation to the native converts, the connection of out-stations with the central mission, etc. These things have suggested to me how Church organization sprang up, and may have been justified by circumstances. I should be glad to hear if you have any clear vision upon the subject as the fruit of your missionary labours."

If you had asked the simple question whether or not Church organization as we see it around us is according to God and His Word, I think I should have asked you to enquire from others far more facile with the pen than I. But since you put it in the way you do, inviting me to state whether—as *the result of missionary experience*—one may not be disposed to excuse now what we speak of as Church organization, or even to regard it as a necessary development of Church history, I feel a sort of obligation to reply.

What you will read will not be a dogmatic setting forth of a position or a creed, but more of the nature of a contribution to your own exercise in and enjoyment of the Word, and of the Lord who is the Centre and Theme of all Scripture. For I think that some phases of Christian life can be realized only in certain circumstances. Others not situated as you are may be unable to see from your point of view; and

if not lowly and sympathetic, may deliberately oppose any point of view other than their own. You remember what the grand old translators of the Authorized Version had to deplore; the being "maligned by self-conceited Brethren, who run their own ways, and give liking unto nothing but what is framed by themselves, and hammered on their own anvil" (Preface to the Authorized Version).

What is the "Church Organization" about which as mere "at home" Christians we used to have certain "thoughts"? Is it not the organization which demands the submission of the Christian to a central authority which in the case of the Romanist is vested in the Pope, in the case of the Anglican in his Archbishop, and in the case of the Nonconformist, in some Assembly, or Synod, or Conference? More lately we have had to add such a scheme as that of the Salvation Army, which, however, (though professing to appeal to Scripture in matters doctrinal) does not, I think, profess to be a *Church* organization, but simply and absolutely a military society for the salvation of souls; in which you have to surrender every exercise of your own conscience which may diverge from the will of the General.

The one thing which may be premised about the varied organizations is that they all originate in a revolt from something or other. The Romanist system is a clear revolt from the authority of Scripture. The Anglican movement is a clear revolt from the authority of Rome; and while it involved at first the closer study of the Word of God, it has resulted in the adoption of much on the Roman lines of procedure, and is trending more and more into the things from which it revolted. The Nonconformist movements have all been on the same lines more or less, revolting either from the the Established Church because of

some matter of conscience in which they felt that the doctrine or practice thereof differed from the Scripture; or else from each other as they differed in questions of administration and practice, or doctrine.

Amidst all the strife of tongues, the Holy Ghost has been pleased to preserve to us the Scriptures of which the text is definable with almost absolute certainty, and which forms a pure and undivisible whole of which every atom is consistent with every other atom; and any version of which can be tested in the first place by the simple question, "Is it in every part consistent with itself?" If for party purposes a version is tampered with in some parts, it betrays itself; for it immediately dislocates some other part. And the great final test is whether, being consistent in every part with itself, it is in its entirety consistent with *Christ*. For He is the living Word; and of necessity the written Word must coincide with Him even as two equal circles having one centre must coincide with each other, or as two straight lines starting from one point and terminating in another point must of necessity lie in one and the same plane.

I refer to this because nothing could guide us in the perplexing questions of the day but the sure Word of God. Take the question of salvation in any aspect you please. "Neither is there salvation in any other" is a straight line. Placing salvation in Mary (blessed though she be among women), or the Pope, or sacraments, or in good works, or in the assembly, is a deviation from God's straight line. Either it does not begin with God's point, or it does not end with God's point. The straight line is Christ, and salvation in Him alone: to place our thought of salvation anywhere else is a deviation from God's straight line as anyone can see.

So also—and here please discover some answer to your query—as to the matter of authority. "All power

(*exousia*, authority) is given to me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and disciple all nations." Where then is God's centre of authority from Whom the entire circumference of our service for Him is drawn? It is in the risen Christ; the Jehovah-Saviour (Jesus) come up out of death, and prepared to fulfil every part of God's will in all the universe. If you put any other point as your centre of authority, your whole circle is wrong. If you deviate a hair's breadth from the true Centre your whole circle is eccentric. Further, if your central point be anywhere within the so-called Christian circle—be it Byzantium, Rome, Canterbury, London; or any place, company, or person, other than Christ—not only is your circle eccentric, but you *cut* God's circle somewhere, and *schism* is the result.

I feel, therefore, that it will not do to lose sight of Christ in any circumstances whatever. Our living in the 20th century does not alter Him, nor the powers and glories invested in Him. Our being in the "missionary field" does not require the least change in the letter of God's Holy Word. In no part of the Holy Scripture are we instructed to look for a transfer of His authority from Himself to some other, so that He should cease to *be it*, and the secondary point or person *become it*. Delegated authority there was, but not such as to turn the eye from Christ. Apostolic? Yes: but for what? "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against *the knowledge of God*, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of *Christ* (2 Cor. 4. 5). Evidently the apostle's delegated authority was not to hide or pervert the knowledge of God; but—in addition to the communication of this knowledge, first by the oral teaching of the apostles, and then by their writings—it was also designed to bring every soul into contact with, and into unfeigned allegiance to, the Person of the Christ. This is the sure corrective of all mere independence, and of the idea of every

man becoming a pope in himself. Sometimes I fear we betray our little knowledge of God, and our little subjection to Christ, by a manner altogether at variance with the mellowing influence of His company.

There are tens of thousands of the Lord's people who cannot articulate a matter for themselves, who yet can see it the moment it is articulated for them. What then is the business of anyone ministering in the Church, be he apostle or prophet, pastor and teacher, or evangelist, or elder, or anything else? Is it not to *articulate* what is true in Christ? You first of all learn for yourself what is true in Him,—in your own case, of course, from the Scriptures, and in dependence upon God the Holy Ghost;—then you prove it in your own soul's experience, and then finally you pass it on for the guidance and help of all whom God, by His providence, has placed within your reach. So that authority in the Church in its true sense is not the "ex cathedra" utterance of an ecclesiastic, but the education of Christ's people, their guidance in difficulties, their help in pressure, by the application of a deep knowledge of Christ to a shallow or defective one. This is a hundred times over confirmed in the New Testament. I can quite understand that when as yet there were no Scriptures in circulation, the Holy Ghost was pleased to use apostles and prophets to utter the mind of God, and the truth of Christ for the guidance and edification of the Church. But on their passing off the scene their teachings were preserved by the wisdom and power of the Spirit of God in the form of the Scriptures. "I commend you to God and to the word of His grace" (Acts 20.).

To come more particularly to your question, I do not think that years of missionary experience have in the slightest degree diverted the force of the Word of God; nor have they shown me that there is any better way of solving the missionary difficulties, or for carrying on missionary labour,

than by perpetual reference to headquarters. Happily we have not the difficulty that many devoted missionaries have, of acting under orders from a society at home. Our access to Christ is therefore simple and undistracted, and our absolute dependence upon Him for financial support helps to keep our faith in exercise. When the work was small we had to look to Him day by day, and He sufficed. Now the work has expanded and is expanding, will His resources fail? Are we justified in "making other arrangements" now that He is blessing His word? Are we to substitute some other authority for His immediate guidance? If the converts multiply, and the working area becomes vast, and too great for us, shall we sink our privilege of asking wisdom of God, and turn to committees and organizations after the manner of men? Is the area too vast, are the numbers too great, for Him? We have only to think of the whole Church, and of Christ's untiring love, and incessant care for it, to have our answer.

Our happy privilege, then, is to teach the converts their right of way to Him. We seek in every way to unfold His sufficiency to them, so that if we should be removed to-morrow, they should not be as orphans bereft of all help, but should look still to One well-known already to the affection of their hearts as their unfailing Resource. We encourage their learning to read, and above all to read the Word; we show them from the Scriptures that the bearing of fruit is the proof of discipleship, that obedience and love Godward, and service manward, are everywhere enjoined in the New Testament.

Accordingly the developments around us have been almost entirely voluntary and spontaneous. I cannot recall the slightest suggestion having been made to the evangelists already supported by Christians as to where they should locate themselves. They have been into certain neighbourhoods, ascertained the possibility or otherwise of a

place for work, and the first we have heard of them has been that they have gone. Constrained as we hope by the love of Christ and the thrill of service, they have been willing to isolate themselves and to work on month after month until souls have yielded, and God in grace has given seals to their ministry. There is a loving interest in the white missionaries who have been at Inkongo, and a certain looking up to them, but I do not think that one of them regards himself as being under the authority of Inkongo. They turn to us as teachers who will show them from the Scriptures what course is right, but I hope that every one of them does so because of his subjection to the Word of God, and not because he regards himself as the employé of a master. They receive help from the assembly funds, but the amount sent is not regulated by the white man, nor is it paid by the white man. There are men who do regular deacons' work, in the way of receiving the collections and of distributing to the poor and to the Lord's native servants; but beyond asking advice now and then and receiving it from the infallible Word, they are as free as though we were not there.

There are opportunities now and then for men to journey to see their brethren in the more distant places, or perhaps to evangelize districts seldom visited. In these cases they often go entirely at their own charges; but occasionally, if the deacons opine that the Christians ought to help them to buy their food, they do so on their own initiative. In this way, as it seems to me, the place and work of the Holy Ghost in the Assembly is unbarred and unfettered; each has a holy liberty to act as he is impressed by the Spirit. Mistakes may be made, and are made; but Peter made mistakes, and I am sure we white folks do. But mistakes are corrected not by sheer

force of authority, but by prayerful and humble consideration of what the Scripture says. Paul did not correct Peter by the weight of authority, but by showing him what was consistent with the truth in Jesus.

I daresay that if anyone saw these sentences who has hitherto relied on the organized ways of the churches in general, he might think this a very loosely constructed building. Perhaps so. But since you asked me the result of my missionary experience, now nearly seventeen years here, I give only that which we prove.

I will add two things.

The first,—that in all meetings of what you would call the Christian assembly (I do not speak of *Gospel* meetings), we have no leader as men speak. The white man is there on the same footing at his black brother and very very often the whole meeting, including the breaking of the bread, is conducted in a happy, orderly way and with unction by the black brothers, and without any audible part taken by the white.

The second,—that we make a distinction between educational work pure and simple, and the preaching of the Gospel. So that in certain instances we feel at liberty to pay a youth or a man whose ability marks him out as a school teacher, to teach letters, syllables, words, and sentences. This enables men, women, and children to read; and so far is preparatory to that reading of the Scriptures which we hope will turn to blessing afterwards. But this payment of school teachers is not made if one of the Christians combines evangelization with teaching in some distant part; for if he be an evangelist he is the Lord's servant and not ours. In that case it is a subject for consideration that he be helped by his brethren.

## SEVEN INDISPENSABLE PRAYERS.

(H. A. WOOLLEY.)

ALL who have studied the Psalms must have noticed many prayers therein which God's children would do well to make their own for perpetual personal use. From these I select seven as being vitally important for every believer.

The first is in Ps. 17. 5.

1. "Hold up my goings in Thy paths that my footsteps slip not."

Beset with snares and pitfalls, how easily does the foot slip. How quickly do our "goings" stray from "His paths" when one leaves the protecting atmosphere of private prayer! Let us set these words in order before our mind's eye, having them ever ready at hand. For only as His Word *abideth* in us shall we be able to stand in this evil day. "Lord, keep me in Thy paths."

2. "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer."

The last verse of Ps. 19. provides this second petition, which centres around our "words" and "meditations," and voices the desire of those to whom Christ is precious. What we say being largely the fruit of what we think, how necessary that the "inner self" should be pleasing to Him. Only thus will the outward expression (speech) be worthy of those called to be saints of the living God.

3. "Shew me Thy ways, O Lord; teach me Thy paths" (Ps. 25. 4).

Though knowing something of God's thoughts about things, we are very apt to turn again to our own point of view. We must come back to be shown "His ways"—how He is acting and will act in regard to all the perplexing problems around—and taught afresh "His paths," so that grasping his purpose, seeing clearly the ultimate issue, we may walk steadily and confidently on in "the good way" He would have us tread.

4. "O, Lord, open Thou my lips;

and my mouth shall shew forth Thy praise" (Ps. 51. 15).

Not only on public occasions, but in private life, this is essential—lips opened by the Lord. If He but touch the lips they shall move to speak His praise, and tell of all His wondrous works.

5. "Open Thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law" (Ps. 119. 18).

Every time we read the Bible, whenever we ponder its precious page, we need the Holy Spirit (the Divine Author) to give us a vision of Christ, taking of His things and showing them unto us.

6. "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken Thou me in Thy way" (verse 37 of same psalm).

Met at every turn by this world's glitter and glamour, how necessary to have our gaze taken from things seen (temporal and transient) and fastened more firmly upon the (at present) unseen and eternal.

7. "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips."

The seventh in Ps. 141. 3 is perhaps the most needed prayer of all. The hasty word, the unguarded utterance, the foolish expression—how easily spoken! If one so meek as Moses spake unadvisedly with his lips, how necessary is it for every Christian to exercise greater watchfulness in this direction! Daily, hourly, should the words be taken up and used, or the tongue (that small but unruly member) will certainly cause us to stumble.

Let us go over these seven petitions again. They all have to do with the everyday of life; we cannot dispense with one. Let us frequently utter them not only when the need is apparent and pressing, but even before the first sign of danger. "Calm seas have their danger" is a truth often overlooked, and the only safe course is to cultivate the habit of "praying always."

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

## Was the early Church saturated with Spiritualism ?

RHOCHDALE claims that Sir A. Conan Doyle's appeal to 1 Cor. 12 is unanswerable, and that it is clear from the list of spiritual gifts enumerated there that modern Spiritualism is a revival of the powers which were exercised in the early church.

On the contrary, this passage of Scripture, like every other that the Spiritists quote in order to bolster up their pernicious system, only exposes and condemns them. There were *many spirits* at work in connection with the idolatry of that day, and these were not the spirits of departed men and women, but demons (see chap. 10. 20, 21). And under the influence of these demons the priests in the idol's temples were able to do astonishing things, as mediums are able to do now under the same evil influence. But with the coming of the Gospel to Corinth, God's assembly was formed in it, and everyone who believed that Gospel went to make up that assembly. In that assembly ONE

SPIRIT manifested His power in contrast to the *many spirits* of heathendom and modern Spiritism. Over and over again it is stated that whatever miraculous powers were manifested in the Christian assembly were by THE SAME SPIRIT, and this one Spirit was the Spirit of God, "the Holy Ghost" (verse 3). Eleven times over in the first thirteen verses of the chapter is the Spirit mentioned. He is the one Divine Spirit making manifest His presence by power in the redeemed and sanctified assembly, and maintaining there the lordship of Christ (verses 3, 5). Do the Spiritists acknowledge the existence of the ONE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD, co-equal in the Godhead with the Father and the Son ? No, they do not ; with them it is many spirits ; but only a mind darkened and blinded to the truth of God could confound the activities of this modern cult with the manifestations of the Spirit of God as given in the chapter in question.

## The Lord's Table and the Lord's Supper.

J. J. N.—The unfolding of the truth of the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians 11. 23-30 is not a repetition of chapter 10, 15-21. In the latter Scripture it is not the act of partaking of the Supper that is in view, but the place of favour and responsibility in which all stand who do partake of it. They were not in the Jewish communion as were those who partook of the Jewish altar, nor were they in the fellowship of demons as were those who took part in pagan rites, but they were in the fellowship of the Lord's death, sharing in common in all the blessings and the responsibilities that must connect themselves with such a fellowship. All who drink the cup of the Lord, and partake of His table, are identified with His death, and are one body. *Identification* with the Lord in death, and *communion* one with another are the

great thoughts. And as all the blessings and wonderful advantages of this fellowship are the common joy of all who are in the fellowship, so also the responsibilities involved lay upon each, such as separation from evil fellowships and from all that the death of Christ condemned. And this not at the time of the actual partaking of the cup and the loaf, but at all times.

In this passage, then, the fellowship to which the believer is committed is defined, while in chapter 11. the word of the Lord in glory is declared as to the Supper, and the manner in which it has to be partaken of. This desire of the Lord, so blessedly expressed, still abides as from the beginning, for we "do this" "until He come." And we show our love to Him by keeping His word.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

Is it possible to sin away one's day of grace?

IN a letter signed "A Hopeless One," the above question is asked. It is a sad letter from one haunted with the fear that "the door of mercy is closed for me because I did not turn to God when He called." What years of misery this "hopeless one" might have escaped if he or she "had turned to God when He called"; years that might have been filled with happy service for the Lord, and with the peace and assurance that the knowledge of the Lord gives. But having missed this, is there now no hope? We will answer the question by relating how one in a similar state of mind found relief. The young woman in question believed that having put from her mind the conviction that the Gospel had brought some years before, and having then chosen the world instead of Christ, she had irrevocably sealed her doom, and while she was sure that there was mercy for others, she was equally sure that for her there was none. I was introduced to her, and said, "There's a verse in the Bible that I am sure is just what you need." Her face brightened for a moment, but when I read to her the wonderful words, "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life," her face clouded and she said with evident disappointment, "I've read that verse many a time." "I know you have," I replied, "but you have not grasped its meaning yet. Notice specially, it is *the world* that God so loved. Are you in the world?" "Of course I am," she replied. "Then," I said, "if you are in the world the blessing of this verse is still for you if you will have it; and until you take a trip to one of the planets,

or find lodgings in the moon, or drop down into hell, it may still be yours."

Instantly she saw that she had been excluding herself from the blessing in which God desired to include her, and she at once became one of the "whoso-overs" that have everlasting life because they believe in God's only-begotten Son. It was so clear to her that she marvelled how she could have remained so long in darkness and despair. And the blessing is equally for our correspondent and all others. There is an old couplet:—

"While the lamp holds out to burn  
The vilest sinner may return."

It is true. The Gospel is preached to men and women in this life, and no matter how often and long the message has been refused, God in longsuffering mercy still offers it. We dare not say that any still living by God's mercy are past redemption, for the closing Gospel appeal in God's Word rings out to "*whosoever will*." "Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22. 17).

We say with all our hearts to our hopeless correspondent, as well as to all others, that the door of mercy still stands open wide, and that all that he needs is to enter in. Christ Himself is that door; He said, "I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved" (John 10. 9). The boundary line that, once crossed, seals for ever the doom of the Christ rejector, is death, "after this the judgment," but as long as a sinner is in the world, the Saviour is accessible, and God beseeches him to be reconciled and commands him to repent.

## The Kingdom of Heaven.

DEAR EDITOR,—With reference to Mr. Hole's letter on the above subject in July issue I wish to make a few supplementary remarks. I have only read one of the pamphlets in question, viz.: "the Kingdom of Heaven."

Mr. Mauro finds fault with the current teaching on this subject. In his preface he says the truth of God has been recovered bit by bit beginning with the

light of the so-called Reformation which dawned upon the Egyptian darkness of the Middle Ages, and we need not be surprised that the truth concerning the Kingdom of Heaven should be the last portion to be recovered.

He avers that prominent expositors say that a conditional offer was made of national deliverance and earthly supremacy to the Jews, and on their rejection

of this, God turned to the building of the Church, as an alternative plan, the Kingdom remaining in abeyance.

He proceeds to combat this teaching by prolix reasoning from the ministries of John the Baptist and of the Lord Jesus in the Gospels, and he finishes with a chapter relative to the presentation of Kingdom truth in Romans.

Since Mr. Mauro came forth as an expositor his writings have unfortunately lost their initial crispness.

On showing the pamphlet to a well-known servant of the Lord, he said that the writer failed to see:—

1. The difference between the ways and the purpose of God.
2. The meaning of 2 Peter i. 20, "No prophecy of Scripture is of private interpretation."
3. The true teaching of the Sermon on the Mount.
4. The great transition in the Book of Acts.

In His ways God deals with man *conditionally*, but God's purpose is the *unconditional* rule of the heavens and the earth by Christ. In the former line he offered restoration to the Jews by Christ personally. Their refusal filled up the measure of man's sin and broken responsibility. On the line of purpose, however, God used the failure to introduce the heavenly department of the Kingdom, without which there could be no Millennial Kingdom. The King was ready to effect all the promises if they had received Him, but on the line of purpose He was there to die, and to lay the foundation of future blessing on the surer basis of redemption.

The whole Old Testament is filled with examples of the above distinction. We see *unconditional* promises in the 12th chapter of Genesis renewed in the 22nd chapter of the same book connected with

*purpose*, and then there is a complete chain of *conditional* promises in the Law connected with the *ways* of God. The pamphlet asserts that prominent expositors impute bad faith to God in breaking His promises, but on the same principle of reasoning we might say that it was bad faith for God to give Adam a test and Israel the Law when He knew that they would fail. Underlying God's dealings, in His ways with the first man down to the coming of Christ, was His purpose in the Second Man; the failure of the first only opened the way for the other to make all good for God.

Mr. Mauro has too much in mind the idea of a carnal kingdom. The Lord could not take the Kingdom from the "mob" in John vi. any more than he could accept it from Satan in Matthew 4. "My Kingdom is not of this world" (John 18. 36).

The transition in the Book of Acts is apparent to every careful Scripture student. In the initial chapters Peter charges the people with culpable homicide in ignorance, emphasizing the resurrection and the promise of the Spirit. On the other hand Stephen accuses them of wilful murder and the refusal of the Holy Ghost. The complete rejection of Christ in Stephen connects the Christian not with Jerusalem but with the glory of God and Jesus there. Stephen's death marked the close of the transitional period in the Acts, and the centre of gravity of Christianity gradually shifted from Jerusalem as the work progressed to Samaria, Damascus, Joppa, Cæsarea, and Antioch, where the first Gentile Church was planted without the aid of Apostolic ministry, and from whence evangelization of the heathen began.

T. OLIVER.

*Galashiels,*

*July 7th, 1920.*

## THE POWER OF THE WORD.

WE must not fear the sceptical spirit of the age, nor let it silence us in giving forth the Word of God. History is constantly declaring to us that Holy Scripture carries with it convicting power. Cæsar Malan once met an infidel in the railway train and quoted texts of Scripture to him. "It is no use," he said, "to read that to

me, I don't believe the Bible." "But," said Mr. Malan, "a sword *would cut if I thrust it into your body, whether you believed it to be a sharp sword or not,*" and then to the end of the journey he continued quoting Scripture. Years after he met this man, no longer an infidel, but a true believer, saved through that conversation in the train.

# THE ACCURACY OF BIBLICAL SCIENCE.

(T. OLIVER, D.Sc.)

THE scientific accuracy of the Bible has been so frequently challenged and ridiculed, that the apologists have become very weak in defence, or altogether silent.

During the 1600 years which elapsed from Moses, the first, to John, the last of the Biblical writers, many erroneous systems of science were propounded. Yet scripture shows no evidence that the writers were influenced by any of these systems. "Holy men of God" spake as they were moved (or carried along) by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter 1. 21).

When the fantastic theories of the ancient philosophers are subjected to modern analysis they will not bear a moment's examination. Let us compare the natural philosophy of Job with that of Plato or Aristotle. The blunders of the latter are often grotesque, but the wisdom of Job has stood the test of time. Yet the vagaries of Plato are considered fit studies for the ablest minds of Oxford and Jena, while the Bible is relegated to the nursery.

The ancients believed that the earth was supported on the shoulders of a hypothetical giant, named Atlas. The balancing of the earth in space and its maintenance in an orbit by gravitation was known to Job 1000 years before Socrates. God "hangeth the earth upon nothing" (Job 26. 7) was his inspired reference.

While Egyptian philosophy was propounding the "flat earth" theory, Isaiah was found stating that God sits upon the circle of the earth and sets a compass, or decrees a circle on the face of the deep, thus proclaiming the spheroidal shape of the earth. (Isa. 40. 22.)

The Psalmist tells us that "His going forth is from the end of the heaven" (Psa. 19. 6). The refined astronomical measurement of the nine-

teenth century has revealed the fact that the solar system is moving through space towards a point in the constellation Hercules.

The apostle James uses the astronomical term "parallax" to set forth the unchangeable character of God. Parallax is the apparent change of place of a body viewed from different points. By sufficiently extending our base of observation even the most distant parts of the universe will appear to shift, but this is not so with God, He manifests no "parallax" or variableness, neither shadow of turning (*τροπή ἀποσκίασμα, tropees aposkiasma*) which is obviously derived by analogy with the shadow arising from the apparent turning of the sun at the solstice. The noonday shadow of an upright stick is shortest at the summer solstice.

The tides are due to the differential attraction of the moon and sun. These are negligible in the Mediterranean, the only sea known to the ancients. Yet Job was enlightened to say "He that compasseth the waters with bounds until the day and night come to an end" (Job 26. 10); and again, "Hitherto shalt thou come and no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed" (Job 38. 11). He stated what he could never have seen nor even heard from mortal lips.

But the examples need not be all selected from the astronomical sphere. Boastful modern philosophy has often laughed at Solomon's ignorance of chemistry when he spoke of the action of vinegar upon nitre in Prov. 25. For nitre does not effervesce when acid is poured thereon. But the fault does not lie with the origin of the saying, but in the medium of transmission. The estimable Westminster theologians, although great linguists, knew nothing of chemistry and were misled by the form of words. The Hebrew word used by Solomon was

nether, corresponding to *νιτρον* (*nitron*) in the Greek, which really describes sodium carbonate (our familiar 'washing soda'), the source of all effervescence on a modern commercial scale. The proper use of the word is well shown in Jeremiah: "For though thou wash thee with nitre and take thee much sope" (Jer. 2. 20).

Who but a Divine Person could have revealed to the Psalmist such meteorological data as the following? "He causeth lightning for the rain", and again: "He causeth the vapours to ascend from the end of the earth" (Psa. 135. 7). These are scientific facts which were only discovered nearly 3000 years later by scientists. "All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full: unto the place from whence the rivers come thither they return again" (Eccles. 1. 7). Even Solomon's acute observation could not have led him to know that evaporation is equal to the rainfall.

The direction and speed of the wind depends on the differential pressure of the atmosphere at different places. This fact is beautifully expressed by Job with the reasons relating to electrical phenomena in regulating the rainfall (Job 28. 23-27).

There were no volcanoes in the land of Israel or the neighbouring countries, yet we find the following records of the Spirit's dictation. "He looketh on the earth and it trembleth, He toucheth the hills and they smoke" (Psa. 104. 32). "Who removeth the mountains and they know not: who overturneth them in His anger" (Job 9. 5). There were no mines or deep borings in Mesopotamia, yet Job could leave on record that "under the earth is turned up as if it were fire". Modern investigation shows that for every 54 feet descent one degree rise in temperature is experienced.

Although easy to supply further examples, it will suffice to say that while the text-books of science are changing twice every generation, and as a philosopher aptly said, "The curiosity of to-day may be the commonplace of to-morrow", Scripture remains securely established and sees human cosmogonies framed and displaced by more feasible propositions. All are illustrative of the scriptural declaration: "They shall perish: but Thou remainest . . . they shall be changed, but Thou art the same and Thy years shall not fail".

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## "GLUE TOGETHER" & "SCOTLAND'S GREEN"

(J. T. MAWSON.)

"YOU can learn more in a railway journey if you keep your eyes and ears open than you can by a lot of reading," remarked a fellow-passenger to me on an East Coast express yesterday; and I felt there was truth in the remark. An instance will illustrate. A family came tumbling pell-mell into our compartment, returning from a seaside holiday. They were a healthy crowd of boys and girls with a merry looking father and a somewhat anxious looking mother, she probably had good cause for her anxiety for her young brood looked quite capable of daring deeds.

We were *en route* for Edinburgh and a connection had to be made there by this family for the West; the time between the trains was little enough, and numerous trunks were packed in the luggage van. It was the father's business to attend to these and as he dashed off to do so he gave instructions to his family: "Glue together" said he "till I come back". It was a sensible command, for anyone can see what trouble the father would have had and what time would have been lost if on returning he had found his family scattered, and it was a needed command, for those youngsters

had wills of their own, and looked as though they liked to exercise them independently of each other, but the father's authority controlled them, and I hope they got their train.

The father's words to his family glued themselves to me. They sounded so much like other words, words that should be for ever sacred and precious to Christian hearts because they fell from the lips of the Lord whom we love. The burden of His parting words to His disciples was, "Love one another till I return". "Glue together". Several reasons are given for this. Said He:—

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another".

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one for another".

"These things I command you, that ye love one another. If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you".

"That they all may be one . . . . that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me".

Cogent reasons these why the followers of the Lord should "glue together" during His absence.

Consider them:—

1. He commands it.
2. Because He loves them.
3. That all may know that they are His disciples.
4. Because the world hates them because they belong to Him.
5. That the world may believe that the Father sent the Son.

Other reasons could be cited, but these are enough surely to incite us who are the objects of the Lord's love to "glue together". Some ignore these great reasons for loving cohesion on the part of the saints of God and would substitute rules and regulations;

would build again little folds for keeping the sheep together, but these things only militate against true cohesion; they divide the saints instead of binding them together. He is coming back, the time of His absence is drawing to its close; do we not feel that it is an unspeakable shame that His disciples have forgotten His word and not kept it; that they have not "glued together" during His absence, but have quarrelled and divided, and scattered to their loss and dishonour, and to His grief? So much so that if He were not the Lord who knoweth them that are His, and where to find them, He would have much trouble at His coming to gather them together again in one. This sort of thing began very early in the history of the Church as the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians proves, and if it was easy for the flesh and Satan to work their evil way then we need not marvel at it now, yet the blame is entirely ours. We certainly have no cause for self-congratulation on this line, but plenty of cause for deep heart-searching and self-condemnation as we dwell upon the fact that in spite of His love and His command we have not "glued together". But in these days it is not so easy as it was in former days to hold together as those who are loved by one great love. We make it harder by our prejudices, as we may learn from another railway lesson. Yes, we make it harder.

Again I was *en route* for Scotland, specially to visit some fellow Christians whom hitherto I had not seen, and of whom I entertained some notions not altogether favourable to them, or creditable to me. The opposite corner of the compartment was occupied by a little girl not more than nine years old. I discovered that she was travelling alone to Edinburgh and we became good friends. It was the first time that she had gone so far, and when our train crossed the border into Scotland I said, "Now we're in Scotland". "No, this isn't Scotland", replied the little maid. "Why do

you say that"? I asked. "Because Scotland's yellow", she said, with the utmost gravity. I lay back and laughed at my dogmatic little friend, and then asked, "Whatever makes you say that Scotland's yellow?" "Well its yellow on my map", said she with great assurance, and in a manner which meant that that's the last word on the subject. And though around us stretched fields of lovely green, it was not Scotland to her because all she knew of Scotland she had learnt from her map. I laughed again and again at the naïveté of that little Yorkshire maid; then I grew grave, and the tears forced themselves from my eyes as the lesson forced itself upon me. I, too, had had a map, and on my map my brethren were yellow, and to be avoided; *was my map right?* I prayed for grace to destroy my map if it proved to be wrong, as it most surely did, for my brethren surprised me by the freshness of their love for our common Lord and His precious truth.

I prayed for grace to discard my prejudices and endeavour henceforward to look upon my brethren as the Lord who loves them looks upon them. It was a needed lesson, and one that has meant much blessing to me, and I shall never forget the little maid who thought that Scotland was yellow; so like to me was she.

Brethren, if we are to obey our Lord's command, if we are to love all who love the truth and "glue together", we must be prepared to discard our cherished maps if they prove to be not according to the truth; seek out our brethren and judge them not according to our notions, according to our maps, but as to how they regard the Lord Himself and His Word, then, and only then, shall we "*follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart*", which is surely as incumbent upon us as it is that "everyone that names the name of Christ departs from iniquity" (2 Tim. 2. 19.22).

## "SEPARATION".

IT is of the very essence of the church to stand in holy separation from the world, as a chaste virgin espoused to Christ. With light or harsh minds this separation easily degenerates into a sour self-complacency, which repels from, instead of attracting to, Him whose glory and grace ought to fill every mouth and heart with praise. . . . The Christian is entrusted with a testimony of truth far beyond what the Jew had, and his separation does not consist so much in external forms.

Hence he is in continual danger of making good a separation to God, not in the power of the Holy Ghost in truth and love among those who cleave to the Lord, but in peculiar abstinences and prohibitions, in an effort to differ from others, and so in the claim of superiority for themselves. This evidently exposes the unwary to self-deception, as it tends to build up that which is as far as possible from the mind of Christ—a bitter though unconscious sectarianism.

A Christian in sorrow will often go for comfort to some servant of the Lord in whom he has confidence, and that is not wrong, but if he expects to receive good from a servant of the Lord, what may he not expect from the Lord who died for him? Go to Him we would urge, and expect a thousandfold greater comfort and good from Him than from the most devoted servant of His living.

"To truly care for the Lord's flock or to be a true preacher is a great thing; and if the Lord did not give strength it could not be. Therefore it was that Christ said to Peter, 'Lovest Thou Me?' and repeated it three times. It was as if He said, 'If thou wilt be a true shepherd and friend of souls, thou must be so through love of Me. Otherwise it is impossible'".

## GOD'S TEMPLE.

(J. WILSON SMITH.)

THOUGH the temple at Jerusalem was completely destroyed by Titus, and not one stone left upon another, let it not be thought that God has no temple on earth to-day.

True, it may not be one formed of such material as stone, nor built by human hands. No such structure, however artistic, or venerable by age or association, may rightly be termed a temple of God throughout the period of Christianity. There has been a material temple, and there will be another in the coming age, but not such to-day. Much is written of this future temple in Ezekiel and the Revelation forming, as it does, a deeply interesting study; but our business, as Christians, is to learn the nature of the temple of God as presented to us in those scriptures which are applicable to the purely Christian period.

The idea of a temple is a sacred edifice, a space "cut off" from others, where God may be worshipped, and from whence things secular, such as commerce, trade, etc., are excluded. With all this we are of course familiar by the ordinary usage of the day. The question is, does such custom comport with the Christian idea of a temple of God? Sincerity as to it cannot make the practice of it right, if indeed the word of God supply no sanction.

What then, to-day, is God's temple? Let us begin at the lowest point. In 1 Cor. 6. 19 we read: "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price?" Here the body of the individual Christian is that temple; his body—it does not say soul—but the body, which is the instrument of his activities, volition, passions, and the like. This is (most wonderful fact, and to be duly pondered) the temple of the Holy Ghost. Do we know it? Are we influenced

by such a marvellous fact? Let me lay hold of it in power, then I will shrink from sin of every kind, and cherish the holiness that the presence of such a Guest involves. I shall seek not to grieve Him, but the rather to encourage Him. I am not my own. I am bought with a price that I should glorify God in my body. Oh! for grace! Spend time in reading the context.

Then we read in 1 Cor. 3. 16: "Know ye not that ye are God's temple and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you . . . for the temple of God is holy, and such (holy ones) ye are".

This address is not individual, but it is sent to the local assembly at Corinth. The saints there formed, collectively, God's temple, while, of course, the aggregate of all the saints on earth made up, not merely God's temple, but *the* temple itself.

The whole body of saints on earth at any given moment to-day forms the temple of God. He dwells in that body. It is the vessel of worship. He assuredly inhabits their praises. Such a body stretches far beyond the confines of an edifice, a locality, a district, or a country (see John 4. 21). It is the temple of God.

Did these Corinthian saints grasp the truth that they, collectively, were God's temple—His dwelling place?

Where He dwells God is necessarily everything. His dwelling is holy. All His name and nature are there displayed. Man may not exhibit his folly there. Room for rival schools and religious pride there is none. Who is Paul? Who Apollos? Glory itself appertains to that temple. To defile it is to court destruction, while to build on the foundation that which is valuable and indestructible is to earn a reward. What a voice to these Corinthians, and to our—no better—selves!

What an effect would not a truer

conception of God's temple produce in us all! "Ye are God's temple and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you".

Again, in 2 Cor. 6. 16, we read: "What agreement hath God's temple with idols, for ye are (the) temple of the living God?" No agreement whatever! A gulf of infinite space separates, morally, between God's temple and the entire system of idolatry. The two may not be mentioned or classed together. It is no question here of seeking the blessing of the poor idolater—that should be earnestly done—but it is the call for not the very least compromise between them. To import into God's temple the smallest principle of idolatry is, so far, to destroy it.

And not only idolatry, but a yoke with unbelievers, a compact with unrighteousness, communion with darkness, concord with Belial, part with an infidel, as well as agreement with idols. There must, at all costs, be a clean cut. God wants holiness. Hence He commands us to: "Come out from among them and be separate", with the precious and unfailing promise to those who obey, that He will receive them and be to them for a father, and they to Him for sons and daughters.

Exercise of soul for such a path there must be, but godly separation to Christ from the world, religious or wicked, is the call of God to all His children; and if that separation be to Christ, it will be one of humility and not of sectarianism, pride, or Phariseism. "Ye are (the) temple of the living God". Then in Eph. 2. 21 we read: "In whom, all the building, fitly framed together, groweth up to an holy temple in the Lord". This is the grand future and sure result. The building grows to that. It shall be fitly framed together. Never did the highly-polished stones of Solomon's temple fit more perfectly, or lie more exactly, than shall the fitting of these stones, once so shapeless, so angular so incongruous, rest comfortably together in that completed temple of beauty, grace and holiness.

How, all through, does holiness mark and characterize God's temple! "A holy temple in the Lord". So much for the temple. We have the house of God in 1 and 2 Timothy, and also in 1 Peter 2., in the last of which the analogy between the house and the temple is very close; but, the word "temple" not being used in it, I close this paper.

## I AM GOING TO HIM.

(W. BRAMWELL DICK.)

Please read Genesis xxiv.

WE were speaking recently to a young lady who expects one day to cross the ocean in order to be married.

We remarked that it would cost her a pang to leave her beautiful native city. She replied, "I will leave *without* a pang". "But", said we, "you are breaking old links, severing happy associations, and going to a country where you will be an utter stranger". She instantly answered,

"I AM GOING TO *HIM*".

There was an emphasis on the last

word that suggested that it was a person and not a country that was attracting her; and that she cared little who or what she left here; nor was she apprehensive at the prospect of being "a stranger in a strange land", so long as she had that person; and where he was that would be home to her.

It seems to us that we might learn a lesson from this. We could imagine Rebekah being asked, after she had made her great decision: "Do you realize what you have done? You are going to part with loved ones, to break links of life-long duration, to

cross a trackless desert, to go to a new country, and to enter upon entirely different conditions. Have you counted the cost?" We think she might say in the short, but pregnant sentence of our friend: "But

### I AM GOING TO HIM".

So far as its meaning for us is concerned the question put to Rebekah:

"WILT THOU GO WITH THIS MAN?"

refers not so much to the sinner deciding to accept the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour, but rather impresses upon us the immense importance and the vast and far-reaching results of

### DECISION FOR CHRIST

on the part of those who have already accepted Him as their Saviour. Rebekah unquestioningly and unreservedly placed herself in the hands of the nameless servant that she might go to Isaac. She thought not of the pain of leaving the city of Nahor, or of the privations of the journey, if such there were; in the company and under the guardianship of a faithful guide she went forth unto *HIM*. So to-day the Holy Spirit of God would have us say with a ring of decision in our voices:

"I WILL GO!"

He would have us place our hand in His as *He* leads us forth. He claims our ear that He may tell us of the excellent glories and the superlative beauties of our Lord Jesus Christ, He claims our heart that He may captivate it by the presentation of "the love of Christ which passeth knowledge", and He claims our entire being that we may go to Christ where He is.

If He has His rightful place it will not cost us a pang to part with everything here. The erstwhile "friends" who do not love our Lord will no longer be our friends. As well offer a grown man a wax doll with which to play, as invite to the picture house

one who has gone forth to *HIM*; for he sings:

"JESUS! THOU ART ENOUGH  
The mind and heart to fill;  
Thy patient life—to calm the soul;  
Thy love—its fear dispel".

No! No!! No!!! There will be no pang, no regret, no dissatisfaction, no hankering after the past, if we can say,

"I AM GOING TO HIM".

It means that He will be the present object of our hearts, the present portion of our souls, who will command our affections, govern our thoughts, control our lives, minister to us pleasure the like of which we never dreamed of, and having *HIM* we shall want nothing, and no one besides.

We follow Rebekah to the other side of the desert. "Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide: and he lifted up his eyes, and saw". Then "Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and she saw"; and decked though she may have been in the "jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment", that the servant had given her, in the presence of the glory of Isaac "she took a veil and covered herself". Now not only did she have him, but he had her, *he* took her, *he* loved her, and *he* was comforted. It is eventide, we have almost reached the other side of the desert; our precious and adorable Lord will soon come forth, *HE* will lift up His eyes; directed by our divine and heavenly Guide we shall lift up *our* eyes; and our souls shall be lost in the contemplation of His beauty and of His glory.

"How will our eyes to see HIS face delight,  
Whose love has cheered us through the  
darksome night!  
How will our ears drink in HIS well-  
known Voice,  
Whose faintest whisper makes our souls  
rejoice"! "

Oh! the grandeur of it! Travelling days done; the vicissitudes of the journey forgotten; our miserable failure a thing of the past; we shall feast our eyes upon *HIM*.

## NOTES FOR PREACHERS.

"HOW can I become an efficient preacher?" "Go to college," says one. No, that is not the way. "FOLLOW ME," says our Lord and Master, "and I will make you fishers of men." The great training school for the Christian worker has Christ as its head, and the tuition that He gives is particular and individual, necessitating personal waiting upon Him. It is interesting and instructive to trace out the Lord's dealings with Peter in this connection in the Gospels. But the Lord is not only the Teacher, He is also the Leader. We have not only to sit at His feet and learn of Him but to follow Him in action. "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." This process may appear simple, but it is efficient, and it is also exclusive; no man can become a fisher of men by any other way.

This means separation from the world and its evil to Christ; it means time spent in studying Him; it means such nearness to Him that we do not miss His direction; it means such liberty from self-occupation that we are at His disposal; it means progress in grace and the knowledge of Himself; it means obedience to His will and success in His service, not according to men's estimate of success but according to His own.

It is only right that the preacher should endeavour to put forth the gospel in a worthy way; he should seek out acceptable words, worthy of the gospel he preaches, and study to show himself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed. The gospel has been likened to a coach, and the preachers manner, language, and method, to the coach in which the sovereign rides. The coach should not be so wonderfully gilded that the sovereign is lost sight of by the people in their admiration for it, and yet it should not be unworthy of the one who rides in it. But this matter, also, which is of great importance, will be rightly adjusted as we follow the Lord. If the heart is

enlarged by the love of God as seen at the cross, and the soul stirred at the thought of the needs of men, the lips of the preacher will give forth goodly words, and what flows from them will be ten times more effective than the most prepared and polished sermon that ever was delivered.

It is well when preachers go to their service with Martin Luther's prayer in heart and mouth: "My Lord, I wish to speak of Thee, to preach to Thine honour, to praise Thee, to glorify Thy name". Then they will say as He said, "I have never been troubled because I could not preach well, but often because I had to speak before the face of God, of His majesty and Divine Being". No preacher who realizes the greatness of the message that he carries, or the responsibility that it puts upon him and his hearers, could go to his work other than with fear and trembling; the self-sufficient preacher will surely come to grief.

In giving advice to preachers, Luther said: "Let your sermons be of the simplest. Look not to the wise, but to the simple, unwise, rude and unlearned people, for the wise are made of the same stuff. If I in my sermons were to regard Philip Melancthon and the other doctors I should do no good, but I preach in the simplest way to the unlearned, so did the Lord. He spoke as if for His audience He had none other than my little Martin, Paul and Magdalene. I keep the Hebrew and Greek for the times when we learned men are alone together. Then we can talk such crabbed stuff that they may well wonder at us in heaven".

"Brethren, we have a message to deliver, let us utter it with the heart. There are those who preach from memory; they are but burden carriers who wish to get rid of the load. There are those who preach out of the heart, quick, eager, palpitating, anxious, yet courageous heart; only by such is the gospel preached effectively.

We have a message to declare, not to invent. Oh! what toil of the most servile kind we might be spared if we would but deliver God's message! If we had to make sermons, it would be dreary work to the maker and drearier still to the receiver. We have not to make anything, we are to tell men what God has told us, and faithful

preachers shall have God-given words. He will confound with sudden and pitiable dumbness the hireling who has been indulging himself and forgetting Christ, but He will honour him with crowns of rejoicing who seeks wholly the glory of Christ, and who seeks in lowly prayer the message that shall glorify Him".

## THE FERVENT PRAYER.

(FROM THE REV. W. W. W. W.)

"It was Thy need of me,  
That brought Thee from above  
It is my need of Thee, O Lord  
That draws me to Thy love."

• *Trust in Him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before Him: God is a refuge for us.*—Psalm 62. 8.

"**BEHOLD**, a woman of Canaan . . . cried unto Him" (Matt. 15. 42). The poor woman prayed (as we say) with good will—with a bent affection. Why is *crying* used in praying? Had it not been more modesty to speak to this soul-redeeming Saviour, who heareth sometimes before we pray, than to cry out and shout? for the disciples do after complain that "she crieth so after them". Was Christ so difficult to be entreated? The reasons of crying are: (1) Want cannot blush. The pinching necessity of the saints is not tied to the law of modesty. Hunger cannot be ashamed. "I mourn in my complaint and make a noise", saith David (Psa. 55. 2). (2) Though God hear prayer, only as prayer offered in Christ, not, because very fervent; yet fervour is a heavenly ingredient in prayer. An arrow drawn with full strength hath a speedier issue; therefore, the prayers of the saints are expressed by crying in scripture: "In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God" (Psa. 18. 6). "Unto thee have I cried, O Lord" (Psa. 88. 13). "Out of the depths have I cried" (Psa. 130. 1). He who may teach us all to pray, "In the days of his flesh . . . offered up prayers and supplications,

with strong crying and tears" (Heb. v. 7). (3) And these prayers are so prevalent that God answered them: "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard, and saved him out of all his troubles" (Psa. 34. 6). "My cry came before him even into his ear" (Psa. 18. 6). The cry added wings to the prayer, as a speedy post sent to court upon life and death: "Our fathers . . . cried unto thee, and were delivered" (Psa. 22. 5).

*Objection.*—But if so be that prayers must be fervent, even to crying, then I cannot pray, who am often so confounded that I cannot speak one word.

*Answer.*—So was the servant of God, in a spiritual kind of praying, in uttering Psalm 77, when he saith (verse 4): "Thou holdest mine eyes waking; I am so troubled that I cannot speak". Yea, *groaning* goeth for praying to God: "From heaven did the Lord behold the earth; to hear the groaning of the prisoner" (Psa. 102. 20). "The Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered". Faith doth sigh prayers to heaven; Christ receiveth sighs in His censer for prayer. Words are but the body, the garment, the outside of prayer; sighs are nearer the heart-work. A dumb beggar getteth an alm at Christ's gates, even by making signs, when his tongue cannot plead for him; and the rather, because he is dumb.

*Objection.*—I have not so much as a voice to utter to God; and Christ

saith, "Let Me hear thy voice" (Cant. 2. 14).

*Answer.*—Yea, but some other thing hath a voice beside the tongue: "The Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping" (Psa. 6. 8). Tears have a tongue, and grammar, and language, that our Father knoweth. Babes have no prayers for the breast, but weeping; the mother can read hunger in weeping.

*Objection.*—But I am often so, as I cannot weep.

*Answer.*—Hezekiah can but chatter as a crane, and a swallow, and mourn as a dove (Isa. 38. 14). Sorrow keepeth not always the roadway; weeping is but the scabbard of sorrow, and there is often more sorrow where there is little or no weeping; there is most of fire, where there is least smoke.

*Objection.*—But I have neither weeping one way or other, ordinary nor marred.

*Answer.*—Looking up to heaven, lifting up of the eyes, goeth for prayer also in God's books: "In the morning will I direct my prayer unto Thee, and will look up" (Psa. 5. 3). Stephen looked up to heaven (Acts 7. 55). He sent a post: a greedy, pitiful, and hungry look up to Christ, out at the window, at the nearest passage, to tell that a poor friend was coming to Him.

*Objection.*—Alas! I have no eyes to look up. The publican looked down to the earth. And what senses spiritual have I to send after Christ?

*Answer.*—There is life going in and out at thy nostrils. *Breathing* is praying, and is taken of our hand, as crying in prayer. "Thou hast heard my voice; hide not Thine ear at my breathing, at my cry" (Lam. 3. 56).

*Objection.*—I have but a hard heart to offer to God in prayer; and what can I say then, wanting all praying disposition?

*Answer.*—Therefore pray, that you may pray. If an overwhelmed heart refuseth to come, it is best to go and tell Christ, and request Him to come, and fetch the heart Himself. If

Christ's eye but look on a hard heart, it will melt it.

*Objection.*—What shall be done with half-praying, and words without sense?

*Answer.*—Broken prayers are set down in scripture as prayers. "My soul is sore vexed, but Thou, O Lord, how long?" (Psa. 6. 3). That is a broken speech. The reason of broken prayers is often the hastiness of the affection. Love and longing for Christ have eagle's wings; and love flieth, when words do but creep as a snail. Every part of a supplication to a prince is not a supplication; a poor man out of fear may speak nonsense, and broken words that cannot be understood by the prince; but nonsense in prayer when sorrow, blackness, and a dark overwhelmed spirit dictateth words, are well known, and have a good sense to God. "Lord, Thou hast heard the desire of the humble" (Psa. 10. 17). Desires have no sound with men, as they come to the ear; but with God, they have a sound as prayers have. Then when others cannot know what a groan meaneth, God knoweth what is under the lap of a sigh, because His Spirit made the sigh; He first made the prayer, as an intercessor, and then, as God He heareth it; He is within praying, and without hearing.

Prayer being a pouring out of the soul to God, it is neither up nor down to the essence of sincere praying whether the soul come out in words, in groans, or in long looks, or in sighing, or in pouring out tears to God (Job 16. 20), or in breathing.

There be so many things that are a pouring out of the soul in prayer: as groaning, sighing, looking up to heaven, breathing, weeping; that it cannot be imagined how far short printed and read prayers come of vehement praying; for you cannot put sighs, groans, tears, breathing, and such heart-messengers down in a printed book; nor can paper and ink lay your heart, in all its sweet affections, out before God.

## UNITY. (Notes of an Address.)

(H. P. BARKER.)

FROM the very earliest time the unity of God's people has been a thing of great regard in His sight. After the flood the unity of the human race was disrupted, and instead of one family they became split up into many nations. When God called Israel, although there were twelve tribes, it was God's thought that there should be one nation, and the unity was to be expressed by there being one meeting-place where the feasts could be celebrated, and the sacrifices offered. That unity was very soon lost. I am not referring to the great disruption under Jeroboam merely, but to the fact that all sorts of high places were set up, first to God, and then to the heathen deities, and although there were great spiritual revivals that swept over the land, the unity was never recovered. Take the revival in the days of Manasseh. He was the worst among the kings of Judah. He filled Jerusalem with blood, and did worse than all before him. He built high places up and down the land. Then the tide of God's recovering mercy swept over the land, and hearts were recalled to their allegiance to Jehovah, but the high places were not removed—only they sacrificed there to the Lord their God alone. They worshipped and served the Lord, but it was on the high places, and under every green tree. There was no recovery of the original testimony of unity in the midst of Israel.

When we come to New Testament times we find the thought of unity in the heart of God coming out in an inexpressibly blessed way, and I think in Romans 10. 12 we have the first movement towards that unity which never can be disrupted in God's attitude of divine and marvellous sovereign grace. The same Lord extended the riches of His favour to Jew and Gentile on equal terms.

This was the first movement in the direction of unity. It was not that

God had ever refused to bless the Gentile, Rahab the Canaanite had tasted of His blessing, Ruth the Moabitess came to trust under the wings of the God of Israel, Naaman the Syrian, Ebedmelech the Ethiopian, and the inhabitants of Nineveh had tasted of His grace. But now it is not the God of the Jew who is blessing, but

### THE SAME LORD

over all is rich unto all that call upon Him. There is grace and blessing to all, absolutely on the same terms, without prejudice or favouritism. That is the first movement of the heart of God towards breaking down the middle wall of partition.

Now turn to Ephesians 3. 6: "That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of

### THE SAME BODY".

The sovereign grace of God is not here overflowing its banks as in Old Testament times, but flowing out without any banks, without any limit. Those who have received it are not left as an aggregate of individual units in the world. When they taste of the grace of God, and are sealed by the Holy Spirit, they become members—please mark this, as it is so important—not of an *organization*, but of a marvellous *organism*. There is all the difference in the world between an *organization* and an *organism*. There may be a certain body of men united together for some purpose. They have an organization, a president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, members of the committee, and so on. But the human body is not an organization, and it is the human body which is taken up by the Spirit of God to set forth the truth of the relationship that exists, not only between one member and another, but between every member and Christ, our exalted Head. He is the living Head of a living organism, in which every

member is livingly united to Himself, and to every other member.

At the beginning there was great and wonderful testimony to this. Every member of the body of Christ on earth was to be found in the company, all assembled together, all realizing in some measure their relationship to one another. And that unity, formed on the day of Pentecost, *SUBSISTS TO-DAY*. It is just as true to-day, as it was then, that every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is a member of this marvellous organism. There is one Head and many members. The unity remains, however lamentably we may fail to give practical expression to it.

The consideration of a few scriptures may make us ashamed of our failure and more sincere and earnest in our desires to walk in the truth.

Look at 1 Cor. 12. 4. "There are diversities of gifts, but

#### THE SAME SPIRIT "

We have the same Spirit in every member of the body of Christ. The subject at the beginning of the chapter is the activity of the members. The activity of the eye is to see; of the hand, to work and to grasp; of the foot, to stand and to walk; so in the members of the body of Christ are different activities. I think the observation is a just one, that "though God loves *unity* He is no lover of *uniformity*". You see that in nature. No two blades of grass are exactly alike. If we understood what this chapter says, we should see that the work of the Lord is one, and that there is no place in it for jealousy or divided counsels among the servants of the Lord. Just as the saw, the screw-driver, the chisel and the hammer are not the same, and cannot do one another's work, but in the hands of the skilled workman all do their part on the one work in hand, so in the body of Christ there are diversities of gifts, but the Spirit is the same. The Spirit uses them in different ways, as

He sees fit. No two operations are the same, but the same Spirit is in all.

Turn to Romans 12. 16, where you have the practical carrying out of the thought of the unity of the body of Christ. "Be of

#### THE SAME MIND

one towards another." We are not to form cliques and parties. We are to maintain the same attitude towards all, if they are really fellow-members of the body of Christ. Look upon all as belonging to Christ. If you find a brother of low estate, and you are one of high estate, "condescend" to him. It may seem rather a difficult task, but it is preceded by what we get at the beginning of the chapter. There must be the renewing of the mind, in verse 2. It is interesting to see how the thought of unity is pursued in Romans. In chapter 14. we have to follow the things that make for peace, not the things that make for disruption. We must follow the things which edify one another. Then in chapter 15. 6 we are "with one mind and one mouth, to glorify God". We are to receive one another, as those that are members of the one body. Then in chapter 16, those that cause divisions are to be marked and shunned.

The members are to "have

#### THE SAME CARE "

one for another (1 Cor. 12. 25). I have often thought of how, when the Lord Jesus was dying on the cross, He saw Mary, His mother, and John, the beloved disciple, and He could say, "Behold thy mother" to John. John took her to his own home, and I can imagine the care he would bestow upon that aged woman for the rest of her days. We have to have care for one another, because we belong to Christ. I have to have the same care for you, and you for me. We can express it to one another in a thousand different ways, but there is something a little further than this.

Turn to Philippians 2. 2: "Fulfil ye my joy . . . having

### THE SAME LOVE".

We are to love one another, not, perhaps, because there is anything particularly lovable in us, but *because we belong to Christ*. If you love Christ, you will love all that Christ loves, and He loves the members of His body. Oh! the love of Christ to the members of His body! We have to express in some way that love to one another. There is something which goes with that, and it is the last verse of chapter i. : " Having

### THE SAME CONFLICT

which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me". The Philippian Christians were not to have a time of outward peace in this world. It was to be a time of conflict, but they were to be careful to enter the conflict with the same aims and for the same objects, and in defence of the same principles as the Apostle himself. May we say that, though the centuries have brought many changes, it is incumbent upon us Christians to see to it that our conflict is the same conflict as that which was in Paul? The enemy's point of attack varies, and therefore our *mode* of conflict may have to vary, but not the essence of the conflict. Paul heard that some preached Christ out of contention. He rejoiced in that, because they preached Christ, though with an unworthy motive. His conflict was not with them but with those who did not preach Christ, or who preached another Jesus. He "wrestled against principalities, against

powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places". And the weapons of his warfare "were not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds—casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ". The conflict deepens. The more faithful we are, the more conflict we shall have, but it is far better to be fighting the enemy than fighting one another.

I must just quote another Scripture. We have spoken of the same Lord and His grace; the same body, to which we all belong; the same Spirit that directs the operations of all; the same mind; the same care; the same love; the same conflict. What do we look for?

### THIS SAME JESUS

whom we have learned to love, in all His patient, tender ways with us. Our hearts have been won to admiration of Him, because of all that He has done for us. This same Jesus, whose love has made our joy too deep and wonderful for words, will come. We have seen many wonderful things, but we have never seen His face. When we do see His face, though He will be in circumstances of glory and majesty, we shall not be dismayed. We shall be at home with Him, because it is this same Jesus whom we have learned to know in His love and tender grace, who is coming again (Acts 2.).

## TRIBULATION TEACHES.

TRIBULATION teaches. "He who is not tried, what does he know?" We go about often with our rebellious queries, "Why God does this, or allows that?" This is not humbling ourselves under His hands; it is rather a rebellious determination to play our part in the game, to claim an equal share with God in deciding what should and should not be. Whoever

can earnestly from the heart humble himself before God, and acquiesce in His chastening, has already won the victory. God is merciful, gracious, patient, of great goodness: and His own prerogative and work it is to have pity on the wretched, to comfort the sorrowful, not to despise the anguished, smitten heart; to give grace to the lowly.

Jordan. The Chariot of Fire. (2 Kings 2. 1,-15.)

[N this strange eventful life Elijah passes from wonder to wonder, and the closing scene is the greatest wonder of all. There is no journey more remarkable than his last day's pilgrimage from Gilgal to Jordan. Led by the Spirit of God he visits places which speak in a striking way of Jehovah's dealing with Israel.

We may first notice that the prophet is accompanied by Elisha, who had been anointed in his room. The time had now come for Elijah to ascend to heaven, leaving Elisha behind to represent on earth the man who is taken to heaven. *The starting point of Elisha's ministry is an ascended man.* He is to be the witness on earth of the power and grace that can righteously put a man in heaven in spite of sin, death, and all the power of the enemy.

Next we may notice that if the man on earth is to fitly represent the man in heaven he, too, must travel the road that leads by Gilgal, Bethel and Jericho to the banks of Jordan, there to have his vision filled with the glory of the ascension.

In these great mysteries we have a striking picture of the true position of the Christian while journeying through this world. If for a while we are left on earth it is that we may represent the Man who has gone to heaven—Christ Jesus, the Man in the glory. And, in order to be adequate witnesses, we must, in the experience of our souls, know something of the great truths shadowed forth on this last day's journey. We too must travel from Gilgal to Jordan and catch the vision of the ascended and glorified Man, before we can in any measure set forth His graces and excellencies in a world from which He has been cast out.

Gilgal was the starting place on this memorable day. At Gilgal Israel were separated unto God by circumcision,

and there, when circumcised, God could say to the people, "This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you" (Josh. 5. 9). There the flesh was cut off, and there the reproach of Egypt was rolled away. At the Red Sea they were delivered from Egypt, but not until they were circumcised on the banks of Jordan was the reproach of Egypt rolled away.

We know from the Epistle to the Colossians that circumcision is typical of the "putting off the body of the flesh". We have been delivered by death from that evil thing which the Word of God calls the flesh. But that deliverance is in the death of Christ, and faith accepts that we have died with Christ. Based upon this great fact we have the exhortation, "Put to death therefore your members which are upon earth" (Col. 3. 5). The Apostle at once tells us what these members are: "fornication, uncleanness, vile passions, evil lusts, and covetousness which is idolatry". Then, too, we are to put off "anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communications and lying". It is important to remember that these are not the members of the body, but the members of the flesh. The members of the body we are to yield to God (Rom. 6. 13); the members of the flesh we are to put to death. Again, it is not the flesh that we are exhorted to mortify, but *the members of the flesh*. The flesh has been dealt with at the cross. This faith accepts, but in our daily walk we are to cut off every evidence of the flesh—those ugly and evil things in which we lived when we were in the world. In the measure in which these things are still seen in us, to that extent the reproach of Egypt still clings to us. For all these things proclaim, not only that we have been in the world, but the manner of life we lived in the world, and therefore become a reproach to us. But if these evidences of the flesh are cut off and no longer seen,

then the reproach of Egypt is rolled away, for if these things are gone no man can tell what manner of men we were when living in the world. This putting to death of the members of the flesh is the Christian's Gilgal, and just as Joshua, in the course of his victories, returned again and again to Gilgal, so the Christian, after every fresh victory, must beware of the manifestation of the flesh and unhesitatingly refuse it. This is the first stage of the journey and its importance cannot be overestimated. If we are to represent the Man who has gone to heaven, how necessary that every manifestation of the flesh should be absolutely judged and refused.

Bethel is the next stage. The deep significance of this famous place is supplied by the history of Jacob. On his journey from Beersheba to Haran, he lighted on a certain place where he tarried all night. With the earth for his bed and the stones for his pillow, he lay down to sleep. The Lord appeared to him in a dream giving three unconditional promises to this wanderer (Gen. 28. 10-15).

1. As to the Land. It would be given to Jacob and his seed. Israel took possession of the land, and lost the land, on the ground of responsibility. They have never yet possessed it according to this promise on the ground of sovereign grace.

2. As to Israel—the seed of Jacob. They will increase like the dust of the earth and spread abroad to the West and to the East, to the North and to the South, and through Israel all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

3. As to Jacob himself. For twenty years he will be a wanderer facing hardships and dangers, but he is assured by the Lord that He will be with him, and keep him, and bring him again into the land. "I will not leave thee," says the Lord, "until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of."

Thus Bethel testifies to God's un-

changeable faithfulness to His people in securing a place for them, in securing them for the place, and in so keeping and caring for each one that none shall perish, however rough and however long the journey may be.

As we Christians take our pilgrim journey through this world, how blessed to have the assurance that the home to which we are going is secured to us by the same unchanging faithfulness of God. The Apostle can remind us we are going "to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in the heavens for you". Israel has a land secured on earth, and the Christian a home reserved in heaven.

But more, just as Israel is kept for the land, so, too, the Christian is "kept, guarded, by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time".

And when at last we are gathered home it will be found that not one of His own will be missing. The journey may be long, the way may be rough, the opposition great, the conflict fierce—we may often stumble and fall—but the Lord's words to Jacob are applied by the Apostle to ourselves: "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." If Gilgal tells of the unchanging evil of the flesh, every activity of which is to be refused, Bethel speaks of the unchanging faithfulness of God in which our souls can rest in perfect confidence.

But in the prophet's day the witness of Gilgal and Bethel to Jehovah's relationship with Israel was but a memory only recalled by faith. To sight, Gilgal and Bethel had become the witness of the people's sin. Amos, the herdman, charges the people with transgression at Bethel and multiplying transgression at Gilgal. Bethel, as the seat of one of the golden calves, was a centre of idolatry; and while the transgression with idols was universal, at Gilgal it was multiplied. The faith of Elijah looks beyond the awful sin

of the nation and recognizes that it is God's purpose to have a people set apart for Himself and brought into blessing on the sole ground of His unchanging faithfulness and unconditional grace.

Similarly in the last days of the Christian dispensation, the cross, which on God's side is the witness of the judgment of the flesh, has become in man's hand an object of universal idolatry, and thus the witness of his sin. How many worship the cross who reject with loathing all that the cross signifies, and hate the Christ who suffered on the cross. Bethel, too, —meaning the house of God—the place of blessing for the display of all that God is in His unchangeable faithfulness, has been degraded into a building of wood and stones to display the pride and glory of man. Nothing either in Elijah's day or our own, so conclusively proves the utter ruin of that which professes the name of God as the corruption of that which is divine. For such there is no hope, and nothing remains but judgment.

This is brought before us in the next stage of Elijah's journey. The prophet is sent to Jericho, the city against which God had pronounced the curse. In defiance of God man had rebuilt the city, only to bring judgment upon himself. Thus Jericho becomes the witness of the judgment of God against those who oppose His people and rebel against Himself. The faith of Elijah foresaw that the rebellious nation was going on to judgment, just as faith to-day discerns that professing Christendom fast hastens to its doom.

From Jericho Elijah takes his journey to Jordan. As a type Jordan is the river of death. Through it Israel had passed dry shod into the land, and now once again Elijah and Elisha pass over on dry ground, but for them it is a way of escape from the land that was under judgment. This passage through Jordan becomes the witness that all links are severed between God and

Israel on the ground of their responsibility. Judgment is upon them, and faith recognizes that death is the only way of escape from the coming judgment.

Gilgal tells us that the flesh must be refused and the reproach of Egypt rolled away if Israel is to inherit the land.

Bethel speaks of the sovereign purpose of God to bless His people on the ground of His unconditional grace.

Jericho witnesses that on the ground of responsibility the nation is under judgment.

Jordan, that the only way of escape from judgment is by death.

In this mystic journey can we not see the foreshadowing of the perfect path of the Lord Jesus in the midst of Israel? No reproach of Egypt was seen in Him. He walked and lived in the light of the unchanging faithfulness of God to His promises. He warned the nation of coming judgment, and took the way of death which broke all links with Israel after the flesh, and opened a door of escape for His disciples from the judgment that was coming upon the nation.

But if, in Elijah, we see shadowed forth the path of the Lord Jesus through this world to heavenly glory, and that by way of death, we see also in Elisha, a picture of the believer who wholeheartedly identifies himself with Christ; who in spirit takes the journey which leads outside this world and who, having seen Christ ascend through the opened heavens into that new place in glory, comes back into a world that is under judgment to witness in grace for the Man that has gone to glory. In Elijah's day there were many sons of the prophets at Bethel and Jericho, but only one man took the journey with the prophet. The sons of the prophets were exceedingly intelligent, they could tell Elijah what was about to happen, but they had no heart to follow Elijah. And many to-day know a great deal about Christ,

are well instructed in Scripture, but they are not prepared to accept the outside place with Christ and they know little of their place with Christ in heaven.

By what power then, we may well ask, is a soul enabled to take this journey? The story of Elisha discovers to us this secret. Another has pointed out some of the steps by which he was led to accompany Elijah. First he was *attracted* to Elijah. There came a day in his history when Elijah "passed by him" and cast his mantle over him. And was it not a great day in our history when the Lord Jesus drew near to us and we came under the power of His grace and with delight we "ran after" Him? But like Elisha, though we were attracted to Christ, there were natural links that held us. Our need and His grace made Christ very attractive but He did not have the first place with us. However, in Elisha's history there came a time when the natural links were broken and then we read, "He arose and went after Elijah and *ministered unto him*". It is one thing to be saved by Christ—as it were to be under the shelter of His mantle—but it is another stage in our history when we definitely go forth to serve Him—to minister unto Him. Does this mean that we give up our callings to follow Him, that we turn our backs on home and wife and children? Not necessarily. But it does mean that whereas once we pursued our callings simply with some selfish object, now Christ becomes our object. Whereas an unconverted child might obey the parents because it is right to do so out of natural affection, the converted child will obey because it is pleasing to Christ. And when Christ thus becomes the object it can be truly said we have gone after Him and minister unto Him.

But as we follow Christ we grow in the knowledge of Christ, and this leads to a further stage in the history of our souls, we become *attached* to Him. This is touchingly illustrated in the

history of Elisha. Three times on this last day's journey, he can say to Elijah, "I will not leave thee". This is the language of a heart that is held by affection. And love is put to the test. At Gilgal, Bethel, and Jericho, Elisha is tested by the words of Elijah, "Tarry thee here, I pray thee", only to be met by the thrice-repeated response, "I will not leave thee". Though Elijah's journey leads to Bethel, the city of the golden calf, to Jericho, the city of the curse, and to Jordan, the river of death, yet Elisha will follow in the power of love. So Ruth could say in an earlier day, "whither thou goest, I will go"; and the twelve could say in a later day, when many turned back and walked no more with Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go?" Grace had drawn them after Christ, and love held them to Christ.

Moreover, attachment of heart leads to full *identification* with Elijah. Three times on this last day's journey the Spirit of God uses the words "They two," speaking of identification. At Jericho "They two went on". At the river "They two stood by Jordan", and when the waters were smitten, "they two went over on dry ground". Love delights to accept the fact that we have been identified with Christ in the place of judgment and at the waters of death.

But more, if we have been identified with Christ in death it is in order that we may hold sweet *communion* with Him in resurrection, and this too is shadowed forth in this lovely story, for having passed on to new ground through the river of death we read, "They still went on and talked". We may have been converted long years ago, but do we still walk with Christ and talk with Christ as we pass along our way?

How blessedly Elisha points the way by which the believer is led to follow Christ outside this judgment-doomed world into His new place in resurrection glory. *Attracted to Him* in grace.

*ministering to Him as our Object, attached to Him in love, identified with Him in death and enjoying fellowship with Him in resurrection.*

Arrived on the other side of Jordan, outside the land, all is at once changed. Not until then does Elijah say, "Ask what I shall do for thee". Grace puts all the power of a risen man at the disposal of Elisha. Death has opened the way for the outflow of sovereign grace. Alas! how little we realize the profound fact that all the grace and power of the risen Christ is at our disposal. What an opportunity for Elisha; he has only to ask to obtain. Does he ask for long life, or wealth, or power, or wisdom? Ah! no; his faith rising above all that the natural heart might covet, at once asks for a double portion of Elijah's spirit. He realizes that if he is to remain on earth in the place of Elijah, he will need the spirit of Elijah. Does not this scene carry our thoughts to the Upper Room of John 14? The Lord was about to leave His disciples and ascend to glory, and though He does not say, "Ask what I shall do for thee," yet He says, as it were, "I will make a request for you". "I will pray the Father and He shall give you another Comforter that He may abide with you for ever." How slow we are to realize that a divine Person has gone up to heaven and a divine Person has come down from heaven to dwell in believers. And the Person who has come down is as great as the Person who has gone up.

If we are left on this earth to be descriptive of Christ as the exalted Man, we shall need, as one has said, "a power commensurate with Himself." Elisha had asked a hard thing, nevertheless it shall be granted if, says Elijah, "thou see me when I am taken from thee".

"And it came to pass, as they still went on and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both

asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven, and Elisha saw it." He sees Elijah ascend into glory, but on earth he sees him "no more". "Yea," says the Apostle, "though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him *no more*." And what is the result for the Apostle of seeing Christ in the glory? He answers, "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature, old things are passed away; behold all things are become new". And this, too, is told out in this wonderful story, for we read that Elisha "took hold of his own clothes and rent them in two pieces". But further, not only does he part with the "old things", but he makes them useless. He did not carefully fold and lay them aside, ready to be taken up again at a future time, but he "took hold of his own clothes and rent them in two pieces". He has done with them for ever. Henceforth he is clothed in the mantle of Elijah. But it is the mantle of the man who has gone to heaven by way of Jericho and Jordan. In figure he has gone through judgment and death, and as a result God is free to send back Elisha with a message of grace to a nation that is under judgment. But for this witness to have any power, he must be a true representative of the man in heaven. How blessedly this was so in Elisha's case, for on his return to Jericho from the scene of the rapture, the sons of the prophets at once exclaim, "The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha. And they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him".

In like manner, having seen Christ on high, and our vision being filled with new creation glories, it is our privilege to part company with the "old things", and in the power of "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" so to represent the Man that has gone to heaven, that the very world is constrained to note that we have been 'with Jesus', even as in Elisha's day they said, "The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha". 7

## DAVID'S MIGHTY MEN. No. 2.

(H. J. VINE.)

## THE SECOND THREE.

THERE are peculiarities in the record which God has given to us concerning the second three of David's warriors which seem inexplicable at first. One of these mighty men is not even named. Abishai is chief, and Beniah is mentioned next, but we cannot be sure whether he was second or third, for we are not told. This is the same in the list of 2 Sam. 23. and in that of 1 Chron. 11. There is some good reason for these deliberate omissions. In the early list, which is given after David's last words, the mighty Joab's name is left out altogether. What we have said of him already explains this. Shammah the Hararite is put after the other two instead; though it is not said he was one of the three mightiest. Indeed, he is mentioned again in the ordinary list in the proper order in verse 33; but his devotedness to David evidently shone where even Joab, the greatest, failed. This honourable mention should encourage *every servant* of Christ to serve Him sincerely. He knows how to value true service for Himself.

According to *man's responsibility* Joab is left out of the list in Samuel, yet according to *divine grace* he stands at the top in Chronicles; but in neither is there any mention at all of one of the mighties of the second three. This is very solemn. There were men of Belial even among the mighty men of David. A man may be very prominent in the service of the Anointed of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, and yet be lost and perish eternally. It was so with Judas. Thank God, no true sheep of Christ can be lost. They may wander and stray and even doubt, but "they shall never perish", said the One who gave His life for them. Service may be taken up by a man for various motives—"for wages", for "his own glory", without having been born again, and without being sealed by the Spirit. Having been saved first, the service of faith which follows

is pleasing to the Lord, but "without faith it is impossible to please Him".

Abishai, "*the brother of Joab*", is so designated, for he was like him in many ways, showing similar traits; but if he shared his brother's graceless hardness of heart, he was nevertheless ready to obey David's word, and so was preserved from most of Joab's mistakes; therefore, although he "attained not to the first three", we find honour and distinction given to him without reserve. "He was chief of the three" (i.e., the second three), we are told; and he was "more honourable" than the other two. This was the result of heeding the word of David while cleaving to him. When a servant of our Lord Jesus Christ heeds His word and keeps near to Him, although there may be a great deal to try him, much that is pleasing to God will be found in his service.

When Saul chased David for his life, and lay one night in a trench with his people round about him, David asked, "Who will go down with me to Saul to the camp"? Abishai said instantly, "I will go down with thee"; and when he stood with David by the sleeping monarch, he desired to smite him to the earth at once, saying, "I will not smite him the second time". David, however, checked his haste, adding, "Who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed and be guiltless"? Abishai heeded the word and was kept back from this sin, though he thought God had delivered David's enemy into his hand. We may be tested to-day in a similar way, but the word of the Lord will preserve us. When Abner was slain, Abishai fell under Joab's influence; but in many a stubborn battle he gained the victory for David and for the people of God.

He could brook nothing that dishonoured the king; and when Shimei called him "a bloody man", he asked leave to "take off his head"; but David again stayed his haste, and in

due time punishment came from the Lord upon Shimei. To the capable hands of Abishai was committed the third part of David's army for the campaign which broke the rebellion under Absalom. In the Edomite war he slew eighteen thousand in the valley of salt, and then put garrisons in Edom making it tributary to David. In the Ammonite-Syrian battles he was entrusted by his brother Joab with an army to fight against the Ammonites, whilst he faced the Syrians; and, although they were at a great disadvantage, being beset before and behind, Joab exhorted his brother to be of good courage and do valiantly, and both the Syrians and the Ammonites fled before them.

When the king was old, and giant Ishbi-benob, with his spear of three hundred shekels weight, thought to have the honour of slaying David in battle, "Abishai, the son of Zeruah, succoured him and smote the Philistine and killed him."

The special act which is singled out for mention, in the list of the mighty men in 1 Chron. 11., is a remarkable one indeed. He faced no less than three hundred of David's enemies alone! Nor did he stay his hand until he had slain them all! After the hardships and trials he experienced with David during the time of his rejection, we may be sure he learned much and enjoyed a near place to the king in his glory. David might well say to him, as another will to His mighty men by-and-by, "*Well done thou good and faithful servant!*"

Benaiah's record is full of stirring incidents. He was true to David, and carried out the desires of the king even after David's death. His trustworthiness must have been a great comfort to his chief. We have small conception of the great pleasure our Lord Jesus Christ finds in a reliable servant of His. It is said of Himself, as the servant of God's will, Behold My Servant in whom My soul delight-

eth. The apostle Paul tells us he laboured to be agreeable to Him.

Benaiah was with David when many were against him, and he was with him when the multitudes owned him king and bowed before him. His communion with the anointed of God seems to have been uninterrupted whether in adversity or prosperity, in the cave or on the throne, in the wars with innumerable foes or in the government of God's people. No wonder David set him over his guard. He would be glad to have such an one close to himself.

He is specially singled out for his victories over (1) two men of *Moab*; (2) a *lion*; and (3) an *Egyptian*. How these three remind us of (1) the flesh; (2) Satan; and (3) the world. It is a great day when in the service of our Lord Jesus Christ we accept the condemnation of the cross upon sin in the flesh, and henceforth walk and war after the Spirit; when it is experimentally true of us, we "boast in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in *the flesh*". Of the young men we read in 1 John 2. 14: "Ye are strong; and the Word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome *the wicked one*"; but at once—strong though they be—the exhortation is given to them, "Love not *the world*, neither the things that are in the world". This is not said to the fathers in Christ, for they have the knowledge of "Him that is from the beginning", and therein lies the secret of victory over the world, for the Father's love enjoyed in the heart, and learned in the Son, excludes the love of the world.

Satan acts upon the flesh, and the two men of Moab were "lionlike", but the one who was "with David" slew them both. The lion himself occupied a pit, and doubtless went about seeking what he could devour when not occupying his stronghold. Benaiah would gain the gratitude of many for his victory on that snowy day; just as a Greater has won our eternal

praise for overthrowing Satan by going into his stronghold of death (Heb. 2. 14), so as "to deliver them who through fear and death were all their lifetime subject to bondage". The Egyptian was a man of tremendous stature, and he wielded a spear like a weaver's beam; yet, with just a staff in his hand Benaiah defeated him; and, plucking the spear from him, he turned it against the owner and slew him. It is through the cross of Christ we get the victory over the world by faith in the Son of God who makes known the Father's love to us. The world lifted up its hand against Christ, and yet by the death He died the world was defeated for faith; so that one could write, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world".

Although *Joab* was out of communion with the thoughts of David concerning Solomon sitting on the throne, *Benaiah* shared the king's God-given desires with others of David's mighty men. If "the Christ dwells in our hearts through faith" we shall be preserved even when many turn aside. Rebellion broke out against King Solomon; and, remarkable to relate, Adonijah, the head of it; Joab, the energy of it; and Shimei who cursed David, all fell at last by the sword of Benaiah. "With David" in his rejection and fightings; "with David" as captain of his bodyguard; "with David" in his kingdom in positions of honour; he was now exalted to be captain of the host of Israel with David's son Solomon, sharing in his glorious reign when wars were passed. Tried and proved to be trustworthy, he richly reaped a blessed reward. How welcome to the hearts of those who follow our Lord Jesus Christ now will it be in the glories of the coming day to be "with the Lord" whom they have loved and served; yea, throughout the endless ages of divine rest and peace and joy to be

"for ever with the Lord" in the Father's house; as He said, "That where I am, there ye may be also".

#### THE THIRTY AND THE REST.

Besides those already named, thirty more are mentioned in the list of the mighty men of David. They are called "the thirty" and "the thirty captains". Then we read of others who shared David's rejection, "when he kept himself close because of Saul the son of Kish". They came to David to Ziklag, and "they were among the mighty men, helpers of the war" (1 Chron. 12. 1). When the time of conflict and stress was over how their hearts would rejoice that they had been honoured to share with David those days of struggle! And when the day of Christ's glory dawns in heavenly beauty great indeed will be the joy of those who have shared to-day in the conflicts for His Name's sake and for the good of all His own. To behold the rich results of the sufferings of Christ which He alone bore, in which none could share and without which we should have remained unsaved—will fill our hearts with still more exceeding gladness; and then we shall see fully what was "the joy set before Him", for which He endured the cross despising the shame!

Meanwhile the warrior looks forward! the fighter looks toward the goal he longs to reach!—the results of victory and triumph he presses on to!—his eyes look right on to the time when the King shall be seen in His beauty reigning gloriously! "That day" Paul often called it, for he knew every true soldier would know what he referred to. Those who laboured with him in view of that day he called his "fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God"; and with all sorts of difficulties besetting him he wrote, "In all these we are more than conquerors through Him that has loved us". There was the secret of his triumphs, the known love of Christ, that nothing could rob him of! Yea, he asked, "Who shall

separate us from the love of Christ"? In answering his own question, he shows that the greater the trials the more pronounced are the triumphs we gain through the One who loves us with an infinite love (Rom. viii. 35-37).

Asahel's name stands at the top of the list of the thirty captains. His soldier career was a short one as we have seen; but we cannot help remarking that David's sister's sons head the three lists. Joab was chief and captain; Abishai the chief of the second three; and Asahel first of the thirty. There was no partiality merely in this. Rather does it prove that the sense of a known relationship with the Anointed of God produces a good soldier. We find this constantly in the epistles. We are not only spoken of as the companions of the Christ, "the Anointed", but we are His brethren! He is "not ashamed to call us brethren" it is said. Wonderful grace! David often sang Jehovah's praises in their midst during those trying times; and doubtless they would join in harmoniously with "the sweet singer of Israel", and be cheered on their rough road to the glory of the Kingdom. A sweeter Singer than David draws His servants aside to-day, and in the midst of the assembly sings the Father's praises, and they are gladdened on their upward way.

The thirty mighty men that were with David had a near place to him; and they doubtless learned from him lessons which secured the distinctions that became theirs. They owed all to David. They would rightly esteem Joab and the other captains, but David was pre-eminent in all their hearts and minds. He was God's anointed one. There must be no rival. All others are fellow-helpers in the war. It is just so to-day. We are to esteem those who are at the forefront in the Lord's service, "very highly for their work's sake"; yea, we are told they are to be regarded "in the Lord" with "exceeding love", but there is only One who is to have

the first place; for God has decreed concerning the Son of His love, the Head of all things, the Head of the assembly, "that in all things He should have the pre-eminence". Every true heart responds, *He is worthy!—He alone is worthy!*

Jonathan, Saul's son, saw that God was with David and that he would sit upon the throne of Israel. He tried to dissuade his father from persecuting him, but he could not prevail. Saul would not even leave him alone, but chased him "as a partridge on the mountains". At times it seemed as if David must fall by the spear of his relentless pursuer. God watched over him, however, and when at Ziklag he was hiding from the one who sought his life, He drew many others to David, to share in separation his path of difficulty which led up to the throne. They were loyal and true, and were also among the mighties. Some were "even of Saul's brethren" we are told. It was through the death of Christ, when "we were yet enemies" we were reconciled and called to serve the Lord.

"Of the Gadites there separated themselves unto David into the hold to the wilderness men of might, and men of war fit for the battle" (1 Chron. 12. 8). Amasai brought some from Benjamin and Judah to David, and said, "Thine are we, David, and on thy side, thou son of Jesse"! Some of Manasseh also fell to David, mighty men of valour. "At that time day by day there came to David to help him, until it was a great host, like the host of God." Separated to David they were ready for the service of David. It is the same in 2 Timothy ii. Those who are separated to the Lord, and call on him together out of a pure heart, are ready for His service—"sanctified and meet for the Master's use."

It was not simply that they purged themselves *from Saul* and his supporters. That they did; but what put them among the mighties was their actual coming "to David." It was

not for them to be thinking of what they had left; they were with David and ready for the battles that cleared the way to the throne. Their work had a positive character about it, and therefore success was secured even though it involved energy and conflict. Can we truly say we are separated to Christ? Are we with those that are with Him? Is the hope bright before our hearts of the coming glory? Are we serving the Lord in view of "that day?"

"That day" will surely come! Its brightness will light up the earth with the glory of God! Our Lord Jesus Christ will be Head over all, and the assembly will be with Him! Like the fleshly king Saul, many mere professors of Christianity will turn away at the end to spiritism; they "will depart from the faith giving heed to seducing spirits" (1 Tim. 4. 1). We are told of "a strong delusion" which will carry off those who "received not the love of the truth that they might be saved". The "man of sin" having dark, supernatural powers will drag them with him to destruction. Saul met his doom after going to the woman that had a familiar spirit. Then

David was proclaimed king. The overthrow of the man of sin will mean the appearing of Christ in power and great glory. He shall be exalted and be extolled and be very high. Loud hallelujahs shall greet the ear of the One who was once despised and rejected. Israel shall own Him then as their Messiah, King David's greater Son. The nations shall own the King of kings; yea, to the uttermost parts of the earth all peoples shall acknowledge the Lord of lords; and the Son of Man shall be supreme. From the heavens on high which now hide Him from the sight of men He shall come forth to reign in splendour and majesty, and men shall be blessed in Him, while all nations shall call Him blessed.

Meanwhile it is our high honour to be separated to Him, to sincerely serve Him, to look forward to the day of His glory, and to press onward through every difficulty like David's mighty men, proving the truth of that word, "We are more than conquerors through Him that has loved us"; for unto us "it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake".

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

### The Judgment of the Living Nations. Matt. 25, 31—46.

R. W. CORK enquires if this passage of Scripture which states that "the Son of Man . . . shall sit on the throne of His glory, and before Him shall be gathered all nations", means that all nations shall be gathered into Palestine for judgment?

No, we should not say so. It is as SON OF MAN that He sits to judge the nations, and this is not a title local to Canaan but is creation-wide. His coming in this glorious character is connected, not with Jerusalem but with "the clouds of heaven" (see Daniel 7. 13, 14; Matthew 24. 30). And "as the lightning cometh out of

the east, and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be" (Matt. 24. 27). All the tribes of the earth shall see Him, they shall be made conscious of His presence and glory, and of the fact that they must now have to say to Him alone. Then the selective judgment will take place and be carried out just where they are in the presence of His "power and great glory" which will be felt and seen universally.

### WILL IT BE AN INDIVIDUAL OR NATIONAL JUDGMENT?

The judgment will be national, it is living nations, in contrast to the

judgment of the dead in Revelation 20. There they "are judged *every man* according to his works", which is intensely individual. The gospel of the kingdom which Matthew presents, which will test the nations, has specially this character: it is not said to be preached to "every creature" as is the gospel which was committed to Paul and which we have believed, but it "is preached in all the world for a witness *unto all nations*" (Matt. 24. 14), "and then shall the end come". So in the final commission the apostles are sent to "*disciple all nations*", which is yet to be fulfilled. The fate of all nations will be determined according to their attitude towards the King's messengers, who go forth to them with the gospel of the kingdom. This gospel will be preached after the church has been translated to heaven; it will not be offered to any who have heard and refused the gospel of the grace of

God which belongs to this present period.

### WHO ARE THE MULTITUDES IN THE VALLEY OF DECISION?

(Joel 3. 14.)

These are not *nations*, but vast *armies* gathered in the valley of Jehoshaphat for the battle of Armageddon. The whole passage shows that the multitudes are men of war; the kings of the east will be there (Rev. 9. 16; 16. 12), and the armies that follow the Beast and the false prophet (Rev. 19. 17-21), all determined to crush Jerusalem; but the Lord will appear for her deliverance (see Zech. 12. 14). This also will take place after the translation of the church to heaven, but, we judge, before the judgment of the nations; those armed against God and His Christ, as these will be, first feel the righteous power of His arm.

## Baptism in the Name of the Lord Jesus.

A. T. DEVONPORT enquires as to what difference there is between baptism "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost", and baptizing in the name of the Lord, as in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 2. 10, 19). As to the baptism itself there is no difference, but the aspect of it in Matthew seems to be wider than in the Acts. In Acts they were baptized unto the Lord, the Lordship of Christ being the great testimony of the Apostles, and this is still our testimony. Baptism unto the Lord Jesus is Christian baptism, and individuals and households received this baptism in the Acts, but it would

certainly not exclude what is presented in Matthew, for none who refused to confess the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, could be recognized as being in the Christian faith. In Matthew the commission is not essentially Christian, it extends to the establishment of the Lord's kingdom in power upon earth, and probably on to the time when He shall deliver up that kingdom to His Father (1 Cor. 15.). This baptism is national. The disciples are to baptize nations, the nations thus baptized will, we believe, be the sheep that shall stand on the right hand of the Son of Man when He comes to judge the living.

## THE FATHER GLORIFIED IN THE SON.

JOHN 14. 13, 14: Saints on earth ask the Father in the name of the Son. The Son who is the actor in the works of the Deity answers the prayer

in order that the Father may be fully manifested—glorified—in the Son. By this means the knowledge of the Father is promoted in the saints on earth.

# THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT OF THE LORD.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

## The Seven Sayings upon the Cross.

THE last Will and Testament of our Lord! May we thus speak of the words of Jesus, uttered amid the woes of His cross of sacrifice, and recorded for us by the infallible pen of the Holy Ghost? We certainly believe that we may so speak of them. The first three of these seven sayings declare His will as to mankind; and the second three, bringing out as they do with absolute clearness what God is, and what man is, and what the Lord Himself is, could not have been omitted, while the last saying, giving completion to the whole, demonstrates the absolute confidence that the holy Sufferer reposed in His Father to the end. But we do not speak of these sayings as His last Will and Testament, as though they annulled anything He had said before, but as gathering up in the intensity of these solemn hours all His desires into sentences which we cannot forget, either now or in eternity.

All His words abide, for He spoke no useless words, and nothing that needed to be withdrawn, modified or qualified. His words were as gold purified seven times; no dross of human failure ever entered into them, for His manhood was as perfect as His Godhead, and the words that He spoke in the language of a man were the words of God—words of light and life and salvation; imperishable and eternal words, and consequently words that we must treasure as we treasure Him who spoke them, for they are the unfolding of the Father's heart, and His own. Yet none can more profoundly affect us, if we love Him, than these we are now to consider. The circumstances in which they were spoken, and the fullness of their meaning claims for them an unique place in our thoughts.

1. "FATHER, FORGIVE THEM FOR THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO" (Luke 23. 34).

It was not at the beginning of His work amongst men that the Lord prayed this prayer but at the end of it; not when they wondered at His gracious words in the synagogue of Nazareth, and proceeded to cast Him over the precipice upon which that favoured city was built, but when, after having fully seen all His works and heard all His words, they mocked His unspeakable agonies on Calvary.

From the first they intended to murder Him, but they proceeded to their end with a malignant hatred into which no benign influence entered. There was no ingredient of shame and suffering that they could add to the bitter cup that He had to drink that they did not pour into it. He was blindfolded and beaten, stripped and scourged, mocked and spit upon, crowned with thorns and crucified. Uplifted upon the cross He saw them, after they had done their worst, gather round to further gratify their insatiable hatred in watching Him there, and He opened His suffering lips to give His heart's answer to that hatred in this never-to-be-forgotten prayer.

But He saw more than that excited crowd led by Priests and Pharisees. He saw the whole world of men that hated both Him and His Father represented there. He looked outward and onward even to this day, and embraced in His prayer sinful mankind. Had He not prayed this prayer to His Father no message of mercy could ever have reached a rebellious world from a Saviour God. In it He declared His will for men; He did not desire that the judgment that this crowning act of the world's sin against God called for, should fall upon it. He was "not willing that any should perish", but "would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth", and this is the will of God.

If infinite love and pity had not filled the Saviour's heart, He might have prayed a different prayer, for did He not tell His disciples, reduced to *less than twelve weak men* by the defection of the traitor when they attempted to rescue Him from His foes, that He could then and there have prayed to His Father and He would give Him "more than twelve legions of angels", but that would have been a prayer for judgment and not mercy, destruction and not salvation. He might thus have prayed and done so justly, "but how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled that thus it must be"?

And the purposes and promises of God made known in the Scriptures must be fulfilled, hence the prayer for mercy. The love of God rose up triumphantly above all men's hatred, and expressed itself in Him who came to make God known. Hatred and sin had done their worst, and now God's love must do its best, and this it did when the voice of Jesus cried, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do". These were His last words about the world of sinful men, and they declared His will in regard to them, and they secured the longsuffering of God which is salvation even to this day.

That prayer committed Him irrevocably to all the suffering that followed, for how could it be answered if He did not give His life a ransom for all? They began to say to Him, "save Thyself", and "come down from the cross, if Thou be Christ". But their taunts were too late. He had spoken His last words as to sinners, and these were not different to His first words; **HIS WILL REGARDING MEN HAD BEEN DECLARED**, it had been registered in heaven, it could neither be withdrawn nor changed; He could not come down from that cross in answer to their challenge. He must suffer all that was to follow "THAT REPENTANCE AND REMISSION OF SINS MIGHT BE BE PREACHED, IN HIS NAME,

**AMONG ALL NATIONS BEGINNING AT JERUSALEM".**

2. "VERILY, I SAY UNTO THEE, TO-DAY SHALT THOU BE WITH ME IN PARADISE."

Having declared His Will in regard to the wide circle of the world, He now turns to the individual sinner and declares His will in regard to every one that flies to Him for succour. The dying malefactor saw in Him what the whole multitude of Jews failed to see. He saw not only the glory of His person, and acknowledged Him as the Lord who must sway a universal kingdom, but he realized that His heart was as tender as His Name would be glorious; and grasping these two facts with a blessed faith, he cried, "Lord, remember me". What a 'me' it was that he set before the Lord! His was a disgraceful past, and a hopeless future; he was a dying wretch, brought to the very brink of hell by his crimes; but he places himself just as he is before the Lord who knows him through and through, and says, "Lord, remember ME". Will the Lord take notice of such as he was? Yes, He takes him as he is, answering his faith by a grace that must have made the dying man gasp with surprise. For His words simply meant, "I want your company, for you are Mine".

We know not which to admire most, the grace that could embrace a world of enemies in one great desire, or the grace that could concentrate itself upon one poor sinner to lift him from the dunghill and make him His happy companion for ever! But the way He treated the thief, is the way He treats all who cry to Him. His dealings are individual, personal. The sinner in his misery can say, "He thinketh on me". It was so with us all. He gave attention to the particular case of each of us, and it seemed to us as we found our refuge and rest upon His breast that we had Him entirely to ourselves. He calls His own sheep by name, it is a way He has always taken, His own

blessed way in which is revealed His tenderness and love. **BUT IN THESE WORDS TO THE DYING THIEF HE DECLARED HIS WILL FOR ALL WHO SEEK HIM: THEY MUST BE HIS COMPANIONS FOR EVER.**

3. *"WHEN JESUS SAW HIS MOTHER, AND THE DISCIPLE STANDING BY, WHOM HE LOVED, HE SAITH UNTO HIS MOTHER, WOMAN, BEHOLD THY SON! THEN SAITH HE TO THE DISCIPLE, BEHOLD THY MOTHER! AND FROM THAT HOUR THAT DISCIPLE TOOK HER UNTO HIS OWN HOME"* (John 19. 26, 27).

No more needed to be said in regard to the destiny of those who put their trust in Him, in one sentence He declared His will for them, and that one sentence was enough for the thief; it is enough for us.

Now He turns to another circle. Not to the world that hated Him, nor to the sinner whose desperate need cried for His attention, but to a little group that loved Him. Who can tell with what tenderness He looked upon them? Who can tell what their answering looks of love meant to Him? Singling out His mother and the disciple whom He loved, He declares His will as to them. "Woman, behold thy son." "Behold thy mother." And the two dwelt together in one home henceforward. We have no doubt that there is a dispensational aspect to the Lord's will thus expressed. Mary represented the saints of the dispensation that was fading away, who had looked for their Messiah to bring redemption to Israel. John, who first learned Him to be the Lamb of God, represented the saints of the new and heavenly order whose hopes and joys were to be outside the world in the knowledge of the Father and the Son. Would the Lord abandon those saints who had looked with eager eyes for His coming to hopeless despair, now that their faith was being so terribly tried by a turn of events

that they never expected? No, they were to find their refuge and compensation in the new company with its brighter and better hopes, their home henceforward was to be the assembly of God. Hence, though we read of Mary in the 1st chapter of Acts, before the coming of the Holy Ghost, it is the last time we read of her, for the godly remnant of Israel that she represented becomes merged in the assembly in the 2nd chapter, henceforth to abide in this new and blessed relationship according to the will of the Lord. This, we believe is, undoubtedly, set forth in the fact that John took Mary to his own home.

But there is more in this touching incident than that. No two persons loved the Lord more than Mary and John. Note how they are here described, "His mother" and "the disciple whom He loved". None would miss Him more than these, no two hearts would be more sorely bereaved; and they were to be bereaved, even though they were to see Him in resurrection, it was only to be for a few days, for He was going out of the world to the Father, and these were to be left behind in it. They would miss Him, and in that they represented all who love Him throughout the period of His absence. One of the great features of this present period is that He is not here, for while "we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord" (2 Cor. 5.). Has He thought of this? Yes. He thought of it as He hung upon the cross of Calvary, and there and then He declared His will in regard to it, and indicated what He desired all whom He loved to do during His absence. They were to cleave to one another. He indicated in these words to those two whom He loved so well a new relationship, a bond of love into which all His loved ones were to stand; they were to dwell together, and love one another as those who belonged to one family. **THIS WAS THE LAST DECLARATION OF HIS WILL CONCERNING THOSE WHOM HE CALLS HIS OWN.**

We do not ask how far we have been subject to His will in this respect in these days; much has been written and could still be written as to the small place that the Lord's will for us has had in our hearts and lives, and how little of this oneness and union in love has been seen. We do not dwell upon this here, but desire to be affected both deeply and effectually towards Himself and one another, as we consider this saying in His last will and testament.

- a. Three circles, then, He had thus far thought of. The world of ungodly men.
- b. Each individual sinner who out of it should call upon Him.
- c. The circle of those whom He loves, who were first in the world, and then were drawn out of it to Himself to find their needs all met in Him, and were finally brought into relationship to each other, because loved by Him.

There was no other circle of men to think of, and having declared His will as to these He turns now from them to seal this testament by His blood.

4. "NOW FROM THE SIXTH HOUR THERE WAS DARKNESS OVER ALL THE LAND UNTO THE NINTH HOUR, AND ABOUT THE NINTH HOUR JESUS CRIED WITH A LOUD VOICE, SAYING, 'ELI, ELI, LAMA SABACH-THANI?' THAT IS TO SAY, MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME?"

What tongue of men or angels, or pen of ready writer can truly tell the deep mystery that here confronts us. God only fully understands it. The thick darkness that covered the land veiled that centre cross from the eyes of the curious and irreverent, and there the lowly Sufferer was alone, alone with our sins, as the sinner's Substitute, and the judgment they justly called for. But while no creature in heaven or earth can fathom what this meant to the Lord, yet His

cry from out of the darkness is recorded for us, and every word He spoke is necessary for the full revelation of God to us. So we consider these words. "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me". Who can answer that question? The Lord Himself; and this He does in Psalm 22. where He says, "*But Thou art holy*". The holiness of God demanded that Jesus should be forsaken in those solemn hours. But was not Jesus holy? Yes, He was. To Mary, His mother, Gabriel announced, "*The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also THAT HOLY THING which shall be born of thee shall be called THE SON OF GOD*" (Luke 1. 35.). The very devils confessed His holiness, saying, "*I know Thee who Thou art, THE HOLY ONE OF GOD*" (Mark 1. 24). And as He hung upon the cross He was as holy personally as when He came forth from the Father. "HOLY, HARMLESS, AND UNDEFILED," He had lived His life amongst men; in Him was no sin, He knew no sin, He did no sin. Then, if God is holy, and Jesus is holy, even as God is, why did God forsake Him when men and devils were all against Him? "*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). This is the answer.

God is revealed in this cry of the Lord, first in His great LOVE, "for God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son"; then His HOLINESS that must put far from Him even His Beloved in that solemn hour when He was made to be sin for us; then in His eternal justice that meted out in full measure the judgment of our sins, so that they might be righteously removed for ever. Every attribute of God was harmonized in that solemn hour, and His nature was fully revealed. And this was necessary, not only for His glory, but also that His will might be carried out in blessing to men. A testament has

no force until after the death of the testator, and Jesus must die if His last will and testament was to be effective, and this was the death that He died. It is because He gave His life a ransom for all, that none can challenge His right to carry out His holy will; upon the righteous basis of His sufferings for sin is every word of it established.

5. "AFTER THIS JESUS, KNOWING THAT ALL THINGS WERE NOW ACCOMPLISHED, THAT THE SCRIPTURE MIGHT BE FULFILLED SAITH, I THIRST" (John 19. 28).

For the first time the Lord speaks of His physical sufferings, and His words, 'I thirst', seem like a challenge to those who stood around. Had the sight of His sorrow melted their hearts? Had the tears that flowed down the cheeks of the daughters of Zion begun to flow down other cheeks? Was there any relenting on the part of His murderers? Listen to the Lord's own answer to these questions. "*Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness; and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none. They gave me also gall for my meat; and IN MY THIRST THEY GAVE ME VINEGAR TO DRINK*" (Psalm 69. 20, 21). Here was brought to light what men are; utterly, altogether sinful. No sentiment of pity moved their evil hearts when they stood in the presence of absolute goodness in the extremity of suffering. It was as they would have it, goodness transfixed to a cross, and evil enthroned. Jesus execrated, and Barabbas acclaimed.

"And 'twas for such as these  
That Jesus died."

6. WHEN JESUS THEREFORE HAD RECEIVED THE VINEGAR HE SAID, IT IS FINISHED; AND BOWED HIS HEAD, AND GAVE UP THE GHOST" (John 19. 30).

The end had come. He could speak of all accomplished, completed. "Lo, I come!" He had said " (in the volume of the Book it is written of Me) to do

'thy will, O God". That will of God was done. He had not drawn back from one step that in God's counsels it was decreed to be necessary for God's glory in man's blessing; and not one word of Holy Scripture as to His sufferings remained unfulfilled. He had revealed the thoughts of all hearts. God was made known in His holiness and love; man was revealed in his hardness of heart and sin, Christ Himself came into full manifestation as the One wholly devoted to the will of God, the absolutely perfect One. Then from lips triumphant He declares His work completed, a work that shall stretch forth unto all generations of the age of the ages, and shall affect every sphere in the wide creation, and every creature in every sphere, from that that abides nearest to the throne of God to the uttermost depths of outer darkness. And when He had so cried, "Behold the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake and the rocks rent."

"7. AND WHEN JESUS HAD CRIED WITH A LOUD VOICE, HE SAID, FATHER, INTO THY HANDS I COMMEND MY SPIRIT; AND HAVING THUS SAID HE GAVE UP THE GHOST."

This alone remained, that He should declare His unbroken confidence in His Father. He leaves all in His hands. It is in Luke's Gospel only that this last word is recorded for us, the same Gospel that records the first words of His that are recorded. "*Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business*". The Father had committed all His work into the holy, dependent, obedient hands of the Man, Christ Jesus, for so Luke's Gospel presents Him to us. And now when all is done He commits His spirit into His Father's hands, commits to Him the work He has done and all the results of it, and so He gave up the Ghost.

Then "one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came

(Concluded on page 285.)

## “IN CHRIST JESUS.”

(A. J. POLLOCK.)

WHAT is the meaning of this expression, oft-repeated in the Scriptures? What is its exact significance? We are too much in the habit of using expressions loosely without bestowing adequate thought or due examination of the sacred text.

Of course, in all such enquiry our attitude of mind would be rather that of the intensely interested individual, who is carefully studying the terms of a will, which disclose *the deep affection of a parent* in the provision made for his child, rather than the cold dispassionate examination of a technical expert. Or, to put it into still truer light, to examine such things with prayerful dependence and adoring worship as we little by little are carried by the Holy Spirit of God into the deep things which the wisdom, prudence and LOVE of our God has designed for His children—this should be our attitude of mind in approaching such a theme.

\* \* \* \*

There are two distinct lines in which the phrase expresses itself, viz., firstly, in relation to qualities and blessings, and secondly in relation to persons.

### IN RELATION TO QUALITIES AND BLESSINGS.

It will readily be granted that all divine qualities are to be seen in all their beauty and fullness in our Lord Jesus Christ, and, too, that all blessing is in Christ Himself. He expresses in His own adorable person every quality that fully expressed to God what He desired in man. And, further, He is the Mediator whereby man can receive divine blessings and be enabled to exhibit these same qualities.

This can be well illustrated by reference to 2 Timothy, where the phrase ‘in Christ Jesus’ occurs seven times, and, indeed, is its characteristic expression.

1. “*The promise of life which is IN CHRIST JESUS*” (chap. 1. 1). Life is the fulfilment of the promise, to possess

that promise of life is to possess the life itself. The Lord Jesus is the inherent Possessor and Dispenser of life. So John tells us He is the eternal life, and that He communicates this life to the believer. Paul puts eternal life as the end of the course, life in its fullness of possession and complete environment. John presents it as the *present* possession of the believer in its moral qualities, apart from dispensation—“He that hath the Son hath life”.

2. *God’s “own purpose and grace which was given us IN CHRIST JESUS before the world began”* (chap. 1. 9). All God’s purposes of glory are carried into effect through Christ. And if man is to share in the blessings of those purposes, and be part of that wondrous world of bliss, grace must be shown to him for he is utterly unworthy in himself to receive any blessing from God. God’s grace lies in the carrying out of His purpose toward poor, fallen, sinful man.

3. “*Faith and love which is IN CHRIST JESUS*” (chap. 1. 13). Here are two qualities seen in all their fullness in the Lord, and He is the Mediator of them, communicating them to His people according to the operations of the Holy Spirit.

4. “*Be strong in the grace that is IN CHRIST JESUS*” (chap. 2. 1). This is not God’s grace that is shown in blessing man, but the precious quality that shone out in Christ with such lustre in His dealings with men; and now communicated to His people, in order to shine out in them.

5. “*Salvation which is IN CHRIST JESUS with eternal glory*” (chap. 2. 10). Salvation is *only* to be had in Christ, and it is the blessing that forms the link between the Saviour and the sinner. We begin with salvation.

6. “*Godly in Christ Jesus*” (chap. 3. 12). The consideration of this expression falls within the range of the second part of our article.

7. “*Faith which is IN CHRIST*

JESUS" (Chap. 3. 15). Faith is necessary for this reception of salvation and this is the gift of God, and the channel through which it flows is Christ.

\* \* \* \*

"IN CHRIST" *in relation to persons*. Here we come to an entirely new aspect of the phrase. At one time it was said that the phrase stood for 'standing' as opposed to 'state'.

The believer was said to be viewed as 'in Christ', just as one would look at a landscape through a piece of coloured glass—the colour in the glass giving an appearance to the landscape, which it certainly did not possess in itself.

But to divorce *standing* from *state* is a piece of loose thinking and leads to unreality. By *appointment* standing comes before and carries with it state; a man must be created a duke, have the standing of a duke, before he has the state of a duke. By birth, state and standing are simultaneous. The Christian's blessings illustrate both these methods.

By God's *appointment*, the believer is justified. This gives him a standing in God's sight. Justification comes through the death of Christ. The believer is justified in Another. The method of our justification involves the setting aside of all that we are in the flesh. But the standing carries state. We get the two thoughts thus.

*Standing*: "Being justified by faith" (Rom. 5. 1).

*State*: "The free gift came upon [literally *toward*] all men unto justification of *life*."

That is to say God communicates a life to which no sin has or ever can attach, and thus gives the state without which justification could not be practically maintained.

But when we come to *birth*, state and standing come together. A child born into the world at once has both the state and standing of relationship.

Having so far cleared the ground let

us adduce one or two Scriptures in support of what we say.

"IN CHRIST JESUS" is *new creation*.

"If any man be" in Christ, he is a new creature [literally, *there is a new creation*]; "old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5. 17). It would clear the ground enormously, if this were clearly grasped. One of the fundamental errors of Christendom is that they seek to graft Christ, as it were, upon fallen nature. This is evident in the way they seek to bring Christianity into schemes of pure worldly uplifting and into politics, on the one hand; and on the other, in seeking to humanize heaven, so that relatives hope to meet relatives *as such* in heaven. I knew one Christian lady, who actually said she would not care to go to heaven, if she did not know her mother as her mother in heaven. A little thought will clearly show what confusion would be wrought in heaven if human relationships were carried into that sphere.

*New Creation* sets aside the old creation altogether. The new in Scripture always sets aside, absolutely and for ever, the old. "He taketh away the first that He may establish the second" (Heb. 10. 9).

God is not building on the old creation in any shape or form. Man's world will be burned up one day; man's day, in which he has done, as he thinks, the best for himself, will destroy itself. And after the storms and wrecks of time; after the judgments and visitations of God there shall arise a new heaven and a new earth, and He, who sits upon the throne, will say, "Behold, I make all things new" (Rev. 21. 5). The recovery of man lies in this new creation. Man of the old order goes for ever from before God, and man after the order of Christ alone has a place before Him.

We learn, thus, that this new creation links itself up with its Head and Progenitor; until our Lord Jesus

died and rose again it could not be said to be inaugurated. He Himself said, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12. 24).

Again, "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor. 15. 22). Here we get the two Headships. There are but the two. Either we are in Adam or in Christ. Either we derive from the one or from the Other. Though the believer is linked by his body with the first creation he is no longer looked at as "in Adam".

We may ask, How are we "in Adam". "In Adam" is true of those who are *of* Adam. But remember Adam begat children in his own likeness *after* he fell, and communicated a fallen nature to his descendants. And it is just this that gives the status of "in Adam". "In Adam" is descriptive of both standing and state—a fallen, sinful standing, and a fallen sinful state.

In the same way we may ask the question, How are we "in Christ"? We are "in Christ" if we are "of Christ". Here, again, standing and state go together.

A word of explanation as to the word *state*. It is not in this connection a question of good state or bad state, a married person is in the married state, whether happy or unhappy. We use the word state simply in its absolute meaning.

Further, not till the Spirit indwells the believer can he be said to be "in Christ". "But ye [believers] are not in the flesh [that is 'in Adam'], but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of

God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His [he is not of Him—N.T.]" (Rom. 8. 9). That is to say the indwelling Holy Spirit gives the full Christian state; to be destitute of the Holy Ghost is to prove that we are not of His order, not "in Christ Jesus".

What a rich unfolding of the heart of God, what a tribute to His wisdom and glory! What a place it puts Christ in! As the result of His death and resurrection He has taken a new and surpassingly glorious place as the Progenitor or Head of a new creation, unassailable, unsullied and eternal. And we believers, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, are "in Christ"—part and parcel of that wondrous new creation, soon to have new creation bodies, and be in a new creation world. "He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new" (Rev. 21. 5), never, never to grow old; new, new for ever and ever.

And as we take up our place and portion in practical reality we shall learn the meaning of the verse, "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3. 12). As we refuse the world in every shape and form, as we refuse to graft Christ on to the old man that crucified Him, we shall have arrayed against us all the force of a worldly rationalistic and ritualistic religion. Everything that recognizes the world and man, intellectual or otherwise, will refuse this wondrous blessing. But on the other hand we shall be free to enter into and enjoy those delights to the full, which far more than compensate for the tribulations, nay, put such a character upon them that we can say, "we glory in tribulations also" (Rom. 5. 3).

## THE SON GLORIFIED IN HIS SAINTS.

JOHN 17. 9, 10: The Son on earth asks the Father to keep the saints whom the Father has given to Him. You have not given them away; they are Thine, but You have given them to

Me, therefore they are Mine; but because we are One, they are Thine, and if Thine, therefore Mine, and in them on earth I am made known—glorified—therefore bless them.

## GOG &amp; MAGOG OF EZEKIEL.

(C. KNAPP.)

## Chapters 38 &amp; 39.

IT has long been held that "chief prince" (ver. 3) should be rendered "prince of Rosh", or what we now call Russia. This is probably so, as it is not a question of interpretation at all, but simply a matter of literal translation of the Hebrew. "Meshech and Tubal" could easily be archaic forms of Moscow and Tobolsk. Meshech forcibly reminds one of the modern Czech, "a member of one of the most westerly branches of the Slavonic family, including Bohemians, Moravians, and Slavoks". This would mean a divided Russia, or a tripartite kingdom; for Gog is not only prince of Rosh, but of Meshech and Tubal as well. "The land of Magog" is probably the territory embracing this triple monarchy. The *time* of the great invasion is evidently after the establishment of the millennial kingdom, and Israel's restoration in the land. It is "the land that has been brought back from the sword"; and Israel is described as having been "gathered out of many people". This national restoration has been described in detail in the previous chapter, in the vision of the valley of dry bones, or, as it is termed in Romans II. 15, "life from the dead". They are spoken of as "brought forth out of the nations", and described as "dwelling safely, all of them" (38. 8). The ruthless invader says, "I will go up to the land of unwallled villages; I will go to them at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates" (38. 11). The long desired disarmament, it would seem, has at last taken place, swords have been beaten into ploughshares, and spears into pruning-hooks. Needless to tell the Bible-reading, Bible-believing Christian, this has not been brought about by "peace conferences", or any "league of nations" (see Dan. 9. 26, lit., "unto the end, wars"), but by the coming in glory and power of "the Prince of peace". Then will

be fulfilled the angelic prophecy uttered by the heavenly host at His birth, "Glory to God in the highest (*Most High*, being His millennial title), and on earth, peace".

So there can be no question, we think, of either the people or the time of this invasion. The invader comes from the "north quarters", the "north parts" (38. 6; 39. 2). The margin of the last, "*sides of the north*", would seem to imply the far distant north, its remotest borders.

But the question will arise in the minds of many: How can an unprovoked attack, such as is described here, such an unexpected revival and outburst of militarism, occur in a time of universal peace, as Scripture describes the millennium to be? How is this possible? and is it not utterly inconsistent with the very thought of Christ's Solomonic earthly reign and kingdom? The answer is simple: most people have a somewhat mistaken idea as to what conditions prevail throughout the restored millennial earth. It is not to be, as many suppose, an ideal condition—we must wait for eternity, the new heavens and the new earth, for *that*. The thousand years' reign is rather an ideal *rule*, or *government* of the earth. There is still evil abroad, but it is kept rigidly repressed; "a King shall reign in righteousness", there is yet evil and evil men to be kept in subjection. "He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet." Then, at the end, when "He hath subdued all things unto Him", He will deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father, after having "put down all rule, and all authority and power" (1 Cor. 15. 24-28). It is only in the new heavens and the new earth that righteousness *dwells* (2 Pet. 3. 13). There still being evil to be kept subdued in the millennial age, righteousness must *reign*.

Notice, it is not one single power that rebels to invade Israel's land, but

a confederacy, embracing many smaller principalities or nations. In these are included "Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya" (38. 5). Ethiopia here is not *African* Ethiopia, as the reader might suppose. The Ethiopia (or Cush) of Old Testament times was a broad belt of territory extending across northern Africa into Asia; and frequently in Scripture Cush refers to its Asiatic side.

This then would embrace the very belt or way to the Indian Ocean of which all pan-Germans, with ambitious Russian statesmen, have dreamed so long; south-eastern Europe and north-western Asia. "Gomer and all his bands," it is said. And it is a remarkable fact that long years ago, before the late European war and upheaval were thought of, a celebrated Hebraist (Gesenius, I think it was) declared that the name *Germani* was derived from Gomer! If this is really so, it means that what is left of Germany then (or the peoples now occupying German territory) will be a subordinate power; he does not lead the invasion or head the confederacy, but joins the chief invader, Gog, prince of Rosh, and carries with him his minor allies, "all his bands".

The object of the uprising seems to be, not so much the military conquest of territory, or even direct rebellion against Christ's rule, but purely *plunder*. It is "to take a spoil", "cattle and goods, to take a great spoil". So the design of the invasion appears to be a plundering expedition, rather than for military occupation of the land. Israel, brought back from all lands, will possess immense riches (as they even now control almost untold wealth), the spoils, too, of the nations that had been previously destroyed (as Rev. 19.) will probably be theirs, besides the presents and gold brought as tribute to Jerusalem by "the kings of Tarshish, and of the isles", with others (see Ps. 72. 10). All this will bring immense stores of wealth to the restored and regnant Israel and will

tempt the cupidity of these northern hordes. It may at first thought seem strange to some why these multitudes of the north should be spared until after the establishment of Messiah's kingdom. But in Rev. 19. the beast and his armies, the nations of Western Christendom, meet their doom before the millennium begins, at the close of the great tribulation. In their mad infatuation, the result of their apostasy, they rush upon "the thick bosses of the Almighty", gathering themselves together even to fight openly against Him who is "Lord of lords and King of kings"; our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, whose grace they have despised and whose authority and might they now contemn. But for some reason or other (it would seem) the nations of eastern Europe and western Asia are permitted to continue awhile longer, because, perhaps, of their pitiable ignorance (see how shamelessly Germany before, and their "Red" leaders now, have deceived and exploited them); or because they did not come into the confederacy or "league of nations" of the west, and so were not parties to the daring defiance of these western European nations, displayed to their destruction, and described so graphically in Rev. 19.; and possibly for their outward submission to God's King, set up on His holy hill of mount Zion (see Ps. 2.). And being suffered to continue for a season (see Dan. 7. 12) they here manifest themselves as being incorrigible; and overcome by their hearts' covetousness they meet their doom in that land which had swallowed up so many nations before them. It would seem from chapter 39. 2 that only a sixth part of them remain behind at home in "the north parts", so great is their eagerness to join in this post-tribulation crusade.

But back of their hearts unconquered lust was the purpose of Jehovah; it was He who turned them back (to rebel) after their "feigned obedience" (see Ps. 18. 44, marg.) to

bring them forth (38. 4); "I will bring thee against My land," Jehovah says, "that the heathen may know Me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes" (38. 16). This was God's purpose, as He, ages before, had raised up Pharaoh, to show His power in him, that His name might be known in all the earth. "All the heathen (i.e., nations, or Gentiles) shall see My judgment that I have executed, and My hand that I have laid upon them," Jehovah says. The fearful judgment executed upon these invading multitudes is intended also to confirm the faith of Israel, and establish them in their confidence in Him. "So the house of Israel shall know that I am Jehovah their Lord God from that day and forward" (39. 21, 22).

The invaders are overthrown by both natural and supernatural means. "And I will call for a sword against Him throughout all My mountains, saith the Lord God; every man's sword shall be against his brother" (38. 2). These are the *natural* means used; the *allies* (as so often happens) fall out and fight among themselves, and so help to destroy each other. But besides this, God sends pestilence amongst them and fearful cataclysms of nature, earthquake and volcano uniting to complete their destruction (38. 20, 22). God makes them an outstanding example for all time before the rest of the nations—a fearful warning to them so that they might never attempt a similar outburst against Messiah's authority. "Thus will I magnify Myself," He says, "and sanctify Myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am Jehovah" (38. 23). When Jehovah's judgments are in the earth the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. He makes here, in the early days of the kingdom, an example of vast multitudes, as He will, throughout its whole course, make examples of individuals, as in Isa. 65. 20 (see also Isa. 66. 23, 24).

What is most striking in this invading host is the primitive nature of the weapons employed—shields, bucklers, bows and arrows, handstaves and spears, chiefly of wood (39. 9, 10). How can this be accounted for, in an age of steel, of railways, of long-range guns, "tanks", and airships? There are two possible explanations; either these people are barbarian hordes (perhaps from Central Asia) who take possession of the rich, fertile plains of Russia, east Germany, and Hungary, after their present inhabitants are destroyed, or, there has been enforced disarmament, and these infatuated insurrectionists lay hand to arms that could be hastily manufactured out of materials easily obtained, and, as they thought, perhaps, without the knowledge of earth's King of peace at Jerusalem. Oh, what is man! and how "incurably wicked is his heart". Verily, except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God, even when established in power before his very eyes, as here.

There is little more to be said about this remarkable section of Scripture. The words in chapter 38. 17, "Art thou he of whom I have spoken in old time, by My servants the prophets of Israel, which prophesied of those days many years that I would bring thee against them"? doubtless refer to the literal Assyrian of whom Gog is here the antitype (see Isa. 10. 5-19).

It is questionable if the destruction of the nations in Zech. 14. 12-15 is identical with God's judgment on Gog here. Nor do I believe Gog and his multitude are identical with "the kings from the east", of Rev. 16. 12. These last come into the land *before* the setting up of Messiah's kingdom, so they cannot be the same, nor can "the east" be "north". "The kings from the east" are, in all probability, the multitudinous races of southern and eastern Asia in alliance, the dreaded non-Christian "yellow peril" at last materialized. They have come, I have long thought, to combat and

conquer, if possible, the arrogant nations of the West.

The immense quantity of wooden instruments and accoutrements left by the perished crusaders will furnish fuel for Israel during seven years, so permitting the reforestation of Palestine so necessary to its fertility and sufficient rainfall—just what it now lacks (as it has for many centuries) (39. 9, 10).

It will require seven whole months to bury the bodies of this vast multitude of the destroyed invaders. And, after that, passengers, or pilgrims to the holy city, coming down the land, when they see a bone unburied will set up a mark at the spot so that men, set apart for the purpose, may give the skeleton part burial; and it will be necessary to have men set apart for this purpose, as the ceremonial law of the Old Testament will again be observed (*memorially*, as it had been before typically), in Palestine, at least; so any one touching a dead body or a bone would be unclean (see Ezek. 44. 23).

The fearful event is commemorated by naming the valley in which Gog met his doom, "Hamon-gog". It is probably Esdraelon, famous as the battle-ground of Palestine in all ages. In addition to this memorial name, a city, evidently in this very valley, shall be named "Mamonah" (39. 11-16).

Needless to say, the Gog and Magog of Rev. 20. are entirely different from those of the same name in Ezekiel. In Revelation the insurrection is post millennial; it is headed by the newly-liberated Satan, with other very marked differences; the one is but a shadow of the other, and the name is used in Revelation only in a symbolic way.

The Lord give us wisdom in the understanding of these things, written aforetime for our admonition on whom the end of the ages are come. And soon HE will come of whom all Scripture speaks. "Amen! Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

## "I AM THE TRUTH."

John 14. 6.

(FRANK HARRIS.)

TRUTH is the expression of what God is, and by it all things are put perfectly in their place, in their true relationship with God and with each other.

Christ is the centre and fullness of that expression. The Holy Spirit is the witness and power of it. The Word is the vehicle of communication of it to us and the authoritative embodiment of it.

Christ is the truth in that He is God manifest in flesh, the expression of the divine nature, and the centre of all the counsels of God.

He is the truth in that by His manifestation everything is placed in its true position; the state and position of everyone in relation to God and to everything are decided according as each stands to Him.

If enemies to Christ, we are enemies to God; if we have been the subjects of His quickening power, we are children of God. And so with regard to the written Word, if hostile to it, or *vice versa*, it is the seed of our life, or the standard by which we shall be judged. If we have heard His voice, we are His sheep, and He gives us everlasting life. If His, we are not of the world. If not His, we shall be the objects of judgment with the rest of the world.

There were partial revelations of truth from the creation. What God is in power, wisdom and goodness were partially seen in His works, and when man fell, His holiness, justice and mercy were partially displayed. But these partial manifestations all pointed forward to the full expression of them

in Him *for* Whom, as well as *by* Whom, all things were created, and by Whom all things subsist.

He was pictured in Adam, in the relation in which Adam was set as head of creation. He is the seed of the woman who was to bruise the serpent's head—Himself bruised in heel. Atonement and acceptance for guilty men were pictured in the "Coats of Skins", and in Abel's offering.

The ark—the only place of safety in the floods of judgment—spoke of Him, as did Noah's burnt offering, when God smelled a savour of rest. Melchisedek, Joseph, Moses, Aaron, the paschal lamb, the Red Sea, Marah, the smitten rock, the red heifer, the brazen serpent, the Jordan, the sacrifices and the offerings of the Mosaic economy; Samuel, David, Solomon, all contributed in type and figure some feature of the fullness of the truth which found its full expression in Jesus.

We trace for a little His advent into this world. When the wise men came to Jerusalem with their startling question, "Where is He?" Herod was troubled and all Jerusalem with him. The presence of God manifest in flesh disturbed the political and religious world, and both were revealed in their true character Godward by the presence of Him who is the Truth. The few who still clung to God in faith were also brought to light. The Simeons and the Annas were seen in their true relationship to God, and in contrast with the careless scribes who could tell where the Christ should be born, but sought Him not, nor knew ought of Him.

It is beautiful to witness the attractive power of Jesus in John 1., to those who recognized in Him the embodiment of the truth of God. "We have found Him", was their delighted testimony, and Simon Peter and Nathaniel respond to their call. Nathaniel confesses Him at once as the fulfilment in person of the promises of God, and as the Son of God; the only One capable of revealing the Father.

Nicodemus is measured by the truth which Jesus announced to him as to his need of new birth, but the Lord stopped not there. Nicodemus found himself in the presence of the perfect expression of what God is. Jesus had come down from heaven, and testified of what He had seen and heard. He was to be "lifted up" as the sent one of God—the manifestation of His love to a guilty world—to save those from perishing who would believe on Him. And those who had truth came to the light, and set to their seal that God is true in their faith in Jesus. Belief in the Son, or unbelief, settled the destiny of all for life or for death.

In the 4th chapter we have a beautiful example of pleading truth and the reception of it by a poor sinner who was measured by it; "Woman, believe Me", are His wonderful words, but more wonderful followed. He declared unto her God's gift and spoke of the living water—the love of God enjoyed by the Spirit's power—but more than that, He made known the marvellous truth that God the Father was seeking worshippers in a world like this, who could worship in Spirit and in truth; and having ministered the truth, He had meat to eat that the disciples knew not of—He had made known the Father to a soul.

John bare witness to the truth, but that the truth came by Jesus. The Father bare witness of Him, His words bare witness, for "never man spake like this Man".

As the Truth, He offended many who could not bear it, for truth cannot compromise with falsehood and error. His testimony divided the companies He addressed, according as truth or falsehood influenced them; and as the children of the devil, the liar, the Pharisees hated Him and plotted His death. And so He went on till Pilate in the judgment hall asks Him, "What is truth?" Poor blind Pilate! He who was the Truth Incarnate stood before him, but he knew Him not. As His judge he had to pronounce

Jesus faultless, but truth had no power over him, and he gave the Lord up to His foes.

See then that blessed One arrayed in robes of mockery and crowned with thorns, standing before the multitude while Pilate bids them "Behold the Man".

Pilate, Herod, the Jewish rulers and people, the disciples, all are seen in the light of the truth there, and a terrible picture it is.

Jesus, perfect in His confession as to the truth of His own person and in His testimony as to God His Father, measuring every man by these truths and setting all in their true relationship to God, to the world, and to each other thereby, now gives Himself up to express to the uttermost the love of God to men, and His hatred towards man's sin. He bows to the stroke of justice, and dies in the room of the guilty.

Man, Satan, the world and its god and Prince, are fully exposed, measured and judged by the light of the truth here displayed. While God in His blessed being is perfectly expressed in His full characters of light and love. The truth as to His thoughts towards man is here brought to light, and the foundation laid for all the blessed development of those thoughts in and by the Son of His love, the Man of His counsel.

What are the developments of His love?

We are admitted to the thoughts of the heart of Jesus in relation to this, in John 17.: "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified through the truth".

The truth as to His place on high, where He has for the present time set Himself apart on our account, till the moment of His coming for us—His claims to earth, and the joy of gathering His earthly people for the time set aside—determines our place and portion as in Him there, and becomes the formative power in us of likeness to

Him—"As He is, so are we in this world". We are not of the world even as He is not of it; and, beholding Him there, we are changed from glory to glory by the ministry in power to our souls of what is true of Him there, "even as by the Lord the Spirit".

God is love, and this is where His love has set us, while the truth, as it is in Jesus, as seen in Him, is that by which we are formed even now in that new creation of which He is the Head. What a measure! What a standard! Jesus would have us sanctified by the truth even now in association with Him where He is, even as we shall be indeed when He comes for us.

All that is true of God in love, then, Christ Jesus is the perfect expression of. In Him, and nowhere else, is the measure of God's love found. "That the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me." When they see us in the same glory as Jesus, they will know the truth of this.

Then as to earth, Romans 15. 8 tells us that "Jesus Christ became a minister to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers; and that the nations should glorify God for His mercy".

In both those respects the Lord Jesus will display God's truth. In Him truth will shine towards the Jew. He will demonstrate that in all His dealings with His ancient people God has been just and true, while they will see and confess their ways, even the best of them, to have been as "filthy rags" in His sight. He will fulfil every promise and declare the unmutable truth of the counsels of God, and make good in the joyful experience of God's earthly people every declaration of His love towards them. In Jesus Christ, too, will all the families of the earth be blessed. The promises made to Abraham He will fully carry out, and make it not only possible, but constitute it a joyous privilege for all the nations of the earth to obey the

call to praise and thanksgiving which the prophets gave in anticipation of His manifestation to them. The rooth Psalm will then be joyfully responded to, and worship in truth rise to the God of truth and mercy, through Christ Jesus, and the knowledge of the glory of Jehovah will cover the earth as the waters cover the seas.

There remains but one more manifestation of eternal truth, and that is in *judgment*.

Truth is as inflexible in judgment of evil as in the setting forth of love and mercy.

Everything that is false, everything that is untrue to the relationship in which God set the creature will be fully revealed at the judgment seat of Christ.

Every thought in the creature untrue to the nature and being and ways of God will there be manifested in the presence of Incarnate Truth.

The Lord Jesus is the touchstone of everything in these relationships *now*, He will be the exposé then of everything in the mind and ways of every creature which does not accord with the

perfections of the supreme Creator, and everyone false to these He will shut up eternally in the lake of fire.

Through all eternity Jesus will shine forth as the perfect expression of all that God is. His truth, what is ever and blessedly true of God, will be perfectly seen in our Lord and Saviour.

We shall gaze adoringly on His pierced hands, and feet, and side, and read there the light of God displayed at Calvary, which, in smiting the Holy Victim in our stead has given the love of God its perfect title to place us in the glory in which we then find ourselves.

And as we view the wide universe of God, we shall see truth ruling victoriously and eternally in every niche of the measureless expanse. Nothing that is false shall again blot the creation of God. (There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination nor maketh a lie.) He who is truth will establish what He loves, and, as Head of the new creation, will reign in the supremacy of His Godhead glory; and God, the God of truth and love, will be for ever "all in all".

## THE WAY OF FAITH. Hebrews 11. (S. SCOTT.)

**FAITH** that enables its possessors to subdue kingdoms, to work righteousness, to stop the mouths of lions, to put to flight the armies of the aliens on the one hand, and to enable others to endure cruel mockings and scourgings, bonds and imprisonments, persecution and torment on the other, is surely a divine endowment of no mean order, for what human power or influence could equip any one for such diverse situations and meet such varying need?

It is faith that calls those "things that are not as though they were"; that gives substance to the intangible, makes apparent that which is beyond human ken, confers endurance beyond

the powers of nature, and above all establishes him who possesses it in the favour of God, for He is pleased to "reward those who diligently seek Him out". It is the great link with Him who is its Author and Finisher.

It is fitting then, in this great parenthetical chapter (Heb. 11.), that the Holy Ghost, in selecting from the Old Testament Scriptures a line of worthies to illustrate the operations of this divine principle, for the establishment of the people of God, should have in His mind much more than a *list* of those who have been actuated by faith, with illustrations of the Way in which it is operated.

That this is done is undoubtedly

true, but beyond a mere chronological and varied selection of those who so walked, there is a clear moral and dispensational order, which is both interesting and instructive in these representative men: representative not only as brilliant exponents of faith in the living God, of leaders of God's people and faithful adherents to this principle, but each characterizing an epoch in the ways of God; so that the chapter gives a vivid, orderly, and consecutive outline of what has been developed in other parts of Scripture.

In order that the reader of the epistle may know at the outset how this grand communication from God is to be recognized, a general statement of the nature of its operation, and the way it displays itself, is given. Faith gives substance and reality to those things which are unknown and invisible. It is that, in the believer, which enables him to survey the whole extent of the universe, from the mighty suns that blaze in infinite depths of space, to the glories of the immeasurably small particles of matter which are visible only by the help of the powerful microscope, and constrains him to attribute the origin of it all to the word of God; no second causes, no development, no evolution, simply this—"The worlds were formed by the word of God"; no scientific scheme, no profound philosophical argument are needed to convince him; the word of God is all-sufficient for faith.

It is only to those who view the worlds in this way that the rest of the chapter has a voice. To the materialist, to the evolutionist, to the sceptic, its message is unintelligible; it is not in *their* sphere, it is all foreign to them, for their minds move in a different channel. "Children in whom is no faith" is the criticism of the Holy Ghost on those who refuse His claims and deny the power of His almighty fiat.

From verse 3 to verse 16 the grand and complete scheme of God's ways is unfolded, step by step, showing how

He is able to establish, on a perfectly righteous basis, a system of earthly and heavenly blessings agreeable to Himself, in spite of the fact that the first creation had been marred by departure from Him, in the fall of man and the introduction of sin.

Each individual may be regarded as illustrating a separate phase of the scheme.

ABEL, a sinner away from God, finds justification, righteousness, access, and favour in the eyes of God on the ground of the excellency of his sacrifice.

Those that are thus acceptable to Him, have a great and blessed hope; it is the assembling shout of the Lord Jesus Christ, to summon them to be for ever with Himself, illustrated in the way that ENOCH was taken out from those amongst whom he lived.

The catching away of the saints is preliminary to the introduction of the judgment that is yet to sweep over the earth, and through which but a small remnant of faithful ones will be preserved, for "As it was in the days of Noah, so also shall it be in the day when the Son of Man cometh". This remnant is typified in NOAH, saved through the flood.

Into the new world purified by judgment, a separated and called-out people (illustrated by ABRAM) will come. His seed is the one born out of due time—the man of resurrection (ISAAC) (see verse 11, Sarah herself received strength, etc.), from whom the glorious company of heavenly and earthly saints (the innumerable stars and uncountable sand) will spring.

All these *died* (v. 13). The indications of the eternal blessings of the ransomed (He has prepared for them a city) close the first section of the chapter.

From verse 17 to verse 22 the way in which man may experimentally participate in what God has brought to pass is developed, the foundation being as before the same perfect and glorious sacrifice on which God's glory

and man's blessing rest. This time it is not Abel's offering, but that of Abraham—and not only the offering up but also the receiving again from the dead of the well-beloved of the father.

This is the sole but all sufficient ground of blessing for man, though he can only obtain it by turning from that which appeals to the natural senses, and by association with the risen One in newness of life.

The following three patriarchs illustrate this.

ISAAC, when dying, could look beyond his present limited circumstances and see that God would establish everything in the *younger son*, typifying the second Man displacing the first (1 Cor. 15. 4).

JACOB, when dying, has his spiritual vision extended. He also reversed the natural order, crossing his hands wittingly and giving the first place to last born instead of the first. He is a worshipper too, leaning upon support from outside himself—He no longer trusts his own wits, he is lost in the greatness and goodness of God, and he puts his hand on the head of the right man.

JOSEPH, when dying, breaks all links with Egypt and looks on to the establishment of his brethren in the land of promise. Nothing in the domain of the enemy can detain him. His own glory in that land is not to be remembered. He looked not backward but forward, to the time when every word of God would be fulfilled in resurrection, and in view of that he gave commandment concerning his bones.

Though these most desirable things are realized by faith and their enjoyment is one of the greatest blessings of Christianity, though they can only be appropriated and appreciated by one who is dead to the course of this world, yet the Christian must (till he is actually taken to be with Christ for ever) walk amongst his fellows by faith. He must discharge his responsi-

bilities in every phase of life, but always as one who has the unseen as his joy and stay.

Of this MOSES is the figure.

The Spirit draws attention to him as one *born*. Abram, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph were spoken of as *dying* men, Moses as a *living* man. He prefigures one who walks in the power of a new life, in the midst of much that appeals to the tastes and ambitions of a natural man, but who is able to set off one against the other, and deliberately choose. He chooses affliction with the children of God rather than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. Note well the result! He refuses, forsakes, suffers, but is still enabled to demonstrate in the face of a hostile world the claims of the One whom he served. He kept the passover in Egypt, and by virtue of the blood of the slain lamb all the firstborn of Israel were saved from destruction.

For the third time the basis of approach, acceptance, and salvation—the blood of the spotless victim—is set forth as the groundwork of deliverance.

But though saved by the work of Another, each individual must exercise faith for himself. Only those who have the precious gift of faith can find the way of deliverance that has been made for them through the "Red Sea's judgment flood." By faith they pass through the Red Sea, and woe betide the one who in the energy of his own strength, in the confidence of his own resources, in contempt of God, dares to pass that way. The Egyptians essaying to follow were drowned—the deep swallowed them up!

Faith being manifested and the overthrow of the presumptuous enemy assured, no further step is necessary to the full and final bringing into being of the relationship that their God had desired. He had brought them to Himself (Ex. 19. 4). Hence opposition is of no avail, the walls of Jericho fall flat! Nothing can stand before those who act for God in the power that He gives.

# NOTES FOR PREACHERS.

## A Letter to a Young Preacher.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

So you imagine that I can tell you how you may become "a real live, effectual preacher of the gospel"! There is no other way than that which the Lord Himself indicates in Matthew 4. 19. You cannot make yourself a fisher of men. But the Lord can do this for you. Make it your business to follow Him. It is from those who follow Him that He calls His servants. And having called them, He prepares and equips them; HE makes them fishers of men.

But perhaps I may usefully pass on to you three or four hints in connection with the preaching of the gospel, to which I am sure you will do well to take heed.

### FIRSTLY.

Be very definite in getting your message. Do not be like Ahimaaz, running to deliver a message without having one to deliver. Go to your Lord and Master in prayer, to receive instruction from Him, before you go forth to face your audience. You *may* get your message an hour, a day, a week, a month beforehand. But get it. Be a man with a message. In an emergency you may count on the Lord to give you words to say at the moment you are called upon to speak. But this should be the exceptional thing, not the rule.

### SECONDLY.

Study that your God-given message may be clothed in suitable language. Remember what a very wise man said in Eccles. 12. 10. Do not try to be wiser than he. Seek out acceptable words, "words of delight" as the margin reads. But let them be "words of truth" such as may be "fastened by the master of assemblies".

### THIRDLY.

Be very definite in the actual delivery of your message. Avoid long introduc-

tions. Come to the point. Aim that the truth that you proclaim may leave a definite impression upon the mind of the hearer. Do not meander. Do not present too many thoughts. Remember what an expert winner of men has said: "It is better to drive home one tenpenny nail, and clinch in on the other side, than to knock in a whole pound of tin-tacks."

### FOURTHLY.

Do not let *self* come into your thoughts, nor show itself in your words. If you use an illustration or relate an anecdote see that it is one in which you yourself do not play the prominent part. What is more nauseous than the anecdote of the "I met a man, and he said to me, and I said to him" type, when the sparkling part of the conversation is *what I said to him*? Say nothing to draw people's attention to your unworthy self. Avoid a patronizing, condescending manner.

### FIFTHLY.

If you use illustrations let them be real illustrations. Let them illustrate something. Let them be like windows in a house, put there to let the light in. Do not relate incidents that may be of interest to you personally, but are of no interest to others. What useful purpose is served by telling your hearers of a man you saw alive last Tuesday but who was dead on Friday? It may have impressed *you*, but the only impression your unfortunate hearers will get will be that the speaker must be stupidly ignorant to imagine that such a case is in any way exceptional.

### LASTLY.

Do not try to preach *as if* you are in earnest. *Be* in earnest, and preach because you are. Do not try to preach *as if* you were sympathetic with your hearers in their trials and difficulties. *Be* sympathetic, and your sympathy

will soon manifest itself in your manner of speaking. And never forget your own utter insufficiency, and your constant need of prayerful dependence on God for: (1) Guidance; (2) The help of His Holy Spirit; (3) Result.

As to results, do not say that you have but to preach the Word and leave results to God. That would be a hired-servant way of doing a task. Remember, you are more than a servant; you are a *son*. A mere servant does his master's bidding, without concerning himself as to results. A son is

deeply concerned that what he does for his father should be fruitful; that his father's interests should prosper in his hands.

Trusting that the remainder of your days, "till He come", may be happily spent in the service of the best of Masters, your life and character formed by what you learn of Him, your lips anointed by His grace.

I remain,

Your brother and fellow-servant,

HAROLD P. BARKER.

## HOW TO SAVE OTHERS AND GLORIFY GOD. Jude 20-25.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

"BUT ye, beloved, BUILDING UP YOURSELVES ON YOUR MOST HOLY FAITH."

THIS IS THE WAY BY WHICH *THE DEVIL IS OVERCOME*. "If ye continue in My word," said the Lord Jesus, "then are ye My disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, *and the truth shall make you free*" (John 8. 31, 32). The truth and the faith are one. The truth presented to us in its completeness in our once crucified, but now risen and glorified Lord is our "most holy faith". It is set forth for us in the Word of God—the Holy Scriptures. "*I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, AND YE HAVE OVERCOME THE WICKED ONE*" (1 John 2. 14).

"PRAYING IN THE HOLY GHOST."

THIS IS THE WAY BY WHICH *THE FLESH IS OVERCOME*. For to pray means that we have no confidence in the flesh but are conscious of our dependence upon God, and to pray in the Holy Ghost surely necessitates walking in the Spirit, and "*This I say then, walk in the Spirit and ye SHALL NOT FULFIL THE LUSTS OF THE FLESH*" (Galatians 5. 16).

"KEEP YOURSELVES IN THE LOVE OF GOD."

THIS IS THE WAY BY WHICH *THE WORLD IS OVERCOME*. "All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world," and while it may be all very attractive to those who do not know God, it loses all its glamour when the glory of God's love shines upon the soul. "Love not the world neither the things that are in the world, *If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him*" (1 John 2. 15).

"LOOKING FOR THE MERCY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST UNTO ETERNAL LIFE."

THIS IS THE WAY BY WHICH *THE PULL THAT THE EARTH WOULD EXERCISE UPON US IS OVERCOME*. It is the way that we are kept from being entangled by its plausible schemes for self-improvement that leave God and Christ out. We look not for great leaders rising up from amongst men to put things right, but we look from the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ from heaven; our hopes are all centred in Him, and consequently shall we be heavenly minded and not earthly minded. "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.* . . **WHO MIND EARTHLY THINGS.** For our conversation (citizenship) is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself" (Philippians 3. 18, 21).

\* \* \* \*

**OUR MOST HOLY FAITH** is the impregnable rock upon which infinite mercy has set our feet; and upon which we stand clear of the horrible pit of our lawlessness and sin; and of the mire and dirt of Spiritism, and other anti-Christian delusions of the devil. Here we have firm footing, and are no longer tossed to and fro, or carried away on the swirling, changing tides of modern thought, or by doctrines of men whereby they lie in wait to deceive. **AND THAT ROCK IS CHRIST.**

**THE HOLY GHOST** dwells in us according to God's wonderful grace, and by prayer puts us into true contact with the power of God, so that we are maintained in triumph in our conflict for the faith once for all delivered unto the saints. It yields great comfort, and conduces to quietness and confidence of heart to know that a divine Person, who is the Spirit of truth, is in us, to be a witness to the truth and maintain us in the faith. To be praying in the Holy Ghost is simply to be in communion with Him.

**THE LOVE OF GOD** is the Sun of our faith, in the bright beams of which our souls develop; it is the atmosphere, the very breath of the new life. In it we are preserved from the chilling, deadening influences of the world.

**THE MERCY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST** is our hope and expectation, a hope that will not make us ashamed, but will grow stronger and brighter as we draw near to its realiza-

tion, for the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

\* \* \* \*

Being thus delivered from the horrible mire in which the devil, the flesh, and the world would have submerged us, and kept free from the entanglements of earthly things **WE ARE ABLE TO SAVE OTHERS;** to have compassion upon them as they struggle and cry out for deliverance. There are two great qualities needed for this, **COMPASSION** for men in their miseries, and **FEAR** of that which causes the misery, which is sin; and a third, **HATRED** of the pollutions of the flesh. Compassion in us must ever be fenced by fear and hatred of evil, lest by contact with it we become used to it and so think little of it. To be saviours of others we need courage, energy, promptitude, for we must pull them out of the fire. The reference is to the angels dragging Lot and his wife and daughters out of Sodom. If we realize that the evil and pollution of the world-system is such that it cannot be made clean, but must be the subject of the fire of God's judgment, we shall fear and hate it more; and we shall see that the only way of safety from it is to be pulled out of it, and be set instead in the world of which our most holy faith is the foundation, the Holy Ghost, the unifying power, and the love of God the light and joy—that is, God's world to which all His children belong.

As we dwell in the light of joy of God's world, and are conscious that the fashion of man's world passeth away, but God's world abides for ever, we can raise our doxology. **WE CAN GLORIFY GOD.** We can ascribe glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever to Him, for He is **THE ONLY WISE GOD** who has not only established a world of eternal felicity, but is our Saviour, and has found a way by which he can deliver us from the world of pollution which is doomed, and bring us into His world. But not this only, He is able to keep us from

falling, to keep us from stumbling back into the mire out of which He has dragged us, and to present us pure from all pollution, faultless before the presence of His glory—before which only the perfection of His own work could stand—and this not with shame and

regret but “with exceeding joy”, for then He will show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us. This is the day of the activities of that grace towards us, in us, and through us, and it is by this grace alone that we are able to save others and glorify God.

## MY PROSPECT.

(D. SCODDAR.)

The heart that far from Zion's walls  
Its wanton way would take  
Now longs and pants for Zion's halls,  
As though its strings would break.

How fair her glorious domes arise  
Upon my ravished sight ;  
My eager spirit onward flies  
Toward those mansions bright.

To share her bliss of saintly joy,  
Her purity and peace,  
And drink delights that never cloy  
Where pleasures never cease.

To tread her river's shining banks,  
Where ransomed myriads rove,  
And tell through all their countless ranks  
That God, our God, is love.

To see the One who here below  
My sinless surety stood,  
From an eternity of woe,  
To save me by His blood.

To see Him in the highest height  
With glory-crown'd brow,  
The Sun, the Centre, the Delight  
Of saints and angels now.

To hear the song in sweetest strains  
The praise of Jesus tell,  
And roll o'er the celestial plains  
With full harmonious swell.

To Him, the Father's only Son,  
The Well-Beloved of heaven,  
Be every act of homage done,  
And ceaseless praises given.

## ANXIOUS CARE.

IN a published letter of Luther's to his wife, he reproves her with gentle irony for her anxious care for him. Here is an extract from the letter: “We thank you very fondly for the great care for us which has prevented you sleeping. Since the time you have taken this care upon you, the fire all but consumed us in our inn, breaking out outside my chamber door. And yesterday, no doubt in consequence of these cares of yours, a stone all but fell on our head

and crushed us ; in our room, two days since, the lime and plaster crumbled away ; for this also, we should have had to thank your holy care, if the angels had not hindered. I fear lest, if thou dost not give up thy anxieties, at length the earth itself may swallow us up, and all the elements turn against us.

“Do thou pray, and leave God to care ; has He not said : ‘ *Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you* ’”.

(Continued from page 269.)

*there out blood and water. And he that saw it bore record, and his record is true, and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe*” (John 19. 34, 35).

The death of the Testator had taken place, and the testament had been committed into the Father's hands, and He has answered the perfect trust of His beloved Son by raising Him from the dead and making Him to be

the Trustee and Administrator of the Will of God. A most blessed and marvellous thing is this to contemplate, for it means that the Will will be carried out not merely according to the letter of it, but according to the spirit of it also, and that not one jot or tittle of it shall fail.

“TO HIM BE GLORY AND DOMINION FOR EVER AND EVER. AMEN.”

## FAITH HEALING.

(A. J. POLLOCK.)

In a paper entitled "Suffering Saints" (October issue) we put forth the general remark that saint and sinner suffer alike in this world. Whilst this is *generally* true yet "God . . . is the Saviour [literally Preserver in a providential sense] of all men, specially of those that believe" (1 Tim. iv. 10).

This was very noticeable in the early history of the church, when healing took its place among the gifts the ascended Lord gave in giving the Holy Spirit. That God can and does still in response to faith heal the bodies of His saints at the present time we do not deny, but a word of strong warning needs to be uttered in this connection. There is a class of persons who exalt faith healing into a system, and fix the minds of Christians upon their bodies instead of on Christ and His Word.

A little examination of Scripture on the subject should give us a sober sense of the matter. The gifts of healing and of tongues are put after the exclusively spiritual gifts in 1 Cor. 12, as being of less importance.

As we examine the Scriptures we find the gift of healing was abundantly exercised. The shadow of Peter was sought after by the sick (see Acts 5. 15); handkerchiefs and aprons from the body

of the Apostle Paul cured, under the hand of God, disease and exorcised evil spirits. Yet even Paul did not use his gift in every case. He says, "Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick" (2 Tim. 4. 20); his bosom friend, Timothy, had "often infirmities", yet Paul was content to advise the taking of wine as a curative agent. Indeed, we have no instance to Paul exercising this gift upon any of the Lord's saints.

It seems as if these gifts that appealed to the senses and were visibly miraculous, were intended to carry conviction in connection with the establishment of Christianity, but now that need has passed, and moreover in face of the disunited condition of the church, its failure on every hand, its worldliness, it is no wonder that such a gift is not seen in vigorous manifestation. Apart from a system that exalts faith healing into a position Scripture never gave it, and which in reality degrades the whole Christian profession, there are instances in which, quietly and without ostentation, the prayer of faith has healed the sick.

But in these false systems cures largely take the form of auto-suggestion, and are on a par with those of Christian Science.

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

DEAR MR. MAWSON,—Again a little news from "a far country", which in some small districts at least is becoming a "land of corn and wine". Thank you, indeed, for the interest and fellowship in the gospel, but especially for the prayers. We have been gladdened by some reinforcements to the staff, but there is still far too much work to allow decent pastoral care of these babes.

"Let us sing as we go," said the shepherd in Virgil, "the way will hurt us the less". And this, too, is true that He

would have hymns and songs and praise to be our daily portion. May we be Divine optimists, with "great expectations", which He excites only to rejoice in satisfying.

May He keep you in the steadfast abounding witness which has been yours, and perfect us all till the blessed Day.

Yours to know Him and to make Him known,  
NORTHCOTE DECK.

*Aola, Solomon Islands,  
July 9th, 1920.*

## “Master the multitudes throug Thee.”

In these days of so-called ‘reconstruction’ in the home lands, when so much of the reconstruction seems but downward, workers in the foreign mission field have many compensations. We are dealing with sin in, as it were, its simpler if grosser aspects; we are dealing with an idolatrous world, which is apt to be far more responsive to the gospel than the apostate world so often found at home. And so we are continually seeing manifested much of the victory of the gospel.

“I had eternity set in my heart,” wrote one of old, “and after that nothing less contented me.” And that, too, has been in large measure our experience and privilege, as we watch the most desperate sinners becoming reconciled and regenerated in larger and larger numbers. So that what oppresses the messenger in many fields is not the sterility of the soil to the gospel seed, but its very fecundity.

So it comes to pass that perhaps the most poignant burden in the hearts of many missionaries is that such inadequate provision can be made for the souls of the multiplying converts. We become bowed down in spirit that those, who, after so many years of tears and toil and prayers, are at length hungering for the things of God, might be decently cared for, and that no longer scores and hundreds of seekers need be turned away unfed, as in many of the mass movements.

“Master, the multitudes throug Thee!” was the cry of old. To-day, in many mission fields, they likewise throug the disciple, as he treads, as best he may, in his Master’s footsteps. Failing and faltering he may be in many ways, but he is entered into a great inheritance; he reaps the abundant fruit of legions of by-gone prayers; he enters into the labours of many honoured servants of God, long since called to their reward.

But we have ambitions for these infant churches, ambitions that they might really KNOW God, that they might keep their first love till the parousia of the Prince of Peace. “There are delicate members of the Body, Whose Head was once crowned with thorns.” God wants his children to be ‘perfect’, full grown, always abounding in grace and health. But what can be expected when we have as in the Solomons, whole chains of Chris-

tian villages unvisited for nine or ten months. One feels almost ashamed to make such an admission. But really it has been impossible to reach them oftener of late, there are so few to do the work.

Our blessed Master calls the halt, the maimed, and the blind to Himself, that He may make “the lame to take the prey”, the blind to see heaven opened, and the maimed to go on their way, “walking and leaping and praising God”. But that He may do these transforming marvels, He expects His sheep to be tended and fed. Being so helpless, knowing so little, He expects them to be built up in our most holy faith, that they may be kept in the love of God. And this ministry of privilege He has committed not to angels but to the saints.

But “men are slow and late”, and the lambs grow up half starved, and the sheep are neglected, because so many of His own, who have the knowledge and health and talents for this service, fail to realize the urgency, the intense privilege, the rich return for thus ministering to these infant churches. Such believers do not seem to realize that marching orders were given to be obeyed. So they go on waiting indefinitely for some special kind of call, unable to really believe that God urgently needs them to minister to the numbers who are believing, or who are *waiting to believe*.

Yet many godly men at home bear faithful witness to the truth, but speak mostly to deafened ears, to seared hearts, to multitudes departed from the faith. **BUT HERE IN THE MISSION FIELD WHAT A CONTRAST!** Why,

“Here is the place where He has touched the eyes  
Of blinded men to instant perfect sight!  
Here is the place where He has said,  
‘arise’,  
To dying captives bound in chains of night”!

Here, then, is the sphere, where, if you are wise to eternal things, you will have an ever-increasing interest and investment; where you will long to come and pour out your life for the many who actually thirst for the Living Water, and for the One who thirsts for the souls of men.

NORTHCOTE DECK.

## PROBLEMS. THINK!

CONSIDERABLE interest has been aroused by the paper, entitled 'Think', from the pen of H. P. Barker, which appeared in our September issue; and it has been suggested that we propose questions and problems to our readers on the lines indicated in that interesting paper. This will we do gladly.

### MISQUOTATIONS OF SCRIPTURE IN PRAYER.

Those who follow closely the prayers of others, will have noticed how often well-known Scriptures are misquoted, partially quoted, or additions made to them. There is a reason for this; it is not always failure of memory, or the repetition of popular mistakes, but the faulty conception of the truths that the statements of Scripture in question contain.

#### NO. 1.

Take for instance Matthew 18. 20.

*"For where two or three are gathered*

*together in My name, there am I in the midst of them"*—"and that to bless"—or "and that to do them good" are the popular additions. Why should these words be added? Think! What is it in the words of the Lord, that those who make these additions to His words fail to grasp?

#### NO. 2.

Take another instance. In 1 Corinthians 3. 6, the apostle says—

*"I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase."*

Why should this cheering passage be misquoted, at least nine times out of every ten: "Paul may plant, and Apollos may water, but God must give the increase"?

If any of our readers care to answer these questions in a few brief sentences, we shall be glad to hear from them, and the best answers shall be published as space permits. Address them to the Editor as early in the month as possible.

## THE LAW OF THE LARK'S SONG. (NORTHCOTE DECK, SOLOMON IS.)

I cannot sing  
With folded wing,  
Nor fill the air with joyful sound  
When hampered low, upon the ground.

But I must soar,  
Before I pour  
My joyful praises all abroad;  
My heart and God of one accord.

For as I rise  
Toward the skies,  
My heart must overflow in praise  
To Him Who gives such glad some  
days.

But when, with weary wings, I droop  
From out the clouds, and earthward  
stoop,

RISING NO MORE,  
MY SONG IS O'ER.

Here is the Christian's law of praise;  
Who skyward rise, and on Him gaze,  
They Christlike grow,  
Their songs o'erflow.

Yet should earth draw them back, ah,  
pain!  
No more the victor's glad refrain;  
If hearts grow numb,  
Lips must be dumb.

Would'st ever sing? Then ever soar  
In God's pure love; so evermore  
Fill all thy days  
With vibrant praise.