"Thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart."—Jer. 15. 16.
## INDEX

### A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advent of Christ, The</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;All Scripture is Inspired of God&quot;</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Things are Ours</td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;All-variegated Wisdom of God, The&quot;</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At Rest (poetry)</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resurrection (John 5. 28, 29)</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;The Building&quot; (Eph. 2. 21, 22)</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;May grow up unto Him&quot; (Eph. 4. 15, 16)</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Sovereign Mercy of God</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Seven Spirits of God</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Silent unto God&quot;</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Lord nourishing and cherishing the Church</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bible Study</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christ our Substitute and Representative</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel 11.</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglo-Israelism</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;God the Son&quot;</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Song of Solomon</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeding Poor Children</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christendom</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;These which came out of great tribulation&quot; (Rev. 7.)</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christadelphian Errors</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;All that the prophets have spoken&quot;</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will Children of God be Punished Hereafter for Unfaithfulness and Unconfessed Sins?</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Eating and drinking the Lord's Supper Unworthily (1 Cor. 11. 27) | 190  |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Add to your faith virtue&quot; (2 Pet. 1. 5-7)</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answers to Questions on</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Timothy 4.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What will be the Position and Occupation of the Church During the Millennium</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthew 18. 8, 9.</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should the Lord's Supper be Taken in the Evening?</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should the Lord's Supper be Taken Fasting?</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Not imputing their trespasses&quot; (2 Cor. 5. 19)</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the Meaning of Saving Oneself? (1 Tim. 4. 10)</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did Christ Die for the Sinful Adam Nature in Everybody?</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Man of Sin and the Falling Away</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Mystery of Iniquity and that Wicked One</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Man of Sin and the Beast of Rev. 13.</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When will the Day of the Lord Begin?</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has the Believer Eternal Life in Him?</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacob's Ladder</td>
<td>287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Church in the Eternal State</td>
<td>288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free Will and Sovereign Grace</td>
<td>288</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Back to First Principles&quot; A. J. Pollock</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believer and Death, The</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Be still and know that I am God&quot; (poetry)</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blessed Man, The</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blessed Sequence, A Dr. N. Deck</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>PAGE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christ as Law for the Universe</td>
<td>J. Boyd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Assembly, The</td>
<td>J. T. Mawson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Sacrament, A</td>
<td>J. W. Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Tenancy</td>
<td>T. Oliver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coming of the Kingdom, The</td>
<td>F. B. Hole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contending for the Faith</td>
<td>J. Boyd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross, The</td>
<td>J. Boyd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross of Christ, The</td>
<td>J. W. Smith</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>D</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daily March in the Wilderness, The</td>
<td>J. R. S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day of Adversity, The</td>
<td>J. W. Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day of Presentation, The “Dead to the Law”</td>
<td>F. B. Hole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death (poetry)</td>
<td>T. H. Wilson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devotedness to the Lord</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the Soul Sleep?</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Do good and communicate”</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>E</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EDITORIAL NOTES:—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hast Thou Left Thy First Love?</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Sufferings of Christ and the Word of God</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our Relationship with God</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forgiven</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palm Trees and Willows of the Brook</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Last Benediction</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effect of the Lord’s Company, The</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emmanu</td>
<td>Hamilton Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End of the Age, The</td>
<td>H. P. Barker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epistle of Jude, The</td>
<td>Hamilton Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Even the death of the cross”</td>
<td>J. W. Smith</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>F</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faith Contemplations! (poetry)</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faithful Witness, The</td>
<td>H. J. Vine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith! What is Faith?</td>
<td>J. T. Mawson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>False or True Witness, A</td>
<td>J. N. D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fellowship and the glories of God’s Son, The</td>
<td>H. J. Vine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For Those Who Suffer</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four Interruptions</td>
<td>W. H. Westcott</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Fret not.”</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From the Solomon Islands</td>
<td>119, 264</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>G</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Glory of the Lord, The</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God and the Sinner</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God is Behind Everything</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God’s Foreknowledge</td>
<td>J. Green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Going Back or Going On?</td>
<td>H. A. Woolley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ, The (poetry)</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greatness of Christ, The</td>
<td>J. T. Mawson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greatness of Christ, The</td>
<td>J. Boyd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Proofs of the Love of Christ</td>
<td>J. T. Mawson</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>H</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heaven Opened</td>
<td>G. Kenwrick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He is Willing and Able</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His Priesthood (poetry)</td>
<td>W. H. Westcott</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home and Business</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home sweet Home! (poetry)</td>
<td>E. R. V.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hope’s Rejoicing (poetry)</td>
<td>J. Boyd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How God Treats Sin</td>
<td>J. T. Mawson</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I have given you an example”</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I have seen the sea” (poetry)</td>
<td>E. R. V.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I thirst” (poetry)</td>
<td>W. H. Westcott</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“If ye endure chastening”</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Christ</td>
<td>J. Boyd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Inside the Veil”</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigating Spiritism</td>
<td>J. T. Mawson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish Saint, An</td>
<td>H. P. Barker</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>J</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Joy in the Holy Ghost”</td>
<td>H. P. Barker</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>K</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Keep the Heart Warm</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>L</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning in Solitude</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:—</td>
<td>24, 47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Relationships in Heaven</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Grace of Our Lord</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assembly or Church</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was Jacob a Perfect Man?</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Body of Sin</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soul and Spirit</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The Eternal Spirit”</td>
<td>258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christ on the Throne of God</td>
<td>259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The People of the Prince”</td>
<td>259</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EDITORIAL NOTES.
Hast thou left thy first love?

We address ourselves to those who have known the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour for five, ten, twenty, thirty or more years, and more especially to those who have reached or passed middle life. Say, brethren and sisters in Christ, has ours been the pathway of the just, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day? Does the dawning of the year of our Lord 1921 find us stretching out with ever-growing desire after Christ, “pressing towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus”? Do our hearts thrill as once they did at the mention of His Name and the thought of His love? And are His interests—His blood-bought saints, and His Gospel still being preached in the world as dear to us as in former days? or have we left our first love?

What’s the matter with the vast majority of middle-aged Christians? If those who have been in Christ for a quarter of a century are spiritually flat and dull we cannot be surprised if younger believers drift off into the world. We remember the time when our hearts “bubbled up” (Ps. 45: 1 marg.), when the fire burned within us while we mused upon our Saviour and His ways of love, when we were constrained by our more than rejoicing spirits to open our lips and speak of Him. How is it now? What means the gradual cooling of our fervour, so long continued with some that it almost seems as though an arctic blast had chilled their souls to the very marrow of them, so that they will never pulse with life again?

Has our Lord disappointed us? When we sought Him at first was it not His precious blood alone that saved us from the lake of fire and brought us back to the God from whom we had wandered in our folly and wilfulness? Have the years changed this? Do you remember the hour when as a sin-laden sinner,

“Weary, worn and sad,”
you looked up to Him, the Saviour crucified for you? You could not tell in that hour the greatness of the debt you owed to Him; has this grown less in the years that have intervened? Or have you been able to repay Him so largely that now you can with a quiet conscience be less grateful to Him?

Has the Lord changed? Does His beauty decline with advancing years? Has His love cooled? Is He so engrossed with other matters that He has ceased to care for you, and has He thus given you some warrant for your growing coldness towards Him? Who is to blame for the backsliding, the lukewarmness? Can we charge the Holy Ghost with this? Has He grown weary of taking of Christ’s things and showing them to us? Has His power become palsied so that He can no longer hold our footsteps stedfast in the heavenly way? Is He no longer
able to fan the fire of our zeal to a fervent flame? Awake, come, let us inquire earnestly and with purpose into this matter, for it is urgent. Our Lord’s glory demands that we cast off our lethargy; the need of His church, the needs of perishing men, the shortness of time, the coming of the Lord, all demand that we should not sleep as do others, but definitely set ourselves to discover the cause of the blight, and remove it.

Every truth of God is not merely questioned, but neutralized and denied, in almost every professedly Christian circle to-day, and this must necessarily have a disastrous effect upon those whose faith is weak, and who go on in associations where this denial of the truth is tolerated, for evil communications corrupt good manners, and the high swelling words, and profane and vain babblings of those who think themselves wiser than the word of God, “eat as doth a canker”, destroying faith and godliness. This, of course, is the devil’s work, and those who engage in it and tolerate it are literally supping with him, and as there can be no fellowship between righteousness and unrighteousness, and no communion between light and darkness, and no concord between Christ and Belial, divine life and joy, devotion to Christ must decline and wither in such associations. We believe that this largely accounts for the spiritual deadness that prevails in what is called ‘organized religion’, and it is not difficult to see why this is so. The mind of man has been exalted to the place of the infallible critic; the Word of the living God must yield to his scientific theories; at all costs religion must accommodate itself to the mind of man, as he is in his enmity against God, and consequently everything that calls for faith is rejected, and all that is supernatural denied, and men are shut up to their own unsatisfying fancies, and are shut off from the inexhaustible fullness of God. The fountain of living water is forsaken, and men are labouring long and hard to hew out cisterns of their own, broken cisterns that can hold no water. Dearth and death could only be the result of such folly, for divine life in any soul is entirely supernatural, and must be maintained through faith by the power of the Holy Ghost.

* * * *

But even where a measure of orthodoxy is maintained there is often a serious blindness as to what is the true work of God in the world, and earnest men are sidetracked, taking up social questions, and labouring upon schemes for the betterment of a world that is past mending, instead of continuing to make known the Gospel which is God’s power for dragging men out of the world—this present evil world, as it is called in Galatians 1. 4. To deliver us from it the Lord Jesus gave Himself, according to the will of God, but if Christians are determined to close their eyes to the truth of God as to this, and spend their time and energy in the vain endeavour to improve it, how can they expect to make advance in spiritual power and devotion to Christ? This is also a cause of backsliding. We know a certain denominational minister who, at one time a soul-winner, was asked if he got many conversions through his preaching. He replied, “Oh, a layman can get conversions”, and he went on to explain that he was an organizer and a leader in social work. Poor man, he little knew how he had fallen. But spiritual blight and death must prevail in such circles, for in them the will of God is ignored.

* * * *

But why should deadness prevail in circles where the great truths of God are still upheld, and where there is sufficient intelligence as to the will of God to see that He takes no part in all these plausible schemes for the improvement of an unimprovable world? That is a question for some of us to face. Is it because the older we get the more selfish and self-centred we become, unless Christ is maintained
before our souls in His own glory? It is a remarkable fact that all the kings of Judah, no matter what their zeal for God in their early days, broke down and dishonoured Him in middle life. A solemn warning, indeed. But there is a striking difference between us and them, and it is this, we have the Holy Spirit of God abiding in us; they had not. So that for us there is no excuse. If we decline and fail, it must be because the Holy Ghost is grieved in us, because there is that in our hearts and our determinations and motives that is so contrary to the will of God that His gracious work within us is thwarted. And this must have its roots in SELF. It may manifest itself in self-indulgence; or in the desire to appear in the eyes of others more devoted than we are, which was the sin of Ananias; or in the fear of bearing the reproach of Christ before the world; or in the desire to be greatest amongst the people of God. It is all self and not Christ, and against this we must watch with greater vigilance as we advance in life. Never is the Christian free while on earth from the encroachment of self upon Christ's domain. Self-judgement must ever be maintained if we are to be fresh and vigorous in divine things even on to old age. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live: yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life that I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2. 20), was the language of the man who was determined that Christ should be magnified in His body, whether by life or by death.

It is easy to grow weary of this life if self is allowed a place, but we have our remedy, and that is to wait on the Lord continually. He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might He increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall; But they that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings, as eagles—i.e., they shall still enjoy and rejoice in God's boundless favour, and the out-of-the-world place of blessing which is theirs. They shall run and not be weary; i.e., they shall still run on the Lord's errands, carrying His words of salvation and comfort to those that are needy. They shall walk and not faint, i.e., they shall tread with firm and undeviating steps the heavenly road to their meeting with the Lord.

* * * *

Our Lord expects us to be so doing when He comes. He expects us to be WAITING—obedient, and ready for His return. WATCHING—full of the expectancy that only love can produce. WORKING—carefully and diligently serving His interests on earth, showing our love to Him by caring for His own. "Blessed", He says, "are those servants, whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching; verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them." And He repeats it again, "Blessed are those servants". Does not that show what our patient continuance in the path of devotion and service on our part means to Him? And should not this be an incentive to us to greatly stir up our souls, and throw off all slackness, and trim our lamps, and go forth to serve Him and to meet Him with renewed energy?

"Repent, and do the first works", is our Lord's word to us wherever decline has set in. To open every door to Him that has been little by little closed against Him, and to continue to serve Him. HIMSELF AND HIS SERVICE! Here we have that which is brighter and better than the brightest and the best that SELF could devise for us. Here we have that which yields satisfaction of heart to us now; which will not be in vain in the resurrection; which glorifies the Lord, pleases the Holy Spirit, and calls forth the approval of the Father.

"WHO can find a virtuous woman?" or "worthy woman", or "woman of worth", as some would read it. The word virtuous here is elsewhere translated "worthy" (see Ruth 4. 11; 1 Kings 1. 52). It means, according to the lexicons, able, valorous; or embraces, perhaps, something of the meaning of all three words—virtuous, valorous, able. Such a woman who can find? "for her price is far above rubies"—the most precious gem known to the ancients. The treasure of such an acquisition is beyond all price; a wife of this description cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof. It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire. The gold and the crystal cannot equal it; and the exchange of it shall not be for jewels of fine gold. No mention shall be made of coral, or of pearls, for she is herself a pearl, and a type of her who is to Christ the "pearl of great price": His loved and blood-bought Church. The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal the worth of such a woman.

The description of the model wife here is in the form of an acrostic, embracing as it does the whole Hebrew alphabet of twenty-two letters. Christ Himself is "the Alpha and the Omega" (the A to Z, in English), exhausting human language, as it were, in the attempt to tell the infinite glories of His person—His moral excellences, coupled with His might, His majesty, His dominion, His grace, His justice and His truth. And here, in this description of her who is intended to represent His church, His spouse, the whole gamut of the alphabet is run to express her moral and domestic virtues and womanly excellences.

Seven things—the perfect number—are specifically noted of her.

(1) Her faithfulness (vv. 11, 12); (2) her industry (vv. 13-15); (3) her thrift (vv. 16-19); (4) her benevolence (v. 20); (5) her providence (vv. 21-25); (6) her moral excellences (vv. 26, 27); and (7) her reward (vv. 28-31).

Let us briefly note these points of excellence one by one, beginning with the mark of most importance, namely,

HER FAITHFULNESS; faithfulness to her absent lord. "The heart of her husband cloth safely trust in her." We say absent husband, for he is evidently considered as being away from home here. And how fittingly this figures our Lord in the time of His absence now from earth. He is, like the nobleman of the parable, gone to a far country to receive for Himself a kingdom and to return. And in His absence His heart can safely trust in her whom He has left to look after His interests till He comes again.

It is His heart, mark, that trusts in her—the seat of the affections. It is not so much His goods and her care for them that He is most concerned about, but her love; this is what He prizes above all. For what would be the industry, the thrift, and all else, without this initial good and basic spring of all the rest?

His heart doth safely trust in her. It is no misplaced confidence—she will not deceive or disappoint him. "She will do him good, and not evil, all the days of her life".

This loyal wife's opposite is seen in the woman of impudent face of chap. 7. Her husband, too, was absent: "The good man is not at home", she tells her yielding victim; "he is gone a long journey. He hath taken a bag of money with him, and will come home at the day appointed". Her husband, too, trusted her, perhaps, but he did not safely trust—she shamefully deceived him. She proved herself untrue, like that which calls itself "the one true church" to-day, Rome,
to an extreme degree, and her Protestant 'daughters' in ever-increasing measure. The great harlot of Rev. 17, is the final form of this base betrayal of the temptress.

But where, it may be asked, can this lovely characteristic of faithfulness to Christ be seen to-day? And a question it must remain, alas! The picture is ideal, collectively; there is not an assembly or body of Christians anywhere on earth that would not be compelled in truthfulness to say, It is not in me.

Yet, let it be the aspiration of the individual soul to answer, in some small measure, at least, to the description, not only of this primary and best-beloved trait of the woman of worth, but also in all that follows.

HER INDUSTRY is noted next: "She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands. She is like the merchant's ships; she bringeth her food from afar. She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens". In Christ Jesus it is "faith which worketh by love". The loving partner here works 'willingly', or with delight, as Young translates it. True love must be active while there is one single need of its object that remains to be met—it must be up and doing for the object of its affections. "The labour of love" is never drudgery, but rather a delight, as here.

The model woman has a house to keep. "Chaste keepers at home", is the expressed command of God concerning women who would please Him (see Titus 2. 5). She does not gad about, engaged in social settlement work, thrusting herself into the public affairs of the world, or demanding equal rights with the men for her sex. Her labours are purely domestic; and it is in this circle that she finds her hands happily and ever full, as every true wife and mother most surely will. Food and clothing for her household occupy her fully—the preparation of wool and flax for the distaff and loom, and meat for her household; she apportions work also for her maid servants, suffering none to dwell with her in idleness.

And the church of Christ—is it her business to mix herself in politics? to wish to govern the world, or even to attempt to mould or influence public opinion. No; her sphere is elsewhere, and her work is of a different character altogether. She has the affairs of her household to look after—"the household of faith", to feed them with the children's bread and to see that they are properly clothed with practical righteousness, and adorned with the goodly "garment of praise".

The church, of course, strictly speaking, does not do these things; as has been often remarked, the church does not teach, but is herself taught. But each member does, or is supposed to do, its share; and so the work is done, if not by the church collectively (or as some would say, officially), by the individuals, who in the aggregate compose the church. "She bringeth her food from afar." It is meat to eat that the world knows nothing of—"bread of heaven", Christ ministered in the power of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. The expression "food from afar" reminds us of the words of Moses in his song before all the congregation of Israel: "My doctrine shall drop as the rain, and my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass". (Deut. 32. 2). "I will fetch my knowledge from afar", says the inspired Elihu, in Job. 36. 3. "The children's bread" is not fable or tradition, cunningly devised and craftily inculcated, but "sound doctrine" drawn from the inerrant Word, the Holy Scriptures, inspired of God. "Nourished in the words of faith, and of good doctrine", answers to the "food from afar", "the meat to her
household", of this diligent "woman of worth" (see 1 Tim. 4. 6).

Closely coupled with the ideal wife's industry is

HER THRIFT; "She considereth a field, and buyeth it; with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard. She girdeth her loins with strength and strengtheneth her arms. She perceiveth that her merchandise is good; her candle goeth not out by night. She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff". She is aggressive, enlarging her husband's domain—buying fields and planting them to vineyards.

Oh, for more of this spirit of aggression among the saints to-day—that we might be "a missionary church", indeed, reaching out to "the regions beyond" us, covetous for further fields of conquest.

The field was first considered—there was exercise. She did not act on the impulse of the moment, but only bought it after calm and careful deliberation (see Luke 14. 28). Then the price was paid, the purchase made. Some lands of earth are inherited; but every square inch of territory acquired by the 'church militant' must be bought, and dearly paid for, often—in toil and tears, treasure, and sometimes blood, even life itself.

After being bought it must be 'planted' with witnesses, assemblies, or individuals, to bring forth fruit unto God. For this, strenuous work is demanded—loins must be girded and arms strengthened, "strong in the Lord and the power of His might".

Such happy service for the Lord whets the appetite for more: "She perceiveth that her merchandise is good"; she sees the profit there is in labour for the absent, but returning, good Man. Night comes on, but her candle still burns. It was said above, "She riseth also while it is yet night". It is now the night of our Lord's rejection and no time for sleeping. But the morning dawns, thank God. "The night is far spent, the day is at hand", the watchman calls. May the little candle of our testimony not be allowed to grow dim or go out, brethren, but shine on "till the day dawn and the shadows flee away".

HER BENEVOLENCE is noted next; it is not niggardliness, or because she is selfishly covetous, that she pursues the practice of thrift and industry, but that she may have to give to others: "She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy".

This is the spirit inculcated in the church of the Ephesians by the apostle Paul: "Let him that stole steal no more; but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth" (Eph. 4. 28).

And, to apply it in a still more spiritual way, think of the devoted apostle himself, toiling night and day, "enduring all things for the elects' sake, that they might also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory". What self-abnegation, what love for others—the souls of the really poor and the needy. He impoverished himself for others: "As poor," he says, "yet making many rich." He was indeed a philanthropist, in the truest and highest sense of that word—the New Testament counterpart of that generous, benignant soul whose goodly ways and character we are analyzing here, this "woman of worth", beyond all price. May both his and her spirit characterize us, their spiritual descendants, more and more.

Next to her consideration for the needs of others comes

HER PROVIDENCE—her care for her own. "She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet (or, double garments, margin). She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her
clothing is silk and purple. She maketh fine linen, and selleth it; and delivereth girdles to the merchant. Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come.". A man who provides not for his own, especially for those of his own house, he is worse than an infidel, Scripture assures us (1 Tim. 5. 8). The lauded housewife here does not come under the condemnation of this passage. She has made ample provision for the future of those dependent on her. Not only is she prepared for the days of storm and snow, but "she shall rejoice in time to come", the delineator of her virtues says: "Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life", is the apostolic admonition concerning those that are rich in this world (1 Tim. 6. 19). This, in measure, all may do, even if poor in this world's goods. To lay up for themselves treasure in heaven is the privilege even of those most indigent in the church.

And what is the clothing of scarlet, the fine linen, the coverings of tapestry, her clothing of silk and purple, but the garments 'clean and bright' of the bride of Revelation, 'the Lamb's wife', who by her divinely energized providence had 'made herself ready'? (Rev. 19.). It is "the righteousnesses of the saints"—their personally practised righteousnesses, as distinguished from that imputed righteousness by which alone they stood justified before God. This last is God's free gift, but the other is of their own prayerful, patient, persevering weaving, though taught and enabled, certainly, by the Holy Spirit.

This will all redound to the praises of the glory of His grace, 'her Husband'. He will in that day when He shall "be glorified in His saints and admired in all them that believe", be, indeed, through her, "known in the gates". Happy, happy day will this be for the now toiling, often weary church—to see Him honoured, and in a certain sense, and in whatever small measure, through her.

Closely akin to her providence are HER MORAL EXCELLENCES.

"She openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kind­ness. She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness." Her speech is in all wisdom—there is "neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient". But though in her conversation chaste, she is not austere; for "the law of kindness" is in her tongue. Her conversation is always in grace, yet seasoned with salt. There is a way of speaking which is as the piercings of a sword; and on the other hand there is a class of speech that is all honey. Both extremes are by this favoured woman happily avoided; while kindly in manner and tone, there is no winking at or smoothing over wrong or sin. "She looketh well to the ways of her household"—there is the faithful exercise of discipline in the circle of her own. Some would discard discipline entirely in the church—the house of God. Not so this noble helpmeet of her Husband; she watches carefully the conduct of those beneath her roof and under her authority. And there are those set in the church "who watch for our souls as those that must give account. "Good, easy man" does not describe the "man of God"; he threatens to come "with a rod", if remonstrance and loving ad­monition fail.

She "eateth not the bread of idleness". The days are evil and it is no time for ease or idleness. "In diligence not slothful." As the Israe­lite in the desert had to rise betimes to obtain the manna, while it was yet early, or go hungry, so must Christians use diligence in the feeding of their souls; they are not permitted to eat the bread of idleness and at the same
time prosper in their souls. "In all labour there is profit", and this worthy wife shall in the end obtain a full reward for her unselfish toil and thoughtfulness for others.

This brings us to the next and final item to this highly advantaged woman’s account—

HER REWARD. "Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her. Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all. Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates.”

These encomiums are evidently rendered her after her removal from the scene of her numerous and praiseworthy activities. Toil and care for the welfare of others was the chief element of her useful and unselfish life; now she is gone to her rest and her works do follow her. And her reward is the unstinted, gratefully rendered praise of both her children and her husband. This honour and blessing will be publicly bestowed on the faithful at the judgement-seat of Christ. But even here in time are not the servants of Christ of past generations praised to-day by those who now profit by their labours—the apostles for their example and writings, and the martyrs and the reformers for their devotedness and willingness to toil and suffer (death, if need be), that the truth of the Gospel might remain with us? Do not we, their spiritual descendants—their 'children', in this sense—rise up and call them blessed? Are they not even now being praised by Christ the Lord Himself through all them that because of their testimony have believed?

"Many daughters have done worthily", but the saints of the present dispensation excel them all; the Christian in a peculiar way is greatly advantaged over the saints of other and past dispensations, excelling in a manner even honoured patriarchs and prophets. For it was said of even such an one as John the Baptist—one of the greatest of those born of women,—that he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.

Deceitful is worldly favour, and vain is fleshly beauty; "the flesh profiteth nothing", and the earthly advantages of birth, culture, riches or fame count for nothing in the estimation of the Lord, the righteous Judge, when weighed in the balances of the sanctuary. But the fear of Jehovah, producing and bringing in its train subjection to and affection for Him, this is what alone merits and obtains praise and honourable mention before the coming judgement-seat—'the gates' of Oriental imagery used here.

Yes, 'the gates'; it is the last word of our acrostic—indeed, the last of the whole Book of Proverbs. Let us not forget them; and may we, by God's grace, live and labour in the light of that coming day. Amen.

THE EFFECT OF THE LORD'S COMPANY.

If you go on any errand for the Lord, whether to visit the poor and needy or to preach His word to few or many, and are entirely occupied with what you will say or do, you are sure to make some grand mistake; but if you keep your eye on Christ, He will go with you and shape you rightly as to word and act. I cannot tell you how or why this is, but it is so. The man of real ability in the work of the Lord is the man who comes from God and is in the hand of the Lord.
"INSIDE THE VEIL."

Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water" (Hebrews 10. 19-22).

The holiest is evidently our place of worship, and it is not upon earth. Chapter 9. 24 tells us where it is, "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us". The holiest is heaven itself, and our Scripture tells us that we have boldness to enter in through the blood of Jesus. It is our place now, and we are to draw near now with a true heart and in the full assurance of faith. There we may be in spirit now, having the full sense of perfect acceptance, not a single cloud in that bright scene. Our acceptance cannot be improved, it is as complete as God can make it, and it cannot be lost, for we are accepted in the Beloved One.

This is not attainment, it is the place and privilege of every child of God. Look at the prodigal; he said, "I will arise and go to my father". He arose and went, and where do we find him? Is he outside the door, or looking through the window? No, he is inside the house. It is boldness to enter, that infinite grace has given to us, that must be seen. The prodigal enters as a child in the full consciousness of his Father's love. If he does not he is trifling with his Father's heart, he is not answering to the Father's love; and that is the strongest appeal that any of us can address to our souls, Are we answering to the Father's love?

It is not a question of missing our own blessings—certainly we do that if we stand at a distance—but of not answering to love ineffable, to the boundless love of the Father's heart.

We come into the Father's house, not only absolved from all our sins, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more," but having, like the prodigal, boldness to come inside with the sense of the Father's love; for He has kissed us, and imparted to us a nature suited to His presence; for He has put upon us the best robe which speaks of the fitness He has given us for His presence. He must have us inside in His very presence as white as snow, and with a nature that fits us to enjoy the bright scene, and clothed with the comeliness of Christ; or, if I may express it thus, the prodigal is as grand as anything there.

We have boldness to enter in. Boldness is the word applied to the emancipated slave. The slave before emancipation could not be on equal terms with his master. Under the law we were nothing but slaves, but now Christ has made us free. We have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. But it is not only the blood, it is also "by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, His flesh". We pass unto another platform, and are landed on other ground. The link that bound us to our old condition is broken in the cross, and we pass through to new ground with a new nature suited to it.

May the Holy Spirit teach us what this means, and lead us into the joy of it. We have a right of entrance into that scene of unclouded joy which gives a tinge of beauty and depth of character to all who enter; and being with Christ inside the veil, we take His place outside the camp bearing His reproach.
"WITHOUT THE CAMP."

"For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come" (Hebrews 13. 11-14).

There is a chair in the house, and you see a child so fond of it. You ask, why are you so fond of that chair? Oh, that is the chair where my mother sat, where she nursed me many a weary day and many a weary night too. I love that chair. It is the dearest thing in the house to me. So there is a spot on earth most dear to me, it is the place where Christ suffered the judgement for me. If you don't take that place you are not occupying the spot that Christ occupied for you, that is, outside the camp. In Leviticus 4. 12 we read: "Even the whole bullock shall he carry forth without the camp unto a clean place, where the ashes are poured out, and burn him on the wood with fire; where the ashes are poured out shall he be burnt". That is where Christ was for us: "That He might sanctify the people with His own blood He suffered without the gate".

But not only did He go there in grace to die, man put Him there, for by wicked hands He was crucified and slain. He suffered from men, THIS IS THE REPROACH.

He was disallowed indeed of men. The builders refused Him. People often say the Jews did it, but they handed Him over to the Gentiles. God gave men two things, a law and a sword, and they used them both against His own Son. The Jews said, "We have a law, and by our law He ought to die". The Romans had the sword, and they put Him to death. The Jews condemned Him by the law God had given them, and handed Him over condemned to the Romans who used the sword—government that God had put into their hands—to crucify Him. I do not think that we can form an adequate idea of the amount of reproach that Christ had to bear at the hands of men.

Christ not only bore the reproach of men, but He bore the judgment of God. There was a place on earth which Christ occupied for me, and in that place He not only bore the reproach of men but He bore the judgment of God. He bore the judgement of God that I might have the joys of God. I have no sufferings from God; Christ bore all that for me. He exhausted all the judgement, but the reproach of men is mine because it was His. If I am attracted to Him and attached to Him, I bear His reproach.

Many think that going outside the camp means going outside all religious organization. It is not merely that, it is occupying the place that Christ occupied for me. He bore the judgement of God for me because of what I was, and I am now clear of that for ever; but He bore the reproach of men, was cast out by them because of what He was Himself and as a witness of God here, and there I stand with Him, if I am loyal to Him. Truly it will put us outside all earthly human religious organizations, for here we have no continuing city. It is not ours to be taking an active interest in schemes and plans for giving stability to this present evil world, whether religious, social, or political. It is ours in the midst of the world to bear His reproach, for He was reproached in it, and to seek the city which is to come in which He will be honoured, a city that will be filled with His glory.
"DO GOOD AND COMMUNICATE."

"By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased" (Hebrews 13. 15, 16).

We have to do two things, to praise God continually and do good to others. We are to be like fruit trees planted in the Master's garden, we are to be there for God's satisfaction and the benefit of others. Fruit is first for God, and the fruit of our lips, giving thanksgiving to Him, yields Him satisfaction that the ancient sacrifices that smoked upon Jewish altars could not yield. Even the psalmist in the day of these types and shadows understood that when he sang, "I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify Him with thanksgiving. This also shall please the Lord better than an ox or bullock that hath horns and hoofs. The humble shall see this and be glad: your heart shall live that seek God" (Ps. 69. 30). But we are not to forget to do good and communicate; we are to bear fruit that others may pluck. How many barren trees there are, or bearing only fruit unmatured and sour. May it not be because they are striking their roots in that which is popular with men and shunning the reproach of Christ? We are here to bear fruit, and the fruit that grows upon us is to be at the disposal of, and for the benefit of, any whom the Master may send to pluck it. We are to be evangelical. The bride in Revelation 22. descends in the most lovely way from the highest occupation with Christ Himself, step after step, until she becomes evangelical to the utmost extent. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come." That is occupation with Christ, and this must be first. Then "Let him that heareth say, Come"; then "Let him that is athirst come"; and last of all, evangelical to the largest degree—"Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely".

HE IS WILLING AND ABLE.

A little girl was one day reading the story of the leper who, coming to Jesus, besought Him to make him clean (Mark 1. 40-45). The story interested her greatly, but she waxed indignant at the leper's prayer. He said to Jesus, "If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me whole", and she declared that he ought not to have said 'if' to Jesus at all, certainly he ought to have left the 'if' out, and said "Thou wilt, Thou canst". And the little girl was right, for Jesus was just as willing as He was able to do for that poor wretch what he so much needed. But that leper was not singular in his doubt. How often we also put the 'ifs' in our prayers, when we come to the Lord, questioning His willingness if not His power to do all for us that we need, and be all for us that we need Him to be. But such questioning is totally without warrant, and He has never given us any cause for it. His interest in us is as great as His love for us, and that is without measure or end. Oh, ye of little faith, wherefore did ye doubt?

KEEP THE HEART WARM.

It used to be said that the English were able to endure the cold of Russia better than the Russians themselves, because they warmed themselves before they went out and did not trust to their furs alone. So we, if we are to maintain our warmth in this cold world, must warm our hearts in that world of eternal sunshine where our home is, and then when we come into this cold world we shall not be chilled, but what we tell of Jesus will dispel the death-cold that reigns in the hearts around us.
HOW GOD TREATS SIN.

I KNEW of a little girl, not more than eight or nine years old, who had been very disobedient. Her mother, perhaps not wisely, said to her: "Mary, go upstairs to your bedroom, and tell God all about your naughtiness, and don't come down again until He has forgiven you". In a very short time the wee maid returned to the drawing-room as pert as could be.

"Well, Mary," said her mother, "did you tell God what a naughty girl you had been?"

"Yes, Ma," she replied, "I did, and He said, Oh, Miss E——, don't mention it."

The little girl's conception of what God thought about her sin is quaint enough to raise a smile, but she merely put a common notion into quaint expression, for the majority of people appear to think that because their sins are a very small matter in their eyes, they are also small in God's eyes, and that when He comes to deal with them He will treat them as of no account at all. We venture to suggest that this estimate of sin largely accounts for the lack of depth in many who are really Christians, and for the indifference of the multitudes to the Gospel of God's grace.

What a difference it makes when sin becomes 'exceeding sinful' in the eyes of a man; when he is brought to see himself as God sees him, and to realize how sin appears in God's sight; then he says, as Job said, "Behold, I am vile". "Now mine eye seeth Thee, wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." Then he is compelled to cry out to God, as David did: "Wash me throughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin". "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."

How can a man appreciate the atoning death of Christ unless he feels that he is a sinful man? And why should he trouble himself at all about the matter if sin is a light thing in the sight of God? Truly if men are to be rightly affected towards God, if they are to awake to righteousness and sin not, the first thing that is necessary is that they should exchange their thoughts as to the gravity of sin and take God's thoughts instead. The cherubims with flaming sword at the gates of a tenantless Eden proclaim God's thought of sin. A world destroyed by a flood of great waters shows forth His severity and inexorable justice in dealing with sin, and Sinai's flaming summit with its pealing thunders in the presence of an awed and trembling people declare that sin is not a small thing in God's sight.

Sin has wrecked God's fair creation, it has ruined men, separating them from God by a gulf that could only be crossed and removed by infinite love; but it has done more than this, it has challenged the very majesty of God in His own universe. Sin is rebellion against God's supremacy; it would climb to the eternal throne if it could and tear Him from thence; and this is what sin means whenever it shows itself in the life of a man; it is the determination of his heart to go his own way regardless of the will of God; it is lawlessness, the refusal to be subject to the throne of God.

But it is the cross of Christ that shows us what sin is as nothing else can. We Christian men and women must not lose sight of the cross or we shall lose our sense of the awfulness of sin. The Scripture says: "CHRIST ONCE SUFFERED FOR SINS". Let us dwell often and long upon that statement and consider as far as we may what He suffered, that He might bring us to God. As we grow in our appreciation of those sufferings we shall grow in our abhorrence of sin, and so we shall increase in holiness and in gratitude to God who "commendeth His love towards us in that while we
were yet sinners Christ died for us.” (Rom. 5:8).

We are often asked the way to revival of spiritual life in the children of God, and of a deeper work of conviction in the souls of those who need the Gospel; we know no other way than this: let those who profess to know the Lord turn afresh to the cross of sacrifice and have their souls renewed in the presence of that cross, where their sins and God's holy judgement met in the Person of their Suffering Substitute. May the Holy Spirit of God affect us deeply along this line.

WHEREWITH SHALL I COME BEFORE GOD?
Micah 6. 6-7.

"Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression?"
Where, where can man of woman bred,
By fallen nature's laws,
Find one to suffer in his stead
And undertake his cause?
The human race by sin is bound,
Who shall the charge deny?
How shall a substitute be found
Where all are doomed to die?

"Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams?"
If cattle on a thousand hills
Were slain in sacrifice,
And blood flowed forth in crimson rills,
All, all could not suffice.
And though the flaming fire consume
The countless victims slain,
To save a guilty soul from doom,
The holocaust were vain.

"By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."
The Lord whose majesty doth ride
The whirlwind and the storm,
Laid all His dignity aside
And took a servant's form,
From heaven's eternal throne He came
To live with men below,
And die His creatures' death of shame
Upon the cross of woe.

"Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father."
Exult, ye heavens, rejoice, O earth,
God's spotless Lamb who died,
The sinless Man of virgin-birth,
In heaven is glorified.
Let all the universe acclaim
The only Worthy One,
And saints unite to bless His name,
The mighty deed is done!
CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH.

The General Epistle of Jude.

THE desire of Jude was to write about the common salvation, and this is a very pleasant task. God has taken us up to make us just what He wishes us to be. He has one thought, that we should be conformed to the image of His Son. By the Gospel He brings us to Himself. He saves by His glad tidings. It is that which gets into the heart of men and becomes the living link between the soul and God. The word of the glad tidings produces a new nature and a new life in the one that hears it, and believes it, "Of His own will begat He us, by the word of truth". God has those in this world, who are begotten of Him, who are able to look up into His face, and call him Father, by the Spirit of His Son. Sometimes we think it was by some kind of accident that we came to see and acknowledge that we were sinners, and that we turned to God, who received us graciously, forgave us our sins, set us in His own presence, and took us into His own love and favour. We are liable to think that He had little or nothing to do with it; whereas He had everything to do with it. None can come to Christ unless the Father draws them. It is all in His hands, and the way He draws is by the Gospel, the glad tidings of His grace. The new birth is a mystery in one way to us. I do not suppose anyone can really tell when he was born again. He may be able to tell when he believed the Gospel, and when he got his soul saved. When a man believes the Gospel and receives the Spirit of God, then he is able to speak about being born again, for the Spirit witnesses with His spirit that he is a child of God. But how He reached us, how He dealt with us, how He made His word powerful in our souls, we have very little, if any understanding. We only know He has done it, and it is His work from beginning to end. There are these things that are beyond our power to tell, or to give any real and true account of, but, blessed be God, we can say that they are true of us. We have passed out of death unto life. We have received the Spirit of God, for we receive the Spirit when we believe the Gospel of our salvation. That gives us the enjoyment of this great salvation, so that it is a very happy thing to preach the Gospel, and a very happy thing to listen to it, and a very happy thing to write about it. Jude would have liked to have done so, but there was something else that was pressing upon His mind by the Spirit of God, and to that He has to refer. It was the state of things that was coming in upon those who professed the name of Christ. Very early in the history of Christianity the evil came in. It is full blown to-day, but it began early enough. The Apostle Paul tells us that evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived, until at last that which professes His name will become so nauseous to Christ that He will spue it out of His mouth.

Jude has to write to the believers, and to encourage them in the battle, because so long as the church is here there will be conflict; we need encouragement. We seem to see everything going to the bad, and we are liable to let our hands hang down, and our knees become feeble, and our feet look for a smooth path through this world. We have to have our hands continually lifted up to God in supplication for strength to tread our pathway through this world. We have to run the race with patience, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of faith, and not only with the desire, but the absolute certainty that God will bring us through, and that we shall reach the goal at last, to be with Christ, and like Him. So he desires that they should contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. We ought not to be contentious people. There
is only one thing that we have to contend for, and that is the faith of the Gospel. We have not to contend for our rights or reputation, but we have to contend for one thing that is more precious to us than our name, more precious to us than our reputation in this world, and that is the faith of the Gospel. Paul could say, when he was about to leave this world, and was seeking to encourage Timothy, "I have fought a good fight". It was a fight all along the line. Paul was not like a man who boasts when he is putting on his armour, and has nothing to boast about when he is putting it off. He says, "I have finished my course; I have kept the faith." There was not another thing he did keep. He did not keep his worldly position, and he lost his life at the last. He kept but the faith. That was more precious to him than anything else. He was carrying through this world a treasure that was of more value than the whole creation put together. He was only careful for that. He fought for that. He contended day by day with men of every kind and class, even with the saints themselves, and with one of the first Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ. He even withstood Peter to the face that the truth of the Gospel might continue with the saints. He did not hesitate a moment to contend for the truth of the Gospel, and he was sure of victory, because he knew that God was for him. If you contend for the faith of the Gospel you may be absolutely sure of victory, because you have God for you, and if God be for you, who can be against you?

Next Jude reminds them of three things. First, WANT OF FAITH, The Lord, after having saved a people out of Egypt, destroyed them who believed not. They really had no faith. What we want to see is that we have faith in Christ. Faith overcomes every obstacle. These had no faith, and their carcases fell in the wilderness. Second, THE GIVING UP OF A HEAVENLY POSITION. The case is cited of the angels who kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation. That refers to Genesis 6. God had given the angels a separate place from man. They were not to mix themselves up with human beings in this world, but they left their first estate, and are now reserved under darkness, to the
judgement of the great day. God never fails in his grace towards those who submit themselves to Him, and He never fails to bring down the wickedness of the wicked upon their own heads. We have a heavenly calling, and we are to maintain a place on earth as separate from the world. Those who profess the name of Christ are responsible, whether they are true believers or whether they are not. "He that saith he abideth in Him, ought himself to walk even as He walked." There are many unbelievers in Christendom. They are Christians in name only. Destruction is before them, because God destroyed the people who believed not. Then the next thing is they cannot maintain their separation from the world. They drop down to the level of the world, mix themselves up with the world, and you cannot distinguish the world to-day from the church. Third, ALL KINDS OF CORRUPTION GET IN. The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were burnt up. If God does not fail in grace, He will not fail in judgement. He will not fail in anything that He takes up to do. Judgement is His strange work, but He is compelled to do it, because He is the Governor of the universe, and He cannot allow evil to continue for ever. If men do not judge themselves, they come under the consequence of their own sinfulness.

More than that. We see the Spirit of God rising up in the midst of that which professes the name of Christ, and saying, "Woe unto them". That is not the world, but that which is inside the profession of Christianity. "Woe unto them, for they have gone in the way of Cain"—mere natural religion. They thank God for the mercies received on earth through His bounty, but want nothing of the blood of Christ to cleanse them from sin. They think they do not need God's salvation at all. They say they are just what God made them, and their relations with God are all right. That was Cain's position. Abel, on the contrary, acknowledged that death lay upon him as the judgement of God. Cain would not acknowledge that, and the end was that Cain rose up and killed his brother Abel, and then went out and dwelt in the land of Nod, to be away from God. "They have run greedily after the error of Balaam for reward." That is associating the people of God with the world, and that for reward. The next is that they have "perished in the gainsaying of Core". We do not need to say they will perish. God looks upon the thing as done—they have perished.

He tells the saints that they have been well warned of these things. "There will be mockers, walking after their own worldly, ungodly lusts. Not merely will you find men of God—they are always to be found—but mockers, scoffers, professing the name of Christ, and scoffing at everything that is divine.

"But ye, beloved." There is but a little flock to-day. The great majority of Christendom has turned away from Christ, and they are going faster and faster every day after every mad thing the devil and man can invent. "Building up yourselves on your most holy faith." As men depart from it, you be more careful of it. Get your soul better built up in it. It is a most holy faith. It is not the invention of man, and the devil has never had anything to do with it. That faith is from heaven itself. Then "Praying in the Holy Ghost," not merely saying prayers as a kind of ritual, but praying in the power of the Spirit of God. That is, presenting your supplication not in your own power, but in the only power by which you can have to do with God. You say, "Can I always be filled with that Spirit?" You ought to be. In Ephesians it says, "Be filled with the Spirit." Who? All believers in Ephesus, and the same thing should be true of all believers, now, everywhere. A person may say, "I wish I were filled with the Spirit. How am I to be?"
Go to God, and He will teach you. Pray to Him. Turn to Him. He will teach you. He is neither hard nor unkind. He is gracious and merciful, full of compassion and love. He knows all about you. He knows your desires. Put your trust in Him, and ask Him that you may be filled with the Spirit. Ask Him in the name of Jesus. “Keep yourselves in the love of God.” What an atmosphere that is. Keep yourselves in the enjoyment and the sense of it. Nothing can separate you from it, but you may not be in the enjoyment of it. Keep in the warmth of that bright sunshine of God’s love. On a cold winter’s day it is pleasant to keep on the sunny side of the street. That is where we are to keep in the winter day of this world. Keep yourselves in the love of God. Then you are not looking for things to improve. You are not murmuring because things are not getting better, but looking for the only way out of it, and that is the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. “Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ”, for mercy it will be to get out of this wretched scene that is so obnoxious to Christ. It will be a mercy, on account of the state of things.

“Of some have compassion, making a difference.” There are people round about you who need you to help them. They need you to speak them. They need you to tell them about the Saviour. There are poor, feeble Christians who need your help; lame things, ready to turn out of the way. They have to be sought out, to be cared for, They may sometimes tell you they do not want your care, but we are not to be discouraged. Go after them, seek them. Seek them in the grace of Christ, and the love of Christ. Make a difference between them, and those that lead them into error. Others save with fear. Just as Lot was drawn out of Sodom, draw the dear people out of this Christendom that is under the judgement of God. The angels laid hold of Lot and his two daughters, and dragged them out of Sodom, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.

Then he closes, “Now unto Him who is able”. We are not able to keep ourselves from falling. “Now, unto Him who is able to keep you from falling.” Not only that, but to present you faultless, to carry you right through to the glory, to present you faultless before the presence of His glory, and that with exultation, with praises, and songs. Israel will come to Zion one day with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads. God will present us before the presence of His glory with exultation, with great joy. Who is able to keep us? The only wise God, our Saviour. Here it is the only God, our Saviour, to whom be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now, and for ever. Why does he ascribe these great things to God? Because there are those who deny the only Lord God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ. The Apostle ascribes glory and majesty, dominion and power to the One whom man casts off.

If you prayed more you would not have to work so hard.

We have two privileges that angels have not; we can preach Christ to men, and we can suffer for Him. They are no angel-martyrs.

Those who hide the cross, hide the love of God.

Learn not to wait till others come forward. Work yourself and others will follow.

Idleness is wickedness.
A CHRISTIAN SACRAMENT.

Soon as ever the young Christians had, at Pentecost, severed themselves from the 'untoward nation' of Israel, they identified themselves with the apostles in "doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayers"; they were thus bound together in a fourfold way. The breaking of bread was in obedience to the express desire of the Lord Jesus, as instituted by Him in the upper room (where He had partaken with them of the Paschal supper) and formed a strong and tender link of fellowship between them, as well as a pledge of loyalty to their rejected and crucified, but risen and ascended, Lord. In those pristine days, faith and love were strong and power was great.

Devotedness continued, in spite of persecution unto death; but the pledge was maintained all along the page of history, until we read, in Acts 20., that, on a certain first day of the week, the disciples at Troas "came together to break bread". It was therefore their custom so to do. Their assembly had this for its definite object. But, as on this occasion the Apostle Paul happened to be, for the moment, among them, he preached to them in great fulness, seeing that he was ready to "depart on the morrow". The preaching, even that of an apostle, was not the object of their coming together; that was the breaking of bread. The other was accidental—this habitual and indispensable—at least in days of love and faithfulness to Christ. There can be no stronger motive or object, no claim more truly obligatory, in the assembling together of the saints, than the breaking of bread. "Do this in remembrance of Me" was, and is, until He comes, the definite, explicit and most urgent desire of the Lord. Its neglect, whether by the individual or the mass, is a deplorable proof of disloyalty and indifference to His expressed will.

The neglect of it is one sin; the distortion of it, from a feast as simple as it is profound, into a saving and superstitious rite enshrumed by mystery and supposed power and virtue, is another. Both are sadly wrong, and yet each is clearly in evidence to-day.

The two words—'Rememder Me'—are surely sufficient to command the willing heart, as also to disclose the folly of all ritualistic mystery. No, these words declare that the blessed Lord desires nothing less than the remembrance of Himself in death, as they ask for nothing more, nor can they give aught else than that sacred memory. How sacred that memory is, is taught us in 1 Cor. 10. The cup which we bless is the communion or participation by all the saints in the blood of Christ! What more sacred? The bread which we break is the same in the body of Christ! What more holy, more profound, or more precious? His blood and His body!

The Jew had his altar, and the Gentile had his table—one of demons—but the Christian has the table of the Lord, and all are absolutely distinct. There can be no intercommunion. Each sets forth a totally antagonistic system—irreconcilably so. The Jewish altar is obsolete; the Gentile heathen table is demoniacal; the table of the Lord is Christian.

Hence the profundity of the service, nay, the sacrament, of the breaking of bread. Moreover the loaf is one, for the saints are one body. Unity marks the whole Christian system. Then what decorum should characterize this feast (See I Cor. 11.). It is "the Lord's supper" and not our own. Bad behaviour there should not be either in eating or in drinking. Idolatry may indulge in its excesses and orgies, but the Christian realizes that he is remembering his absent Lord; and, at that moment, showing His death, in view of His return. His heart is duly and divinely solemnized.
by these great facts. His whole soul is filled with adoration and praise. All else than the grace and infinite love of the cross is forgotten. No other subject whatever need engross his mind. Christ is more than enough; and, better still, it affords the Lord the deepest joy when He finds Himself thus actually remembered by His assembled saints.

There may be other assembly meetings, as for prayer, etc., but that for the breaking of bread—the Lord's supper—the weekly remembrance of Himself is, as our chapter clearly shows, of chief importance in the estimation of the Lord. Yet how heartlessly abandoned by the great majority of Christians, to-day, for a service of some kind which has only man for its object. But in no other way can "ye show the Lord's death till He come".

Beloved Christian reader, may I urge on you for Christ's sake the sacred desire of your Lord that, in responsive love to Him you do your part in thus remembering Him?

HOPE'S REJOICINGS.

By the Love of the Father divine—
    By the infinite grace of the Son—
By the power of the Spirit benign
    To the goal in the glory we run,
    Where the glory shines bright
In the house of the Father above—
    Where the shadows of night
Never darken the dwelling of love.

What our souls have most surely believed,
    We shall see in that land with our eyes;
Things that mortal has never conceived
    On our glorified vision shall rise.

Then an ending in bliss shall be brought
    To this waste with its trials and woes,
And what wisdom eternal has wrought
    The creation made new shall disclose.

In that sinless and sorrowless sphere
    We with songs shall our Saviour surround.
Then an end to our fretting and fear,
    For the rest of our God shall be found.

And with endless unspeakable joy
    We shall walk with our Saviour in white,
And our tongues we shall gladly employ
    In His praise where the glory shines bright.
    Where the glory shines bright
In the house of the Father above—
    Where the shadows of night
Never darken the dwelling of love.
"THEN—!

THEN they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His Name. And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels: and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him" (Malachi 3. 16, 17).

THE Holy Spirit seemed to find peculiar pleasure in recording the fact that in the dark night of Israel's history, and amid all the ruin of that nation and departure from their God, there were those whose hearts beat true to Jehovah, and to whom His Name and His interests were of paramount importance. The earlier portion of the prophecy of Malachi reveals a state of matters as sad as it is possible to conceive. So far as concerned the mass of the people, not only had they turned aside from the path of truth, but they were utterly unconscious of the gravity of their condition. They certainly went on with a religious routine, and they seemed to think that they were all right, but, alas, their heart was far from God, and His claims over them were entirely ignored. How refreshing then as we reach the close of the book to learn that 'then', when everything seemed dark, when the apostasy appeared to be full blown, when the failure was complete, when, to outward appearance, there was nothing for God, "THEN they that feared the Lord spake OFTEN one to another". They were characterized by real piety, and to them His Name was everything. They made no pretension; they did not claim to be the custodians of the truth; but, in face of the break-up all around, they were drawn together, bound together, held together by His Name. Round that Name they rallied, under the banner upon which that Name was emblazoned they stood, and what was due to that Name they sought to maintain. In this short book the 'Name'
is mentioned no less than ten times; and they seemed to realize that the recognition of His Name, and of what was due to it, was grateful to Jehovah. That it was indeed grateful is shown by the statement that "the Lord hearkened and heard". Not simply that He heard, but He bent His ear to listen. Looking down, He saw a few to whom His Name was precious, who found their chief joy in thinking upon it, and in speaking often one to another. So much did He appreciate this that He caused "a book of remembrance to be written", and He declared, "they shall be Mine in the day when I make up My jewels" (or special treasure, margin), and—when the judgement falls upon the apostate people—"I will spare them".

We travel on some four hundred years. The darkness deepened; so far as we know, during those centuries there was no intercourse between Jehovah and His people. At length the silence was broken by the preaching of John the Baptist; then, when the night was at its darkest, Christ came. We turn to Luke 2., and there we find that when He came there were still those "that feared the Lord", and that "spake often one to another". They were favoured with intercourse with Heaven, and with them was "the secret of the Lord". To Simeon it was revealed by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ" (Luke 2. 26). He was waiting for the coming of Christ, and led by the Spirit into the temple He feasted his eyes upon God's Christ, and gave utterance to the satisfaction of his heart at this glorious consummation of his happiness. Then there was Anna, the purveyor of 'royal dainties', who walked in the power of the Holy Ghost, and who, at her 'great age', realized the truth of the word, "As thy days so shall thy strength be". She "gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of Him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem" (Luke 2. 38). If unex-
pected by the people He was welcomed by the few, and in the "book of remembrance" it was duly recorded. We turn now to Rev. 3. 7-13. There we find something analogous to that which we have been considering.

In the darkness of the night of the church's history, surrounded by a mass of mere profession, that which had a name to live, but was dead, was this company represented by Philadelphia. Their very circumstances probably helped to promote that 'brotherly love' indicated by the name of the place where they lived. They had "a little strength"; they were waiting for the Lord's return; and during the period of waiting they were marked not by herculean effort; not by the consolidation of an organization; not by anything that might appeal to the eye, or to the ideas of men generally; but by that of which the Lord could take account and which He could appreciate; "Thou... hast kept My Word, and hast not denied My Name" (v. 8). Then how similar is the promise; they would be vindicated by Him before their persecutors (v. 9), and "in that day" they would be spared by Him, and kept out of the storm of judgment that should fall upon the doomed world. We should not like to hear of any particular company of Christians claiming to be Philadelphians now. That to us would seem to be proof that that company was in a Laodicean condition. We do desire, however, for ourselves and for our beloved fellow believers that the Philadelphia spirit should characterize us. That in the deepening darkness and increasing confusion, when there is such loud profession and so little reality; when so many are content with the shell and refuse the kernel; when there is the outward form without the inward work; we should be on our watchtower looking for our Lord's return. That as we wait and watch, His Word and His Name should be everything to us; and that with all in every place who seek to keep His Word and not deny His Name, we should find a bond that binds us together; and that, refusing every name but His, we should in 'brotherly love' go on in happy, holy fellowship together. This does not mean the forming of anything new; nor does it mean claiming to be anything distinctive; but it does mean going on with that which He has formed, with those whose hearts are loyal to Him, and to whom the authority of His Name is everything.

As this becomes true of us we will seek to be found speaking OFTEN one to another. Is not this the meaning of the exhortation in Hebrews 10. 25?

"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting—encouraging—one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."

Do we not actually "see the day approaching" NOW? Shall we not then seek to be found speaking often one to another? Alas! How often business, housework, classes, a headache, letter writing, and other comparative trivialities keep us away from the company of our fellow Christians. Yet as Christ has His place in our heart; as His Name is owned by us; and as His return is the hope of our soul, we will seek to be OFTEN together to speak of Him.

To return, in closing, to Revelation 3., how heartening the Word of our blessed Lord in verse 11!—

"Behold, I come quickly; hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

It is said that it is in the last lap of the race that the athlete is most sorely tempted to give up. We seem to have reached that stage now. The night is at its darkest; but as we peer through the darkness we "see the day approaching"; the enemy is putting forth all his energy, and is adopting every
strategy to get us to give up; but there comes ringing down from the glory the well-known voice of Him who loves us—'hold fast'. This does not mean great effort; it does not carry with it any show; it does not secure the applause of men, nor even the approval of many who profess to belong to Christ; but it is that which is grateful to His heart; which He will have recorded in His "book of remembrance", and which He will appraise at its true value "in that day".

Beloved saints of God, how we should thank God for the honour of being permitted to live here just at the present time. The path is narrow, the difficulties increase, but we hear Him say, "Behold, I come quickly"; we "see the day approaching"; shall we not seek that He may be able to look down upon those who fear the Lord; to hearken and hear as they speak OFTEN one to another; and to have His heart refreshed as He takes account of those who think upon His Name?

HOME AND BUSINESS.

There are two things which a man has—his home and his business. So with the Christian, his home is in heaven, and his business is to live Christ on the earth. He must come from his home to his business. Every body knows that the workman who has the most comfortable and brightest home makes the best workman. Hence wise employers of labour are concerned as to how their workpeople are housed. God has provided a home for those who are to do business for Him on the earth, and He would have us know the joy of this home now, and to dwell there. This is the order in Psa. 84. "How amiable are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts... Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house: they will still be praising Thee". Can you say, I have got my home where Christ has got His? What could exceed that? But what follows? Dwelling in the house of the Lord first, then coming down to "the valley of Bacca". If you understand and enjoy your place you come from the brightest possible place, from the very presence of the Lord, that is your home; and you come to do business in the valley of Bacca, to the valley of tears, to live in it for the One whose company you have enjoyed in His house, your dwelling-place. You go out with your heart warm. There never was a good nurse who did not in cold weather take the child out warm. If we are to be truly for Christ in this valley of tears where He is not, we must know and enjoy His home. Don't say this is impossible, that it is a mere religious delusion, or pious sentiment; for it is here in this Scripture. "Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house; they will be still praising Thee." Their hearts are glad and full of song, and it is the One in whose house they dwell that makes them so.

But how can it be? Simply in this way. God loves us so much that He will not keep us waiting until we actually reach heaven to enjoy that home, but He has given to us the Holy Ghost, the Spirit from heaven, that we might know and enjoy it now.

When we find little doing in our own narrow circle, let us be cheered and encouraged when we hear of what is doing elsewhere. The work of God is one.

God grant that you may have Martha's activity with Mary's tranquillity.

"Ye did it unto Me" is the test of life's actions.

When God sends His servants on a self-denying errand He goes with them.
In John 5, the Lord is declaring His authority over the saved and unsaved alike; every man must have to do with Him. Death and the grave cannot hide them from Him, for He is Master of both, and when the time comes for Him to speak the word, death and the grave will acknowledge His supremacy, and yield up with an immediate obedience all that they hold. This authority has been given to Him by His Father because He is the Son of man.

"The Building . . . growth." Eph. 2. 21.

In this passage the thought is, as you suggest, growth as a building grows, for stone is added to stone and will be until the assembly is completed and appears as a holy temple, really the Holy City of Revelation 21. But is there not also the thought of growth as a body grows? Does not the expression, "fitly framed together," bear this interpretation as well as the other? It is in Christ that the whole building fitly framed together growth; it is a living building formed by what Christ is, and growing in Him, but not only this but it is "in the Lord"; the whole is under His administration, and develops under His direction. Consequently, nothing will enter into the building as here presented but what is of Himself, and in its completion it will display the wisdom and the power of His work, and will be for ever the expression of His mind.

"Builted together for an habitation for God." Eph. 2. 22.

In this verse the thought expressed is not that of the temple in course of erection as in verse 21, but of the tabernacle always complete; and the saints are viewed as thus put together for a present habitation of God through the Spirit. From Pentecost onwards this has been true, and will be as long as the Holy Spirit remains in the assembly of God on earth. When the Lord comes this aspect of the saints as being one will give place to the Holy Temple, which will be then completed.

"May grow up unto Him." Eph. 4. 15.

Growth must take place of course in each individual member of the body, but this is not the full thought of this passage; it is the members of the body growing up together in all things unto Him who is the Head of it. And for this growth it is necessary that the relation in which the members are placed in regard to each other and the Head should be discerned. It is from Christ the Head that all nourishment and grace and power is derived,
that the body might develop and grow in all things according to the perfect design of the Head, and so as to become expressive of Him.

“Maketh increase of the Body.” Eph. 4. 16.

We could not admit, as your question suggests, that the body is incomplete; the passage under consideration disproves that, for the whole body is fitly joined together and compacted; every joint is there, and every part is prepared and present for the effectual carrying out of their special functions, but it is evident that the body while complete is in the process of growth. The Head is the source of the supply of all the nourishment necessary to this, but the joints and every part must work in organic unison with the Head, and so the whole body is edified in love. Love is the perfect bond, and, apart from love, each member of the body would selfishly think of its advancement and so work ill to its fellows. A thing impossible in a body such as is used to illustrate this blessed relationship in which we are set.

These answers to your questions do not in any way profess to unfold these great things, they are merely suggestive.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

Problems.

DEar MR. EDITOR,—So some of your readers would like me to set them some problems! That is, they would like me to think out some for them instead of thinking them out for themselves! But the object of the paper, entitled “Think!” was to induce your readers to be original in their meditations, and not to follow a track well beaten for them by others.

It is a great help, in reading the Scriptures, to continually ask oneself, ‘WHY?’ Let me illustrate by taking the first chapter of 1 Timothy. I will suggest a few whys, and perhaps your kind readers may find their desire for some problems satisfied.

1. WHY, in verse 1, is God spoken of as Saviour and Christ as our hope; and, in verse 2, God as Father and Christ as our Lord? Could the order be reversed?

2. WHY do the translators insert the word ‘of’ in italics twice in verse 5? Is it to show that love (charity) has its springs in the three things mentioned? But has it? Look up reliable authorities as to what the apostle said; whether he said Love out of (1) A pure heart, (2) A good conscience, (3) And faith unfeigned; or, whether he said Love out of a pure heart.

(2) A good conscience.
(3) And faith unfeigned.

3. WHY was law only made for the lawless? Do not the righteous need guidance as to what is right and what is wrong? Is not a good man to use the law lawfully (verses 8, 9)?

4. WHY, in verse 11, does the apostle speak of the Gospel of the glory, instead of the Gospel of the grace, of God? Do not reply merely that he was inspired to do so. WHY did the Holy Spirit inspire him to do so?

5. WHY, in verse 13, does Paul say he attained mercy because he sinned ignorantly? Have not many who have sinned wilfully and daringly obtained mercy?

6. WHY is God spoken of as a King in verse 17?

7. WHY were the ‘prophecies’ mentioned in verse 18 brought in as a means by which Timothy was to war a good warfare? What does the verse exactly mean?

These are just a few of the whys that present themselves in reading this chapter. Your thoughtful readers will think them out, always remembering to ask God for wisdom and help, for the Scriptures can only be rightly learned by the teaching of the Holy Spirit.

Yours faithfully,

HAROLD P. BARKER.
PRAY IN YOUR STORE-CHAMBER. (Harold F. Barker.)

"Thou, when thou prayest, enter into thine INNER CHAMBER, and having shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret."—Matt. 6. 6, R.V.

"Consider the ravens, that they sow not, neither reap; which have no STORE-CHAMBER nor barn."—Luke 12. 24, R.V.

In Egypt and the east, the store-chamber of a house is generally one of the interior rooms. The front rooms, and the court beyond, have to be traversed before it can be reached. John Urquhart, in his "New Biblical Guide", reproduces the plan of an Egyptian High Priest’s house, and remarks: "This plan will now make it plain why Joseph had to pass through the house of Potiphar daily. The store-rooms which he had to inspect, to keep replenished, and from which daily supplies had to be dispensed, were at the back of the building".

This fact gives an added interest to the verses that we have placed in juxtaposition at the head of this article, especially when we observe that in the Greek of the New Testament precisely the same word is translated "inner chamber" in Matthew and "store-chamber" in Luke. Let us see what we can gather from this.

The birds have no "inner chamber". They, in common with all the animal creation, are fed by their Creator, who is mindful of the least of them. "He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry" (Psalm 147. 9). But neither beast nor bird knows anything of its Creator. They have their God-given instincts, but they have no relations with God, nor can we connect the idea of responsibility with an animal. The language in Job 38. 41, which speaks of the young ravens as crying unto God, is poetical and figurative. Birds do not pray. They have no "inner chamber" in which they can commune with their Creator.

But this is just what we, His children, have. Unlike the lower creation, man is capable of entering into relations with God, and this we have been privi-

This "inner chamber" is also our "store-chamber", filled with the bounty of God. And all that our "store-chamber" is furnished with, enters into the substance of our communings with Him. The truth which we have learned, the blessing which we have enjoyed, the thoughts of God that we have delighted in, the light from Him which has shone into our souls, form the very atmosphere in which we pray. CHRIST, appropriated as the food of our souls; all that HE is, all that HE has won for us by His death; all that association with Himself in His risen life, means; the blessedness of the relationship of sons into which HE has brought us, the knowledge of what it is to be before God in love, holy and without blame according to His eternal counsel; all this, the store with which our "inner chamber" is furnished, enters into the very texture of our secret prayers, when we pray in our "store-chamber" with the door closed on the affairs of earth.

Who can tell the happiness of being thus alone with God, the soul filled with the wonderful things HE has been pleased in His grace to make known to us? The Spirit delights to make us conversant with these things, to make us at home in them, as co-heirs with Christ, and as one with Him. Our desires, our inmost longings, are coloured and formed by them, and in this, our well-filled store-house, we may pray to our God and Father. Our
prayers will not in this case be barren and thin. They will not be the expression of the mere natural desires of the heart, but will be the utterance of a soul impressed with the wonder of divine and eternal verities.

May God teach us more and more of this as we avail ourselves of the privilege of intercourse with Him in our "inner chamber", which His grace has turned into so rich a "store-chamber".

NOTES FOR PREACHERS.

Do not seek the praise of men. It is better to have God's approval than the world's applause. The time is coming when a smile from God's face will be infinitely better than the patronage of the world; it is so now to all who are wise.

You are to catch the souls of men, not to tickle their ears. You are sent to convert men, not to court their favour. Then remember that it is cruelty not charity to speak smoothly to them when their souls are in danger through their sins. Truth when it is in the plainest dress is the most comely, then speak the truth in love; but love will warn as well as woo; it will lay bare the cancerous sore as well as proffer the sovereign cure.

Some preachers love to soar aloft, and fly above the capacities of the people; they would rather be admired than understood. Instead of being stars to give light they are clouds that obscure the truth.

God crowns the labours of the faithful servant, even if he be not skilful, and he who has more heart, even if he have less brain, is most effective in catching men.

Will you give music or meat to a hungry man? Yet how many who profess to preach the word spend their time in their pulpits fiddling their own monotonous tunes while souls perish for lack of the bread of life.

To be a preacher approved unto God and of service to men you must live and walk with the truth. Let your waking hours on your bed be made fruitful by your meditations and entrance of heart into the great Gospel texts of the Word. As you walk along the streets, close your eyes to the vanities that surround you, and open your heart to the Holy Ghost that He may enrich you with the truth. Don’t imagine that your brains can fathom the depths that the truth of the Gospel contains, but the Spirit can teach you, so let your heart be at leisure that He may have His own blessed way in this.

How solemn is the place that the servant of God is called to! First, he must stand for God; then act towards men. It is not so much what he does but what he is. "Be thou a model of believers, in word, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity" (1 Tim. 4. 12). Like a star in the sky—he is here for God. He may have his special mission besides—may help people—but the calling and portion of every servant of Christ is to stand in the power of the Holy Ghost for Christ in the world where Christ has been rejected.

If you are occupied with your preaching instead of Christ you will fail to serve according to the Lord’s mind, and the results of your service will be defective. You should labour to put the truth fully and clearly before souls, but let your exercise be that the result of your preaching is that souls become absorbed with Christ. This cannot be unless you are absorbed with Him yourself. John the Baptist is the great example. He looked on Jesus as He walked, and from his enraptured heart there burst the acclamation: "Behold the Lamb of God", and at once the two disciples that heard him speak followed Jesus.
THE LOVE OF GOD AND THE CROSS OF JESUS.

It is impossible to find two words, the bringing together of which has so important a meaning as the DEATH of the LORD. Did He whom we know as Lord die? Could anything be more arresting? What love is expressed here! What purposes of divine grace are here brought to light! What wonderful results must flow from this!

Can you rejoice in the forgiveness of sins through the blood of Jesus? Then what a wonderful change has taken place in your life. Once the book of your daily life appeared before God, black with the catalogue of your offences. On every page of it was written sin, sin, sin; but now this blackened record has been effaced, and on each page is transcribed in letters of blood, in the blood of God's dear Lamb, Love, love, love. We brought the befouled book of our sins to Him, encouraged by His grace, and He has taken it and cast it into the soundless sea of His forgetfulness, and has opened our eyes and enlightened our understandings to read His book, the story of His feelings towards us, and it is all love, love, love.

Where does faith see the greatest depth of man's sin and hatred of God? In the cross; and at the same glance it sees the greatest extent of God's triumphant love and mercy to man. The spear of the soldier that pierced the side of Jesus—the last stab of the world's hatred, only brought forth the precious blood—the supreme token of God's love.

Creation shows God's power, but it does not bring out His love and truth. It is the cross that does this. Therefore it remains everlastingly the wonderful and blessed place of learning what could be learnt nowhere else— the love of God.

When once we come to really know God, we know Him as love. Then, knowing that everything comes to us from Him, though we be in a desert—no matter where, or what the circumstances—we interpret all by His love, for GOD IS LOVE.

LOVE ONE ANOTHER.

"And this is love, that ye walk after His commandments."—2 John 6.

In primitive times there was so much love among the children of God as set the heathen awondering, but now there is so little as might well set us all ablishing.

Why doth the Lord bring His people together in affliction, but to bring them together in affection? Metals will unite in a furnace, how much more Christians in the furnace of affliction. If we suffered together we could scarcely strive with each other.

Love will be the atmosphere and the music of heaven, dwelling in the love of God we shall truly love one another, and as perfect love casts out all fear, so will it also cast out all envy and discord. There will be no strife in heaven. Satan cannot put his cloven foot there to make division. There all shall be harmony and concord, and not one jarring string in the harps of the saints.

Want of love amongst Christians doth much silence the spirit of prayer. Hot passions make cold prayers.

Christ must be all to us or we shall soon be discouraged in the exercise of love one towards another. But if Christ is everything, and the Father's love the air we breathe, then we are right and shall find no difficulty in serving those who are loved with the same love that we enjoy.
"I THIRST." John 19. 28.

A THOUSAND memories linger round the tree,
Where Jesus died for sin, at Calvary;
The sinner's refuge, and the saint's true boast,
Where shone the love that seeks and saves the lost.

Gal. 6. 14
Rom. 5. 8

Luke 23. 33
Rom. 5. 6
2 Cor. 5. 15
1 Thess. 5. 10
1 Kings 10. 7
Titus 2. 14

On either side there hung a dying thief,
Of whom, one spurned, the other sought, relief
From endless shame. He found it; at his side
Was Jesus, who for guilty sinners died
That they might live; suffered, that they might have
His place in glory, conquerors o'er the grave.
No mind can e'er conceive, no language tell
All He has done to save our souls from hell.

Luke 23. 33
Rom. 5. 6
Ps. 69. 20
Mark 15. 29, 32
Luke 23. 48
Isa. 53. 4
Matt. 27. 25
John 19. 28
Ps. 102. 20
John 1. 12
2 Sam. 23. 15

Long hours of suffering at the hands of foes,
Sickening desertion, on the part of those
Whom He had called His friends, both told their tale
Upon His frame. All other hearts would fail
Beneath such sorrows. He, devoted, stood,
His visage marred, His form besmeared with blood.
At length He hangs, in boundless love for me,
Aching and lonely on the accursed tree.
Lonely? Ah, yes! though all around Him stand
Lawyers, and priests, and elders of the land;
Though thro'gs of people see Him there impaled,
Lonely He hangs, by every woe assailed.

Isaiah 52. 14
Mark 15. 24
Luke 23. 44
Ps. 22. 4, 6
Isa. 41. 17, 18

They thirsted,—for His blood! He too is heard,
"I THIRST!"

Did not a myriad Angels gird
For service at their Maker's word, and fly
With lightning speed adown the darkening sky?
Were there not found three mighty men to break
Through hosts of foes, from Bethlehem's well to slake
The thirst of David's Son, and David's Lord?
Not men, nor angels, can relief afford.

2 Kings 3. 17
Exod. 17. 6
Judges 15. 18
Ps. 22. 4, 6
Isa. 41. 17, 18

Was there no miracle? He gave the stream
In answer to His people's cry, whose gleam
Spoke life from out the stricken rock. He wrought
A gushing fount in Lehi when besought
By Samson in his need. But for His own,
No miracle appeared. No ringing tone
Of cheery succour reached His ear; no rain
Fell from the brazen heavens; unmeasured pain
Was unrelieved.
Ps. 104. 10, II

* * * * * Where are the flashing rills
Leaping and splashing from a thousand hills,
Fed by eternal snows? Where are the springs
Sparkling from depths profound, whence water brings
Welcome refreshment, to remove all thirst?
Did not some rushing torrent, awe struck, burst
Forth from its rocky chains, and gently lave
The Master's lips with its submissive wave?

Ps. 22. 11, 15

He thirsted: and no human means availed
T'assuage His great desire. His words unveiled
The sorrow of His heart. He panted there
For love of sinners, who in glory fair,
Might own His love, and owe eternal praise
To His death-sorrows. Yes, their raptured gaze
Will rest on Jesus who thus died to save
Rebels from hell, and sinners from the grave.

He thirsted: and adoring saints proclaim
'Twas for the love of rebel hearts, whose shame
Deserved eternal woe, where thirst shall reign
Supreme.

* * * * * * O needy one,
Canst thou not trust God's blest, eternal Son?
He thirsted: but for thee, there ever flow
Streams of salvation. DOST THOU JESUS KNOW?

ONE-SIDEDNESS.

SAINTS, like other men, are apt
to be one-sided. It looks spiritual
to choose the highest line and stand
on the loftiest point, and fancy oneself to be safe in that heavenly elevation. On the other hand, it seems loving to steer clear of the church question so constantly abused to gratify ambition, if not spite and jealousy (and thus scattering saints instead of uniting them holily around the Lord's name), and to devote all one's energies, in the present broken

RAYS FROM A SETTING SUN.

THE sun is dipping in the west,
but soon it will burst forth in
a cloudless sky in the bright resurrection morning. What triumph and victory then! And why any doubt or fear now? 'He is not here, He is risen,' and His words fall sweetly on our ears:—'Fear not': 'Because I live ye shall live also.' What an immutable foundation to rest on! His Person, His Work, His Word. Oh! that preachers would make that the text of all their ministry. It is what the enemy is ever attacking. While all else is going, may the Lord's dear servants stick to these—His Person, Work, and Word, that will stand for ever.'
THE BLESSED MAN.
(Priscilla Cox.)

"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.
Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile."—Psalm 32. 1, 2.

"Blessed is the man whom Thou choosest, and causest to approach unto Thee, that he may dwell in Thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of Thy house, even of Thy holy temple."—Psalm 65. 4.

"Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house: they will be still praising Thee. Selah.
Blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee; in whose heart are the ways of them."—Psalm 84. 4, 5.

THE 32nd Psalm begins at the very foundation of our blessing. "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, and whose sin is covered." But this blessedness would be impossible were it not for the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; but because of that cross the Spirit of God has the greatest delight in describing the blessedness of the man whose transgression is forgiven, and whose sin is covered. God has gone into the whole question, and it has been settled, not only to His satisfaction, but to His glory. It is a great joy to know that in saving us God has not lost anything. He not only has lost nothing through the salvation accorded to us, but He has been a great gainer. Not that we have done anything to glorify God, but His beloved Son, whom He sent, He has glorified Him. Now God has glorified Christ. When Judas went out (in John 13) to betray Him, He said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him". There never was in the whole universe an hour when God was so glorified as when Jesus went to the cross. There never was a moment in the history of Christ when He was so glorified, though He reached the very lowest point of humiliation. The excellency of Christ came to light at the cross in a way that it never could have come to light previously. We naturally would have said, "Now is the Son of Man dishonoured", but He says, "Now is the Son of Man glorified". God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and will not wait very long to do it. He will straightway glorify Him. He raised Him from the dead, and set Him far above all principality and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. He could say, "I have glorified Thee on the earth; I have finished the work Thou gavest Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Me with Thine own self, with the glory that I had with Thee before the world was".

The foundation has been laid at the cross whereby the blessing of Psalm 32 has reached us, and is offered to every sinner. In the New Testament we learn the principle on which we are justified. It is by faith, on the ground of the work which has been accomplished by Jesus at the cross. The believer has found One who does not condemn, but who justifies the ungodly. He ceases his efforts to justify Himself, because he has found that God is able to justify him, and that He delights in justifying him. He does not need to state before God or before men his goodness. He tells what he is as a sinner before God, and then God justifies him. "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, and whose sin is covered; blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." What will He impute to him? He will impute righteousness. He will never hold him to be a sinner; He will always hold him to be righteous. This is the very beginning of our relationship with God. It is not something advanced, but the very beginning. We were exceedingly thankful to know that our sins are forgiven, but by-and-by we become used to being converted.
We are accustomed to think of ourselves as being converted, and as belonging to God, and being among the blessed ones to whom the Lord will not reckon sin. It ceases to have the power over our souls that it ought always to have, because it is a wonderful thing for anyone to be able to say, "Thank God, There is one thing God will not do: He will not impute sin to me. I feel I have sinned grievously, even since I was converted. I feel, if I look back over my wilderness journey, it has been a day of provocation from the beginning. But though He may take me in hand in His government, and use the rod, He will not impute sin to me."

Our failure will never in the least impair the relationships that God has established between us and Himself, because He has established them in Christ. Hence, until sin can be imputed to Christ, it cannot be imputed to the believer. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus."

In Psalm 65, you get another thing. We are brought near to God. "Blessed is the man whom Thou choosest," may astonish us when we learn it first. We think that we chose Christ, we chose to turn to God, that the movement began with ourselves. It did not. The Lord said to His disciples, "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you". When there was no movement in our hearts towards Him, He began with us. He has made us His children. He keeps us by the way, He holds us from stumbling, and by-and-by He will change these bodies of humiliation, and fashion them like to His own body of glory. It is all of Himself from beginning to end. The prodigal did not want the place of son. He never expected to be brought into such a place. It never dawned upon his imagination that he would be received as a son, until the Father ran and fell on his neck, and covered him with kisses. God has not come out to give us a place in His presence according to the desires of our heart. He has come out to take us up for His own pleasure.

"Trembling we had hoped for mercy, Some lone place within his door. But the crown, the robe, the mansion, All were ready long before."

"Blessed is the man whom Thou choosest, and causest to approach unto Thee." It is not that we wanted to be in His presence; He wanted to have us in His presence. It is not that we wanted those new and eternal relationships. We only wanted to be saved from hell, but He had something better than that for us. His salvation included being brought to Himself, and being set in the person of His Son before His face, so that we might be in the end with Him and like Him to the satisfaction of the heart of the Father and the Son throughout eternity. So the Spirit of God has something more to say about our blessedness besides that we are forgiven, and that God will never look on us in any other way than as righteous before Him. "Blessed is the man whom Thou choosest, and causest to approach unto Thee."

That is a very happy man. It is God who has advanced towards me. He has come out towards me, as the shepherd sought the sheep, as the woman sought the piece of silver, and as the father came out to the son. He wanted me. It is true of all the people of God, whether they have learned it or not. Perhaps we are long on the way of learning it, and perhaps some never learn it at all, and think that the movement was on their side first. God was dealing with us before we were dealing with Him. "Everyone that hath heard and learned of the Father, cometh unto Me." We stayed away from Him as long as ever we were able, and did not want to have anything to do with Him, but as the hymn puts it—

"And when was come the moment, Thou, calling by Thy grace, Didst gently, firmly lead us, Each from his hiding place."
He brought us from our hiding places; God spoke to us before we spoke to Him. Saul of Tarsus had not spoken to God, when God spoke to him. The Lord says to Ananias, "Behold he prayeth". Had not he prayed a thousand times before? He was a good Jew and a good Pharisee, who prayed often. Yes, but his prayers never reached God. Now His voice is heard in the courts above. His voice is heard in the Father's ear. It never was heard before. The Spirit of God delights to point out to us such a person, and say, "That is a blessed man whom God chooses". He did not choose us because we were anything better than other people. He chose us because He did choose us, and we shall never be able to explain how God chose us and why He chose us.

He chose us that we might approach to Him, and that we might dwell in His courts. It does not quite say "in His house", but "in His courts". Israel came into the courts of the Lord. We have that constantly in the Psalms. The priests could go into the holy place, but nobody could go into the holiest of all, except the high priest once a year.

* * *

In Psalm 84, there is something different. "We shall be satisfied with the goodness of Thy house." Here we get another blessedness. The Psalmist says, "How amiable are Thy tabernacles, O Jehovah of Hosts". Why were the tabernacles amiable? Psalm 65. is Israel's blessing. It falls short of ours, I admit, but the principle is the same. He has brought us near to Himself, that we might dwell with Him. What is it that makes us say, "How amiable are Thy tabernacles, O Jehovah of Hosts"? Because God was there. The chief joy of God's people is God Himself, not the place we are going to, but the Person who is there. "We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ." The Lord said to His disciples, "I go to prepare a place for you". Do you think that brought any great joy to the hearts of His disciples? I do not think it did. They preferred earth a great deal to that place. But He goes on, "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am, ye may be also". That made the place dear to them. He was to be there. We could not think of going to heaven if the Lord was here. If He is there, then we want to go there. This Psalm really depends in a way, for the understanding of it, on Psalm 42., "As the hart panteth after the water­brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God". God was everything to the writer. It was God that made the tabernacles a place to be desired. His presence made them amiable. Then Psalm 43. says, "Send out Thy light and Thy truth; let them lead me".

"Let them bring me to Thy tabernacles, and to Thy holy hill." In Psalm 84, the man is not there yet, but he is on the way. "My soul longeth, yea, thirsteth for the courts of the Lord." Then He speaks of the sparrow as finding a house and the swallow a nest for herself, where she might lay her young, but there was only one place for him—the altars of Jehovah of Hosts. It was not that the sparrow and the swallow built upon the altars. He says, "Everything has got a place, however worthless or wandering it may be, but I will not have any home here but those altars.

"Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house; they will be still praising Thee." There you get the occupation. We are on a journey. We are going to the Father's house. We are to be where Christ is. Where is Christ? He is in the presence of the Father. He is there with Him glorified. If I want to know what my place is with God, I learn it in Christ. I cannot learn it anywhere else, or in any other way. I am going to the Father's house, and every step of the journey leads in that direction, and shortens the way. "Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house." What shall we be like when
The Blessed Man

Then, again, “Blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee.” We never would arrive there by our own strength, but “they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.” They will be able to go on. “In whose heart are the ways”, the ways to glory, the ways to the Father’s house. They may be rough and thorny, but would we rather go some other way to the Father’s house than the way marked out for us by the feet of Jesus? There is no other way than that, and we would not look for any other way. “Blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee; in whose heart are the ways.” Not only the place, but the way to it is good. The Lord says to Ananias, “Tell Paul how many things he has to suffer for My name’s sake”. Was that to discourage him? No, but to greatly encourage him. You would not let your enemy suffer anything on your account. The Lord would not let us suffer anything on His account if He did not love us. But then, the highway to that place should get into our hearts. We should love the pathway there. “The lines are fallen to Me in pleasant places,” the Lord says. “Thou wilt show Me the path of life.” That path of life led to the cross. The pathway to the right hand of God lay through the sorrows of Calvary, yet He calls it a path of life. “At Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore”, and the light of that glory so fills our hearts that the way to it even becomes pleasant to us.

"There is but one path in this waste Which His footsteps have marked as His own. And we follow in diligent haste, To the seats where He’s put on His crown."

“Who, passing through the valley of Baca, make it a well.” They turn this desert scene into a well, and the rain from heaven covers the pools. How do we tread that pathway? Footsore and weary? It does not say so. “They go from strength to strength”, the very opposite of the way in which men go through this world. They go from weakness to weakness, and in the end die of weakness. “Here they go from strength to
strength.” Going out of this wilderness scene, they are stronger than they entered it, spiritually stronger. “As thy days, so shall thy strength be.” According to the number of a man’s days on earth naturally is his weakness, but “according to the number of days so shall thy strength be” here.

“Everyone of them shall appear before God in Zion.” This is Israel’s blessing; we shall appear in the Father’s house before God. What a prospect God sets before our souls, and what does it all resolve itself into? It is this. We shall see Jesus, as He is, whom not having seen we love; in whom, though seeing Him not, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. What will it be when we see Him face to face, and are with Him in that home of glory? The joys of that scene cannot be told, but they have a powerful influence upon us if we know anything about it here, so that, however rough the pathway it seems smooth, because of the blessedness of the home that lies before the vision of our souls. We are going to the Father’s house. We know what our occupation will be—worshipping the Father.

“Devotedness to the Lord.

Devotedness to the Lord begins when you know His love. This is more than the knowledge of the work that He has done for you. You must be near to Him to know His love, and as His love is known, He not only claims your heart, but the more you are drawn to Him, the more you feel that He is worthy of all the devotion of your heart. Thus He becomes the one controlling object of your life, and you reach onward and upward to know in fuller measure “the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.”

The Lowliness of Christ.

Shall we ever forget the humiliation of Christ? Never! never through all eternity. We shall never forget His humiliation on the earth. Beholding Him in the glory where He now is animates the soul to run after Him, as the Hebrews shows us, but what feeds the soul for that heavenly race is the Bread come down from heaven. That produces a spirit of self-forgetfulness. Go and study Him, and live by Him, and you will come out in His likeness, in His grace and gentleness and loveliness. This will not be reformation but transformation. The Lord give us to be absorbed with Him who was so full of love and lowliness.

Faith makes me see that God is greater than my sin, and not that my sin is greater than God.
THE TARES BOUND IN BUNDLES.

In a foot-note on Matthew 13. 30, in Weymouth's New Testament in Modern Speech, the editor remarks as follows:

"An interesting indication that the distinction in time which some would make between the Epiphany (Christ's coming to take away His people) and the Parousia (His coming, later on, to judgement) is groundless. The 'harvest time' is one and the same, and judgement precedes, instead of following, the gathering of believers into the heavenly home."

This surprising note is based on, or follows, the word "first". The reader is probably familiar with the verse; it is, "Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn". It is amazing how carelessly men, even commentators, sometimes (as the above), read Scripture, overlooking entirely words that give a completely different meaning to the text from that which they take from it. In the above quoted verse due emphasis, for a proper understanding of the time indicated, should be placed on the preposition "to", before "burn". This explains it all. The Lord does not say "and burn them", as if the burning were to follow immediately on the binding of the tares together. The binding into bundles is only with the view to the burning of the tares, and a considerable interval comes between the two events or actions. This is true of the interpretation as it would very naturally happen in the actual disposal of tares or weeds in a field, as we have often ourselves seen done.

So instead of the verse in question being "an interesting indication" that the ordinary pre-millennarian explanation of its meaning is "groundless," the learned editor's misunderstanding of it on the contrary becomes "an interesting indication" that mere man learning, apart from humble dependence on the Spirit of God, does not prevent men from overlooking the force of a preposition, which even in purely human composition should be given due attention, and so the author's meaning apprehended.

And the editor's strange misapprehension of our Lord's meaning is not based on any material difference in the translation; for in "Modern Speech" He is made to say, "Leave both to grow together until the harvest, and at harvest-time I will direct the reapers, Collect the darnel first, and make it up into bundles to burn it, but bring all the wheat into my barn." No, the reading is substantially the same, and the notation but indicates the blinding power of prejudice, even when coupled with piety and widest learning.* That an interval of time, seven or more years at least, comes between the Lord's coming for His saints and His coming with them (the Epiphany and the Parousia), could be easily shown from Scripture, even to a class in Sunday-school, and how a devout student of the Word, and learned at that, could deny, or even overlook it, seems incomprehensible. But to be a learned man is one thing and to be an intelligent Christian is quite another.

The notes in the now widely circulated Scofield Reference Bible make plain the difference between the Rapture and the Revelation—Christ's secret coming and His manifestation, which we trust may prove an offset with the general Bible-reading public to the misleading annotations in reference to our Lord's coming in this "Modern Speech" New Testament.

The following from J. N. Darby's unequalled "Synopsis" is as "wheat to the chaff" compared with the note under review:

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At the time of harvest (a phrase that designates a certain space of time during which the events connected with the harvest will take place) the Lord will deal first, in His providence, with the tares. I say, 'In His providence,' because He employs the angels. The tares will be bound in bundles ready to be burnt. . . . After the binding of the tares He gathers the wheat into His garner. There is no binding of wheat into bundles. He takes it all to Himself. Such is the end of that which concerns the outward appearance of the kingdom here below. . . . At the close He will bind all the enemy's work in bundles; that is, He will prepare them in this world for judgement. He will then take away the church. It is evident that this terminates the scene below which goes on during His absence. The judgment is not yet executed. Before speaking of it the Lord gives other pictures of the forms which the kingdom will assume during His absence.'

This binding of the tares into bundles for burning is evidently in progress at the present time; societies, orders, associations, leagues, legions, unions, etc., are on the increase; and they embrace all purposes, religious, philanthropic, mutual benefit, political, protective, and what not? And almost everyone belongs to some one or more of these associations; and what is it all but the beginning of the binding of the tares into bundles? Unsaved appear to be rapidly banding themselves together—association seems in the very air. And to the Spirit-taught believer it is an evident token of the nearness of the end. The wicked are being gathered together ready for their judgement here on earth, after the Lord has come and, by the rapture, gathered the wheat into His barn. "But the sons of Belial shall be all of them as thorns thrust away, because they cannot be taken with hands . . . and they shall be utterly burned with fire in the same place" (2 Sam. 23. 6, 7). Where, and as they are, heaped or bound together, they will meet their just deserts, as cumberers of the ground. It is a temporal judgement, here on earth, ("in the same place") to be followed, none the less surely, by the "eternal judgement" of the great white throne, one thousand years later.

THE FELLOWSHIP AND THE GLORIES OF GOD'S SON.

Those who have heard and believed the word of truth, the Gospel of God's salvation, have been called into the most wonderful fellowship known on earth or in heaven. It is designated in 1 Corinthians 1. 9, the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

It is most important to understand this, for the same Scripture shows that we can count upon the faithfulness of God in regard to it. It is the fellowship He Himself has called us into, and He will never fail those who abide in it.

All sorts of fellowships exist to-day, and new fellowships are being formed. Indeed, the very word itself is now constantly upon the lips of democratic politicians and worldly ecclesiastics. They are seeking to unite mankind in a fellowship which knows nothing of new birth by the word and Spirit, nor of redemption by the blood of Christ. It is the high honour of those who are redeemed to enter into the privileges of the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, for God has graciously called them by the Gospel in view of it.

Just think of the greatness of this which is to be enjoyed even now, before we are glorified with Him in heaven—the fellowship of the glorious
Son of God! What can compare with it? What else can be desired by us? Moreover, we are reminded that the One unto whose fellowship we are called is not only 'God's Son'; He is "our Lord". His dignity as such is therefore to be esteemed by those who are called, and then they will order all their ways in the recognition of His authority as Lord. Anything that is inconsistent with His lordship will necessarily be avoided. Indeed, it is said, "Let every one who names the Name of the Lord withdraw from iniquity" (2 Tim. 2. 19, N.T.). To continue in it would not only mar our enjoyment of the fellowship into which we are called, but it would show disloyalty to God's Son.

Although it is in the first epistle to the Corinthians this wonderful fellowship is indicated, yet, remarkable to say, the glory of the Son of God is not unfolded in that epistle. The fact is, the saints at Corinth were carnal. They had not advanced, they were dwarfed; and the apostle could not speak to them "as to fleshly, as to babes in Christ" (1 Cor. 3. 1). Moreover, divisions, sects and man-following were rife among them, therefore the apostle had to remind them often of the lordship of Christ, and to call attention to His dealings in discipline (1 Cor. 11. 32), to correct them.

In the second epistle, however, he recognized some progress in them, and the glory of Christ is in a measure unfolded. He says, "Beholding the glory of the Lord, with unveiled face, we are transformed according to the same image from glory to glory". This refers to His moral glory. Again, we read, "The radiancy of the glad tidings of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God"; and again, "The glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ". The glory which shone on the face of Moses was surpassed by the glory which excelleth. The ministry of the Spirit by means of the gifts given from Christ on high, has in view the edifying of the assembly, the body of Christ, "until we all arrive at the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of God's Son" (Eph. 4. 13) into whose fellowship we are called.

When the saints are spiritual, walking in the happy recognition of the lordship of Christ, the Holy Spirit is free to unfold before our glad gaze the marvellous glories of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. When it is not thus with us, He has to correct us, because we are self-occupied, and not at leisure to delight our hearts in the Lord. The normal work of the Spirit is to glorify Him, as He said, "He shall not speak of Himself, He shall glorify Me". He has been sent from Christ on high for that purpose.

So vast and varied are the glories of the Son of God, their superlative splendours outstrip the comprehension of the most spiritual saints. Like Himself they are infinite, nevertheless the Spirit who knows them all brings their precious riches within the comprehension of those who do not grieve or hinder Him. Their resplendent radiancy shines as the glowing clusters of the most precious stones in God's mineral creation, those gems of rare beauty, which shed forth their rich colours and brilliant lights in such bright and variegated diversity that the most experienced eye fails to detect more than a comparatively small number of the lustrous rays which they so bountifully radiate at every movement; nevertheless, the more closely they are examined the more clearly their manifold beauties are seen, and with deeper interest their iridescent charms are recognized. The city of God, the heavenly Jerusalem, is seen in Revelation 21, with the foundations of its jasper wall "adorned with every precious stone", and its twelve gates, twelve pearls, while the street of it is of pure gold, as transparent glass. It is the glory of God, however, which shines from Christ, that enlightens the city, and it is by that light which it radiates that the nations of the earth are yet to walk.
Before that day arrives, even now as the assembly, the bride of Christ, awaits His coming again; the Spirit edifies, cheers and satisfies our hearts by showing us Christ's glory and by telling us of Christ's love. The distinctions which culminate in the Son of God and which shine in illustrious perfection from Him, the Spirit shows to the gladdened gaze of those who are redeemed by the blood of Christ and who share in the new creation in Himself.

"Amidst His own the Spirit still
Bears witness of His glory there,
And from the sphere which He doth fill
Brings knowledge of His fullness here."

Those who are called into the fellowship of God's Son, and walk in the recognition of His lordship, receive the benefits of this enriching ministry of the Spirit of God, and they grow in grace and in the excellent knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

"As they rest within the circle
Where love's treasures are displayed,
There they drink the living waters,
Taste the joys that never fade."

It is said through the Apostle John, who wrote of the glory of the Son of God beyond all others: "These things write we unto you that your joy may be full". That was given to us after the failure of the assemblies was an accomplished fact, that therefore need not hinder us being led by the Spirit into the fullness indicated. It is only for us to walk in the path marked out for us, to "practise the truth" as it is revealed, to follow righteousness, faith, love and peace with those that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

In all the Scriptures our Lord Jesus Christ interpreted to the two wondering disciples the things concerning Himself. That made their hearts burn within them for very gladness. Such ministry by the Spirit from the writings of the Spirit to those who are indwelt by the Spirit does exactly the same today. In Moses, Aaron, David, Solomon and others the Spirit has foreshadowed some of Christ's official glories. In the Gospels we see the beauties of His moral perfections, and in all His personal glories are plainly to be seen. So multitudinous are these distinctions, however, whether they be official, moral or personal, that eloquent volumes could not encompass their infinitude.

Moses failed, Aaron failed, David failed, and Solomon also; but the Son of God stands out eternally glorious as the unfailing One. In official, moral and personal perfection, all abides in Him in undimmed glory for ever. Some have had the official glory of kingship, but have been utterly without moral worth. Eli's sons had the official distinction of being priests, and the personal distinction of being Aaron's family, but they were morally debased. Every official glory, every moral beauty and every personal perfection in the Son of God shines in unsullied splendour. When they saw His glorious majesty in the Holy Mount, having been withdrawn and elevated above other influences, Peter tells us, "He received from God the Father honour and glory, such a voice being uttered to Him by the excellent glory: This is My beloved Son, in whom I have found My delight."

We are called by God into the fellowship of such an One, into the fellowship of God's Son. He is our Lord also. May our walk, ways and words show that we value this high honour. God is faithful always in regard to this fellowship into which He Himself has called us.

A difficulty may be a real one, but it is only unbelief of heart that will make it an obstacle, if on the path of God's will. Faith reckons upon God, and difficulties are nothing to Him.
INVESTIGATING SPIRITISM.

We quote from a Glasgow Journal:

"The Church of Scotland’s investigation of Spiritualism has commenced. Yesterday a party of ministerial investigators, comprising many eminent ecclesiastics, assembled in Glasgow, and were present at two séances which had been arranged for the express purpose of enabling them to embark upon the closest possible study of a subject which is receiving increasing attention all over the world."

"At the last General Assembly a committee of inquiry was appointed. This committee, which is now known as ‘The General Assembly Committee to inquire into alleged super-normal psychic phenomena’, has a membership of 34."

We should have thought that the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland would have taken the Scriptural way of investigating Spiritism, which is to test the doctrines it teaches (1 John 4. 1, 2) by the one and only infallible standard that we possess—the Holy Bible. But if the name of the Committee defines and limits its activities, this test, which is both safe and effectual, because it is the God-appointed one, will not have its place in these investigations. The committee has been appointed to inquire into ‘alleged super-normal psychic phenomena’. It may be necessary to do this, but to treat this as the only ground for inquiry, or to give it the first place, or to approach it without the whole armour of God is, we believe, a very dangerous procedure, as we hope to show. On the other hand, if the Scriptural way had been taken, and the Committee had set to work to compare the doctrines taught by the Spiritists with the Word of God—an easy task—the anti-Christian character of the movement would have been exposed; faith would have been strengthened; waverers would have been warned, and some, perhaps, who have been ensnared would have been delivered, and so the Committee of investigation would have rendered a great service in the land.

The super-normal phenomena of Spiritism has been aptly described by Sir A. Conan Doyle as the ringing of the telephone bell; the great thing, he tells us, is to inquire who it is that wants to communicate with us, and what they have to say. Exactly, and we shall certainly discover who they are by the doctrines they communicate. We are glad, however, that there is no necessity for us to spend hours in a darkened drawing-room waiting for things to happen, as this Church of Scotland Committee of investigation has done: Sir A. Conan Doyle and the printing-press, by publishing these doctrines, have saved us that trouble.

This foremost apostle of the movement tells us with a blunt honesty what the teachings of the spirits which he has had to do with are. Infidels and Christians, Buddhists, Mohammedans and Jews all fare alike in the next world, their attitude towards God and Christ makes no difference whatever; indeed, say these spirits, they know no more of God in the next world than Sir A. Conan Doyle does in this, and that he tells us is next to nothing; and the conclusion that one is forced to, after studying Spiritistic literature, is, that one of their chief efforts is to convince those who will hear them that we never shall have to do with God at all, consequently, "repentance towards God" is not necessary. He has also learnt that the doctrine of the vicarious death and atoning blood of Christ are "the brutal side of paganism", and, if so, "faith in our Lord Jesus Christ" is also useless. Now the many eminent ecclesiastics who form this Committee of investigation should have no difficulty in tracing such teachings to their source, especially as their life's work is to preach these great things to the people of Scotland.

There has appeared weekly since February of last year—in a popular
Sunday paper—messages, which it is alleged have been communicated to an English Church clergyman from the spirit world. In introducing these ‘revelations’ this clergyman tells his readers that at first the spirits found considerable difficulty in getting into sympathetic contact with him; and the reason for this was that his mind was full of Biblical questions. It was not until he dismissed these, and his mind became ‘quiet and passive’, and completely at the disposal of the spirits, that they could make progress. In a later message he was told that those who looked back to Christ to learn of Him as presented in the Bible were ‘tethered men’. The doctrine of this spirit is that Christ is moving on and communicating fresh things to men. “The mistake men made”, he is alleged to have said, “was to hamper a living, moving life with a Book. They regarded the Book, not what it is, wonderful, beautiful, mostly true, but as both infallible and also complete.” The meaning of that, in spite of the flattery, is that the Bible must no longer be our guide and that Spiritism must hold an undisputed field.

We make these quotations, because Spiritists claim that the Bible commends and teaches Spiritism. Sir A. Conan Doyle’s constant assertion is that the Bible is full of it, and the early Church was saturated with it, but he has yet to show us a single passage where those who sorrowed for their dead were told to seek out a medium in order to speak with them, or where such attempts are not denounced in most unsparing terms as abominable in the sight of God. No, Spiritism is against the Bible, and the Bible is against Spiritism, and this is so plain that it needs no committee of investigation to discover it. It is certain that where the Bible is read and revered there is little room for Spiritism. It abounds in India and China and other non-Christian lands, where mediums are more powerful than any in the west who practise their arts. Its progress in England has followed hard upon the heels of the destructive criticism of the Bible. Yes, the traitors to the Word of God who hold the chairs at the theological colleges, and the pulpits in the churches, have thrown down the only barrier that could have kept this awful menace at bay. And if it has not spread with the same rapidity in Scotland as it has in fast-apostatizing England, what is the reason? If the Committee investigated this question, we believe that they will find that the only answer to it is that the Bible has a larger place in the lives of the people in Scotland generally than in England.

We quote again from the newspaper report of the first seance:—

“The investigators, upon being shown into the room in which the medium was awaiting them, examined their surroundings with the utmost thoroughness.

One or two looked below chairs and couches, others shook the curtains, while a few were observed tapping the walls as if searching for secret panels.

Several prominent Glasgow Spiritualists were present, and they, and also the medium, were seated between the investigators.

When all was ready, silence descended upon the circle, and suddenly the room was plunged into darkness.

Then began what is known as ‘direct voice work’.

The voices of spirits, who manifested themselves through the medium, were made audible to the ‘circle’ through a megaphone.”

Thus the Committee set to work, evidently determined to eliminate, if this report is true, every chance of deception, but it would not be so easy to do this when the room was plunged in darkness; when that happened, there surely must have come to the memories of some of these investigators those solemn words of the Lord Jesus, “Men love darkness rather than light,
because their deeds are evil". And these spirits are evidently like them, and this is the more strange, since they profess to come from realms of light. Why did not one of these investigators propose that they should open the séance by some suitable passage of Scripture, and with prayer to God that He would preserve them from deception and cause His truth to triumph? That would surely have been appropriate, since they were there representing the Church of Scotland, and professing to be servants of God.

There are those who contend that there is nothing but deception in this thing, and that all the phenomena displayed at these séances can be reproduced by clever conjurors. We are sure that they are wrong. It may be that a large percentage of the phenomena is fraudulent, we believe it is, but there is that which is real, devilishly real. It has been proved again and again, that at these darkened séances intelligent beings not in the flesh do communicate through mediums. Men of science and letters have become confirmed Spiritists, who were once absolute sceptics on the subject, simply by what they have seen and heard. And we have no doubt that when the Scotch Committee has completed its investigations it will be compelled to the conclusion that spirits do communicate. But then they will have to address themselves to the further question, who are the spirits?

Are these spirits then the spirits of departed men and women? Many refuse to believe in any other kind of spirit, hence they are the more easily deceived, and to this category belong the men of science and letters who have taken up this thing with such enthusiasm: and herein lies the danger to the present investigators in Scotland: they are urged to approach their labours with open minds, but an open mind will not preserve them; their minds must be garrisoned by the truth of God or they will be surely ensnared, for the devil is shrewder than they.

The Lord Jesus, risen from the dead and glorified, says: "I have the keys of death and hades", and we believe this fact excludes all possibility of the dead communicating with the living; for it surely means that He is Master of death and the world beyond. His Lordship may not be acknowledged by all in this life, but none can refuse it in the life beyond, all there are subject, willingly or unwilling, to His dominion. Then if this be true, none can return who have passed through the portals of death except as He permits it, certainly they cannot obey the call of a godless medium. We know all about Samuel and the witch of Endor; this case does not help the Spiritists, but condemns them. There God intervened specially, that the apostate Saul might hear his doom. It was not the power of the medium that brought him up; she expected her familiar spirit to come, impersonating Samuel, and was terrified when Samuel himself appeared. And the Lord slew Saul for his great sin.

Here are some 'extracts' from English Spiritualistic papers, given in The Apostacy or Seducing Spirits, and Teachings of Demons, by E. McHardie. "Spirits from the vasty deep . . . will come when we do call if they can once quaff, if not the bowl, the vital spirit of the blood through us as mediums. . . . Hence cases of the most awful spiritual persecutions of particularly susceptible persons of today . . . with them the approach of spirits is not a visit . . . but an inroad. They come, the door once open, in crowds, in riotous invasions. They run, they leap, they fly, they gesticulate, they sing, they whoop, and they curse. . . . There is no doubt, with the wretched sufferers of their phantasmagorical assaults, that they are the life and quintessence of hell. . . . Mind, body, soul, memory and imagination—nay the very heart—are polluted by the ghostly canaille. . . . We have known such sufferers, and know them still. . . . No agony of petition had
been able to dislodge the foul and murderous crew."

Are these the spirits of the human dead? Surely not. They are evil spirits, which, as the Bible shows us, desire to possess human bodies, such spirits as possessed Mary of Magdala and Legion before the delivering power of Jesus set them free; and the damsel of Philippi. And the spirits that possess the bodies of mediums to-day, and speak at these séances are spirits of the same order; spirits in rebellion against God. For their own purposes they may veil their malignity and even appear as ministers of righteousness, for Satan, their arch-leader, transforms himself—when it suits him—into an angel of light (2 Cor. 11. 14, 15); but such they are, for no unfallen angel would transgress the definitely expressed commands of God, nor would they assist men and women in this terrible defiance of His will (Deut. 18. 9–14).

The devil is "the prince of the power of the air" (Eph. 22.), and Sir A. Conan Doyle tells us that the spirit world from which these communicating spirits come is all round and about us. Are we wrong, then, in saying that these spirits belong to the devil's realm? He is the leader of the rulers of this world's darkness, and these spirits form part of the vast army that serves under him in his fight against God and Christ and the salvation of men. "The gates of hell" are a reality. Just as a power like Germany could flood the world with spies in view of a possible war, so the powers of darkness have their emissaries moving constantly amongst men, working together in their fell determination to blind and destroy their souls. Their doom is certain, for everlasting fire is prepared for the devil and his angels (Matthew 25. 41). They want men to share their doom, and how easy they seem to succeed in this, for, alas, thousands refuse the truth of God and embrace the devil's lies, and exult in doing so.

The question may arise as to how it is that these spirits, if they are not the spirits of the dead, seem to know so much about those whom they impersonate? The Bible helps us as to this. From the Book of Job we learn that Satan had carefully considered Job; he knew his outward circumstances intimately, though he could not discern his motives, and in the same way we have no doubt these evil spirits make a study of men, and are able, as a result, to impersonate men. Satan spent his time, we learn, in going to and fro in the earth, and these restless spirits are like their leader. Hebrews 1. 13, 14 teaches us that the heirs of salvation are constantly cared for by angel ministers from God, and may it not be that these evil spirits also attach themselves to individuals, especially to those who know not God? If so, to speak of a person's 'evil angel' is more than a figure of speech; and this would certainly account for the knowledge that these spirits possess of those who are dead.

If the alleged super-normal psychic phenomena of spiritism must be investigated let it be done in the Name of the Lord, and tested by the word of God. We urged a well-known Baptist minister who has been ensnared by it, to put three questions to these spirits:

1st.—In the Name of the Lord Jesus declare whether you are what you profess to be?

2nd.—Do you confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, according to the meaning of 1 John 4. 1, 2, 3?

3rd.—Why were these very practices condemned in Old Testament times as abominations in the sight of God?

He would not apply the tests, and so remains ensnared.

But it is only by the power of the Lord's Name that any one could force the truth from those spirits, for Satan, their leader, is a liar from the beginning, and they are "lying spirits", "speaking lies in hypocrisy".
YOUR MOST HOLY FAITH.

It is remarkable that the only occasion in which the words “most holy” are used in the New Testament is in giving its character to our Faith, not, of course, to its subjective power as an inward quality, but to the common belief which, as Christians, we profess. The truth which, as a system, we have received from God is (mark the word) “most holy”. It is “the faith once delivered to the saints” and for which we are commanded to contend earnestly (see Jude 3 and 20).

When we seize the fact that this faith is esteemed by God as “most holy” we cannot fail to regard it as a treasure of supreme value. The defence of it calls for “the whole armour of God” inasmuch as the great enemy—the devil—ceases not to resist, to overturn, and to undermine, with devices the most subtle, “the faith of God’s elect”. Our contention can be maintained only by divine weapons. We are strong in the Lord only when we carry the panoply of God in its completeness, and when, along with this, we “pray with all prayer”. We are then safe and victorious. Not otherwise. But to contend signifies a struggle. It means conflict, perseverance, tenacity, purpose of heart, and true devotedness to the Lord.

The treasure is “most holy”. It is worthy of supreme affection. It calls for genuine consecration of heart and soul.

No citadel ever claimed such a strenuous defence, nor was assailed by so unscrupulous a foe.

Do we grasp the most holiness of our faith? Do we see that it stands out as Satan’s one point of attack? Are we bent on maintaining, even to death, the inviolability of that which is so unspeakably valuable to God? Have the words “contend earnestly” weighed with our conscience as they should?

“Your most holy faith” is anything but “a cunningly devised fable”, or a matter of very minor moment. This faith may not be dragged in the mire; may not be flung to dogs, to evil-workers, or to the concision, may not be polluted, nor perverted, nor prostituted; may not be kicked about as a football, as a thing desplicable and beneath notice. It is “most holy”, and its essential holiness God will eventually prove; for just as its perfect Witness emerged in resurrection from “the contradiction of sinners against Himself”, so, surely, will the faith itself receive divine and full vindication in God’s good time. Meanwhile may each and every saint charge himself with its defence, and seek, in the torrent of all contention, to build each other on our “most holy faith”, while we look for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

A FALSE OR TRUE WITNESS.

When the church says, “I am rich and increased in goods (making itself the vessel of grace instead of Christ) and have need of nothing”, it boasts of riches within itself. Thus in so doing it neither puts its “amen” to the promises of God in Christ Jesus, nor is it the true and faithful witness for God. The church ceases to be this directly it looks away from Christ as the only source; and when it takes itself to be the vessel of riches, it then necessarily becomes a false witness instead of a true one. The moment I say the church is all this or that, or the church is what I am looking at and not Christ, the eye is completely taken off Christ to the church, I am looking to it instead of to Him, however much I may pretend to honour Him.

J. N. D.
WHEN the Lord Jesus Christ walked this earth two things gave Him very great pain:—

1. Unwillingness of people to come to Him (John 5: 40).

2. Unwillingness of some to go on with Him (John 6: 66-68).

Just as many grieved the Lord by “going back”, in those days, and “walking no more with Him”, so it is in our day. For this scene, so vividly pictured in the Word, is a continuous experience. It has been, and is being repeated, and in this respect how often the Lord must deeply feel the indifference of His own.

“Will ye also go away?”

While others are “turning back” this tender pleading rings afresh in our ears with searching challenge. These words come to us with the penetrating power of the voice of the Lord.

Are we seeking “with purpose of heart to cleave unto the Lord”, or do “the vain things” we often sing about “sacrificing” still “charm us most”?

Every Christian is either giving Christ joy or grief. Joy given to Christ means eternal gain for ourselves and for Him; grieving Christ means present and future loss for us. For the joy we might give Him now we shall never have an opportunity of supplying when we leave this scene. There is a peculiar sweetness about this present joy; for now it is a matter of choice. When He takes us to be with Himself the conditions will be changed; and what we have failed to render now cannot possibly be given then!

Christian progress is produced largely by: — (1) Right disposition of will; (2) Obedience to the Holy Spirit.

If my will is set on pleasing Christ, then I shall yield to the gentle influence of the Spirit as He occupies me with Christ by daily meditation on the Word and prayer. The place the written Word has in our lives is precisely the place we give the Incarnate Word. Every right desire and good thing done is born and carried through by the Spirit. As we let Him have His way, Christ becomes more precious.

What we really want to do we make time for. That is true in natural things and equally true in spiritual things. What folly after having come to Christ for life not to cling to Him for the maintenance of that life. If we turn from Him, where shall we go?

I earnestly appeal to our young brothers and sisters to put Christ first, to give Him joy—not pain. Christ will more than make up for anything of earth you think you will lose. Unless we give Christ joy we ourselves can have no real joy. We do well to face these solemn facts, and to pray for one another that the Lord will graciously turn us again (Ps. 80: 18 and 19).

The simplicity of a life of faith has charms that they do not know who never tried it.

We do not get rid of the difficulties of the path of faith by trying to avoid them, we must go through them by the power of God.

Experience ought to strengthen faith; but there must be a present faith to use experience.
The Sovereign Mercy of God.

EDMONTON.—You say you cannot accept the doctrine of predestination as taught in Romans 9. 14-24. But strictly speaking predestination is not taught in this passage at all. Predestination has to say to the relationship and destiny to which God, in the riches and glory of His grace, has called those whom He foreknew. (See Romans 8. 29, 30; Eph. 1. 5, 11.)

What is taught in the passage to which you refer is the sovereign mercy of God; a most blessed truth, and well calculated to stabilize our faith, and especially so, as we are Gentiles who had no part in the promises made to Israel. The Jew would have excluded the Gentile; he claimed relationship with God on the ground of his natural birth, but the chapter shows that on this ground even he could have had no part in the blessing, for Esau naturally had a prior claim; but God made His choice, and took Jacob instead of Esau. So now He has chosen to bless Gentiles such as we are. “As He saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. And it shall come to pass that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God.”

But see how careful is Scripture to remove the thought, that is so natural to us, that God is not just. When it is a question of God showing His wrath and power, which He must do against all iniquity, we read, What if God, willing to show His wrath, and to make His power known, ENDURED WITH MUCH LONGSUFFERING the vessels of wrath? fitted for destruction. Did God fit them for destruction? No, He endured them with much longsuffering, and still does. They fitted themselves for destruction by their own wicked works, unrepented of and persisted in. But how, then, shall any be saved, for naturally we all love the self-willed way? The next verse tells us. “And that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which HE HAD AFORE PREPARED UNTO GLORY” (verses 22, 23). He takes hold of sinners in His mercy and prepares them for glory by His grace, so that not one of us who can rejoice in the hope of the glory of God but owes it entirely to His sovereign mercy.

The Seven Spirits of God.

THORNTON.—You are right in concluding that in the Seven Spirits of God (Rev. 1. 4; 3. 1; 4. 5; 5. 6) we have the Holy Ghost presented in a different way to other parts of the New Testament. Seven is the number in Scripture that stands for perfection, and here the Spirit is presented in the perfection and plenitude of His power, and the diversity of His operations in connection with the judgement and the government of the world. He does not here come forth from the FATHER—name of infinite grace, to indwell those who are the children of God, but He is before the throne in this sevenfold way. The throne is God’s throne, and tells us that He, the unchangeable and eternal God, has not given up His rights in this world, and the Book of Revelation shows us how He will assert and secure these rights. It is by the power of the Spirit presented in this symbolical way that all this will be carried out.

But this is not the first time that the Spirit is thus presented in the Word. In Isaiah 11., also in connection with the government of the earth, we read of the Spirit of the Lord (1), the spirit of wisdom (2), and understanding (3), the spirit of counsel (4), and might (5), the spirit of knowledge (6), and of the fear of the Lord (7).
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

Natural Relationships in Heaven.

FROM Dublin we have received a communication from which we give an extract: "I have read and re-read, with increasing pain, a paragraph in this month's (Dec., 1920) Scripture Truth, in the paper entitled, 'In Christ Jesus', and having found others like-minded about it, I feel compelled to ask you to try and explain, or rather absolutely contradict the assertions made in it. I refer to the paragraph on page 271 which reads as follows: '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'.

"You . . . I am sure will agree that the distraught remark of the poor Christian lady called more for comfort than criticism—such comfort as the word of the Lord gives (1 Thess. 4. 16-18). We shall be caught up TOGETHER'. . . . Paul will not mistake his Thessalonian converts (1 Thess. 2. 10). A father will know his son, as his son, and not as someone else's, and a mother her child; otherwise where would the comfort of 1 Thess. 4. come in?

"Trusting you will not think these remarks are made in any spirit of mere criticism, but that you will remove the unhappy impression made by this surely inconsiderate paragraph and give your readers some comfortable words on this important subject".

We are exceedingly sorry that anything appearing in our pages should have given pain to any of our readers; but we feel that in this instance our correspondent has not quite understood this very brief reference to knowing our friends in heaven. The writer states that we shall not know our relatives, "as such, in heaven". That is, these natural relationships, so precious, and of God, are for the earth life, they will not be resumed in heaven, but that does not mean that we shall not know each other there; we believe that we shall. But we shall not be divided into small groups and families; we shall be one family in the presence of the Father. The spiritual links are greater than the natural, and they are indissoluble and eternal. Our correspondent must have felt this, she probably has relatives who do not love the Lord, and while her heart yearns for them, she has found that bonds formed by grace in Christ with those who otherwise would be complete strangers are more precious and stronger than these other natural ties. And if she considers carefully the Scripture she quotes, she will see that they both refer to those who have been known in the Lord. Paul laboured amongst his beloved Thessalonians, and he will surely know them in heaven, for He says, "For 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 glory and joy" (1 Thess. 2. 19, 20). What an encouragement is that statement for all who labour for souls. And chapter 4 evidently refers to sorrow for those who had died in the Lord—they are to be caught up together with those that are alive and remain at the coming of the Lord, as our correspondent points out, and in this there is great comfort.

We believe that death will not destroy the personality, we shall be the same individuals in heaven as we are here, though, of course, conformed to the image of the Lord, and, consequently, we conclude that we shall know each other, yet Scripture gives us no warrant for believing that natural relationships will be resumed. The Lord's answer to the Sadducees (Matt. 22. 23-33) when they came to Him with the story of the woman who had had seven husbands, proves the contrary.

But the spiritual links abide. The mother, whose prayers, and gentle life, and loving labour has been instrumental in blessing to her boy, will surely know
him as her glory and her joy in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, just as Paul will know the Thessalonians. Personally I expect to meet my mother in heaven as the one who brought me up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, who prayed and laboured for the blessing of my soul, but that is the spiritual link between us. The husband and wife, father and son, mother and daughter, who have enjoyed communion in the things of the Lord in this life will find that these blessed links of communion will not be lost in heaven. But these are spiritual links, made possible, and perhaps more precious now by the natural links, yet the latter will be dissolved and the former will abide. Thus far we believe we can go, and in this we find comfort. But when we are caught up together with those who have gone into the Lord’s presence before us, our greatest joy will be, not that they have links with us, but that they and we have links with the Lord. May our correspondent and all others, whose hearts know what bereavement is, find true comfort in the truth.

Problems—Answers.

MISQUOTATIONS OF SCRIPTURE IN PRAYER.

1. “Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matt. 18. 20). To this wonderful statement of the Lord, there is often added, “and that to bless”, or, “and that to do them good”. What is it in these words of the Lord that those who make these additions to them fail to grasp?

One correspondent writes: “If they were consciously in the Lord’s presence they would find so much delight in Him that they would not think of themselves and their own blessing. They do not understand this”. Yes, that is true; a sense of the presence of the Lord would deliver from the self-centredness that so sadly characterizes many gatherings of the Lord’s people. Another states: “If the Lord is there His presence means blessing, and so the additions are meaningless”. This also is true, and if we are set for the furtherance of His interests we can safely leave our blessing in His keeping.

These words of the Lord have prayer specially in view, as the context shows, and they contemplate a gathering together with the interests and glory of the Lord specially in view. Being gathered together unto the Lord’s Name means in the first place that He is not here, a very solemn fact when we remember that the reason for this is that He was rejected and crucified by the world; and in the second place it means that those who are thus gathered together represent Him in the world where He is not, hence their whole concern should be His interests and the honour of His Name, and this should be far greater in their thoughts than their own blessing; the immensity of the privilege surely ought to, and would where it was realized, exclude all thought of making self an object. It is this that is not understood when this precious verse is spoilt by these additions.

2. “I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase” (1 Cor. 3. 6). Why is this cheering passage misquoted nine times out of ten, “Paul may plant, and Apollos water, but God must give the increase”?

We believe it is so misquoted as a sort of excuse for no blessing in Gospel work. The spirit in which it is thus mutilated often seems to be, “What more can we do? If blessing does not come, it is because God has not given it”, and generally when this spirit prevails the work is done in a desultory, formal and heartless way. The statement has no such meaning. What it says is, “Paul planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase”. There was no doubt as to the result, though all the glory was God’s. So the farmer casts his seed into the field, and God gives him a harvest; and in His work to-day, if Paul’s successors plant, and those who follow Apollos water, the increase will certainly appear, and if there is not the increase, there is not the planting and watering according to God. Let us, instead of making the Scripture fit our moods and failure, lay our consciences and hearts open to its searching, and acknowledge that if our labour is in vain it is not done in the Lord.
Further Problems.

WE feel that we cannot do better than continue the series of questions on 1 Timothy which started in our January issue.

1. WHAT is the difference between supplications, prayers, and intercessions (chap. 2. 7)?

2. WHILE it is not difficult to see why we should pray for all men, what is there about them for which we can give thanks (verse 1)?

3. WHY are we to have the blessing of all in view in this Epistle?

4. IS "coming to the knowledge of the truth" something in addition to being "saved" (verse 4)?

5. WHY is the manhood of the Lord emphasized (verse 5)?

6. WHAT is the meaning of lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting (verse 8)?

If any of our readers care to consider and answer these questions we shall be glad to hear from them.

HIS PRIESTHOOD.

O SON of God Eternal,
—Jesus—in glory now,
Before Thy throne of mercy
Behold a sufferer bow.

Thine eyes of tenderest pity,
Thy heart of strongest love,
Thy pierced hands of power,
All move for me above.

Upon Thy face, Lord Jesus,
My soul would fix its gaze,
Such love as Thine inviting
Its rest in Thy blest ways.

These marks of earthly trials,
Of loneliness and pain,
Oft touched Thy holy Person,
And touch Thy heart again.

Yes, there in brightest glory,
One Person lives for me;
Who tasted all this sorrow,
And—Death—upon the tree.

From out this house of weakness
In spirit, I’ll away;
Affection’s mighty pinions
Cleaving their heavenward way.

The body in its suffering
Shall not enchain the heart;
Love finds its happy solace
Where Thou, Lord Jesus, art.

And at Thy feet adoring,
High Priest of God’s own choice,
I’ll fold my wings untiring,
And in my heart rejoice.

For here in deep communion
With God revealed in Son,
And saints who also love Him,
We bow before His throne.

Thou, Lord, dost lead our singing,
(Thy sufferings all behind),
And we in spirit with Thee,
Repose in worship find.

“For My sake and the Gospels,” Though I am absent from you, the Lord says, My Gospel is with you. Show love to Me by showing love to it.

“Tidings of great joy” is the essence of the Gospel. If you have little joy in it, it is because there is little of it in you.
EDITORIAL NOTES.

The Sufferings of Christ and the Word of God.

If we value our spiritual prosperity and desire to advance in the knowledge of God's will and His ways, or serve Him well in the Gospel—we must remember the sufferings of Christ and hold fast to the Word of God. These lie at the basis of all our relationships with God and our fellow Christians, and apart from them we have no testimony for the world. For any to touch the things of God apart from them only displays their godless presumption. There is no sphere in which we may move with Him on this hither side of the glory in which we may forget the sufferings and death of our Lord and Saviour; and on the other side, when we see Him enthroned in heaven. He will still be to us "the Lamb that was slain". The Scriptures bring Him before us, telling us of His sufferings and the glory that must follow, hence their preciousness to us.

How could we know of His sufferings and the meaning of them apart from the Word of God? If we had not the Holy Scriptures and the divine illumination that the Holy Ghost sheds upon them, we should still regard Him—as the Jews did—as a malefactor, or as so many modern rejectors of the Word of God regard Him, as a great reformer who lived before His time and suffered for His principles; but the Word teaches us that "He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed".

The Lord Himself brings together His sufferings and the Word of God in a most striking manner in Luke xxiv.; a resurrection chapter.

1. BACKSLIDERS WERE TO BE RESTORED, and He speaks to them of His sufferings out of the Word to accomplish this.

2. HIS DISCIPLES WERE GATHERED TOGETHER—a pattern of His assembly—and they needed to be established in the truth in order to be His witnesses in the world. He shows them His hands and His feet, in which were the indelible marks of His sufferings, and opens their understandings to understand what Moses and the Psalms and the Prophets had spoken concerning Himself.

3. HE COMMISSIONS THESE DISCIPLES TO CARRY THE GLAD TIDINGS OF FORGIVENESS TO ALL NATIONS; but here, too, He shows them that it was written that He must suffer before this could be.

No backsliding Christian was ever restored to the Lord apart from the truth of the sufferings and sacrifice of Christ being brought in power to His heart and conscience by the Word. Numbers xix. teaches this in type. And no revival of Divine life ever manifested itself amongst the people of God in which these had not a prominent place; as witness the hymns that true revivals have produced.

There can be no freshness or power in any Christian community if the Lamb that was slain is lost sight of, or if the thoughts of men are substituted for the Word of God. All preaching must be barren in results for God's glory and lasting blessing to men unless the marrow of it is the sacrifice of our Lord, the one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus Who gave Himself a ransom for all to be testified in due season.

But what place have the Scriptures and the sufferings of Christ with those who profess to carry out the mission given to His disciples by the risen Lord? The question needs to be asked, for neither can be popular in the world that knows not God; and the popular taste, alas, is often consulted rather than the will of God. The preaching of Christ crucified strikes at the root of all the pride of men; it means that he, in spite of all
his boasted progress, must bow down at the feet of Him who died upon a cross of shame; it means that by that one sacrifice alone can he be saved and brought in right relations with God; it means that in spite of all his culture, education, progress and power, he is a sinner under the judgment of God, a servant of sin with no hope in the world; it means that Christ who was the holy and the true, the one faithful Witness for God in the world, upon whom death had no claim, for He was sinless, had to go down into the depths of death if salvation was to be preached to, and enjoyed by, any child of Adam’s race.

The preaching of Christ and Him crucified does not mean that man merely “needs Divine help to make him loyal to the Divine plan”, as Canon Barnes teaches; it means that he is helpless and dead. It brings into prominence that which the semi-infidelCanon would set aside, that which he calls Paul’s doctrine of the fall “which had been accepted in certain Rabbinical schools, whence he, a Pharisee by training, took it”. What need could there be for the sufferings of Christ if man merely needed Divine help? And Paul was not the first to state that the Redeemer must suffer instead of those whom He would redeem; it was written centuries before He came—in Moses, the Psalms, and the Prophets, Scriptures that the Canon and men of his school would tear from us if they could, and that because they are a perpetual rebuke to their folly. And the Risen Lord, having passed through the sufferings spoke thus to His disciples: “THUS IT IS WRITTEN AND THUS IT BEHOVED CHRIST TO SUFFER and to rise again the third day; that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem”. And Paul only repeated his Master’s words when he preached, as we read in Acts xvii. 2, 3: “And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures. Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ.”

And again, when he wrote 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4: “For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that CHRIST DIED FOR OUR SINS ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES; And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.”

This preaching is to the Jew (the religionist) a stumbling block, to the Greek (the philosopher) foolishness; nevertheless it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, and by no other way can any be saved.

Every servant of God who goes forth to proclaim the great fact that the living, risen Lord once suffered for sin does it in His name, that means that he is backed by his Lord’s authority, and such the Holy Ghost will support, and none other.

THE WORD OF GOD.

There are three actions of the Word.

1. When my soul is going astray it is the word that recovers me.
2. When my soul is going right, the word discovers to me what may lead me astray and so preserves me.
3. The Word leads my soul into communion with the Lord; it presents Him as the One all-satisfying object for the heart, it advances me.
FOR THOSE WHO SUFFER.

The Lord has ordered your circumstances and trials, and though you suffer much, He is able to make you abundant amends, and to give you a fairer opportunity of adorning His doctrine. Look up. Our God can give seasons of refreshment in the darkest hours, and break through the thickest clouds of our outward affliction or distress.

The Saviour drank the cup of unmixed bitterness and wrath for your sake, and only puts into your hand a cup of affliction mixed with many mercies.

Do you think that God is an unconcerned spectator of the sufferings of His children? No, with the eye, and ear, and heart of a friend, He attends to their sorrows, He counts their sighs, puts their tears in His bottle; and when our spirits are overwhelmed within us He knows our path, and adjusts the time, the measure of our trials, and everything that is necessary for our present support and seasonable deliverance, with the same unerring wisdom and accuracy as He weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance, and meted out the heavens with a span.

Dwell upon the ways of the Lord when He was in the world; His heart was moved before His arm was exerted. He mingled His tears with mourners and wept over distresses which He intended to relieve. He is still the same in His exalted state; compassions dwell in His heart. In a way inconceivable to us, but consistent with His supreme dignity and perfection of happiness and glory He still feels for His people. When Saul persecuted the members on earth, the Head complained in heaven, and sooner shall the most tender mother sit insensible and inattentive to the cries and wants of her infant, than the Lord Jesus be an unconcerned spectator of His suffering saints.

It is a common thing for Him to bring spiritual good out of temporal evil; He can extract pleasure from pain, and enrich by impoverishing, and turn losses to gain.

GREAT PROOFS OF THE LOVE OF CHRIST. (J. T. MAWSON.)

The love of Christ is unchanged and unchanging. Indifference and coldness of heart on our part does not diminish the force of it at all. John did not get orders to write the 17th chapter of his Gospel until long after Paul had written his 2nd Epistle to Timothy. In the latter we see how faithless the Church on earth was, and was yet to be; in the former we learn how tender, faithful and true our Lord abides. Do any of us want to be true to Him? to war a good warfare on His behalf? Here is our backing. In John xvii. we are brought into contact with our reserves, or to be more accurate, the Lord's reserves. Our base of operations, from whence all supplies flow is the heart of Christ, and John xvii. is the pouring out of His heart in prayer for us. Soldiers of the cross, sit down and consider what exhaustless supplies yours are, what a wonderful backing you have got in the love of Christ! Consider:—

1. WHAT HE GIVES.
2. WHAT HE IS DOING OR HAS DONE.
3. WHAT HE DESIRES.

1. What He gives.
He gives "eternal life" (ver. 2).
He gives "the words" (ver. 8).
He gives "Thy word" (ver. 14).
He gives "the glory" (ver. 22).

THE LIFE is His own life; He must begin with this, for without it
we were dead. And this life finds no pleasure in worldly things; it carries us into a new sphere of interests; it belongs to those realms of glory into which He has gone, and into which we shall enter soon; it finds its sustenance and joy now in the Father and in Jesus Christ, His sent One.

THE WORDS are the actual communications that the Father gave to the Lord Jesus; by them we become intelligent in the relationship into which we have been brought. In the life we have the capacity for enjoying God; in the words the intelligent entrance into that joy.

THY WORD sets forth the whole counsel of God, His thoughts expressed in their utmost completeness. The revelation of what He is, is fully declared. And it has been given to us not in a fragmentary way, not as so many isolated texts, but in its beautiful and worship-compelling wholeness, and as we keep and treasure it we have the abiding presence of the Father and the Son (xiv. 23); for the "word" is not a system of doctrine, but the revelation of the love of living Persons, of the Father and the Son.

THE GLORY. This covers all that He is entitled to as the Man who has glorified God on the earth. He does not give His essential Godhead glory to any. But all that He can give He does give, such is His love to us, and He is not impoverished in giving, though once He did become poor that we might be enriched in all this wealth of glory that He now shares with us. It begins with the relationship of sons even now, for He calls us brethren, saying, "Go to my brethren and say unto them, I ascend to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God". But it embraces also what is yet to come, when every thought of God will be completed in our full conformity to the image of His dear Son, that He may be the Firstborn among many brethren.

2. What He does.

HE PRAYS (ver. 9). His whole heart is poured out in intercessory communion, and He asks for His own. He stands up on their behalf, having bound up their blessing and preservation with His own glory. He puts them directly into His Father's hands and claims for them that the Father should keep them in His name; sanctify them by the truth, and keep them from the evil that is in the world.

HE DECLARES THE FATHER'S NAME (ver. 26). He speaks to the Father of us, but He also speaks to us of the Father, and the object of this is "that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them". That is the oneness in which infinite love sets all the saints, and that same love will neither rest nor be satisfied until they know and enjoy it. It is not for heaven only but our portion now.

3. What He desires.

"THAT THEY ALL MAY BE ONE" (ver. 21). This is not an ecclesiastical unity. Rome can offer that. It is a blessed oneness, brought out when disorganization and decay had spread in the Church publicly on earth. In this oneness there are no clashing judgments or opinions, nor is it an agreement to differ for the common peace. It is the oneness of heaven, for "All the mind in heaven is one"; it is oneness expressed in those words. "I in them and Thou in Me"; oneness of life, of mind, and tastes. We are kept from the evil of the world—that is, from the principles that energize and control the world in which the Father has no place—and sanctified through the truth—that is, formed and built up and satisfied by what the Father is as declared to us in Jesus—this is the Lord's desire. It is outside the evil of the world that works consistently and always dissolution and death; and inside the truth, in Him in whom the Father is, that we shall know this desired oneness.
“THAT WE MIGHT BEHOLD HIS GLORY” (ver. 24). This is our prospect. Full victory at last; no failure in the fight; the soldiers of Christ Jesus brought triumphantly through to find every true desire of their hearts realized in His glory; that to which they had borne witness to in faith, at last beheld—His glory, as the One who was loved by the Father before the foundations of the world were laid, and loved still and for ever after having passed through the world and out of it, fulfilling all God’s will. And this glory, they will behold, not from afar, but made nigh, for they will be with Him where He is, His companions in the Father’s house.

Seven times over He speaks of His own as those whom the Father had given to Him. This seems to be the chief reason why He loves them so well, and why He prays with such tenderness for their blessing and fullness of joy.

If love like this is upon us and behind us, we need not fear to take our stand in witness for Him; for what He gives, and does, and desires, fence us about on every hand, and furnish us within and without so that we may be invulnerable in Him in the presence of the foe.

The framework of this short paper has been taken from some notes by the late J. B. Stony.

NOTES FOR PREACHERS.

To combine zeal with prudence is indeed difficult. There is often too much self in our zeal, and too much fear of man in our prudence.

Many of the conflicts through which we pass spring from the desire to gain an ability for doing something, when our Lord would convince us that we can do nothing. We want a stock in ourselves, and He would have us absolutely dependent upon Him.

Every real conversion may be accounted miraculous, being no less than an immediate exertion of that power which made the heavens and commanded the light to shine out of darkness.

Let us endeavour to keep close to God, to be much in prayer, to watch carefully over our hearts. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and such will He guide continually.

A few minutes of the Spirit’s teaching will furnish us with more real useful knowledge than toiling through whole folios of commentators and expositors.

They have their place, but it will be our wisdom to deal less with the stream and more with the fountain-head. The Scripture itself, and the Spirit of God, are the best and the only sufficient expositors of Scripture.

When our Lord questioned Peter, after his fall and recovery, He said not, Art thou wise, learned and eloquent? nor, Art thou clear, sound and orthodox? But this only, LOVEST THOU ME? And this three times repeated. An answer to this was then sufficient. It is the question for us now, and any other answer than that which Peter gave then will be insufficient now. Knowledge of all mysteries without this is nothing. The eloquence of men and angels sounding brass; soundness in doctrine, important as it is, is dead orthodoxy if love to Christ is lacking. Happy the preacher, whoever he be, who in the presence of the Lord can answer as Peter did.

Service is having part in Christ’s ministry of love.
How varied are the conditions of soul in which the disciples were found on the resurrection morning. Peter was a backslider; Thomas a doubter; Mary Magdalene was desolate, and the two disciples, on the way to Emmaus, were disappointed. Moreover, it is blessed to see with what divine skill and perfect grace the Lord adapts Himself to those varying states of soul. He has a restoring word for backsliders, a reproving yet encouraging word for doubters, a comforting word for the desolate, and an arousing word to touch the heart and reach the conscience of the disappointed.

The two disciples journeying to Emmaus may well be described as disappointed saints. Like other believers, driven by their need and drawn by His grace, they had been attracted to Jesus. They had seen His mighty acts of power, listened to His words of grace, and followed His holy pathway of love. They were convinced that He was indeed the long promised Messiah, and confidently expected that the Roman yoke was about to be broken, and Israel redeemed by power from all their enemies. But alas! the chief priests and rulers had delivered their Messiah to death. Instead of taking His throne as King of kings, He had been nailed to a cross between two malefactors. Instead of making His enemies His footstool, His enemies had trodden underfoot the Son of God. All their hopes were thus rudely dashed to the ground. They were deeply disappointed saints.

The result of this disappointment is soon made manifest. They turn their backs on the little company of believers at Jerusalem and, without hesitation, they went “the same day” to their home at Emmaus; and as these two wandered on their way they reasoned (15); and as they reasoned they were sad (17).

So to-day are there not many disheartened and disappointed saints who, in like manner, turn their backs on the company of the Lord’s people and wander off into a solitary path? And as such pursue their lonely way, are they not full of reasonings and sadness?

But, we may enquire, what was the root of the disappointment of the Emmaus disciples? This—they were occupied with their own thoughts about Christ rather than God’s thoughts. And with minds possessed by human thoughts they were unable to grasp divine thoughts—they were “slow of heart to believe” all that the prophets have spoken. Unbelief was at the back of their disappointment. Unbelief turned their feet away from the Lord’s people; unbelief set their tongues reasoning, filled their hearts with sadness, and held their eyes fast closed so that they could not discern the Lord. And what was the unbelieving thought that possessed their minds? Simply that they thought to bring Christ back into their circumstances for their temporal glory, and their earthly ease and blessing.

Are we not often like these disciples? Is it not a common thought with many Christians that Christ came into the world to make it a better and a happier place? Do we not at times still try to bring Christ back into our circumstances for our temporal comfort and earthly glory? And with such thoughts in our minds do we not fall into great disappointment when we find our circumstances difficult, and that identification with the Lord’s people throws us into the company of the poor and despised of this world, involves contempt and reproach, and, it may be, even loss and suffering?

And yet how graciously the Lord pursues His wandering and disappointed saints. How blessed the way He takes to restore and hearten up these sad and downcast disciples on the way to Emmaus. First He “draws near” and it is “Jesus Himself” draws near.
No messenger is sent to recall to His presence these erring saints. When all goes well with His people, angels, apostles, prophets and others may carry out His behests, as well we know in many a fine scene recorded in the Word. But is there a wandering sheep—dejected and disappointed—behold, “JESUS HIMSELF” will draw near to restore. There is work to be done between a wandering saint and “Jesus Himself” with which no stranger can intermeddle. “The Lord hath risen indeed and hath appeared to Simon” tells the same blessed tale of a secret and personal interview between a broken-hearted backslider and “Jesus Himself”. How different, alas, the way we often take with one another. Does a brother wander away from us, how apt we are to draw away from him. But in the day that the Emmaus saints drew away, Jesus Himself drew near. What a Saviour when we were far away He came near, and when we draw away He draws near.

Having drawn near, how gracious the way He takes. He discovers to us all that is in our hearts. With divine wisdom and infinite tenderness He drew out all the difficulties of the two disciples, and disclosed the root of unbelief that was behind their disappointment. They were “slow to believe”.

Nor does He stop there, for the discovery of what is in our hearts, however important in the work of restoration, is not sufficient to restore. We need indeed true thoughts of our hearts to learn how we wander into a wrong path; but we must have true thoughts of His heart that our feet may be restored to a right path. And this is the way the Lord takes with the two disciples. Having exposed all that was in their hearts, He reveals all that is in His heart. And revealing what is in His heart turns their “slow hearts” into “burning hearts” (25, 32). He sets their hearts ablaze with love to Himself by revealing the love that is in His heart.

To reveal the love of His heart He expounds “to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself”. And as He expounds He passes before them the touching story of His sufferings and His glories (26). The disciples, with their poor human thoughts, would have spared Him the sufferings, and so withheld from Him His glories. We know He must needs suffer “to enter into His glory”.

What in all the Scriptures concerning Himself so touches the heart as the sufferings and the glories of Christ. And when we find the sufferings, we are not far from the glories. Psa. xxii. speaks of His sufferings, Psa. xxiv. of His glories. Again the story of the sufferings is taken up in Psa. lxix., to be followed by the glories in Psa. lxxii. So in like manner the sufferings of Christ in Psa. cix. are followed by the glories of Christ in Psa. cx. As we look back to His sufferings and on to His glories, our hearts may well burn as we think of the love that led Him to the cross that He might lead us into the glory.

The two disciples had been thinking of the things concerning themselves, the Lord leads them to “the things concerning Himself”. Their desire was to bring Christ into their circumstances. He would lead them into His, and to know Him as the Risen One outside this present evil world.

The Lord had exposed their hearts and revealed His heart, but to what end? Clearly to lead them to desire His company above all else. Now He will test them to see if the “end of the Lord” is reached. So it came to pass having arrived at the village, whither they went, “He made as though He would have gone further”. He had drawn near to win their hearts, He will now draw away to lead out their hearts in longing desire after Him. And very blessedly they respond to the testing of the Lord. “They constrained Him,
saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent." He wants them—had endured the sufferings of the cross to possess them—but He has so dealt with them that at last they want Him.

Have we so learnt the evil of our hearts in the presence of the love of His heart that we can say we desire His company above all else? Search throughout the length and breadth of God's great universe and where shall I find another who knows me through and through, and yet loves me. This it is that makes us more at home in His presence than in the presence of the nearest and dearest on earth.

And such is His love that we can have as much of Christ and His company as we desire. Thus the disciples found when they "constrained Him" and the Lord loves to be constrained—for do we not read, "He went in to tarry with them"?

Thus at last the Lord does come for a brief moment into their circumstances, but only to lead them out of their circumstances into His. For having made Himself known He vanishes out of their sight. How touching also the way by which He makes Himself known. "He took bread, and blessed it, and brake it and gave unto them saying, This is My body which is given for you"? The whole act proclaimed who He was, and recalled His dying love. Little wonder that "their eyes were opened and they knew Him". Yes! but how did they know Him? Not as in the days before the cross, in their circumstances, but as the One who was dead but is alive for evermore. Immediately He vanishes out of their sight. For if we know Him as the Risen One, it can only be by faith while yet we are in this scene. The disappointment that had possessed the disciples when they lost Him on earth, was changed to delight when they found Him in resurrection.

The immediate result is, they are recalled from their wanderings. In spite of having walked eight or nine miles, and though the day was far spent, and the night fast drawing on, they at once retrace their steps in their earnest desire to join the little company of the Lord's people gathered together at Jerusalem. And having reached their own company they find, to their great delight, they are in the company of the Risen Lord, and in His company there is no room for dissatisfied or disappointed hearts. There all reasonings and all sadness give place to "wonder", "worship", and "great joy" (41, 52).

THE BELIEVER AND DEATH.

The Lord usually reserves dying strength for a dying hour. When Israel was to pass Jordan, the ark was in the river; and though the rear of the host could not see it, yet as they successively came forward and approached the banks, they all beheld the ark, and all went safely over.

You have nothing to fear from death; for Jesus, by dying, has disarmed it of its sting, has perfumed the grave, and opened the gates of glory for His people. Satan is a vanquished enemy; our Lord holds him in a chain, and sets him bounds that he cannot pass.
"THE ALL-VARIEGATED WISDOM OF GOD."
Eph. 3. 10 (N.T.).

(H. J. VINE.)

A Study as to the teaching of the precious stones mentioned in the Scriptures, Exodus 28.; Ezekiel 28.; Revelation 21.

THAT God should call such as we are, and save us by His grace, is a cause for eternal thanksgiving and praise! We were once far away from Him, undone by sin, held in darkness under the authority of the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that energizes those who are disobedient. “But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ,” and saved us by His grace; “that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2. 7).

We have cause also to give Him thanks for His present care over us. It is unceasing! Do we recognize this sufficiently? Not a sparrow is forgotten before Him! “The very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows” (Luke 11. 7)—such are the words of our Lord Jesus Christ. It was amidst much tribulation that the Apostle Paul said, “Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation” (2 Cor. 1. 3, 4). How little we bless God for the grace and for the mercies which He makes to abound towards us continually!

The spring of all God’s ways with us is found in the great love wherewith He loves us; in the love that was manifested in the sending of His beloved Son into the world, that we might have life eternal. He is, however, not only known to us as our God who has called us and saved us, and as the Father of mercies whose care and compassion for us is so unremittent; but He is also made known as “the God of glory” and as “the Father of glory”. Love, and grace, and mercy, and glory, and wisdom all shine out resplendent in the way He has wrought for our blessing in Christ; “in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace; wherein He hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence” (Eph. 1. 7, 8).

When in the riches of His rich grace He called us by the Gospel, He had the glory in view, just as it was with the calling out of Abraham; God had in view the blessing of all nations, and the filling of the earth with His glory. So it is said, the God of glory appeared to Abraham (Acts 7. 2). Only there is this difference now—we are called out in view of universal glory, and of heavenly glory especially. Therefore it is desired in Ephesians 1. 17, that we should be granted the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of the Father of glory; for He is the divine Source of that universal glory—the Beginner and the Begetter of it all. How blessed that this is so! The one Source of it all is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, our God and Father, too, through His grace; but the glory itself, like the wisdom with which it is brought about, is both vast and varied as we shall see.

The centre of it is Christ. He is the One in whom it shall be headed up; and He is Head of the body, the assembly. He is the Lord of glory. When He was in this world, the great and the wise did not recognize Him, for “none of the princes of this world knew, for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory”. He was God’s hidden wisdom, predetermined
before the ages for our glory. He is now exalted in heaven, and is known to our glad hearts as the Lord in glory. His unsearchable riches, and the riches of the glory of the mystery, concerning Christ and the assembly, in relation to the glory we speak of, are now revealed. It is in this that all the divine treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid (Col. 2. 3).

"Oh way of purposed blessing
In Christ made known to man!
The fruit we're now possessing,
Of Wisdom's wondrous plan."

God's great love for us has been fully declared in His Son. His grace is glorified in the way He has made us His. His manifold mercies are new every day. Soon we shall shine with Christ above to the praise of His glory. But even now the secret of His wise counsel of love is made known to His own.

* * * * *

THE WISDOM OF GOD.

When we say 'It is now made known', we mean in contrast to the times before Christ was exalted as the Lord in glory, after He had secured eternal redemption by His work on the cross. Previously, we are told, "Silence was kept in the times of the ages" (1 Rom. 16. 25) as to this mystery, but it "has now been made manifest". That is the way of "God only wise". In Ephesians 3. 5 and 9 we read that in other generations it "has not been made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed", for this mystery was "hidden throughout the ages in God", who created everything in view of the making known to the heavenly dignities and intelligences His "all-variegated wisdom", through the assembly in Christ, in accordance with His purpose in Him. In Colossians 1. 26, it is said, "The mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but has now been made manifest to His saints". The treasury of the varied stores of divine wisdom and knowledge are hidden in this mystery. Indeed, "all the treasures" of wisdom and knowledge are there (Col. 2. 3). The philosophies that have originated in the minds of men can add nothing to the assembly, but are "vain deceit", leading away from Christ, in whom our fullness is, and in whom also the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily.

Stepping back in our thoughts for a moment, we may well ask, where could the wisdom be found, to bring man who is sinful into right relation to God who hates sin? How can man who is unrighteous be made right with God who is righteous? How can man who is unholy be made suitable to the presence of a holy God? Can fallen man be blessed before a just God? If this cannot be done, where shall the mercy of God be displayed? Where shall His forgiving grace and love be known? His longsuffering, His goodness, His kindness, His pity, His compassion—where shall these be seen? Could divine wisdom devise a way whereby righteousness and grace could meet together in peace? A way for justice and mercy to greet each other in truth? A way by which all the holy attributes of God could abide in perfect harmony with His nature of love, in the blessing of sinful man who had merited His judgement, and do so in such a manner that His wisdom in its all-variegated perfection and beauty might be made known to the heavenly dignities, who had witnessed man's sin and degradation?

Job asks, where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding? Man knoweth not the price thereof; neither is it found in the land of the living (Job 28. 12, 13). Gathering up the gold and silver and precious things of creation, he shows that wisdom outvalues them all. The precious onyx, and the sapphire, and the crystal cannot equal it; the price thereof is above coral or pearls or rubies; the topaz of Ethiopia cannot compare with it. If it is not to be
found in *Creation*, whence then cometh wisdom? and where is the place of understanding? seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living. In answer, we are told, “God understandeth the way thereof”; also that, “Destruction and death” had heard the fame thereof. This is surely an intimation of the Cross of Christ. Yes, the necessary wisdom was known to God, and when that “hidden wisdom” came forth in Christ, and the world crucified the Lord of glory, then death and destruction heard its fame! It was there in that wonderful Cross that the conciliation of the attributes and nature of God was expressed, in regard to the blessing of sinful man. The sinless Son of God took the sinner’s place, and bore the righteous judgement which the sinner’s sins demanded: God the Son there glorified God the Creator in respect of His creature’s sin.

“Holy claims of justice finding Full expression in that scene; Light and love alike are telling What His woe and sufferings mean.”

Upon the cross, the holy, sinless Son of God was made sin for us, and then and there made atonement for our guilt, and secured eternal redemption for us. He both satisfied and glorified God in regard to our terrible guilt, and we know Him now as our Lord and Saviour; Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God. He is God and Man. Who else could bring fallen man back to God in a right way in happiness and blessing, and glorify God in doing it? And in what other way could even such an One do it righteously and abidingly, save by bearing the judgement we deserved? There was none other who could do it! There was none other way! To Christ on the Cross we look to see the way of God’s wonderful wisdom.

We may look at *Creation*, and see the glory of His power and divinity; but we must look at the *Cross* to see His glorious moral perfections, and His great love. Nor can we read His glory in the present state of government in the world, even though God Himself has set up the authorities that exist. There is government; and we have reason to be thankful for this; knowing that all true justice comes from God’s wisdom; even as He tells us in Proverbs 8. 15-16; “By Me kings reign and princes decree justice. By Me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth”. In such as Solomon, remarkable wisdom in government was seen; but it has been corrupted like all else committed to man’s responsibility.

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**THE PRECIOUS STONES OF EZEKIEL 28—GOVERNMENT.**

The King of ancient Tyre is brought before us in Ezekiel 28. 12, as an example. He, doubtless, pictures for us that great unseen dignity—Satan, now fallen—the devil. He had been in the holy mountain of God, the place of divine government; and in “Eden the garden of God”, the sphere of national order according to God (compare 28. 13 with 31. 8, 9, 16, 18). He sealed up the sum of perfections in regard to government as ‘king’. He was “full of wisdom and perfect in beauty”; but he sinned, and corrupted his wisdom by reason of his brightness. He became the great enemy of God and the oppressor of mankind. He cruelly used the might of death to keep in bondage the children of God through the fear of it; and Christ took of flesh and blood, so that He might go into death and deliver them from this bondage by annulling him (Hebrews 2. 14, 15). In regard to government, we should remark, It was no matter of mockery, when in that very high mountain, the devil showed the Lord “all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory”, and said to Him, “All these things will I give Thee if, falling down, Thou wilt do me homage”. It was a real temptation, even though our blessed, adorable Saviour and Lord triumphed over it. The remarkable position of Satan is
seen in his being able to approach the holy Son of God, and make such an offer. The Lord Jesus spoke of him as the prince or ruler of this world.

In regard to Creation, Job showed that wisdom was beyond all its riches of gold, and silver, and precious stones. Ezekiel, too, when he speaks of this great dignitary—"the anointed cherub"—in his place of Government, full of wisdom, groups these stones of beauty about him, and tells us that every precious stone was his covering:

1. "The sardius, the topaz, and the diamond;
2. The chrysolite, the onyx, and the jasper;
3. The sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle;
and gold" (Ez. 28. 13, N.T.).

The light for guidance in government was thus gloriously reflected in him, the creature, though not originated in him. The variety and beauty were there; but he fell from his high estate; and another must come—a greater and wiser than even Solomon—Christ, the true King (as Matthew introduces Him), and take up the dignity and glory in a way that shall be for abiding blessing to all creation, and for the glory of God. In the holy mount the three disciples saw His majesty. His face shone as the sun, and his garments were white as the light; and from the excellent glory the Father's voice was heard saying, "THIS IS MY BELOVED SON, IN WHOM I HAVE FOUND MY DELIGHT".

**THE PRECIOUS STONES OF EXODUS 28.—GRACE AND GLORY.**

The Son has the glorious position of Firstborn in all the Creation; and following upon the overthrow of Satan through His death, He takes the highest place in Government. He is "the Firstborn from the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth". All things in heaven and earth are put under Him; He is given to be Head over all to the assembly, which is His body. He is set above every principality, authority, power and dominion. This is not yet publicly seen, but it will be in God's own time; meanwhile, anointed with the oil of gladness in glory above His co-heirs, He is preparing them to inherit with Him the glory that is His.

It is here that His grace is active on our behalf. Before He reached the exalted place which is His, He suffered here, being tempted; He is therefore now able to succour us who are tempted on our way to the glory. He sympathizes with our infirmities, and as our High Priest He saves to the uttermost those who approach by Him to God. Such is His present grace! The service of Aaron for Israel, saved out of Egypt, is a type of this grace. On his shoulders and on his breast Aaron bore the names of the tribes when he represented them in the holy presence of God. On his shoulders were two onyx stones; and like the engravings of a signet, six names were cut into each precious stone, to glisten there before the Lord (Exodus 28. 12). These two stones were on the shoulders of the priestly ephod; but inseparably connected with this ephod was the breastplate, in which there was set a precious stone for each name. We are told, the breastplate shall not be loosed from the ephod (verse 28). Aaron bore their names on his heart also for a memorial before the Lord. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ"? "He ever liveth to make intercession for us." His present service of power and love prevails on our behalf.

Another feature in this beautiful type is, the Urim and the Thummim were put in the breastplate of the High Priest. The wisdom of God for guidance was connected therewith. The lights and perfections (for that is the meaning of Urim and Thummim) of
God were associated with priestly grace. Urim began with the first letter in the Hebrew alphabet, and Thummim with the last. Christ is the Alpha and the Omega. The language of God is expressed in Him. He is the wisdom of God. We learn the mind of God in Him. It is remarkable that this undescribed Urim and Thummim should be “put in the breastplate”, upon which the names of God’s people glistened. Is there not some indication (then hidden), of the riches of the glory of the mystery (now made known among the nations), “which is Christ in you the hope of glory” (Col. 1. 27) ?

The precious stones in relation to government are arranged in three threes (Ezekiel 28.) In connection with grace there are four threes (Exodus 28.); this order is also given in relation to glory (Revelation 21.). In Job 28., where the precious things of Creation are grouped, the order is not so clear; but seven seems to be the number given. The stones in Exodus 28. 17 are arranged thus:—

1. “A sardoin, a topaz, and an emerald;”
2. A carbuncle, a sapphire, and a diamond;
3. An opal, an agate, and an amethyst;
4. A chrysolite, and an onyx, and a jasper;

enclosed in gold in their settings” (N.T.).

It should be remarked that the jasper, which is the last of the twelve here, is the first in Revelation 21. 19. In the likeness of jasper and sardius, the One who sits on the throne appears, in Revelation 4, that which grace teaches and leads up to, is reached in perfection, glory; when the church, which will come forth as the holy city, will reflect the glory of God, and shine as a crystal-like jasper stone most precious. This is as yet unknown. The opaque jasper of earth, with its elegant polish and varied colours, is known; but the clear, crystal-like jasper, like the heavenly, transparent gold, has not been seen. Such symbols speak of splendours yet to come. The radiance of that day will be altogether heavenly, according to divine wisdom; and the glory of God will enlighten all, as it shines upon the face of the Lamb, our blessed Lord Jesus Christ.

“Undazzled in that glory bright,
Which shines upon His face,
Where every eye beholds unveiled
The mysteries of His grace.”

The foregoing anticipates a little; but it prepares us to understand what is said in Ephesians 3. 10 as to the all-variegated wisdom of God. The word for all-variegated is only used this once in the Bible. It is polupoikilos. If a Grecian saw a magnificent picture, a masterpiece of brilliance and design, blending its colours in the most beautiful harmony, this is the word he would use to describe the varied and yet harmonious combination of colour, with its rich hues and delicate tints, presented so pleasingly to his eye. In the times past, before the redemption work of Christ was accomplished on the cross, before He had ascended to God’s right hand, and sent down the Holy Spirit, the mystery, in which the treasures of wisdom are found, was hidden in God. He had created all things, having in view the purpose which He purposed in Christ before He created the universe; and according to that purpose to provide a way for the making known of His all-variegated wisdom. Such a thought transcends the natural mind altogether; but God has revealed it that we may rejoice in it, in the power of the Spirit, even as we read concerning the administration of this mystery, “hidden throughout the ages in God, who has created all things, in order that NOW to the principalities and authorities in the heavenlies might be made known through the assembly the all-variegated wisdom of God, according to the purpose of the ages, which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord”. Creation becomes the sphere for this.
What love! What glory! What surpassing grace! To quarry sinners such as ourselves out of the pit, and to connect us with such princely and supernal splendour. Eternal praise to our God and Father, even as there shall be glory to God "in the assembly in Christ Jesus unto all generations of the age of the ages" (Ephesians 3. 21, N.T.).

THE PRECIOUS STONES OF REVELATION 21.—THE CLIMAX.

When the assembly is seen in glory in Revelation 21. 10, as the bride, the Lamb's wife, she shines out as a city of pure gold, like transparent glass. A great and high wall of jasper is also seen; and twelve gates, which is the well-known symbol of her administrative character. The wall has twelve foundations, and it is in this that we have the final grouping of the precious stones; and that in inspired keeping with the order of the other groupings in Scripture. The foundations of the wall are adorned thus:

1. "The jasper, the sapphire, and the chalcedony;
2. The emerald, the sardonyx, and the sardius;
3. The chrysolite, the beryl, and the topaz;
4. The chrysoprasus, the jacinth, and the amethyst,
and the twelve gates, twelve pearls; each gate one pearl."

The absence of the ruby here is both striking and instructive. The value of this stone would appeal to the natural mind as meriting a place in this group, where there is none other of greater value or hardness. Why, then, does the Holy Spirit give it no place in this heavenly scene? Because He uses it as a distinctive earthly symbol else-

where. Jerusalem on earth is to have her "battlements of rubies", not "windows of agates" (Isa. 54. 12), and her princes "more ruddy than rubies". Unlike other stones, this rich red ruby of carmine here, is always spoken of in the plural in Scripture. The heavenly bride, the assembly, is characterized by oneness, of which each gate of "one pearl" witnesses. In view of this, it is not surprising to read of the worthy woman. Her value is "far above rubies" (Prov. 31. 10); and of wisdom, "she is more precious than rubies" (Prov. 3. 15, 8. 11, etc.).

As we pointed out before, these precious stones, representing the varied reflections of the light and perfection of God, do not originate that which shines from them. "God only wise" does this. But how glorious is the display which He is about to bring to pass through the assembly, the heavenly bride, according to His purpose in His beloved Son. The administration will be blessed indeed; and the nations of the earth will benefit thereby. It will not be angelic then. The administration will be in the hands of Man glorified. It will be perfect! What is man? God has set Him over the works of His hands! This is seen in Jesus crowned with glory and honour as Man at the right hand of the majesty in the heavens. Those who are glorified with Him as His co-heirs, share in His glory as Man.

THE LORD OF GLORY.

Christ was the Wisdom of God in a mystery—the hidden Wisdom; though all true guidance in government emanated from Him at all times (compare 1 Cor. 2. 7 and Prov. 8.); but the rulers and princes of this world, whose own wisdom comes to nought, did not know Him when He came in flesh. They displayed their ignorance, as well as their hatred, by crucifying the Lord of glory. But that which eye has not seen, nor ear heard, God has revealed to us by His Spirit. Christ is
the wisdom ‘which God had predetermined for our glory’ (1 Cor. 2:7), and when the assembly shines out in heavenly radiance, He shall be ‘glorified in His saints, and wondered at in all that have believed’.

His glory as the Firstborn in the Creation may be set forth in the first precious stone mentioned in the Bible,—the onyx (Gen. 2:12). It is also the first in the group of Job 28:16-19; and it is there distinguished as the ‘precious onyx’. The only separate stone so designated, except where Christ is spoken of as the Stone, Elect, Precious. The onyx stones were on the shoulders of the High Priest; and a glance at the groups of government and grace (Ezek. 28. and Exod. 28.) shows that the onyx retains a special place of distinction; being the centre stone in government, and the centre of the last three in grace; whilst in each case it is set between the chryso-lite and the jasper. The fact that the onyx is not seen in the wall of the city, emphasizes that Christ Himself is indicated. The bdellium is mentioned with it alone in Gen. 2:12; and this is only named again once in Scripture, in Num. 11:7, in connection with the manna. This, again, confirms what we have said, for if we have the glory of Christ as the Firstborn of all Creation in the onyx, we are reminded that when He came into His Creation, He came in lowly grace as the Manna, whose appearance was as bdellium. He was the One who humbled Himself, blessed be His Name; but He could ask those who murmured in the presence of this lowly grace, ‘What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before’?

There are many features in these groups of precious stones in the law, and the prophets, and the apocalypse, which speak eloquently to the true believer of the same Spirit inspiring all; and of the glories of our blessed Lord to Whom all the Scriptures point; but we must leave the reader to trace them out himself, in prayerful dependence upon the guidance of the Spirit, and bring our meditation to a close, or it will occupy too much space.

A word must be said as to the most valuable and most beautiful of all these precious stones; for the diamond seems to single out some special and supreme glory of Christ. It is the hardest and most precious of minerals. Nothing but diamond can cut diamond! Like the onyx it is not found in the wall of the city in glory. Where is it? Surely, it must be found in glory somewhere, if the other precious stones are there! The fact that it shines in the first three of Ezekiel 28., and that it glistens on the breastplate of Aaron, although absent from the city wall, tells us that the diamond points to Jesus, who takes up the Kingly dignity in governments, and the priestly place in grace. He is both King and Priest; and as such will fill the throne (Zech. 6:13). This supreme glory is His alone! and He is worthy!

Oh, that our hearts knew His love, and His grace, and His glory in a deeper way. We lose nothing by so doing; but rather are we led to know our own portion better, as we meditate upon, and rejoice in, His the more. May our blessed God and Father enable us to do so in the power of the Holy Spirit. “NOW TO THE KING ETERNAL, INCORRUPTIBLE, INVISIBLE, THE ONLY WISE GOD, BE HONOUR AND GLORY FOR EVER AND EVER. AMEN.”

When faith is tested we learn our own weakness but God’s faithfulness.

Faith tested is faith strengthened.
“JOY IN THE HOLY GHOST.”

If you carefully study the early chapters of the Acts of the Apostles, you will find that the great object for which the Gospel was preached was that men might receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. We would say, “But surely it is that men might be saved, that they might have their sins forgiven, that they might be fit for heaven.” Yes, all that enters into it, but the great aim on the part of God was that men might receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, because, after all, apart from the blessed Spirit of God and the fullness and sufficiency of His work in us, there can be nothing in the shape of progress or power, or effective testimony, or inward joy. If we have not that inward joy, that gladness which depends not on external circumstances, however favourable, but which is wrought in us by the work of the Holy Spirit, we are poor, powerless creatures. “The joy of the Lord is your strength.” Show me a joyless Christian, and I will show you a powerless one. Show me a poor, weak, helpless Christian, and I think I can let you into the secret of his powerlessness—he is a joyless Christian.

The greatness of the gift of the Holy Spirit cannot be exaggerated. The Russian Doukhobors are a very queer people, but there are a great many children of God among them. Amongst their acts of worship which we should think very strange is this: when they meet together on Sunday morning they commence their meetings by making a profound obeisance to one another. If you ask them why they do it, they will tell you it is their way of recognizing the fact that God, the Holy Ghost, dwells in each member of the body. “It is not to men we make obeisance,” they will say, “but we recognize the presence of the third Person of the Godhead in that way.” We should not care perhaps to imitate them in this strange custom, but surely we ought to recognize more than we do the presence of the Holy Ghost.

“What, know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which you have of God, and ye are not your own?” Anything is better than not recognizing His abiding presence. It is a most tremendous fact that you and I have the Holy Spirit dwelling within us, and of course it raises the question of allowing the Holy Spirit to have His way with us, how far we are allowing Him to have His way, and strike up that note of joy, which can only be spelled with six letters—CHRIST—in our hearts. If we miss this wonderful opportunity which this little span of life affords, of letting the Holy Spirit strike up this wonderful note of joy within, God may and will forgive us, but I believe we will never forgive ourselves.

It is said that the Cathedral of Freiburg has the most magnificent organ in Christendom, and people used to come from far and near to play that organ. One day a man, mean in appearance, and shabby in dress, entered the Cathedral, and went up to the organist, and asked permission to play. The organist drew himself up, looked at this stranger from head to foot, and declined to have his organ played by such a person. But the visitor had some coins in his pocket which he judiciously jingled. This was music in the organist’s ear, and he relented, and said to the visitor that he might sit down and play for a little while. The organist went about his work, and the visitor sat down, and began to run his fingers over the keys. The organist had never heard such music as this produced from his organ. Whoever was this insignificant looking stranger? He went up to him, and stood breathless until he ceased to play; then he said, “May I ask your name?” The player at the organ turned to him, and said, “My name is Mendelssohn.” He was, indeed, that world-famous musician. The poor organist was filled with shame at having treated Mendelssohn in such a way. He said, “I can
neve forgive myself to think that I refused you permission to play on my organ.

If the blessed Holy Spirit has His way with us, He will show us the things of Christ, and strike up marvellous music in our souls. He will put the very gladness of God there. He wants to make our hearts thrill with the melodies of Christ. He wants to make the chords of our souls vibrate with the love of Christ, and here we are, hugging some little bit of the world, something that hinders Him and grieves Him. When we have got to the end of our little life-span, some of us will have to look back over the mis-spent days, and to say, "To think that I refused Him the permission which He sought to produce those melodies in my soul! God will forgive me, but I cannot forgive myself". God help us to avail ourselves of the opportunities put within our reach of going His way, putting our hand, as it were, into His gracious hand to lead us in the Christ-glorifying way.

OUR SPIRITUAL STATURE.

Our spiritual stature is not measured by our mental acquaintance with the truth, but by the practical effect of it in our daily lives. We may be able to explain with perfect lucidity the early chapters of Romans, but if the righteousness of the law is not fulfilled in us by our walking not after the flesh but after the Spirit (chap. viii.), of what value is it? If the truth of justification by faith and all the mercies of God which we clearly see have delivered us from condemnation by placing us in Christ, do not lead us to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, there is something wrong. We have become enlarged in the head and not in the heart, with the result that we are puffed up in the flesh and have not developed in the Spirit. Knowledge puffs up; love builds up; one is wind and gas and will perish in a moment, the other is Christ formed in the soul by the Holy Spirit and will abide for ever.

We may be well acquainted with the doctrines of the early chapters of Ephesians, and be able to expound the glories of them to others; it will be all worthless if the effect of the knowledge does not lead us to use diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love.

We must not study the doctrinal parts of the Epistles less, but we must pay more attention to their exhortations, for our spiritual stature is measured by our ability to carry them out rightly according to God as the truths that precede them are in our souls in power, but we may test ourselves as to how far these truths possess us by the way they affect our conduct.—Ed.

"For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? . . . Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord" (2 Cor. 6. 14-18. See also 2 Cor. 7. 1; 1 Cor. 5. 6; Eph. 5. 11; 2 Thess. 3. 6, 14).
A CELEBRATED statesman made a speech lately, addressed to University students. He said:—

"There never were, in my opinion—when you survey the international sphere—there never were conditions which made it more necessary for us to go back to first principles."

The phrase, "Back to first principles", is striking, and worthy of a place in our thoughts in relation to the things of the Lord. As to the realm of politics we can, and should, as Christians, steer clear of it. "Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth" (Isa. xlv. 9), said the prophet; whilst our Lord said, "Let the dead bury their dead" (Matt. viii. 22).

But in the sphere of the Lord's interests we may well consider the demand, "back to first principles", for it is sadly needed.

Look at Christendom to-day, divided into sects, systems, and divisions, the most enlightened Christians unable to say they have had no part in the failure. Look at evil doctrine rampant, worldliness among Christians the rule rather than the exception. We may well be exercised.

"Back to first principles" is an acknowledgement that they have been departed from.

As I write, a great gathering of University students from all parts of the world is in conference in Glasgow. Long reports of the different addresses have been given. These addresses, by their very departure from first principles, emphasize the necessity for the return to first principles.

Dr. John R. Mott, Secretary of the Christian Students' Movement, sent a message to the gathering as follows:—

"May delegates have revised vision of the necessity, urgency, practicability of enthroning Christ in social, international and inter-racial life of mankind, and to this end may they return to confront the present student generation with the living Christ through their lives, witness-bearing and united service."

Now one of the first principles in which God is acting is "to take OUT of them [the nations] a people for His name" (Acts xv. 14); whilst our Lord said, speaking of His disciples, "They are NOT of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John xvii. 16).

A first principle is to grasp the truth that the Christian Society is an unworldly society, and the seeking of a place in the world the prime way for its enervation and ultimate destruction. The devil knew what he was about when he sowed tares among the wheat; that is, introduced mere professors into the Christian circle. The result of that was to pave the way for the pretension of Christendom, set forth in the parable of the grain of mustard seed, and seen in all the political aggrandizement and imposing pomp and ritualism of Rome, and in a lesser way both in Church and dissent. All true barriers gone, the way is open for the leavening of the Christian doctrine with evil teaching, as set forth in the parable of the woman introducing the leaven in the three measures of meal. And surely the Christian profession to-day is leavened through and through with evil doctrine.

Thus we are faced with the signs of apostasy on every hand, soon to result in absolute apostasy, once the true Church is raptured to heaven.

As to Dr. Mott's desire to see Christ enthroned in the social, international, and inter-racial life of mankind—that cannot be till Christ Himself comes to reign, and Scripture warns us that the great tribulation must take place, bringing judgment on God's enemies, and deliverance to His people Israel, brought to repentance through the terrible ordeal of the tribulation. Evil men and seducers are to wax
worse and worse, and the millennium cannot be till Christ arises and takes the reigns of government into His hands.

No; never more than now the necessity of the believer, if he is to carry out God's mind, is

SEPARATION FROM THE WORLD,

including separation from a worldly religion.

Hear Paul's inspired exhortation:—

"Be ye not unequally yoked with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an unbeliever? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God... wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate" (2 Cor. vi. 14-17).

If this were acted upon, every Christian would leave churches and chapels where unconverted ministers, officers, and members were knowingly allowed. And Christians, true Christians and unworldly, simply following the teaching of Scripture, would exert far more power in the world for God, and in the salvation of sinners out of it, than by this unholy mixing up of things that leads to such disaster.

Another speaker, Mr. J. H. Oldham, London, said:—

"We must have an international Society, and the Christian Church should be that Society."

The apostles had no such outlook, and no diligent reader of the Bible could gather such a false idea from the Scriptures.

The apostle Peter wrote to the believers: "I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims" (1 Peter ii. 11), and spoke of them as partakers of Christ's sufferings and being reproached for the name of Christ; an unworldly society, belonging to "another-worldly" society, if I may be allowed to coin a word, rendering them strangers, as not belonging to this world, and pilgrims, as travelling to that world. Would that the Christian students had the truth of separation from the world put before them.

The apostle John, in his inspired writings, draws a very clear line of demarcation between the believer and the world. The following is a sweeping statement:—

"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 the world passeth away and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (John ii. 16, 17).

Whilst the apostle Paul is equally clear:—

"For our conversation [our citizenship] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. iii. 20).

First principles lead us to take up an unworldly position, yet diligently seeking to spread the Gospel and "show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light" (1 Peter ii. 9), recognizing the unworldly character of the Church, and knowing that blessing for the world as such can only come when He, whom the world crucified, comes to reign.

The Bishop of Peterborough, in his address, said:—

"If Christianity was to grip the world it would not be done by a mere collection of free lances, however admirable or enthusiastic. It would only be done by the organized community which they called the church."

Here the Bishop has the right idea, but he applies it to the wrong thing. What he has in view is the highly
organized, religious community of saved and unsaved—the latter, alas! in the preponderance, which he calls the Church. Whilst thanking God for the Reformation that released these favoured lands from the superstition and thraldom of Rome, alas, rearing again its head and gathering strength in these last days; yet we cannot but acknowledge that it came partly as a political affair, in the which the ungovernable moods of Henry VIII, whose life was one long act of cruelty and wickedness, had part. He became head of the Reformed Church of England, and whatever the character of the reigning monarch is he holds this office by virtue of his kingship. The union between Church and State is diametrically opposed to the teaching of the Word of God, as also the order of priesthood, for all believers are priests in God’s account.

But let us get back to first principles and endeavour to get a true idea of the Church of God.

Before God it consists of every blood-washed, Spirit-indwelt believer on the face of the earth. As a professing thing on earth it is composed of all baptized individuals, who are thus held by God responsible for their profession. The former is seen in Ephesians (see Eph. i. 22, 23; iv. 4, 16; v. 25–33); the latter is seen in the addresses of the seven churches in Rev. ii. and iii., which are set forth under the figure of “the seven golden candlesticks”.

In the midst of profession and amid all the confusion caused by the mixture of saved and unsaved, the link between Church and State, the worldliness and political efforts of the Churches, the evil doctrines, the divisions, denominations, sects and parties, we need guidance, and this we get from the Lord by His Spirit through His Word.

Amid all the ruin we should associate with those who seek without assumption to cleave to the Lord, maintain an unworldly position, and recognize in a practical way the truths of the assembly, carrying out the order laid down in Scripture, as far as the confusion of the day allows.

That being so, what the Bishop of Peterborough says as to ‘free lances’ is true and weighty. The discipline of an army makes no room for free lances, nor does the navigation of a ship, nor the running of a business, nor the building of a house. Each individual employed is under a master mind, and labouring for the complete result in co-operation with all who are under the direction of that master mind.

What should definitely be before each servant’s mind is the objective of building up God’s thoughts in souls. We may minister the Gospel, or our limit may be the truth of a very simple nature, but, in learning that, souls would not be under the necessity of unlearning anything in order to receive further and deeper truths.

We are assured, with the right object before us, that we should be better evangelists, pastors, teachers or helps.

An earnest evangelist in France, recently writing to a brother in Scotland, says: “The preaching of the truth does its own separating work”. He never wrote a truer word.

There must be in the last days of the Church’s history upon earth a revival of truth, a returning to first principles we feel sure, as we study Rev. 2. 17 and 3. 10-12. Though Laodicea may, and does, characterize the present day with its sinister omens of the apostasy prophesied by Scripture abounding on every hand, yet Philadelphia, blessed be God, goes on to the end of the Church’s history on the earth, terminated, as it is, at the Lord’s coming.

We have written pointing out the need of returning to first principles; perhaps some abler pen may be used in describing more fully and in a more orderly way what they are.
G. L.—We cannot add much to the paper to which you refer (Scripture Truth, Vol. xi, p. 138). That which it describes is an experience to be greatly desired. Often when we turn to God in prayer we are burdened, fretful, and impatient. We are often more occupied with our needs than with His readiness and ability to meet them; perhaps more anxious to have our desires granted than to know what His will is respecting us. We think more of our praying, or having prayed, than of the God to whom we pray; and so instead of the stillness of soul that the Psalmist describes, we go from our praying as restless and perturbed as ever. This means that instead of being consciously in the presence of God, we have been in the presence of our need only, our need has been more real than God to us, and nearer to us than He. To be silent unto God means that we have made our request known unto Him, and know that He has heard us; we know that our help is in Him alone, "from Him cometh my salvation". "He is my rock and my salvation; He is my defence, I shall not be moved." And we wait for Him to move for us according to His own wisdom.

In verse 8 of the same Psalm the Psalmist exhorts the people to pour out their hearts before God; this is what he had done. He had told out to God his whole burden and all his circumstance, and had discovered that God was a defence for him against all that he had feared, and in simple trust he could be silent before Him. You will find the New Testament counterpart of this in Philippians iv. 6, 7: "Be careful for nothing: but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

What a God-honouring, peace-giving experience this must be.

The Lord nourishing and cherishing the Church.

V.—This beautiful statement (Eph. v. 29) brings the Lord's unchanging love in its present activities strikingly before us. The meaning of 'NOURISHES' is that He supplies every need of His Church. If a person's body is to be properly nourished it means that every part of it must have its every need supplied, not only must the wear and tear and waste be made good, but there must be a replenishing and abundant supply, so that there may always be a reserve to fall back upon. All the spiritual need of His Church is a matter of deep concern to the Lord. He furnishes a supply of grace and strength—all that is needed in fact to sustain it according to His own thoughts. And what He is to the whole Church He is to each individual that composes it, to you and me. This is beautifully illustrated in Paul's case: "My grace is sufficient for thee, my strength is made perfect in weakness".

'CHERISHES' means that He nurtures and develops the affections of the Church towards Himself. It expresses at once the strength and tenderness of His love, for it speaks of protection and affectionate consideration. The two words together declare His all-sufficient care for our spiritual necessities, and His tender cultivation of the love of the Church towards Himself. And let us not forget that what He does for it, He does for each one that forms it. All we need is to be nearer to His heart of love to realize it all.
Bible Study.

TRENT. Systems of Bible Study do not appeal to us, and this is the reason why we have not adopted any in our publication. Every Christian ought to study the Bible; those who neglect this will soon become lean in soul and drift into worldly things, and helps to the study of it are useful, but we think it better to leave every one to their own methods. Certainly you should make use of all the helps you can, but see to it that it is the Bible you study and not the helps.

But the study of the Bible is not enough; this may be merely the activity of the mind, and in consequence, while you gain a knowledge of the framework of it, the heart of it, and the life and spirit that are in it, remain hidden from you. We need Divine illumination, and this comes more by meditation and prayer than study, for in meditation on the Word THE HEART is engaged, and in prayer about the Word we put ourselves in that dependent attitude before God, which gives His Holy Spirit the opportunity of unfolding the things of Christ to us. Hence we read, “Meditate on these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all” (1 Tim. iv. 15).

It is not by mental activity that we progress in the knowledge of the will of God, for this we need to have the eyes of our hearts enlightened (Eph. i. 18, N.T.); and yet the mind has its place in the reception of the truth; the heart and mind go together. By all means give yourself to the study of the Word, and use everything that will help you in this, but don’t forget that the Holy Ghost is the Teacher, and He cannot be bound by any system of study, for all of them are human and He is Divine; but have with your study, meditation and prayer.

Christ our Substitute and Representative.

SOUTHEND.—We believe you are right in speaking of the Lord as our Substitute rather than our Representative on the cross. In one sense of the word He was our Representative there, but the word is capable of other meanings, and Substitute has but this, that He stood in our place and bore all the judgment that was our due. As you say, we did not elect Him to stand in our place, and the word representative generally means one elected or chosen to stand for others, those for whom He stands.

“But He was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our ini-}

QUITIES” when we only “ despised and rejected” Him. We may well thank God for the grace that has broken down our opposition to Him and opened our eyes to see that “Christ died for the ungodly.”

He represents all the saints of God to-day in the presence of God, just as the high priest in Israel went into the Holiest to represent the whole nation there, but He could not be spoken of as our Substitute now. Every Christian can say, He was my Substitute upon the cross, He is my Representative before the throne.

PRAYER.

Much prayer means much of God; little prayer means little of God and much of man; no prayer means none of God and all of man; so then, unless we are downright fools we shall be men of prayer.

J. W. S.
PROBLEMS.

Further Questions on 1 Timothy (chap. 3).

1. WHAT is the difference between a bishop and a deacon? Can we gather this from the qualities required in each?

2. WHY are the qualities necessary in the wife of a deacon stated, while nothing is said of the wife of the bishop?

Answers to these questions will be welcomed by the Editor. Send them as early as possible, please.

Answers to Questions on 1 Timothy (January Issue).

1. WHY, in verse 1, is God spoken of as Saviour and Christ as our hope; and, in verse 2, God as Father and Christ as our Lord? Could the order be reversed?

God is spoken of as Saviour in the opening verse of this Epistle because it is in this character towards all men that the Epistle presents Him, and in this connection Christ Jesus is the one hope and confidence for all. In the salutation of the next verse God and our Lord are spoken of in the relationships in which they stand to the believer, and not as the Gospel sets them forth to all men. Hence it is 'Father' and 'Christ Jesus our Lord'. The order could not be reversed.

2. Why do the translators insert the word 'of' in italics twice in verse 5? Is it to show that love (charity) has its springs in the three things mentioned? But has it? Look up reliable authorities as to what the apostle said; whether he said

Love out of (1) A pure heart,
(2) A good conscience,
(3) And faith unfeigned;

or, whether he said

(1) Love out of a pure heart.
(2) A good conscience.
(3) And faith unfeigned.

The word 'of', which is in italics in our Authorised Version, should be omitted. The three things are distinct as indicated in the latter part of the question. The Gospel, which is, we judge, the commandment spoken of, produces these three things, so that they become the outstanding features of those who come under its converting power. The fables and genealogies, that only gendered question, produced none of these things, but the opposite, and do so still. We must avoid being involved in questions and go in for the truth which ministers 'godly edifying'.

3. WHY was law only made for the lawless? Do not the righteous need guidance as to what is right and what is wrong? Is not a good man to use the law lawfully (verses 8, 9)?

The law was given to curb the godless passions of men and to convict them of their godlessness and sin, and this is its lawful use to-day. When truly convicted they are ready for the Gospel which only can save them. But the Christian does not need the perpetual, capital 'DON'T' of the law. He is under grace, and has received a new nature and life which delights in those things that please God. If a Christian puts himself under law he uses it unlawfully.

4. WHY, in verse 11, does the apostle speak of the Gospel of the glory, instead of the Gospel of the grace, of God? Do not reply merely that he was inspired to do so. WHY did the Holy Spirit inspire him to do so?

The apostle contrasts the Gospel with the law. The law only brought into evidence the abominable wickedness of man, the Gospel declared the glory of God, that is why he speaks of it as the Gospel of the glory of God.
5. **WHY, in verse 13, does Paul say he obtained mercy because he sinned ignorantly? Have not many who have sinned wilfully and daringly obtained mercy?**

The sin here referred to is that of his determined opposition to the name of Jesus and the Gospel of God, and not to the common sins of lying, self-will, and others that have their spring in the will of the flesh. When He blasphemed and persecuted the Church of God he was ignorant of the grace of God, and who Jesus was. When the light from heaven shone upon Him he was not disobedient. Wilful sin, in contrast to this sin of ignorance, would be the deliberated turning away from this grace, or as the leaders of Israel, who knew that Jesus was the Heir and yet said, "Come, let us kill Him".

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**"THESE BE THY GODS!"**

IN one of the great lagoons of cannibal Malaita, in the Solomons, the whole structure of heathen belief is being shaken to its foundations. Ten years ago I first began to visit in the mission ship Evangel two little refugee handfuls of Christians, huddled on a reef island, because of continual killing on the mainland. To-day 700 intelligent believers are worshipping daily in seven large well-built buildings, and include amongst their numbers some of the most renowned fighting chiefs and witch-doctors. So great has become the perturbation in the ranks of the thousands of heathen who cover the inland mountains, that they are largely abandoning the immemorial practice of praying to their akalos, or deceased ancestors. The cult of the older patriarchs among the akalos (in the past, names to conjure with) has largely ceased, men now only occasionally praying to a few of their more immediate ancestors.

They have also largely abandoned praying to the 'afa' or hawk, their universal totem or patron for fighting, and ARE TRYING VARIOUS SUBSTITUTES! They are still afraid to kill hawks, but leave them severely alone. Instead they have adopted new totems, such as the rat and frog, or the snake, such is their despair of the old faiths. On one tiny island they have a number of holy rats, which they feed and worship. Thus the old order having become discredited through comparison with the truth of the Gospel, the Evil One is adopting new devices to keep them from the One Source of Peace and Love.

It is significant that the new cults are called 'schools' in imitation of the Christian schools, and the Christians are allowed free access to all the holy places from which the old akalo-worshipping heathen are excluded (completely reversing the usual order of things); so they seek to counterfeit the freedom of the Gospel! Yet to one who knows the native mind, sodden in superstition, abject in fear of these dreaded ancestors, the whole movement is amazing, and nothing like it has ever been seen before in the islands. The whole experiment seems but the counsel of despair. And it marks, we believe, the beginning of the end. For they will surely find that the new gods "having eyes, see not; having ears, hear not". And the glad songs of praise to the Redeemer, which raise night and morning, from each little mission room, will not long fall upon deaf ears. Continually families are filtering down to all the Christian villages, to swell their numbers, and soon to swell the volume of their praises.

This little drama in this far-away island reminds one of the unclean spirit which having “gone out of a man” afterwards returns with “seven other spirits more wicked than himself” to make the last state worse than the first. And reading of the many apostate movements of to-day, it seems but an echo, faint yet distinct, of the world’s desperate search for new ‘gospels’ which contain no good news, for new cults which cannot satisfy, for fresh seducing spirits with which to fill the hearts designed for God. And the Saviour? The Saviour still cries: "Ye will not come unto me that ye might find LIFE".
"THOU REMAINEST."

O Lord and Saviour, we recline
On that eternal love of Thine,
Thou art our rest, and Thou alone
Remainest when all else is gone.
(Heb. 1. 11-12; 13. 5, 6, 8).

We look out upon a world that is perishing, where all things are waxing old. Over all we see the dark shadow of death, and that sooner or later death breaks up the happiest home on earth. We see how true it is that "the world passeth away". Then with tear-dimmed eyes we turn our gaze from this passing world, we look up through the opened heavens, and, at once we see "the glory of God, and JESUS", and faith delights to say to the Lord,

"THOU REMAINEST".

Our loved ones pass out of our sight, but He remains. Blessed indeed for all saints at all times to realize that He remains, but never more precious than when in the deep sorrow of bereavement—amid the break-up of earthly homes, and the wreck of earthly hopes—we can look up into His face and say, "Thou remainest". And as He looks down into our stricken hearts, with infinite compasssion, He answers back, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee".

The first utterance of these comforting and sustaining words fell upon the ears of a saint about to face a journey. From the after history of that long journey we know by what rough ways it led, the sorrows it contained, the hardships it involved, and the trials it would bring, as well indeed its seasons of joy, its wholesome lessons, and its lasting gains. But in the mercy of the Lord no word is uttered to inform the patriarch Jacob of the character of the path. However, this indeed he does know—he knows the glorious end of the journey, for, says the Lord, "I will bring thee again into this land", and "In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed". But he knows more. From the start of that journey until the last step which set his feet again in the promised land—he knows that he will never be forsaken, for says the Lord—

"I am with thee";
"I will keep thee";
"I will not leave thee".

Nor is it otherwise with the Christian to-day. Yea, rather in a deeper way, and with richer meaning, can we appropriate such words of comfort. We too know the start of our pilgrim journey. We set out with the grace of God that has brought salvation.

We know the end of our journey, for grace begun will end in glory. The appearing of grace makes way for the appearing of glory. A glory in which we shall be like Christ, and with Christ for ever and ever. But between the start in grace and the end in glory there lies our pilgrim path through a hostile world of sin and sorrow. What that untrodden path may hold for us we know not. But this we do know, the Lord has said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee".

For our comfort and assurance this unconditional promise comes to us with all the absolute authority of His own word. It is no prophet or apostle who speaks the word; no messenger from the Lord that brings it. No angel or archangel is equal to breathe such words of comfort into forlorn and sorrowing hearts. It is none other than the Lord Himself who draws near to us in our desolation, and with infinite tenderness, we hear Him say, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee". The binding of broken hearts shall not be in other hands than His. No hands so tender, so gentle, so skilful, to bind a broken heart as the hands once bruised and pierced in love upon the tree. And seeing the Lord 'hath said', faith, rising above a world of sin and sorrow and death, can 'boldly say': "The Lord is my helper, I will not fear."
Moreover the One who breathes these words of comfort—has promised to be with us—is One who has been before us in the journey. He has trodden every step of the way. He has reached the glorious end, and appears in heaven itself before the face of God for us. He can say, as it were, to His sorrowing saints, “I have been before you in the way. I have trodden the path as a stranger in the land, and as a wayfaring man”, as “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief”. I know every turn in the road; I know the rough places and the smooth. There are hills to climb, dark valleys to tread, and rivers to cross, but I know them all. I have climbed the hills, I have trodden the valleys, I have forded the waters. I have passed through the last dark valley of the shadow of death, I have reached the home of glory, I have sat down at the right hand of God, and from My throne of glory I will sustain you, and succour you, and intercede for you as you journey on your way, and at last I will come for you and receive you to Myself, that where I am ye may be also. “I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.”

Moreover there is yet further comfort in the Lord for our sorrowing hearts. Not only can we look up and say, “Thou remainest”, but we can add—

“THOU ART THE SAME”.

Full well we know the way of this sorrowful world. As we look back over the passing years and recall the faces of many we have known and loved, are we not confronted with the sorrow that some have gone, and some have changed? But how does it lift our spirits above the sadness of such moments to look up and discover there is One who will never pass away and never change. As indeed we sometimes sing:

“Earthly friends may fail or leave us, One day soothe, the next day grieve us, But this friend will ne'er deceive us, O, how He loves!”

And just as the Lord's words, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee”, give the blessed answer to that sweet word, “Thou remainest”, so will this last chapter of Hebrews supply the enlargement of that other touching word, “Thou art the same”. For there we read, “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever”. This tells us more than the word in the first chapter, comforting indeed as that is, for this seasonable word tells us not only that He is the same, but that He is the same in heaven to-day as He was on earth in the days that are past.

His circumstances indeed have vastly changed. Yesterday He was the poor and needy Man, the homeless Man, the Stranger with not where to lay His head. To-day He has resumed royalty and majesty in heavenly glory. He has laid aside for ever the garments of humiliation, He has put on the majestic robes of glory in suitability to that place of glory. But though He has changed His circumstance, He has not changed His heart. Many crowns are His, and we delight to crown Him Lord of all; but no crowns that will ever adorn His head will ever change His heart. The love that could weep with Martha and Mary has not changed one whit. The heart that had compassion on the widow of Nain still beats in sympathy with sorrowing saints. The tender love that sustained the broken-hearted Jairus can still say with infinite compassion to a broken-hearted saint, “Be not afraid, only believe”.

“ The shadow dwelt on Calvary's tree, And now Thine unveiled face we see; Praise be to God for that blest word, That 'Thou remainest', blessed Lord.”
NOTES FOR PREACHERS.

HERE is an old story retold which should help those who preach. Judson, the missionary to Burmah, had passed through unheard-of hardships, and had performed dangerous exploits for his Master. He returned, after thirty years' absence, to America. Announced to address an assembly in a provincial town, and a vast concourse having gathered from great distances to hear him, he rose at the close of the usual service, and, as all eyes were fixed and every ear attent, he spoke for about fifteen minutes, with much pathos, of the precious Saviour, of what He had done for us, and of what we owed to Him; and he sat down, visibly affected. "The people are very much disappointed", said a friend to him on their way home; "they wonder you did not talk of something else". "Why, what did they want?" he replied: "I presented, to the best of my ability, the most interesting subject in the world". "But they wanted something different—a story." "Well, I am sure I gave them a story—the most thrilling one that can be conceived of." "But they had heard it before. They wanted something new of a man who had just come from the antipodes." "Then I am glad they have it to say, that a man coming from the antipodes had nothing better to tell than the wondrous story of the dying love of Jesus. My business is to preach the Gospel of Christ; and when I can speak at all, I dare not trifle with my commission. When I looked upon these people to-day, and remembering where I should next meet them, how could I stand up and furnish food for vain curiosity—tickle their fancy with amusing stories, however decently strung together on a thread of religion? That is not what Christ meant by preaching the Gospel. And then how could I hereafter meet the fearful charge, 'I gave you one opportunity to tell them of ME; you spent it in describing your own adventures'?"

The man with one object is the energetic man. The Christian's one object is Christ.

Every bit of work you do is affected by your state. A heart full of Christ, and the seriousness of dealing with souls for eternity, which we feel when full of Him, and speaking from Him, gives weight and unction to our words.

Let not your activity outstrip your communion. Living to God inwardly is the only possible means of living to Him outwardly; apart from this all our service will be marred by self.

Do not mistake man's acceptation for God's approbation. "Study to show thyself approved unto God."

Keep near to Christ. The pressure of the world without contracts the heart, tends to make us lose that largeness of heart, that capacity of presenting the love of God freshly to souls.

THE CROSS OF CHRIST.

VERY much is needed to-day on the moral bearing of the cross, death and resurrection in practice, the Judgment Seat of Christ, and all these eternal, moral, and inevitable issues, from all of which the soul would prefer to turn aside. It prefers things mental, intellectual, expository, rather than that which affects the conscience and the claims of God—in a word, the cross of Christ, and yet that cross was ever and always His own objective; the one thing in glad obedience to the Father's Will that dominated His whole being and regulated His entire pathway here. He truly despised the shame.

(J. Wilson Smith.)
THE GREATNESS OF CHRIST.

"I HAVE FOUND AN ANSWER IN CHRIST TO EVERY QUESTION THAT TROUBLED ME; HE IS THE WISDOM OF GOD."—From a letter by one who sought in vain for satisfaction in Theosophy and Eastern Philosophy.

THERE are many religions and systems of philosophy in the world, but there is only one Mediator between God and man, THE MAN CHRIST JESUS, and no truly awakened soul and conscience can find rest except in Him. There are two terrible realities in the world which affect every man, woman, and child in it; they are SIN and DEATH. The religions of the world make no proposals as to how to deal with these realities; the philosophies of the world wear themselves out in the endeavour to discover the why and wherefore of their presence here; they cannot grapple with them, or curb their activities, or annul their power. There may be high ethical teaching in some of these religions, but they provide men with no strength by which their precepts can be carried out; nor do they tell a sinner, conscious of his perpetual sinning, how he can be at peace with God, or how he may overcome the evil tendencies of his nature; they have no remedy for sin; they cannot cope with death.

But Christ came into the world to deal with these two great powers that held men in this terrible bondage. He came to deal with sin and death. Christ is the power and wisdom of God; He is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, and He has annulled death and brought life and incorruptibility to light by the Gospel; and in taking up these questions He has made fully manifest the very heart of God, and none of the speculative religions of the world do this; the religions of the world are darkness; Jesus is the light of the world, for in Him God was manifested in the flesh. It was at the cross that He dealt with sin and death, and revealed the love of God to men; for there the one Mediator between God and man gave Himself a ransom for all.

He was without sin—the Holy One of God. Yet He was made sin for us, that in righteous judgment our sins might be cancelled, and the nature that produced them condemned, that we might be in Him the righteousness of God (2 Cor. 5. 21). He was totally exempt from any liability to death as to His own person, and yet He came to die, moved by the love that passeth knowledge, and He has broken the power of death, and triumphed over it by resurrection from it.

Our Lord and Saviour stands forth without a rival. His is the Name that is above every name. All honour and praise be His for ever! Every question of the human soul can find an answer in Him, for He is the wisdom of God; every sinful man can be delivered from the power of sin and death, for He is the power of God. How right it is that He should be exalted, since He has met and overcome sin and death, these two great foes of God and man. How right it is that every knee should bow to Him, and every lip confess Him Lord!

Does the question of our sins arise?

"He was delivered for our offence, and was raised again for our justification" (Rom. 4. 25).

Do we ask how the question of our sinful nature is to be answered?

"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Rom. 6. 6).
Do we fear the power of death?

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. 2. 14, 15).

That according as it is written, He that glorieth let him glory in the Lord (1 Cor. 1. 31).

**OUR FATHER’S PURPOSE.**

How beautiful and wondrous to us are the ways of our God with us when we once begin to see the purpose of His heart regarding us!

We see a natural parent toiling and planning to get his children in the order and condition of life here which he thinks the best suited to his means and ability. Now, when we see that there is this purpose in the heart of God respecting us, His children, what may we not expect as to the order and condition of life which He thinks best? Who can describe or measure that? It is not what I think best. If I were to think most extravagantly, could I in any measure reach up to what He thinks best? And when I see that He is leading me to the enjoyment of this, His purpose, I have the key to every dealing and every movement of His hand. He has no doubt of being able to effect His purpose as a natural parent often has: but He wants to make us conscious of His purpose, and to lead us into the enjoyment of it. Our Father, as it were, longs to see us in His house, enjoying His purpose now accomplished in His Son, our Saviour: and when He finds any unwillingness in our hearts to go there, He weans us from the things that stop the way. A child is not weaned in a minute, and it may go through a great deal of suffering before it is weaned, but it is all the healthier and stronger when the weaning is fully over. The desire of the Father’s heart is that we should have such a sense of being with His Son in glory, that we should feel as if everything here for the moment had lost its claim and hold on us; and then, after this temporary death, this weaning, we should return again to the place of death, assured in heart and mind of the purpose of our God for us.

He is only conducting us through this world to the zenith of His own delight, and the purpose of His love for us. He passes us through all the seasons here; and the winter, the most trying one, is the most helpful, if we are really cast on Him in it. Then the real measure of our dependence on Him is ascertained, and also the extent of our resources in Him; and we make acquisitions in Him which we never make at any other time. All our growth and fruits depend on our winters, or rather on how we pass through them. The more we can rest in Him, the more independent of everything outside of Him at such a time; the more vigour we really possess, and the better we get over the winter, be it ever so severe. If I am independent of the winter, it is evident that I have mastered it, and not it me, and if I have done so, through the power of Christ, I am relieved though in no human way. Peter was delivered from prison in a superhuman way; but first he, though enduring a very trying winter, could lay him down and sleep—take his rest, because the Lord sustained him.

J. B. S.
THE SINGLE EYE.

"If thine eye be single thy whole body will be light."—Matt. 6. 22.

This Scripture apparently involves a paradox, i.e., an impossible conclusion, because the retina of a man with a single eye receives and transmits the sensation of half the light received by the brain of a person of normal vision. The meaning of a word is, however, best obtained by considering its usage, and Scripture is always its own best commentator. The word translated ‘single’ occurs only in this passage and in the corresponding one in Luke, but the similar noun απλωτής (aplotes) occurs eight times and is translated variously, as follows:—

Thrice as ‘simplicity’ (Rom. 12. 8; 2 Cor. 1. 12; 2 Cor. 11. 3).
Twice as ‘singleness of heart’ (Ephes. 6. 5; Col. 3. 22).
Twice as ‘liberality’ (2 Cor. 8. 2; 2 Cor. 9. 13).
Once as ‘bountifulness’ (2 Cor. 9. 11).

It means literally ‘one-foldedness’ or ‘simplex structure’.

We are all familiar with the annoying experience of seeing objects distorted through a common sheet-glass window. Light travels slower in glass than in air, and in passing through the thicker parts of the glass is retarded so that the wave front of the light becomes bent and clear vision is impossible. The Scriptural meaning of the word is then that there should be no ulterior motive or duplicity in the Christian’s action. Indeed, he should be what is commonly termed “transparently honest”. The perfect example in this as in every other respect was presented in the Lord Jesus Christ, and what was true in Him while He was here should now be true in the Christian.

In 2 Cor. 8. and 9. the word is used three times in connection with the Christian’s stewardship of material resources. In this connection Ananias and Sapphira are seen at the outset of the era showing the ‘duplex’ eye in their apparent generosity.

That the Christian should be transparently honest in his ordinary business may be taken as a sine qua non, because, judged even from temporal considerations, honesty is the best policy, and business confidence once shaken cannot be again rendered stable, and the Christian has a higher object than what is dictated by time and sense.

Where the duplex eye has been most in evidence amongst Christians is, however, in connection with their association or fellowship one with another, and it is in this that the greatest dishonour has been attached to the name of the Lord. The enemy has taken advantage of the characteristic to separate the people of God, and divisions have been consummated by the most shameful duplicity.

It is strange that men of proved uprightness in worldly matters should have evinced such untrustworthy character in relation to their spiritual stewardship which is vastly more important because position in ecclesiastical circles can only last for a few years, while Christ’s kingdom will be permanent, and our position in the latter will be determined by our faithfulness to His interests in His absence.

The day is coming when the light of the presence of Christ will be perfectly displayed, an indication of which was given on the Mount of Transfiguration. At present, however, He is absent. How then can we as individuals be guided aright? “The entrance of Thy word giveth light, it giveth understanding to the simple” (Psa. 119. 130).

The common idea of ‘simple’ is ‘weak-minded’ and ignorant, but the Word of God puts no premium on ignorance or sloth. How often the
Apostle abjures his readers, "I would not have you to be ignorant". The Scriptural idea of simplicity is 'one-folded' moral texture. The honest man is the one who has spiritual illumination by the Word of God, and who is thus guided right. The Word penetrates deep into the recesses of the heart, and reveals perfect grace.

The apostle John opened his Epistle in the light of the beginning of Christianity, and not in the light of the candle of human tradition, and he judged everything by the former. He investigated the darkness arising from Satan's lie in Eden, viz., that there was a spot on God's honesty, and he boldly refuted the insinuation of 4000 years' standing by proclaiming that "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all".

He then measured profession of fellowship and refused to recognize man's claim to fix the standard: "If we walk in the light as God is in the light, we have fellowship one with another". In the second chapter, profession is subjected to certain infallible tests. Prominent amongst these is "the light". He that saith (profession) he is in the light (ver. 9), i.e., the light from the Word of God, must manifest the characteristics of the light.

The central ray of light from God is His love shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost which manifests itself by the illuminated one loving his brother, and he who hates his brother merely evinces the fact that he has not been illuminated by the Word of God, no matter what specious pretension may be advanced in support of his contention that he is in the light of God's revelation.

May we be found viewing things through the single or simplex eye so as to obtain the correct perspective, and act rightly for our blessed Lord in His absence.

"BE STILL, AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD."
Psalm 46. 10.

Be still, my soul: thy God doth undertake
   To guide the future, as He has the past.
Thy hope, thy confidence let nothing shake;
   All now mysterious shall be bright at last.
Be still, my soul: the waves and winds still know
His voice who ruled them while He dwelt below.

Be still, my soul: when dearest friends depart,
   And all is darkened in the vale of tears,
Then shalt thou better know His love, His heart,
   Who comes to soothe thy sorrow and thy fears.
Be still, my soul: thy Jesus can repay
From His own fullness all He takes away.

Be still, my soul: the hour is hastening on
   When we shall be for ever with the Lord;
When disappointment, grief, and fear are gone,
   Sorrow forgot, love's purest joys restored.
Be still, my soul: when change and tears are past,
All safe and blessed we shall meet at last.
THE DAILY MARCH IN THE WILDERNESS.

It is marching time. There is for us an annual and a daily journey to Canaan, like the earth, which has its annual and its diurnal motion. The former is the course of faith, the latter that of practice. I mean, one takes the circuit, fulfils the journey in faith, and one has in practice to traverse all the road; all the varieties of seasons are to be known to the soul; but we are not to be occupied with the journey, but to be each day prepared for it before the day's march begins. The manna was gathered before the sun was up, and the cloud was the signal for them to journey. Your heart is to be stored with Christ before the demands of the march are upon you, but you must be ever ready for the word of 'March'. There is some new experience, some new testing every day almost; at any rate, I think there is seldom a repetition of the same experiences, except in new combinations. I suppose with the Israelites that there was a tarrying at one place until the lesson connected with it was learned. They were conducted through the wilderness in order to be, in their biography, ensamples to us in our journey through this world, upon whom the ends of the world have come. You are to begin each day with a supply from Christ, which will enable you either to remain in the old halting spot, or to enter on a new one. You pitch at one place, you remove to another; but the point is, that you are not thinking of one or the other; the one thing before you is to be prepared for either. You must be prepared to march as well as to remain; but if you are prepared to march—to enter on new circumstances, you must be first proved in prior ones. I do not mean any very remarkable circumstances, but something new, a fresh demand of some kind. It may be an unexpected visit from a former worldly friend, or an interview with a worldly saint; something apparently small, but unusual, so that it calls forth a new energy in you, and with it a fresh sense of dependence; but of this you may be assured, that if you have gathered the manna, that is, if your soul has been fed with Christ for the day, it is sufficient for the day. The day's provision was given before the day's demands came on. The Lord knows all that is before us, and He reveals Himself, if we seek HIM simply; that is, in accordance with the need in which we shall be placed, whether it be to maintain us where we are, or to march. By marching I mean entering on new circumstances of some kind or other. If I have begun the day with the Lord, I have the sense of His grace and power, and that is sufficient for all the demands of the day.

What an interesting journey it is! What a tale the earth could tell of its diurnal and annual motion; and surely we can tell a much more interesting and wonderful tale, as we perform our orbits, and are each supplied by Christ in varied ways for all that the path requires. The only strength you have is the strength which Christ has supplied, for He is your only food. In the wilderness there is really no food for nature; and as Christ is your only food, every divine energy is characterized by Him who is the food and the strength of your soul.

J. B. S.

"Only Thine own to be; only to live to Thee: Thine with each day begun; Thine till my work is done; Thine, Thine alone."
THE FAITHFUL WITNESS.

HIS WORDS (John), WALK (Luke), WORKS (Mark), AND WAYS (Matthew).

There have been, and there are, many faithful witnesses, but only one could be designated without qualification "The faithful Witness".

In Rev. 1. 5 our Lord Jesus Christ is thus named, and in chap. 3. 14 (in the address to the lukewarm Laodicean assembly) He is further spoken of as "The faithful and true Witness".

It is important to understand what is involved in this, for we live in days of religious boasting as to "our testimony" and "our witnessing"; and that, strange to say, where there is glaring inconsistency and where the witness is neither 'faithful' nor 'true'.

We are told in Prov. 14. 5, "A faithful witness will not lie: but a false witness will utter lies". To witness truly means to rightly represent what is true. This our Lord Jesus Christ did though it cost Him His life. Others followed in their measure, and the Greek word for witness (μαρτυρεῖ) passed into English as martyr. Indeed the same word is translated witness in Rev. 1. 5, and martyr in 2. 13, just as it is said to-day, 'So-and-so is a martyr for the truth.'

In the case of Antipas (mentioned in the latter scripture), he was the Lord's faithful witness in the assembly at Pergamos, and he was slain there. It had sunken so low morally that it dwelt experimentally where the throne of Satan was. Lust and pride captured them, though we are told, at the same time, they held fast the Lord's name and had not denied His faith, yet some held Balaam doctrine and others Nicolaitan teaching. This happened before the apostles had gone to be with Christ above, so we need not be surprised at the happenings of to-day when there are no apostles on the earth. There may not be manifest violence in Christendom at present, but the corruption is none the less, and faithful and true witnesses are greatly needed.

CREATION, THE LAW, AND CHRIST.

The two witnesses of Psalm 19, still bear their uncorrupted testimony: (1) "The heavens declare the glory of God"; and (2) "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul" (1. 7). These witnesses plainly speak the truth according to their measure. The first declares God's power and divinity. All men, including the heathen, have this witness continually testifying to them, therefore all who do not consequently turn to God are 'without excuse' (Rom. 1. 20). The second (sent to the nation of Israel primarily) speaks of the holiness of God, and exposes the sinfulness of man, shutting him up to God alone for mercy, and rendering him inexcusable likewise if he does not seek this from Him.

Neither of these witnesses, however, did, nor could, make God Himself known. Much concerning Him was made known in Old Testament times, but He Himself remained unrevealed. We are told in John 1. 18, "No man hath seen God at any time"!—not Adam, not Noah, not Abraham, not Moses, not David, not Isaiah, nor any of the holy prophets—"No man"! Another, therefore, must come; and this has taken place as the verse continues to tell us—"The only-begotten Son, Who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him"! He alone was capable of so doing, and in Him God has become visible, even as it is said, He is "the Image of the invisible God"; and, "God has been manifested in the flesh" (1 Tim. 3. 16),
Not only in His words and His walk, but also in His works and His ways He has rightly represented the truth. He is the faithful and true Witness. Some may set forth the truth in words and in walk deny it, or their works may do so and their personal ways be inconsistent. In our Lord Jesus Christ all was perfect. There was no flaw. We see this in the four Gospels. He was the true Light which shone for every man, and He was also the Truth to be known by all those who came into the light.

John bore witness concerning Him. His words and His works testified also. The Father's voice singled Him out, and the Spirit descended upon Him as a dove. The Scriptures all point to Him as He Himself said, "These are they which bear witness concerning Me, and ye will not come to Me that ye might have life" (John 5:39); Moreover, the resurrection proclaims Him to be the Son of God, the One who could and did make God known, the One who rightly represented the truth in every way. The resurrection was God's justification of our Lord Jesus Christ, and He is declared to be "the faithful Witness, the Firstborn from the dead" (Rev. 1:5). If we heed His words, therefore, we shall prove their reliability, for there was no disparity between what He was and what He said—He was altogether that which He said (John 8:25).

HIS WORDS.

The witness of His words are given to us specially in John's Gospel. There He is the Word become flesh (1:1,14), that 'Prophet' promised in Deut. 18, Who should speak the words of God (1:21,23,25; 4:19,44; 6:14; 7:40,52; 9:17; also 3:31-34); and He said to the Father, "I have given them Thy words" (17:8). He also said, "The words which I speak to you I speak not from Myself" (14:10). The voice from heaven said, "Hear Him". The apostle Paul charged Timothy before God and before Christ "Who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate" to keep the commandment given to him in regard to the things of God spotless and irreproachable until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Example set before Timothy was the faithful and true Witness. To utter words that were true and to be faithful to those words might mean suffering and death. It was so in the case of our Lord Jesus Christ, though false witnesses arose against Him. He told Pilate that His kingdom had not its origin in this world, and when Pilate inquired if He were a King, Jesus answered, "Thou sayest it, 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". Pilate inquired of Him, "What is truth?" (John 18:36). He did not know it, but "the Truth", the expression of what is true, stood before him. Pilate vacillated and tried to get Him liberated, for he knew He was innocent of the charges brought against Him, yet he delivered Him over to be put to death. They crucified the Witness of the truth whom God had sent to men.

The Son of God is 'the Light' which makes manifest the truth as to God and man, and He is also 'the Truth' which is seen and known in the light. He is likewise the Revealer of the Father, the effulgence of God's glory and the exact expression of all that He is. John 1 introduces Him to us as 'the Word' Who was God; and, as becoming flesh, the One Who makes known the mind of God to us; it is no exaggeration, therefore, for John to say as he closes his Gospel that he supposed not even the world itself would contain the records, were the things written that such an One as Jesus did. How could it? In chapter 1. He is seen to be the Creator of all things! Could the whole of the creation even contain the Creator?
How then could this small part of it contain the records of the things done by One who Himself is infinite? John says, "If they were written," but could any finite being write them?

These last words which the Spirit gives us through John (probably the last words given in the inspired writings) may well be weighed by us: "This is the disciple who bears witness concerning these things and who has written these things; and we know that his witness is true. And there are many other things which Jesus did, the which if they were written one by one, I suppose that not even the world itself would contain the books written." Enough, however, is recorded to show the faithful Witness Himself; and the Spirit of God is in and with all true believers, giving them to know the truth revealed in the words of the Word who became flesh and dwelt among us full of grace and truth; showing them that which is true—that which is rightly represented in Him who is Himself the Truth personified; leaving them without a shade of doubt, and in possession of the peace and fullness of joy of which John wrote, being made glad in the presence of the faithful and true Witness.

HIS WALK.

We have said a witness might represent the truth in His words and deny it by His walk. This has become proverbial of a certain class of religious leader—he says in effect, "Do as I say, but not as I do." The Witness of whom we speak was as perfect in the witness of His walk as He was in the witness of His words. To see this the Gospel of Luke should be considered carefully in dependence on the gracious guidance and teaching of the Spirit.

It is in this Gospel, which is written in such an exceptionally elegant style, we have portrayed the wonderful walk of the perfect Man. For the blessing of the needy and sinful, and for the glory of God, He is seen walking with feet washed and anointed with costly myrrh, wiped with the hair of one who also kissed them, for they had brought to her the blessed Witnesses of the saving and peace-giving grace of God. Those holy feet ever carried that faithful Witness in paths where Divine grace was mercifully manifested under all circumstances, so that the needy and the sinful were attracted, and the heavy-laden found rest.

At the very commencement of Luke we find Him lost by His earthly father and mother, who, when they discovered Him, found Him diligent in His true "Father's business"; yet, perfect in every relation, we read, "He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and He was in subjection to them". What a beautiful picture! What a lovely lesson for the homes of believers nowadays, when insubjection to parents is so rife, even as God's Word has foretold! No wonder that these disobedient and insubordinate children of to-day know neither the favour of men nor of God. What a contrast we find in Jesus—He "advanced in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and men" (Luke 2. 52).

In His service for the Lord, the apostle Paul exercised himself to maintain a good conscience void of offence Godward and manward. To witness rightly in our walk this is necessary. Even in the warfare of Ephes. 6. our 'feet' are to be shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, and as to our brethren in the Lord we are to 'walk' 'according to love' (Rom. 14. 15), and we are exhorted to "walk in wisdom towards them that are without" (Col. 4. 5). Words are not enough to bear witness truly; one has often heard it said, So-and-so's life gives the lie to what he says! By their fruits ye shall know them! On the other hand we have known cases where the children of God have been mentioned, and it has been said, If any hold the right thing, they do, for they are as consistent
on week-days as they are on Sundays! That is just what it should be.

The faithful walk of our Lord Jesus Christ, however, in the path of God's will, involved misunderstanding and suffering when He stepped forth in public testimony. Frowns instead of smiles then greeted Him. Isa. 50. foretells that wonderful walk of grace and faithfulness. He ministered sustaining words to the weary ones, He turned not back but went forward in the path which God had appointed for Him; they smote His back, they plucked the hair from His cheeks, they spat in His face, yet He set His face as a flint (Isa. 50. 7) steadfastly to go up to Jerusalem (Luke 9. 5)! Nothing turned the feet of the faithful One aside! Man and Satan might oppose, but He went forward! Dark clouds might gather thickly around Him, but He faltered not! The mutterings of violence might yield to the ragings of the tumultuous tempest, yet He walked onward! Blessed Lord and Saviour, faithful and true Witness, they all forsook Thee and fled then, but Thou didst not fail! Thou didst not turn back!

"Faithful amidst unfaithfulness, 'Mid darkness only light, Thou didst Thy Father's name confess, And in His will delight; Unmoved by Satan's subtle wiles, Or suffering, shame, and loss, Thy path uncheered by earthly smiles Led only to the cross."

There they crucified Him; they pierced those feet that had been washed, wiped, kissed, and anointed by one who experienced the forgiveness, salvation, and peace He brought from God for sinful man. Unlike those who hated Him without a cause, she loved Him much for she had been forgiven much. Man rejected the witness of Jesus, but God declared that it was true by raising Him from among the dead.

The world saw Him not again after His burial, but to His disciples (Luke tells us) He appeared, and showed them His hands and 'His feet' (24. 40). The Spirit of God with infinite wisdom calls attention in John to 'His side' (20. 20), for thereout came the blood and the water, which along with the Spirit form the threefold 'witness of God' (1 John 5. 7-11) that believers on the Son have life in Him. Luke closes by showing us the risen Son of God sending the feet of His witnesses with the Gospel to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem, for, "Ye are witnesses of these things", He said to them; but first He led them out as far as Bethany. It was there that His witness had been lovingly appreciated when the official and royal city on the other side of Mount Olives had rejected it, and there He blessed those who accompanied Him. From thence also He ascended to heaven even while His uplifted hands were still outstretched in blessing. What a significant close to the walk of the only perfect Man who has trodden the soil of this sin-stained world, the One who has represented the truth rightly in both His words and His walk, the faithful and true Witness. May we be led by the Spirit to appreciate this more deeply.

HIS WORKS.

There is also the witness of His works as well as that of His words and walk. The Gospel of Mark shows us the Divine Servant diligently working in this world for God's glory and man's blessing. Unlike the other Gospels which introduce us to our Lord Jesus Christ in some special way previous to His public service, Mark shows Him to us straightway taking up the work of God. The use of the word Eutheos (which is variously translated 'straightway', 'immediately', and 'forthwith') some forty-nine times, shows with what perfection of energy Mark sees His labours carried through.

In accord with Christ's witness in John, the Spirit first tells us in that Gospel of His eternal distinction as the Word who was with God and who was
God. In Luke, with the same exactness of purpose, He is traced back to Adam, for He is to be presented as the perfect Man walking amongst men as we have seen. Matthew also, with equal precision, introduces us first to the royal genealogy of the King of whom his Gospel is to speak; but Mark shows Him at once working as the servant of God’s pleasure, and indeed in the very last verse of that Gospel we find these words—“The Lord working with them.” How significant!

Isaiah had foretold the coming of this Servant, and that just as distinctly as it was foretold that He should come as the Prophet, and the Priest, and the King.

Mark begins by citing the first chapter of that part of the prophet which introduces the Servant (Isa. 40. 3; Mark 1. 3). It should be observed he gives no other quotation after this, though the Lord Jesus Himself does. Isaiah foretells the personal Servant of God (42. 1-12; 52. 13-53, etc.), the national servant also (41. 8; and witnesses, 43. 9-12, etc.), and ‘the servants’ after God’s personal Servant has “instructed many in righteousness” (53. 11; see 54. 17, etc.). The Gospel of Mark, however, shows Him come into and at work in a world of need, faithfully witnessing in all that He does, and rightly representing the truth in His wonderful works of grace and power at which men were astonished and said, “From whence hath this Man these things? and what wisdom is this that is given unto Him, that even such mighty works are wrought by His hands”; and King Herod also heard of the ‘mighty works’ which showed forth themselves in Him (Mark 6. 2, 14).

The very first work which is detailed by Mark is the casting out of an unclean spirit, and he cried out, Art Thou come to destroy us? I know Thee who Thou art, the Holy One of God. This true Servant did His works always in a way that connected God with them before the eyes of others. It was His glory that He always sought, and in this Gospel of deeds rather than words we specially observe this. When the people saw the palsied man arise at His word, and carry his couch out of the house before them, “they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion” (Mark 2. 12)! They might well glorify Him whose power was thus manifested in mercy and grace through our Lord Jesus Christ.

There was a faultlessness about the works of the Lord which impressed the beholders, and even in the manner in which He did the works of divine power they saw something which contrasted greatly with that of other men. When He gave hearing and speech to the man of whom we read in Mark 7. 32-37, having first looked up to heaven, the people “were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well. He maketh both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak”. Every work which He did for the blessing of men was done in a way that honoured God. It was this which pre-eminently marked Him, whether in word, or walk, or work, for all blended together in the faithful and true Witness to represent God perfectly.

What good reason we have to rejoice in Him at all times! How great the grace which has given us to trust in Him and know His great salvation! “And when on that bright day we rise, And join the anthems of the skies, In heavenly songs this note shall swell, Our Saviour has done all things well.”

HIS WAYS.

The ways of our Lord Jesus Christ are rightly designated ‘Royal ways’. They could be nothing else, for though He ‘humbled Himself’ He ever remained who He was, and no less a person could represent God in this world. He was God’s King and also God the King. It is Matthew who
thus presents Him to us, and Ps. 2. and 45. foretold His coming in this royal manner along with other Old Testament Scriptures. The first Gospel begins by showing to us the One of whom God speaks as 'My King' in Ps. 2.: the Son of David, "King David's greater Son" (1. 1); but He is also God the King of whom we read in Ps. 45., and who is named in Matt. 1. 23 'Emmanuel' which being interpreted is 'God with us'. The ways of such an One must be therefore Royal ways indeed, and His ways alone could be a perfect revelation of the truth of God.

A star in the east guided the magi to Him "to do Him homage" (2. 2). King Herod and all Jerusalem were troubled at the coming of this greater King to Bethlehem. There, the prophet had centuries before said, He should appear whose goings forth had been from eternity (Micah 5. 2). It was the city of David, and that was the way for the Royal One to come. Sad to say, but it is significant to observe, the mere religious students of prophecy were instructing the debased monarch Herod concerning His coming, whilst these eastern Gentiles were on their way to honour Him with "gold, and frankincense, and myrrh"! Consistent, too, with that aspect of the truth which is unfolded in Matthew, the Gospel closes with homage rendered to Him as to a King upon a mountain in Galilee, 'all power' in heaven and earth having been given to Him. Therefore 'all nations' are to own Him, and 'all things' commanded by Him are to be observed. He is the Divine King whose ways faithfully witness as to the truth of God.

These ways give character to the Gospel. Because He has come, "the kingdom of the heavens has drawn nigh". Only Matthew so speaks of the kingdom. His baptism fulfils righteousness and the heavens own Him as He goes up from the water. His victory over Satan in the wilderness manifests a stronger than he. The words uttered by Him to those assembled upon the mountain (still closely studied by the thoughtful) declares the principles of His reign. When He descends, a leper does Him homage (for so the word worship should be translated), and he is cleansed by a touch of the Lord's hand and a word from His lips.

A Greater than the greatest of earth's princes or prophets is there! John the Baptist was very great—"more than a prophet"! "Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of the heavens is greater than he" (Matt. 11. 11)! How much greater, therefore, is the King Himself! Yet this King's yoke is easy and His burden light: rest is found by those who come to Him. Jonah was great, and King Solomon was great and wise too, but a Greater than Jonah, a Greater and Wiser than Solomon is there! He is the Lord. He is Emmanuel, and He is the Son of Man, the Lord of the sabbath day, who is to build His assembly for the day when the Son of Man shall come in His kingdom and glory; and in view of this, with royal right, He gave the keys into Peter's hands for the opening of the door. This Peter did at Pentecost for the Jews, and later in Cornelius' house for the Gentiles. Mark, these are not called "The keys of the Church" (Peter never speaks of 'the assembly') but "the keys of the kingdom of the heavens".

Again, when the Son of Man is seen upon the holy mount by the favoured three, "His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was as white as the light", and "a bright cloud overshadowed them". Here the Son of Man Himself is seen in His glory (Matt. 16. 28). In Mark, where His works of power are in question, it is "the Kingdom of God with power" that is displayed (9. 1), while we have simply "the kingdom of God" mentioned in Luke (9. 27).
If, as we said, at the coming of Christ to Bethlehem, a star in the heavens guided the magi for Him to receive homage from them, so at His death the temple veil was rent from top to bottom! the earth shook! rocks were rent! tombs were opened! and the Roman centurion on guard said, Truly this was the Son of God (Matt. 27. 51-54)! Moreover, when in resurrection, Jesus met the women who were returning from the sepulchre, and said, All hail; they also bowed in homage at His feet. The faithful and true Witness had rightly represented the truth in all His ways—His perfect ways—His divinely royal ways, and God raised Him from among the dead, bringing some thus to own Him, rendering the homage due to such an One though rejected by the world. Our hearts also have been tuned by the Spirit to sing:

"Worthy of homage and of praise,
Worthy by all to be adored:
Exhaustless theme of heavenly lays,
Thou, Thou art worthy, Jesus, Lord."

WHAT WILL IT BE?

What will it be when all the toil is ended?
When we have conquered in the last fierce strife?
When the bright portals of our home are entered?
Pilgrims no longer—heirs of endless life!
Gone the last dust our weary feet hath gathered—
Wiped the last drop from off the aching brow;
Safe in the presence of our God and Father,
Whose strength supports us in the desert now.

WHAT WILL IT BE?

What will it be to hear the voice of Jesus?
"Draw near, ye blessed ", His sweet words will be.
Oh, richly then that hand of love will bless us;
We shall the King in all His beauty see!
Behold those eyes that wept great tears of sorrow,
Mourning o'er harden'd hearts with grief untold,
Dark night of woe! the morn of joy shall follow
When He shall see the travail of His soul.

WHAT WILL IT BE?

What will it be to see the hidden meaning
Of every trial we have met below?
To trace the secret of our Father's training;
Where faith gain'd spoils from many a vanquished foe?
All that seems dark to our imperfect vision,
The light of heaven at once will render plain;
Deeper our joy through that all-wise provision—
Suffering awhile, ere with our Lord we reign.
TABLE TALK.

Can we read the Bible through?

Q.—We were advised in Mr.—'s address to read the Bible through; he said it could be done in sixty hours. What do you think of this advice?

The advice is good, undoubtedly, for reading the Bible through is the surest way of becoming acquainted with its entire contents, and yet in another sense you can never get through it. Nor can you ever be fully acquainted with its contents; there will always be something fresh in it to become acquainted with.

Remarked.—The ignorance of the contents of the Bible is astonishing. The majority of Christians have never read it through; they seem to have their favourite chapters or texts, and beyond these they are quite ignorant of what the Bible contains. I was sitting with a company of Christians once, and the words were quoted, "Be sure your sin will find you out", and there was not one of them who knew to what part of the Bible to turn for them.

Yes, it is strange and sad that the Bible should be so little known by those who profess to know the One whose Word it is; and the more so since it was by the Word that the Lord overcame Satan in the wilderness, and only by the Word that we can overcome Satan; it means that if we do not know the Word we cannot overcome him. It is by the sincere milk of the Word that we grow up from spiritual babyhood to spiritual young manhood (1 Peter 2.), and it is by that Word that we are made strong to triumph over the wicked one (1 John 2.). But we cannot know the Word if we do not read it, and the advice to read it through is good, whether you do it in sixty hours or not, for we need it all, and should read it all, or God would not have given it to us. A faithful old servant of God said in his last illness, "I needed the whole Bible for life, but now that I am dying one text is enough"—"The Son of God loved me and gave Himself for me". By all means read the Bible through, but remember at the same time that you can never be through with the Bible.

Q.—What do you mean by that?

Well a wise man has said "You cannot read the Bible through because it has no 'through': you may read every chapter, verse, sentence, word, and syllable in it, but when you have done that you are not through, you are being constantly turned back by it to something that has gone before, and you make progress in it by going back and back". These words set me thinking and I said, Yes, that is true, the learned doctor who made the remark never uttered truer words, "The Bible has no through". And yet in another sense it has a most blessed and wonderful 'through'; but let us first consider it as having no 'through'.

I have thought of the Bible as a great circle, the golden, glowing centre of which is Christ. Within it there are many roads all fragrant with His grace and love, and along these we are led constantly back, if we read the Bible rightly, to the golden Centre.

Suppose now, we began to read the New Testament through, we begin at the first verse of Matthew's Gospel and at once we find ourselves in the company of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham. The book is about Him, but why is He introduced to us in this way? The question carries us back to the Old Testament. We are compelled to go back if we are to understand. We learn that Jesus Christ being the Son of these men of ancient days, is the Heir to all the promises that God made to them, and two promises in particular press themselves upon our notice—the greatest of all promises made to ABRAHAM was
“In thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed” (Gen. 22. 18). And Paul tells us that this seed is Christ (Gal. 3. 16). And to DAVID, “Once have I sworn in My holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before Me. It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven. Selah” (Ps. 89).

It changes the character of our reading when we see the greatness of the glory of Him of whom we read. When we see this we shall not take up the reading as a task to be accomplished, or as some study to be mastered: we shall feel that this Book is not as other books, but that in it we are in the company of a glorious Person: that we are to walk with Him, and if He is introduced to us as the One in whom all the nations of the earth are to be blessed, He has surely blessing for us, and if His Throne is to be established, universally and for ever, we must surely begin by acknowledging Him as our Lord now.

But it is not difficult to see that it will take us a long time to get through even the first verse of the New Testament: we feel as though we wanted to linger here and become better acquainted with the glories and the future of the One to whom we are here introduced, and we gain this knowledge by turning back to the promises made to these favoured men whose names appear first in this genealogy of our Lord. That is the way to read the Bible.

If we pass hurriedly through the names in the genealogies, which we have no need to do, for they form a chain full of instruction, and it will well pay us to turn back again and again to the Old Testament to see what is said about them—we come to the first definite fulfilment of an Old Testament prophecy, “Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet”. “Behold a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us”. We are compelled to turn back here to Isaiah 7, for we feel that we cannot progress unless we understand what this means. Emmanuel is God’s intervention on man’s behalf and His own; when all hope of blessing seemed lost—man’s extremity was God’s opportunity. In Emmanuel’s presence here and in His refusing the evil and choosing the good, as this prophecy declared He would, we have not the glories that He will inherit as the son of David and Abraham, but what He is personally and in character—He is God with us. God manifest in the flesh, a man amongst men. Unlike every name in the genealogy, His abides untarnished by any evil thing. He chose the good and refused the evil, He loved righteousness, and hated iniquity, as Hebrews 1. puts it, and consequently called forth the full and delighted approbation of God. And as we see what He is, and who He is about whom the Bible speaks, we read with greater attention, deeper adoration and fuller blessing; and if our progress through it is slower our knowledge of Him will be richer, and all true advancement in Divine knowledge lies in the knowledge of Him.

Now we may go through to the 6th verse of chapter 2, where another prophecy is fulfilled, “For thus it was written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art not the least among the Princes of Judah, for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule My people Israel”. We turn back to Micah 5. And there we learn the sort of treatment that He was to receive at the hands of men, so that our faith is not shaken when we find Him rejected and maltreated, but we also learn that His “goings have been from old from everlasting”. He is the eternal One, and all He does must abide for ever. What confidence this gives us as we read His words and trace His ways. They are all abidingly eternal. If we
learn of Him, we shall not have to unlearn what we learn;” no changing time or circumstance can change the truth that comes forth from the lips of the eternal One.

Thus far in our reading we have learnt that—

1. All earthly glory belongs to Him.
2. All nations are to be blessed through Him.
3. He brings God into the midst of men.
4. Treads a path of absolute rectitude.
5. His words and ways are eternal.

In laying hold upon them we possess ourselves of treasure that neither time nor rust can corrupt. This is what I mean when I say that in reading the Bible we are constantly turned back upon roads beautiful with unexpected glories and graces, back to Him who is the theme of all Scripture.

Take one more example—you come at length to the last verse of the Bible—"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen". Are you through the Bible now? No, for that beautiful expression, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ", has a very familiar sound, and we are carried back along a fragrant road to 2 Corinthians 8. 9. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich." Here we are again at the golden centre, and the cross is there, where He—whose riches the opening chapters of the New Testament show to us—became un speakably poor for us, and we know the grace that made Him do it. Know it, not as a matter of doctrine, but as a great reality, and this grace is to be with us until the glory dawns.

If you begin to read the New Testament with this thought in your mind, you will see how the first verse of it will carry you onward. On through the road of suffering that the Lord had to tread until we reach the glories that are to follow, when as the root and offspring of David He will appear to fulfil all the words of blessing that have comforted the saints of God as they have travelled along the road of testing and sorrow, through to the consummation of their hopes.

If we formed the habit of reading the Scriptures from this point of view, we should find great comfort from them in this valley of the shadow of death, and the result would certainly be to purify us from the world and its ways, for our hope would become continually brighter and more real. While we read the Bible through, let us be carried through by it in faith and hope to the fulfilment of every word of it, and yet always remember that it has no "through" in another sense, for Christ is its theme.
THE UNTAMEABLE TONGUE.

SUCH is the description of the little but vastly important member of our bodies. In modern days the pen might be added, for the pen like the tongue is the medium of communication. If tongues only spoke, and pens only wrote what was edifying, how vastly less would be spoken and written.

It is not a little remarkable that a whole chapter—James 3.—should be devoted to the consideration of the tongue.

We are told if a man can control his tongue he is

A PERFECT MAN.

How intensely serious is the matter when we find a controlled tongue means perfection; an uncontrolled is "a fire, a world of iniquity". Bits are put in horses' mouths, and they obey the rider; a little helm in the hands of the governor moves the mighty ship in spite of the raging elements, but the tongue is uncontrollable.

Every kind of beast, of birds, of serpents, of things in the sea, can be, and has been tamed, but the tongue is untameable. "It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison."

One startling fact is this. The word gehenna, hell, is used for the first time in the Word by our Lord Himself in His faithful warnings. This word is found in James 3. 6, in connection with the tongue: "The tongue . . . defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell [gehenna]".

This surely reveals in terribly lurid light the seriousness of our subject. Could anything be more serious than this?

The other side of the story is found in Philippians 4. 8, 9. To think of things true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, of virtue, worthy of praise, is to speak of such things. Speech gives expression to our thoughts. How we have all failed in these respects. But it is never too late to be deeply exercised about such things.

A matter may be true, but if it is to the detriment of the party involved, before we spread it, we had better ask ourselves the question, Is it necessary to mention the matter? Is it wise to spread it? Is there any true gain in doing so? Is it kind to the one involved? If we cannot answer one of these inquiries in the affirmative our lips had better be sealed. The discipline of holding one's tongue to some natures is specially helpful and character-forming.

Remember when once the matter has passed your lips it is beyond your control.

Peter encourages us in a right use of our unruly member, when he wrote, "He that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile" (chap. 3. 10).

Good things come from the good treasure of the heart of a good man evil things from the evil treasure of the heart of an evil man, is a searching word (Matt. 12. 35). Our speech describes what we are.

And so our Lord says, "That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment" (Matt. 12. 36). This is very serious.

If only all this were borne in mind, how much idle gossip, how much malicious talk, would be stopped.

And, then, there is the class who offend more by want of thought than want of heart. Such do not intend to do harm, but they do it nevertheless.

May the Lord exercise us one and all about this deeply important matter, for we are all sinners in this respect.
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

The Grace of our Lord.

DEAR MR. EDITOR,—I have read with deep interest in "The Editorial Notes" your appeal to Christians who have known the Lord for over twenty-five years, and the state in which many are—cold, indifferent, and scarcely any response in the soul to the blessed Lord and Saviour.

Twenty-five years ago I knew the Lord; my deepest joy was in communion with Himself, and fellowship with His people. Truly those were days of joy and happiness; but since, for twenty years I have not heard his voice, but I have been seeking satisfaction in work, in seeking power away from Him. As the years went on, I got further and further away from Him. New worldly ambitions filled my soul, and my spiritual life so dead, that Christians, professing Christians and men of the world, saw in me but a worldly person, an Agnostic, or a Rationalist, and, indeed, spiritual life was so low that I cared not to be associated with anything Christian; I had no desire for God, or His beloved Son, and openly avowed indifference, and sneered at any attempt to fan to life the apparently dead life.

I became associated with men whose whole idea was the accumulation of this world's wealth.

But what of the Lord? I was His child, wandering away from His fold. Had He forgotten me? I thought He had. I even thought it impossible for man, or even God, to restore me. But I had reckoned without the "One who saves even unto the uttermost". How could He deal with me? I read nothing of His Word, or, about His Word. I attended no chapel, I did not mix with Christian people. He began dealing with me in the circumstances in which I was, He would not let anything prosper. He made me dissatisfied with the work in which I was engaged. He made the associations in which I was extremely noxious, then He made life a great burden, so that I did not wish to live. Oh! the darkness of those days, the torture and the burden of them is indescribable, and, yet, to-day I can thank God for them.

When the misery of those days was at its height, then He spoke. He showed me the home of the Father with its ready welcome. He told me to cast all my burdens upon the blessed Lord and Saviour. He filled my heart with a deep longing to be separate from the associations with which I was connected, and to leave to Him the way in which I was to be delivered therefrom, and He is opening out the way. How gracious, loving, and powerful He is. He watches us, in perversity, enter into ways and circumstances of which He disapproves. He teaches us through our own folly, but He always provides a way of escape. Blessed be His name.

Then He revealed Himself, rejected and cast out by man, outside the camp, and in love He beckoned me to go out to Him, and He gave the strength to go. There by His Holy Spirit He began to teach me of Himself, and it was the same blessed Jesus, not changed through all my wandering, but more precious, more glorious, in my eyes, than He was; and now He is making Himself more and more precious, until the desire of my heart is "to know Him".

Oh! for grace, in these closing days, to be more and more like unto Him. That His Holy Spirit may live ungrieved in my heart, daily revealing more and more of the glorious and glorified Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

If those who have wandered from Him, who have lost their joy in Him, will only allow Him to enter their hearts and lives, He will again flood their souls with Himself, for does He not say, If any man love Me, he will keep My words, and My Father will love him, and We will make our abode with him.

"The Lord heareth the poor, and despiseth not His prisoners."
Assembly or Church.

BELOVED Brother,—As some brethren who have long been interested in what is called the 'church', the body and bride of Christ, have a difficulty about the word 'church', I wonder if you could help to remove the obscurity. I have seen it on good authority that the Greek word is 'Ekklesia', which means assembly. That seems to be in accord with Scripture. But I have seen again that the English word 'church' is said to be derived from the Greek 'Kuriakos' which signified pertaining to the Lord. Is this Greek word in Scripture anywhere as the church, or rather assembly?

Then, again, it is said the word church literally means 'called out'. Is this Scriptural?

I know that the saints who compose the assembly are called out of the world, but I do not think this can prove that the word church means called out, if it really signifies pertaining to the Lord.

I find saints who think the church is connected with the purpose of God, and therefore superior to the assembly. There are other wrong ideas in connection with the word 'church'.

If you could clear this up in Scripture Truth I think it would help.

Yours in Christ,

T. M.

As regards your correspondent's question on the words 'church' and 'assembly', the subject is sufficiently interesting but not difficult. There is no such word as 'church', properly speaking, in Scripture. The word translated 'church' in our A. V. should be rendered 'assembly'. The Greek form 'Kuriakos', pertaining to, or belonging to, the Lord, from which our word 'church' is derived, is only used twice in Scripture—1 Cor. 11. 21, "The Lord's Supper", and Rev. 1. 10, "The Lord's Day". The way in which the word 'church' came into use among us is told as follows by Arch. Trench:—

"There can, I think, be no reasonable doubt that 'church' is originally from the Greek 'Kuriakē', and signifies, 'that which pertains to the Lord', or, 'the house which is the Lord's'. But here a difficulty meets us. How explain the presence of a Greek word in the vocabulary of our Anglo-Saxon forefathers? For that we derive the word mediately from them, and not immediately from the Greek, is certain. What contact, direct or indirect, was there between the languages to account for this? The explanation is curious. While the Anglo-Saxons and other tribes of the Teutonic stock were almost universally converted through contact with the Latin church in the western provinces of the Roman Empire, or by its missionaries; yet it came to pass that before this, some of the Goths on the lower Danube had been brought to the knowledge of Christ by Greek missionaries from Constantinople; and this word 'Kuriakē', or 'church' did, with certain others, pass over from the Greek to the Gothic tongue; and converted these Goths, the first converted to the Christian faith, the first, therefore, that had a Christian vocabulary, lent the word in their turn to the other German tribes, among others to our Anglo-Saxon forefathers; thus it has come round by the Goths from Constantinople to us." And, in fact, it ought never to have come at all, for it has been the parent of much misunderstanding.

Now as to 'ekklesia', 'assembly'—It means properly, 'called out', or 'from'; and some of its principal uses are as follows:—

1. A gathering of citizens called out from their homes into some public place: an assembly.

2. In the Septuagint it is often equivalent to 'kahal', the assembly of the Israelites, especially when gathered for sacred purposes.

3. Any gathering or throng of men assembled by chance, or tumultuously (Acts 19. 32, 41).

4. In the Christian sense, an assembly of Christians gathered for worship: or those who anywhere constituted such a company and are united into one body, in contrast to the Jews or Pagans, and who thus take the position formally and characteristically of being God's assembly sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling and so united in a common bond with all who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.
This is the common title of all who profess the Christian faith, but it is evident that the great mass of such are merely nominal Christians, and have no part in the real vital assembly of God, the body and the bride of Christ, as definitely set forth in the Epistle to the Ephesians (chap. 1. 23), "the assembly, which has this character that it is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all". (E. Cross.)

If it is understood that there is really no such word as church in the New Testament, but only assembly, several difficulties disappear. All who form that assembly—and every believer has his place in it—is an "out called" one; called out of the world—to be for Christ, to be henceforth not of the world, but of Christ's own circle—His assembly. The notion that the church is superior to the assembly, will also be seen to be wrong, since the word translated church should be assembly.

DOES THE SOUL SLEEP?

The sleep of the soul is a miserable doctrine that comes simply from Satan acting on man's reason. The Lord tells the thief he shall not wait till the Kingdom, but that he should be with Him in paradise that day. Was he to be fast asleep, unconscious of His surroundings and the presence of the One who had redeemed him? Such an idea is monstrous. We are "absent from the body, and present with the Lord", but if that means being fast asleep, we might as well be at the other side of the universe. "To depart to be with Christ is far better", and that means, if this doctrine is true, that it is better to be fast asleep and unconscious than serving Christ and ministering to His glory. It would be gain for me to die, said the apostle. Did he mean that it would be gain for him to cease his service and become unconscious to everything in time and eternity that ministered joy to him, and most of all the love of Christ? Could anything be more absurd? There is no such thought in Scripture as the soul's sleeping.

HEAVEN OPENED. (Rev. 19.)

(George Kenrick.)

1. Behold He was called... Faithful and True—"My Holy Servant"!
2. On His head were many "Diadems". "Imperial Majesty"! (False "Diadems"—Rev. 12. and 13.).
3. He had a name written that no man knew but He Himself. The Fullness of GOD, Absolute Deity Col. 2. 9, non occ.; also Rom. 9. 5).
4. He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood—Accomplisher of Redemption.
5. His Name is called the Word of God—Revelation of God in Judgment, as once in grace.
6. He hath on His vesture—Authority given, bestowed upon Him (Ps. 2).
7. And His thigh!—Authority in the right of this on Divine Person.
8. The Name written, King of Kings and Lord of Lords—Power and Dominion.

Note Ephes. 1. 19-21—In Christ the concentration of all Power, Authority, Energy, Strength, Lordship.

"Light, Life, and Love, and Liberty,
This happy portion given:
In Him, who is the First and Last,
God's own delight in heaven."

"..."
Answers to Questions on 1 Timothy (February Issue).

1. **WHY is God spoken of as a King in verse 17?**

   The apostle is compelled to break out into this ascription of praise as he considers the Gospel of God’s glory; for in this Gospel God manifests Himself as greater than all evil. He is supreme in every age. Sin has not dethroned Him, nay it has given Him the occasion to manifest His very nature and to develop and fulfil all His counsels. The Gospel shows how His love can flow out in blessing, and His righteousness be established for ever.

2. **What is the difference between supplications, prayers, and intercessions (1 Tim. 2. 1)?**

   To understand this exhortation, we believe that the way in which God has already been presented before our souls in the Epistle must be kept in mind. He is the Saviour God, the blessed God who has sent His glorious Gospel to men, but He is also “the King eternal, immortal, invisible, only wise”. How great is His majesty and glory! How infinitely above us is He! How insignificant and worthless are we, and all men, even kings and those set in authority, measured by what He is, hence we begin with supplications—the word used here involves the taking of the low place, deprecating ourselves and those for whom we supplicate, and this we will do if we are conscious of the greatness of the One to whom we speak. We suggest that Abraham illustrates the meaning of this word, when he said, “Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak to the Lord, which am but dust and ashes” (Genesis 18. 27).

   But as the Lord encouraged Abraham to continue before Him he poured out his desire in His presence, and this is what PRAYER as used here means, it is a ‘pouring out’ of the heart’s desires for all men, and in doing so we find ourselves in sympathy with the mind of God; our thoughts meet the thoughts of God, and this is the meaning of INTERCESSION; it comes out beautifully in Abraham’s praying for Sodom, for we find that this was not merely the expression of the yearnings of his soul, but he prayed as being in communion with God (verse 33).

3. **While it is not difficult to see why we should pray for all men, what is there about them for which we can give thanks?**

   Thanksgiving always has its place in true prayer whether on our own behalf or on the behalf of others. Here it is ‘on behalf of’ others. Those who, through grace, form God’s household have been brought into priestly nearness to God, and can approach Him on behalf of all men, just as the tribe of Levi was brought near to God on behalf of all Israel. The great majority of men never think of thanking God for any of His mercies, for they do not look upon Him as the source of all good. We, knowing His long-suffering towards them, can give thanks to Him on their behalf for it. We can also give Him thanks for the temporal mercies that He so freely gives to them. The Christian who silently bows his head in thanksgiving for his meal in the crowded restaurant, may include in his thanksgiving every other meal being eaten there, for he knows that the majority of those who sit with him will not think of God as the giver of the meal; consequently, while they do not thank Him, yet He does get thanks for His good gifts to men from the heart that is in communion with Him, and so ready to take up its priestly functions. So every day and on every hand we may find plenty of causes for thanksgiving on behalf of all men.

4. **Why are we to have the blessing of all men before us in this Epistle?**

   Because God’s heart goes out in desire for all men, and Christ gave Himself a ransom for all, and if we belong to God’s household we must be like God.

5. **Is coming to the knowledge of the truth something in addition to being saved?**

   Yes, being saved would mean that a man was delivered from the power of the enemy and brought to God. The knowledge (epignosis) of the truth implies that he is no longer ignorant of the truth as to the God who has saved him, he has no doubt about it; it is his possession, it is not a mere acquaintance with the truth, or a partial acquaintance with it, but he
is in the full knowledge of it as it is set forth in Christ.

6. Why is the manhood of the Lord emphasized in verse 5?

The truth of the true manhood of Christ is as essential as that of His Godhead, and here it is an absolute necessity. To stand for us before God and to give Himself a ransom for all, He must be a man as we are, though sinless. He became a man with this end in view, and this is the testimony that must go forth to all.

7. What is the meaning of lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting?

Here is indicated the state or condition of the soul in which we can rightly pray to God. Holy hands means that our ways and works are consistent with our approach to God. Without wrath means that there is forgiveness in our hearts towards others (see Matt. 6. 23, 24). Without doubting means that we have confidence in God (see James 1. 6, 7, 8). These three things mark those who according to God's will approach Him in prayer.

1. Personal holiness.
2. Love towards others.
3. Confidence in God.

Further Questions on 1 Timothy (chap. 4.).

1. IS it possible to discern the workings of seducing spirits to-day (verse 1)?

2. WHY is thanksgiving so important in connection with temporal mercies (verses 3, 4)?

3. HOW are these things sanctified by the Word of God and prayer (verse 5)?

Thanks are due to those readers who have sent in answers to questions. Prayerful thought is not in vain. Answers to foregoing questions will be welcomed.

SUBMISSION.

It is only when the will mixes itself up with the sorrow that there is any bitterness in it.

“So it seemed good in Thy sight”, was the hinge of the Lord’s comfort.

The Christian has no future but the glory. All he has to do is to do God’s will at the moment, and the rest is all in God’s hands.

We have only to find God’s will and we shall find Him in it. Submission to His will means the support of His presence.

There are thousands of things we do from habit, and we say we must do them; there should be no ‘must’ for us, but the will of God.

Oh for the meeting in the radiant air,
Caught up to meet Him, all His glory share;
Changed to His likeness, gazing on His face,
Know the deep meaning of His matchless grace.
Even so, Amen.
EDITORIAL NOTES.
Our Relationship with God.

We may well bless God for the relationship into which He has brought us with Himself! *By faith in Christ Jesus, we are the children of God*; in immeasurable grace, He is our Father. And this is not a question of terms or doctrine; it is real; it is actual. The relationship is as definite, as absolute, as perfect as it will be when, having entered the Father's house with Christ, we shall surround Him with joyful wonder for ever. God knows us now as His children, and we know Him as our Father, for He "hath sent the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. 4. 6). No other relationship than this is enough for Him, for this is the manner of the love that fills His heart. To be supreme in His universe is necessary to the glory of His great Name, but universal supremacy cannot satisfy His heart; myriads of angelic intelligences are all obedient to His will in His far-stretching domain, but these do not contribute to the boundless longing of His bosom. He must have children—children begotten by Himself, having His life and nature—upon whom He can pour forth this perfect and holy love; and so we read, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God" (John 3. 1).

"When I consider the heavens", said David, "the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained; What is man, that Thou art mindful of him?" Yes, those countless stars which encircle with their splendour the brow of night, fill the soul with a sense of the greatness of their Maker; they bear a glorious witness to His power and divinity, and how small, how puny, how utterly insignificant in the presence of them is man! Yet in him and not in them does His heart pour forth His love.

"Unfathomable wonder, And mystery divine! The voice that speaks in thunder, Says, Sinner, thou art Mine."

Yes, sinners, not angels who had never rebelled against His holy will: but sinners, who when they saw His beloved Son,

"Nailed Him to the tree."

These He takes, and having received and kissed them, brings them into His family and makes them His children, and loves them with a Father's love. This is the manner of His love!

We must be careful not to limit our conception of the blessedness of this relationship to that of which the Lord speaks so sweetly in Luke 12. 22-30. The Father's care for His children is an unchanging reality; their necessities call forth His bountiful giving, and no anxious care should fill the heart of any one of His children, for He makes their needs His concern. Surely if He clothes the fields and feeds the ravens—the works of His hand; He will feed and clothe His children—the well-beloved of His heart. He would deny Himself if He did not, and He cannot deny Himself. But our intelligent entrance into the relationship of children with the Father means more than this—much more. It is not the grateful acceptance of good gifts, or the confidence that the knowledge of perfect care yields merely, but it means that the presence and company of the One who is known and loved alone can satisfy the affections that belong to the relationship; it means love appreciated and producing by its own blessedness, a response to itself; it means communion, communion between the Father and His children, the revelation of Himself in Christ being the subject of this communion.
It is plain that this alone will satisfy His heart. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work", said the blessed Lord; and the object in view is "that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them" (John 17. 26). This is the measure and the manner of His love; this is the portion of the children; and the Father cannot rest until they know it and enjoy it; and the more we enter into the children's place the more eager shall we be that the Father's heart shall be satisfied in this respect. Consider it. "THE LOVE WHEREWITH THOU HAST LOVED ME." The same love that rested upon and was in the heart of His beloved Son, this is the love that belongs to this new relationship, and rests upon all who have believed in Jesus! Has the earth beneath or heaven above anything better than this to give us?

And mark it well, it is not only upon us; it is upon us, and will rest upon us for ever as we acknowledge in a song of praise,

"The Father's love the source of all,  
Sweeter than all it gives,  
Rests on us now without recall  
And lasts while Jesus lives."

But it is more; it is to be IN US. In us as the light and life of our souls, so that we are delivered from the darkness and death that belong to the world and the flesh; in us, filling our thoughts, so that our minds become intelligent in Him who makes Himself known in this love, and delight in communion with Him; in us, so that our hearts are absorbed by it, and we are bowed down before the Father with a sense of His infinite blessedness. But it is only as Jesus Himself is in us that this love is in us, the two are inseparable. If He has His place in us, dwelling in our hearts, we shall enjoy the Father's love without reserve or fear. On the other hand, "if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in Him."

"No infant's changing pleasure,  
Is like our wandering mind."

Consequently it is well that we think often of the cost by which this relationship became possible. It could never have been if Christ had not died. The first word of public testimony borne to Him in the Gospel that unfolds this relationship is "Behold the Lamb of God".

There is great joy for the soul that enters into this relationship. "These things write we unto you that your joy may be full", wrote the apostle whose special service it was to tell us about it. But before that could be, we hear from the Saviour's lips, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death"; and again, "Now is My soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour: but for this cause came I to this hour. Father, glorify Thy Name" (John 12. 27). The cross had to be faced and endured with all that it meant for the Holy Son of God, and that is beyond the power of creature comprehension.

"Death and the curse were in my cup,  
O Christ 'twas full for Thee;  
But Thou hast drained the last dark drop,  
'Tis empty now for me.  
That bitter cup, love drank it up,  
Left but the love for me."

"Christ suffered, the Just One for us the unjust, to bring us to God." There was no other way. Now the Father has glorified His Name, and in full consistency with His holiness He gathers to His bosom such as we are. We shall not think lightly of this relationship as we consider the cost by which it has been brought about. But as the Father loves His Son because He laid down His life that He might take it again (John 10. 17), so shall we love Him, and for the self-same reason, and shall find fullness of joy in communion with the Father concerning Him, and so shall the relationship be real to us, and a joy to the Father, whose heart planned it all.
SPIRITUAL EXPANSION.

I FIND it good, ever and again, to survey the vast canopy overhead on a night when the sky is clear and the stars shining in brilliance, so that the vision, instead of being contracted by the limits of four walls, or even by those of the narrow horizon, may be enlarged by objects which are millions of miles distant. The effect is most expansive to the mind. That which is minute and discernible under the microscope, may, no doubt, be very instructive; but as the telescope sweeps through space, and carries the eye to the infinite, endless, illimitable, the result is an immense enlargement of mind. The immensity of what is called space gives an idea of God in the greatness of His handiwork; and to acquire a sense of that greatness is (for one thing) exceedingly valuable. Our minds are prone to narrowness, to become circumscribed by our surroundings, and thus to lose touch with that which is outside ourselves.

The remedy for this very common disease is clearly a truer conception of God, as made known, first in creation and then in redemption. The knowledge of God is beneficial in every way. It is, without doubt, the most wholesome and pleasant of all knowledge. It is life eternal.

We need not delay to answer the question of the agnostic, whether God can be known. He can! He is known, and loved, and obeyed by vast numbers of His creatures; He should be known and obeyed by all; and this so certainly, that the day approaches when judgment will fall on “them who know not God”. Let that fact be remembered.

Creation leaves us “without excuse”. It is a witness to His power and divinity—a universal witness, and one that appeals to all nations, even though, alas, its witness may be refused by human wisdom and philosophy to the confusion and shame of the opposers.

Redemption is additional, and presents a God of love and grace which meets the need of guilty man, in a way that mere creation—a thing external to him—never could.

The Gospel unfolds the charming scheme of redemption, and places the believer in the happy consciousness of a known relationship with God as Father through our Lord Jesus Christ. Yonder far-distant star, how brilliant soever it may be, is eclipsed by the self-sacrifice of the Son of God on Calvary. This is love infinite and everlasting; that is power and wisdom; both are of God.

And what does the knowledge of God produce in the soul that receives it? Well, it sets everything right within. How could it be otherwise? The adjustment is divine and perfect. Forgiveness of sins! Surely. Peace with God, reconciliation, sonship, and glory ere long; all this, and joint heirship with Christ, the members of whose body we are! It produces love to man, and a life of practical righteousness and holiness—a morally beautiful life. The sphere of this life is boundless. Telescope and microscope may be employed in its innumerable and benign activities. It is a life of charity and truest altruism.

No wonder that Paul, whose whole being was spent in the knowledge of God and in the service of Christ, should have pressed the spread of it on all hands.

For instance, he charges the saints at Corinth to “abound in the work of the Lord”, for such “labour” can never be in vain in Him—never! He charges them, as his beloved brethren, to be “steadfast and unmovable, always abounding in that work”. “His brethren”! Yes, his “beloved brethren”, the very brethren who had caused him such deep sorrow, and whom he had to rebuke and correct so unsparingly. He styles them his
beloved brethren, and urges them, in
the hope, no doubt, of their recovery,
that they should, notwithstanding their
past failures and sins, devote them­selves to the only work that is of
permanent value—"the work of the
Lord ".

That exhortation (in 1 Cor. 15. 58)
shines like a star of the first magnitude
through a rift in the cloudy sky as it hung over Corinth.

THE GLORY OF THE LORD.

"God who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the
fathers by the prophets, HATH IN THESE LAST DAYS SPOKEN TO
US BY HIS SON."—Hebrews 1.

HE is the Lord of all, as He was
the Agent in the creation of all.
(" By whom also He made the worlds.")

He exists as the radiance of the
unceathed Splendour, and as the exact
impress of the Father’s substance
(" Who being the brightness of His glory,
and the express image of His Person ").

The universe which He has created
He sustains and controls by His
omnipotent word (" Upholding all
things by the word of His power ").

To the oblation that He presented
to God for the purgation of sins, since
it was BY HIMSELF, He imparted
an infinite value (" When He had by
Himself purged our sins ").

He has assumed His place at the
right hand of the Eternal Majesty
(" Sat down at the right hand of the
majesty on high ").

In His exaltation He is far above
angels, as His pre-existent nature and
hereditary dignity exceeded theirs
(" Being made so much better than the
angels, as He hath by inheritance
obtained a more excellent name than
they ").

The source of this dignity is His
sonship; which is not to be under­stood as descriptive of office or rank,
but of nature; He having been
begotten of God (" For unto which of
the angels said He at any time, Thou
art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee ").

And so transcendant was the glory
of this filial relation that even in the
humiliation of the manger it procured
the homage of the angels (" When He
bringeth in the First-begotten into the
world, He saith, and let all the angels
of God worship Him ").

The Son is the true God, seated on
a throne of Divine perpetuity (" But
unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O
God, is for ever and ever ").

He maintains a moral government
of matchless and inflexible rectitude
(" A sceptre of righteousness is the
c sceptre of Thy kingdom ").

Himself immutable and eternal, He
must remain in peerless majesty when
the material universe shall have passed
away (" They shall perish, but Thou
remainest; and they shall wax old as
doth a garment, . . . but Thou art the
same, and Thy years shall not fail ").—
(Treffrey.)

This is the One who has declared to
us the will and love of God, and this is
He who has become the Leader of the
sons of God, and who will insure their
final triumph, for every enemy shall
be put beneath His feet and theirs.
THE END OF THE AGE.

Do Signs show that it is Near?

THE character of the age in which we live is not altered by the fact that the church is still on earth, nor by the preaching of the Gospel. Though from one point of view it is "the day of salvation," yet it still remains "this present evil age" (Gal. 1:4, R.V.) from which Christ gave Himself to deliver us. Nor will the translation of the church at the coming of the Lord put an end to the present age, nor alter its character, save to remove every obstacle to the full development of evil.

The saints that form the church being removed from the earth, the age will go on without them, and will speedily reach its terrible terminus. All the "signs of the times" which may be discerned to-day have to do with the end of the age, and not with the previous coming of the Lord. Christians are never bidden to look for signs, though when the signs are discernible we may look at them. And anything that indicates the approach of the end of the age sets our hearts throbbing with joyful anticipation, knowing, as we do, that our translation to meet the Lord in the air is to take place before the end is reached.

To make clear the relation—or rather, the absence of all relation—between the two things, the translation of the saints and the end of the age, let me draw an illustration from my immediate surroundings.

I am writing on board an ocean liner bound from England to New York. We are evidently nearing the end of the voyage, for to-day two signs of it are apparent. The British seabirds ceased to follow the ship two days ago, and since then we have not seen a feather. This morning, however, quite a number of gulls are circling round us—American gulls—a sure sign that we are within a few hundred miles of the American coast. Away to the north some fishing-boats are visible, the first we have seen since leaving European waters. In these we have another welcome sign that the end of a rather tedious voyage is not far distant.

The pilot has not yet come on board, but to-morrow perhaps, or it may be the day after, we shall see the sail of his boat, and the great ship will stay her progress for a few seconds while he climbs up the side stairs to the deck.

Now let us suppose, for the sake of our illustration, that there are certain persons on board who are not going to New York, but who have arranged that the pilot's boat shall take them from the ship and land them at some port on the Connecticut coast, leaving the great liner to proceed to its destination without them. With what peculiar interest they watch for the sail of the pilot's boat! The sight of the birds and the fishing vessels is full of interest for them, as proofs that the voyage will not in any case last much longer, but their thoughts are not upon the end of the ship's voyage, but upon the boat that is to remove them from the ship before the end of the voyage, and land them in Connecticut at the home of their friends.

We too—all of us, saved and unsaved—are voyagers. Night and day we are travelling; this age, the ship in which we find ourselves is bearing us ever onward. But some of us know that, through infinite and unmerited grace, we are to be taken clean out of the age before it reaches its end. The coming of our Lord and Saviour, according to 1 Thess. 4., will mean for us translation out of the course of the age to be with Him, leaving the age to rush on to its terminus without us. The "signs of
the times are to us like the appearance of the birds and fishing-boats. We look at these signs with a wonderful glow in our hearts. But not for such things as these do we look and long. We look for the Saviour from heaven (Phil. 3. 20), whose coming (like the coming of the pilot's boat) will mean our transference from "this present evil age" to be "for ever with the Lord".

Then the age, bereft of every member of Christ's body, will reach its predicted climax amid marvellous displays of the power of Satan and the terrific energy of evil, and will be ended by the glorious appearing of Christ with His saints and angels to judge the nations and to inaugurate His long-expected kingdom.

The signs that are showing themselves to our wondering eyes are vivid and awe-inspiring. It would seem that the end of the age must be near. But nearer still the coming of Him for whom we have waited through weary years.

He has shown us wonderful things. We have seen the mountain of our million sins flung into the ocean of Divine forgetfulness; we have seen the munificence of grace heaped upon our unworthy heads. But not yet have we seen our Saviour's face. The day is coming, however, when we shall see Him "face to face". This is the moment for which we long! This is the sight we fain would see! With it signs and seasons have nothing to do. But they do point to the nearness of the end of the age, and it becomes us, as those saved from it, from its course and from its spirit, to seek by all means to rescue others from it while yet there is time. God help us so to do!

GOD'S FOREKNOWLEDGE. Daniel 11.

The eleventh chapter of Daniel supplies the links which connect the third year of Cyrus (chap. 10. 1) with the establishment of the Roman power. This is now history as far as verse 35; after that verse the prophecy is projected to the time of the end. As in several other Scriptures, the prophecy is not continuous, the interruption being filled with the present church period, as to which the Old Testament is absolutely silent. After the rapture of the church (1 Thess. 4. 16, 17) the times and seasons of the prophets, which are now in abeyance, will again proceed. This break in the prophecies may be seen in Isa. 61. 2 compared with Luke 4. 19, 20; in Dan. 9. 26, 27, between the 69th and 70th weeks; in Luke 21. 24, 25, and again in the chapter we are considering.

Verses 1 and 2 concern the Medo-Persian empire under which Daniel was living; verses 3 and 4 describe the Grecian kingdom which was to succeed it, and tell how its short duration would terminate in a fourfold division. This division amongst the four generals of Alexander the Great, resulted in the supremacy of two of them, Ptolemy king of Egypt, in the chapter styled king of the south; and Seleucus king of Syria, styled king of the north; these directions being in relation to Palestine which lay between them. The struggles of their successors who are also called kings of the north and south are then given. None but God could have so described in detail, events covering a space of 360 years, before ever the actors in those events were born. The description is so accurate that some who lack the knowledge of
God, have ventured to assert that Dan. xi. must have been written after the circumstances took place. The last verse of chapter x. disposes of any such idea, for we are there told that the contents of chapter xi. were already noted in the 'Scripture of truth' at the time the angel was conversing with Daniel; the prophet had only to write the future things which God already saw (Psa. 119. 89).

The quarrels of the opposing kings are rapidly passed over, until verse 21 introduces us to one, Antiochus IV (Epiphanes) who, while king of the north (Syria) is at the same time a type of the Antichrist, the wilful king of verse 36. The doings of Antiochus as king of the north are described, and his interference with the Jewish worship in Jerusalem, how he deposed the High Priest verse 22; and enriched himself from the Temple treasury, verse 28. But his progress was checked by the rising power of the Romans who come upon the scene in verse 30. Disappointed and baffled in his schemes, he vented his wrath upon the Jews, stopped the daily sacrifice, offered a swine upon the altar, and placed in the temple the image of Jupiter. This is referred to in verse 31, and with still greater detail in chapter 8. 9-14. These events are now history, but they foreshadow that further abomination of desolation which is spoken of in chapter 12. 11, the Scripture quoted by our Lord in Matt. 24.

The power of Antiochus was overthrown and the Temple worship restored by the Maccabees; these are the events of verse 32 who, knowing their God, were strong and did exploits, instructing also many among the people. Then in a few brief words, the sad condition in which the Jewish nation would be found even until the time of the end is given in vv. 33-35.

From this verse the prophecy is still future, the last wilful king of the Jews is described, and the scene is set for the close of the 'times of the Gentiles'. There will be a king in Jerusalem, an infidel (verse 36) regarding neither Jehovah nor Christ (verse 37), at the same time an idolater (verses 38, 39). He will have two bitter enemies, for there will again be a king of Syria and a king of Egypt. Here the prophecy leaves him, for the Lord will be his judge and destroyer. The remaining verses, 41-45, describe the end of the last king of the north to whom the personal pronouns 'he' and 'him' in these verses refer.

A reference to Isa. 11. 14 shows that Edom, Ammon and Moab (who will have their representatives at the time of the end), are reserved to be subdued by Israel (compare Psa. 60. and 108.).

The spiritual lesson of the chapter is that God has foreseen all that would take place under Gentile dominion; knowing this, the soul is kept calm amidst the upheaval of nations, and the change of kingdoms. God is working out His own end, and when this is revealed, the supreme authority shall be given to the Son of man, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him (Dan. 7. 13, 14 and 37).

GOD AND THE SINNER.

The infidel scoffs at God, and says, "Who would have a God who cast off His creature for an apple"? But the infidel is very blind, he does not understand. It was not God who cast off His creature for an 'apple', but the creature who cast off his God for an 'apple'. What that apple represented to him he valued more than he did his God. What then, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son". For a world of sinners who think as little or less about Him than Adam did, God has a great care. For, "God commendeth His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us".
MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

"With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."—Matthew 7. 2.

GRACE unmerited by us saves all those who rest alone in the merits of the atoning work of Christ. And God's salvation is eternal, every saved one is destined for His eternal glory; they shall never perish. But if our feet are to be kept from stumbling on the way to glory, and from turning aside from the highway of truth and righteousness, we must pay earnest heed to the Word of God, and be very watchful against the tendencies of our own hearts. How careful God has been to erect warnings and danger signals all along life's highway. He has given us precept upon precept, but lest we should pass these by heedlessly as though they had no application to us, He has also given us solemn examples in His Word as to the consequences that we shall most surely reap if we take our own way and regard not His will.

No Biblical character is more striking in this respect than Jacob. He cheated his father and his brother—let us take heed lest in anything we are acting like him—he cheated his father and his brother, and that act drove him forth from his home to the cattle troughs of Haran, where he was cheated out of his wages, and cheated out of his wife, and cheated, and cheated, and cheated again, ten times cheated, and that, too, by his own mother's brother, till cheating stank in his nostrils, and became hateful as hell to his heart. This cheating clung to the cheater as his very shadow for the rest of his years, "Good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over" was given into Jacob's bosom as a recompense for that early act of treachery in his mother's home. Let us take heed.

As we read the story, we remember David's words; that to the froward God will show Himself froward; and this day of grace has not changed God's dealings in government in this respect, for our New Testament tells us, that "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap". And it is well that we should hear again the Lord's own words, "For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again".

What a hypocrite Jacob was and is, not only the Jacob of Genesis 29. 31, who was buried at Machpeleah, but the Jacob that lives, shall I say, in your heart and mine! Look at him again; behold the biter bit, see the shearer of others, shorn like a sheep by the shears of Shylock his mother's brother. "What is this thou hast done unto me? Wherefore hast thou beguiled me?" he asks, in his injured innocence. He had never seen the like of this in his mother's home; how terribly shocked was his inborn sense of right and wrong! Yes, and Laban still takes a hand in deceiving and wronging Jacob, and how incensed, how outraged is Jacob when it happens! We never see what wickedness there is in lies, and treachery, and cheatery, and evil speaking, and tale-bearing, and the rest of the hateful products of the flesh, until we are injured by them ourselves. We will sit still all our days and speak against our brother, till some one comes and reports to us what they say who sit and speak against us. Then up go our hands in horror at the iniquity of it. It were well if the utter blackness of lying and slander broke out upon us in such a way that we would rather cut out our tongues than be guilty of it again. But we reap what we sow; that is the lesson. Jacob is a danger signal to warn our feet from such paths as he trod. "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."
"The Exaltation of the Lord."

Our Lord Jesus Christ, that Prophet foretold and foreshadowed in the Old Testament, came to speak the words of God; also to do His will and His works. This brought upon Him opposition and persecution, sorrow and suffering. His grace and love were refused. They requited His labours for their blessing with rejection; they rewarded Him with hatred for His love. He nevertheless "set His face like a flint, to finish the work He came to do."

It was thus with Jeremiah in a measure more limited. "They shall fight against thee," he was told by the Lord. Therefore he was to be purposeful, and gird up his loins, and arise, and speak unto them; for "I am with thee, saith the Lord" (r. 17-19).

To be true to his name, in "the exaltation of the Lord" amidst deceit and violence, encouragement is divinely given in this first chapter; where the details are recorded of his call and his commission.

In the first section (chaps. 1. to 24.), the Lord pleads with the people, whilst warning and admonishing them also. The first twelve chapters, and the next twelve, equally subdivide this section; significant signs being given in the second twelve to illustrate truths stated in the first twelve.

The Call, Commission, and Encouragement of A Servant of the Lord.

Of the early verses of chapter i. we have spoken. Although at first Jeremiah felt he was but a child, it must have been a great stay for him afterwards to think of God's foreknowledge of him, even before his birth, setting him apart, and giving him to be a prophet not only to Israel, but also to the nations (1. 4, 10). This fact of God's foreknowledge was made known to him at his call to the work, when the Lord touched him and put His words in his mouth. "I am with thee" is twice said to him (verses 8 and 19). Every servant of the Lord should have some sense of this, along with a settled conviction of the foreknowledge of God. This gives stability amidst trials and testings. The Lord said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee". Paul constantly speaks of himself as "a called apostle of Jesus Christ, by God's will", and Peter reminds us that we are "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father".

The faithful servant may have to meet great difficulties and fierce foes, but he is encouraged like Jeremiah, who is again twice told not to fear (verses 8. and 17). God would fortify him against all opposition (18), and; however strong it might be, none should prevail against him. The greater the foe the greater becomes faith's victory. "I am with thee, saith the Lord, to deliver thee".

We often find this honoured servant faltering afterwards, but he pursued the path to the end nevertheless. He might say to the Lord, "Woe is me"; and "Know that for Thy sake I have suffered rebuke"; and again, "Why is my pain perpetual?" "Wilt Thou be unto me as waters that fail?"; but the Lord reminds him once more, "I am with thee to save thee" (15. 20). He might curse the day wherein he was born, and tell the Lord he had 'enticed' him (20. 7), and that he was a derision daily; but his faith however becomes strong again, and he says, "The Lord is with me" (20. 11)!

Tossed and tried, opposed and persecuted, he nevertheless laboured on to the end of his long, toilsome journey.

It was to encourage Jeremiah that the two visions in chapter i. 11, 13, were given to him—the rod of an almond tree and the seething pot. Both spoke with significant eloquence. The first, like Aaron's rod that budded, implied the watchfulness and wakefulness which were always active for
the true interests of the Lord; the second, like the caldron of Ezekiel, which was made to boil furiously by the fiery judgment from the north (Ezek. 11. 7; 24. 1-14) illustrates Jerusalem and the consuming judgments which should come from God by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar.

An exceptional word (shaqed), a poetical expression, is used for the almond tree here. So in the next verse for 'hasten' it should read 'wakeful' rather. The word (shaqad) is from the same root. This divinely inspired use of words is exceedingly expressive. As to the seething pot, the word is the same as in Ezekiel, and referred to what was evidently a common saying at Jerusalem at that time—"This city is the caldron". There is no difficulty about the expression in verse 13—"From the face of the north" (margin). It means the pressure of judgment would come from thence, and the caldron would lean in the opposite direction. All this is solemnly explained in the following verses, and the main reason given by the Lord is touching indeed. It shows how His heart felt the way they treated Him. They have "FORSAKEN ME" and served other gods, He complains.

They worshipped the works of their own hands (ver. 16). Sorrowful as it must have been to Jeremiah, yet, when it all came to pass, exactly as he was given to foresee, it must have given great stability to him amidst the trials of his later years, increasing his confidence in the One who had called, commissioned, and encouraged him.

THE LORD FORSAKEN AND RETURNED TO: THE CONSEQUENCES.

Chapter 2. is the first recorded word to the people. It gives the first thought which filled the heart of the Lord, the main reason, as we have said, for all the sorrow.—Those who once loved Him had forsaken Him. He could not forget the kindness of their early years when they first went after Him. He remembered the love of their espousals, but now He complains again and again, They have "gone far from Me"; they have "forsaken Me"; they have "turned their back unto Me"; they have "forgotten Me" (see vers. 2, 5, 13, 17, 19, 27 and 32).

This is written for our learning, and does it not remind us of the first word as to the declension of the assemblies (Rev. 2. 4)—"Thou hast left thy first love." Oh! the sad results of this ending as it does in what is said to the last of the assemblies, "I will spue thee out of My mouth" (3. 16). Such is the beginning and ending of the professing Christian assemblies. May those who understand this and have "ears to hear"—not what the church says—but what "the Spirit saith to the churches"—have grace given to them to encourage a return to the first love again now at the end before Christ returns for His bride. There is Scriptural reason to expect a revival of this among the real, but our Lord Jesus Christ and His love must be ministered in the power of the Holy Spirit to produce this. "The exaltation of the Lord" before our hearts and eyes is necessary, if the heart of the bride, the assembly, is to be reached. The last picture given of her in the last chapter of the Bible, shows her responding to the presentation of the Lord Jesus as God and Man, and as the bright and blessed Hope of her heart. In unison with the Spirit SHE SAYS TO HIM, "COME". At the same time there is living energy manifested in calling thirsty souls to come and drink and live; yea, in inviting "whosoever will" to take of the water of life freely (Rev. 22. 16-17).

In our chapter we learn that the nation of Israel was seeking the lethal waters of Egypt and Assyria (vers. 18 and 36). The people turned first to one and then to the other. They should, however, be made ashamed of both. They would learn that it
was an evil and bitter thing to forsake the Lord (ver. 19). With sorrowful eloquence and pitiful pleading He exclaims, "Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the Lord! For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken Me, the Fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water" (2. 12, 13)! Yet with what condescension and consideration He inquires of them, "Have I been a wilderness to Israel? a land of darkness?" (ver. 31). But it is of no avail, they were shameless and idolatrous (vers. 20-30). Pastors, prophets and people went after Baal; the priests said not, "Where is the Lord?" In vain had He chastised them; they received no correction. Wicked still, Israel said, "I have sinned not"; therefore the Lord righteously rejected their confidences (vers. 35 and 37), they had become the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto Him.

Chapter 3. continues to lay bare their unfaithfulness and the present consequences of the same; pleading with them also to cry to the Guide of their youth (vers. 1-5). Then the prophet foresees a turning to the Lord, with future consequences of astonishing splendour; when, in the exalted Lord, Israel shall be saved and the nations be abundantly blessed (3. 6; 4. 2). This flows out of a special word of the Lord to Jeremiah in his early days, when Josiah was king (6. 11). The outward revival of those days was "with falsehood" (chap. 10., N.T.). The call which follows to return and confess to the One who is married to them looks on to a future day, when the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord shall be outshone by a greater glory, when the true King shall reign, and "they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord", when He shall be truly exalted, and when in a national sense Israel shall call Him "My Father", and "not turn away from following Him" (vers. 14-19). This has never yet taken place, as we know. It supposes the return of our Lord Jesus Christ to Israel as David's greater Son. Their conscience will be truly reached then, and they will return to the One they had forsaken and forgotten. "Behold we come to Thee", they say, "for Thou art the Lord our God" (ver. 22). They confess their sin, owning that the salvation of Israel is in Him alone (ver. 23).

The reply of the ever blessed Lord is given in the first two verses of chapter 4. Let them return to Himself, putting away the abominations which have been a snare to them: let them thus return, and they should be nationally established, and widespread blessing also be secured for the nations around: let them return to the Lord, not to national greatness, but to the Lord their God, and the other would follow: let them "Return unto Me", not to national salvation, but to their Saviour God, all else would then come right: let them "RETURN UNTO ME", not to fullness of blessing, but to the Blesser Himself, overflowing blessing would consequently result: let them "RETURN UNTO ME, saith the Lord", not to be the head of all the nations, but to be the King of nations (10. 7), the King of Eternity (10. 10), the living God; national headship should follow: "And thou shalt swear, The Lord liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness; and the nations shall bless themselves in Him, and in Him shall they glory" (4. 2).

This is a beautiful picture, painted by the Spirit of God Himself. It is a true picture, animated, moving, and in few words, showing us the happy administration of earthly blessedness in the coming age after the assembly is taken to her heavenly home, and after the great tribulation which follows. Israel is seen saved and exalted in the Lord, in Whom also the nations ranged around Israel shall bless themselves, and glory! The vivid scene of the last two chapters of the Bible is necessary to explain and complete this picture. The Old Testament never gives this. It is
the assembly, the bride of Christ coming out from her heavenly home (to which she had been previously taken) as the City of heavenly administration, having the throne and the glory of God. She is given her place above the earth in relation to Israel and the nations. This brings the heavens and the earth together for administrative purposes. God and the Lamb are in the heavenly city and the light of the glory shines with royal radiance to Israel and the nations below. Gloriously great, bountifully blessed, and divinely delightful, is this completion and explanation of the Old Testament promises. They find their "Yea" and "Amen" in Christ, for the glory of God by us, who are now brought into the assembly before that joyful day dawns with all its beauty, brightness and blessing.

"Then the wide earth, in glad response
To the bright world above,
Shall sing in rapturous strains of joy,
In memory of Thy love."

PERFECT SUBMISSION.

"Not as I will, but as Thou wilt" (Matt. 26. 39).
"That good . . . will of God."
"Thy will be done" (Matt. 26. 42).
"That good and acceptable . . . will of God."
"The cup which My Father have given Me, shall I not drink it?" (John 18. 11).
"That good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Rom. 12. 2).

GETHSEMANE, meaning the 'oil press', answers to its name. We find in it not the wine press, the sufferings that wrought atonement, not the bearing of sin itself, but the pressure upon Him of that sorrow, as He now touched the border of it. We are allowed to see the agony of it to Him who takes the cup in its full bitterness, humbling Himself and becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. From the oil press there flows nothing but what is perfect and of the Spirit—uncompromising obedience to God, and self-sacrificing devotion to us.

The sweat of the face was part of the curse, it was to mark sinful man as he laboured on his journey to the grave; but here the sinless Man sweats as it were great drops of blood, and this is in view of meeting all that sin had brought in. It is not the thought of the physical suffering that lay before Him that moves the Lord thus. It would be a dishonour to suppose it. There is but one thing mighty enough to do this—the surpassing agony of the cross, the forsaking of God, and death as the judgment of God. The sinless One takes up the sinner's place, and Gethsemane is in anticipation of this. This is the Father's will, and this is enough for Him.

O Saviour, increase our appreciation of that perfect submission to the Father's will for our blessing!
THE LOVE OF CHRIST.

A QUESTION of great importance for every one of us is, whether we have faith in the Lord's love for us, or in His power. Let us each be exercised as to it. Do I value the love of Christ for me more than the power that I know He could exercise on my behalf? Naturally speaking, you could have more reliance on a friend who has means than on a friend who has no means; but the friend who has no means, if he has true love, is a better friend. Therefore, if I know that the Lord loves me personally, the more I study that love the more I see, not what He could give me, but what He could be to me. When His love begins to be attractive, you are surprised to find where it will lead you, and what it will open out to you.

Every Christian has learned the Lord as his Saviour, but the first real beginning in the soul of this attachment is the discovery that He loves me. Then it is that I realize that not only is He the object of my heart, but that the One I love has made me an object of His heart! And that is a great day for the soul! Many are ready to say that they love Him, but how far can they say that they are conscious of His love to them? That they so prize it, that it is the great secret of their hearts?

One of the first things I learn is the Lord's desire for my spiritual advancement and not my advancement in earthly position, and this will surely be a test to me. The more real His love is to my heart, the more I shall desire spiritual advancement, and the less I shall care for earthly advancement, for His desires will be mine. It is beautiful to see that the work of true love is to set aside whatever would interfere with association, but if I am seeking something for myself on earth I shall not appreciate this; our tendency is to judge of His love by earthly gifts and favours.

The bride in the Song of Solomon (chap. 1. 4) began rightly when she said, "Draw me, and we will run after thee". The unfailling mark of true affection is that I seek His company. If I know that He loves me this must be so, and therefore plainly, if I keep my first love, I shall seek to have company with Him. If you are true in heart to Him, as the bride to the Bridegroom you can go on to Song of Sol. 2., "I sat under His shadow with great delight, and His fruit was sweet to my taste". It is very plain that company is dearer to the heart than any gift, "He brought me to the banqueting house, and His banner over me was love".

But, though knowing the peculiar sweetness of sitting under His shadow with great delight, yet the tendency is to think of oneself and one's interests here, and to drop down into selfish engrossment, and sleep like the bride in chap. 5. 2, 3. Sleeping is not doing anything actually wrong, but it is making oneself comfortable without the Lord, a state of inactivity with regard to Him. It often follows a very happy time; but you feel you have had an irreparable loss, and you want to return to your first love. This we see (in chap. 5.) brings out great exercise, and connected with this is the calling to mind the beauty and love of Him who is altogether lovely, whose company for the moment had been lost. The result is that the heart is drawn nearer to Him than ever, and the blessed fact is realized anew and in a fuller way.

"I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine" (chap. 6.).

Mary Magdalene is a great pattern of a devoted heart, and when in her agony she could not find her Lord she must have been indifferent to all here in the world, consequently she was a fitted vessel to attend to the Lord's interests, when He revealed Himself to her. But mark the way that His love took with her. He did not merely relieve her present distress, He
did not allow her to touch Him, but sent her to tell His disciples that He was going away—a great practical lesson, and a deep disappointment it must have been to her, but the Lord in His love would thus teach her that henceforth the only way of reaching Him was outside everything down here, which in the long run the true heart gladly accepts, for it means that we can be where He is fully accepted, and clear of the place where His is refused. This Mary learnt before the close of the day, when she met Him again in the midst of His own. She had her part in a consecrated company, set free from all defilement and earthly bondage by the purity and perfection of His work, of Whom it could be said, “As He is, so are we in this world”. That is the assembly, and relieved of every human pressure such can enter the Holiest to share before God in all the fragrance and acceptance of Christ. Of this we have no type, and the fullness and magnitude of it are only made known by the Spirit of God.

“All Scripture is inspired of God.”

(F. W Grant.)

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3. 16).

First of all, the apostle puts ‘Doctrine’ as that for which Scripture is profitable. Doctrine must come first, as the basis of everything. Truth must be ours before there can be the application of truth; and then notice that the application is immediately brought home in a personal way to ourselves. The first use of doctrine is for ‘Reproof’, or conviction. It, the Word, shines as a light upon us, shines upon all the road in which we are, and discovers that which must bring down all the pride of our hearts; so that we shall receive the Word not as philosophers, but as sinners—though, through God’s grace, saved sinners. Conviction here is not, of course, the primary conviction. It accompanies us at every step. We learn ourselves under this light more and more, and we learn what the world is. But the light is none the less because it displays the evil of so much that it shines upon. ‘Correction’ is that which follows conviction, while ‘Instruction in Righteousness’ carries us on to the positive side of things, and occupies us with the good in itself, and not merely enables us to distinguish it from the evil. Thus by the Word of God the man of God is made complete, “Throughly furnished to every good work”.

It speaks, as we know, with the sweetest familiarity, and with the encouragement that is ever of God; but it manifests itself, nevertheless, as to that which is beyond us, higher than ourselves; the revelation of One who is that, into whose ways and thoughts we may be led more and more, just because they are always still beyond us. How wonderful is this ‘God-breathed’ Scripture, as the word ‘inspired’ means! It is in this sense that we call it the Word of God. There is no need for overlooking and no comfort in overlooking the human element; but that human element is always penetrated with the Divine, and lifted into and empowered by that which is higher than man and beyond him.
THE WORTHY WITNESS.  
(H. J. VINE.)

When Paul exhorts Timothy to be faithful and true, he reminds him of the witness of our Lord Jesus Christ before Pilate, also of His future appearing in the glory which shall manifest "The blessed and only Potentate", the King of those that reign, the Lord of those who exercise lordship, to whom belongs honour, majesty, and eternal might. Pilate inquired of Him, as we have pointed out, concerning Kingship, and when the Jews observed his indecision, they cried out, "If thou releaseth this Man thou art not a friend of Cæsar!" The Representative of the Roman empire was in a dilemma! and he handed over the true Witness, God's King, to be crucified! The Jew and the Representative of the revived Roman empire must, however, face Him again when He returns in power and glory, as we shall see.

It is striking that the worthy Witness is singled out so definitely in this connection in the last book of the Bible. John has shown Him as 'the Word' become flesh, full of grace and truth, but Revelation reveals Him as "the Word of God" executing judgment (19. 13). Luke has presented the lovely walk of those anointed feet among men; but Revelation shows 'His feet' like "fine brass as burning in a furnace" (1. 15), to tread down wickedness. Mark has shown us His works of power in blessing, but Revelation shows us His works of government in judgment. Matthew has given us to see His royal ways upon the earth, but Revelation shows us His ways of judgment from the throne. The worthy Witness was faithful and true in all His words, walk, works and ways in His lowly path of humiliation even unto death, and He will be faithful and true to God in all that He does from the throne to which He has been exalted.

When He rides triumphantly forth from heaven upon a white horse to deal with an apostate and blaspheming world, he is called 'Faithful and true' and 'The Word of God' (Rev. 19. 11-13). There is no question of Kingship allowed to be raised then! no question of His acceptance or rejection is permitted! The wicked leader of the Jews, 'the false prophet' and the blasphemous head of the revived Roman empire, 'the beast', are both dealt with as we said; both are taken alive and cast into the lake of fire (ver. 20). Once the representatives of Jew and Gentile combined to reject Him, now the representatives of Jew and Gentile are rejected for ever by the One they disowned so cruelly, as He comes out of heaven in might and majesty clothed in vesture dipped in blood upon which in shining splendour is seen a name—as it is also emblazoned upon His thigh—being His by right and by might—"King of kings and Lord of lords", the One who once witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, the worthy Witness.

Once again He is found in Revelation. This time He addresses Himself to a lukewarm assembly, a picture of the last Laodicean phase of Christendom before His return, which gives no true witness, but is steeped in self-satisfaction and worldliness. He says, "I am about to spue thee out of My mouth" (3. 16). Nor need anyone think there is no witness because of the humiliating failure of the assemblies, for the One who speaks is Himself "the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the beginning of the creation of God". We can therefore glory in the Lord, and rejoice in Him always, even as we are exhorted to do.

Finally, let us notice, at the very beginning of this last book of the inspired volume, which is to show the judgment of God upon the assemblies, the Jews and the nations, a greeting is given "from Jesus Christ, the faithful Witness, the Firstborn from
the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth". The faithful One abides! the true One remembers His own! The worthy One sends greeting! This revives the heart and gives joy to those who are truly His! Therefore response is immediately given—"Unto Him who loves us, and has washed us from our sins in His own 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" (1. 5, 6).

What a relief it is amidst all the unreality and inconsistency of Christendom to turn to the One who faileth never, the ever worthy One! What joy it imparts to know One who abides faithful and true! How it moves our hearts to utter the praises of the worthy Witness! ' to sing songs of the glory of Him, who rightly represents the truth as to God and man, our ever to be adored Lord Jesus Christ.

WINTER TIME—THE TEST OF GROWTH.

In our journey through this world to our heavenly home we pass through every season—the spring, and the summer, but also the autumn and the winter. The winter tests the growth of summer. The tree that endures the winter best, is the one that will bud best in the spring. In the winter, the sap—the power of life—is concentrated; everything without checks the expression of it, and there is hindrance on every side because of the inclemency; and this effects, as there is vigour in the plant, consolidation which forms stamina for future exertion and growth. Thus in trial and sorrow, there is everything checking and blighting outside and around, but this is the time that one more fully reaches and ascertains the real power within—what the resources really are, independently of all outward and perishable things; and as this power is assured and possessed, so will there be increased ability to bud and blossom and bring forth fruit when the trials are over and gone.

The Lord sees it necessary at times to subject His people to temporary eclipses of the natural sun, that is, the blessings which suit us naturally, in order that they should ascertain the measure and value of what He is in Himself; because it is as we know the latter, that we enter into and know the joys of heaven. Here our God does for us and Christ does in us, for we are in Him; but there we shall not need anything to be done for us or in us, but what He is Himself will occupy and satisfy our hearts. The winter here is a temporary death, all encouragement to life is suspended, there is nothing to induce one to look around, or to bind one to this scene; and then it is one discovers the real amount of one's resources in Christ, and the actual extent of one's satisfaction in a purely human condition. During the eclipse there is nothing but Christ; and if He be known in His preciousness, the eclipse—the winter—becomes a time when the most blessed acquirements are made. How differently one would address oneself to the journey, if one had experienced truly the loss of every green thing here—but at the same time were compensated for it all in the company of Christ. It would be as if one had died and had reached heaven and entered into its joys with the Lord, and had returned here again for another spring and summer and autumn. How wonderfully would such an one bud and blossom and bring forth fruit! May every tried child of God know much of this blessed acquirement in these dark and wintry days; and may the Lord be able to say of them, "I have come into My garden and have eaten of My pleasant fruits".

J. B. S.
GOD IS BEHIND EVERYTHING.

In view of the growing unrest and violence in so many parts of the earth, which is evidently causing considerable disquietude of mind in some of our correspondents, we give the following quotation from J. N. Darby.

Speaking of THE REVELATION, he says: 'The persecuting emperor little thought what he was giving to us when he banished the apostle [John] to Patmos; no more than Augustus, in his political plans as to the census of the empire, knew he was sending a poor carpenter to Bethlehem, with his espoused wife, that Christ might be born there; or the Jews and Pilate's soldiers, that they were sending the thief to heaven, when they broke his legs in heartless respect for their own superstitions and ordinances. God's ways are behind the scenes; but He moves all the scenes which He is behind. We have to learn this, and let Him work, and not think much of man's busy movements; they will accomplish God's. The rest of them will disappear. We have only peacefully to do His will.' Oh, for this confidence in Him who is supreme above all evil at all times. This will keep us in perfect peace.

THE CROSS.

THE HISTORY OF MAN.

The history of man as a fallen sinner—his wanderings, his erratic activities, his feverish restlessness, his headlong career, his wilful forgetfulness of his Creator—begins not with Adam in his fallen condition, but with his posterity. That which was found in him when he had broken with God had, as far as his written history goes, to come to light in his descendants: of his personal history we have no account. In his race we learn what he was, for what they are they are by derivation from him. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and what the flesh was when the sinner was driven out of Eden had yet to be manifested. It took four thousand years to do this, but the patience of God was equal to the demand made upon it.

During this long period man occupies the stage, and in his history the forces of good and evil are seen to be in ceaseless conflict. This question, with which man meddled to his disadvantage, has in man to be brought to an issue, solved and settled. The triumph of the one must unquestionably be the destruction of the other. In the conflict there can be neither quarter, compromise, nor armistice. And not only so, but the armies and adherents of the defeated must ever lie under the humiliation of defeat, and subject to the penalties imposed upon them by the victor.

Behind the scenes and out of sight are the powers that direct those forces—God on the one side, and the devil on the other—and according to the nature of the power to which he gives his service, the creature is under the domination of the good, or of the evil. God is good, does good, and ever leads the subject creature in the way of good. The devil is evil, practices evil, leads his dupes in the way of evil, and knows no mercy. Woe to the hapless creature that comes under the influence of his deceitful wiles!

He is not omnipotent, neither can he influence man to do evil without man's consent. The creature who serves in the army of the devil proves himself by so doing to be a consenting party. By a blind and fanatical course in the devil's service a man may come under his complete control, but in that service he cannot be conscripted.
In the history of the fallen race these moral forces are seen at work. And what a history it is to ponder over! From the first a mind at enmity with God becomes manifest. In the altar of Cain this mind is very discernible. He refuses to acknowledge that the judgment of death lies upon him. He is willing enough to admit that it is by the bounty of God his creature necessities are met, but his sinful condition is utterly repudiated. The Word of God has no place in him. And therefore does he slay his brother, because his altar witnessed to his acknowledgment of his sinful condition.

Corruption and violence, the former of the flesh and the latter of the devil, fill the earth and dominate the race less than two thousand years from the fall. And if there are a few that will hearken to the voice of God, they can neither purify that filthy human river, nor alter its disastrous course; they can only testify to the sure judgment of an angry God, that shall bring to an end that horrible state of things resulting from the lawless behaviour of the godless creature. In the judgment of the flood, that world so offensive to God disappears, eight persons alone finding refuge in the ark.

Is the history of man any better afterwards? Alas, no. The tower of Babel, the cities of the plain, the iniquity of the Amorite, the horrors of the Canaanite, and other evils, show to us the resurrection of the abominations of the antedeluvian world, its corruptions and its violence. The worship of everything except the true God, the cruelties and the oppressions, the pollutions in which men everywhere wallowed (Rom. 1. 21-23), compelled God, if He was to have anything for Himself on earth, to call out of the world one man to be His witness, a witness to the one true God in the midst of a world given over to demon worship (Josh. 24. 2, 3; 1 Cor. 10. 20). This man’s descendants went down into Egypt, and there became slaves to the Egyptians; and when God brought them out, after having showed great signs and wonders in the land of Ham, they provoked Him daily on their journey to Canaan, and when in that land they practised greater abominations than the original inhabitants of that land had been guilty of. They broke the law, persecuted the prophets, stoned those that testified of the coming of Christ, and when He came they betrayed and murdered Him (Acts 7. 52, 53).

From the beginning of his fallen history the lawlessness of man steadily increased in volume and in moral corruption, until at the cross it burst all bounds, and attempted to extinguish the authority of God upon earth. Here was the midnight of man’s transgression, the black and dark night of his rebellion against God. Here the unmixed wickedness of the human heart reached the summit of insane hostility. Here it was not the testimony of creation that he was met with, nor was it the law with which he was in conflict, it was God Himself with whom he had grappled, it was the Almighty with whom he had come to blows. And who was it that could not forecast the issue of such a combat?

From the standpoint of the creature, the cross and a dead Christ upon it might seem to record a victory on the side of sinful flesh, and were it not for the resurrection, we might well give up hope for the triumph of righteousness. But by the light of the resurrection and glory of the Saviour, and the last Adam in the presence of God, we can view the cross as the destruction of the whole power of evil. In the cross the end of all flesh came before God. The hour in which it manifested itself in all its hideous hatred of God was the hour of its utter and complete condemnation. In the cross it has been completely set aside in the judgment of God. It still goes on in its lawless behaviour as though it had gained the victory, but its day of probation came to an end when it rejected God come in grace. Its condemnation and end
in this sense came in the death of Him who stood as its representative in the hour in which the judgment of God broke loose upon it (Rom. 8. 3), and it is the privilege of the believer to apply this to himself in a personal way, and to say with the apostle: "I am crucified with Christ" (Gal. 2. 20).

THE WORK OF GOD.

What a relief it is to lift our eyes from the tortuous and rebellious ways of the fallen race, and fix them upon the activities of God in the person and work of His beloved Son, the Man of His counsels, the Head and Centre of another race deriving from Himself, and which is to supersede the old and fallen race before God. In the accomplishment of this it is not the history of fallen sinners but that of God that is to be our study. While the sending of His Son into the world was the last test He applied to man, it was also the beginning of the intervention of God for man's deliverance from the power of evil. The cross cleared the ground of the old order, and in the resurrection and glory of Christ the Head of the new order is established in the presence of God.

Here we see God as the Worker, and man is the subject of His work. He has the Man in His presence who is the life-giving Head of a heavenly and spiritual race, and every man must be refused who has not his derivation from this Man. At this present time man's work goes for nothing except to condemn him in the day of judgment. He must be saved by Christ. There is no salvation in any other. He is righteousness for every human being under heaven, and He must be received as such, and that by faith, as the free gift of God. Man must be born again. He must have a new life and nature. The old life is sinful and corrupt, and there is no mending of it. But life eternal is in the risen Saviour, and "He that hath the Son hath the life, and he that hath not the Son hath not the life".

The relationship and place of favour in which the Son is, the believer has, for He has taken us into favour in the Beloved. The redemption of the body is all we look for, and we shall have this at the coming of Christ. We shall be in heaven as the work of God; only that which He has wrought can be there, but we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus. In all this we are the subject of His operations; it is now, What hath God wrought? The eternal lake of fire will show that which man's work has merited, and this must be the portion of all who are determined to reject God's plan of salvation, which is in Christ, and preached worldwide in the Gospel of His grace.

THE MAN OF GOD'S COUNSELS.

It is in the Man of God's counsels, our Lord Jesus Christ, that God, as we know Him, and His work has come to light. We see His gracious activities in the One who subsisting in the form of God, did not esteem it an object of rapine to be on an equality with God; but emptied Himself, taking a bondman's form, taking His place in the likeness of men; and having been found in fashion as a man, humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, and that the death of the cross (Phil. 2.). The disobedience of the man after the flesh brought him to death, and in the ways of God, as we have seen, the cross was his end in the judgment of God; but the cross was also the end of the obedient Man as come in flesh and blood, for He came in the likeness of sinful flesh, that He might stand as its representative before God, when His judgment broke loose against the man after that order (Rom. 8. 3). The One who knew no sin was made sin for us (2 Cor. 5. 21). Our old man has been crucified with Him (Rom. 6. 6).

What it was to that holy Sufferer to be accounted sin, and to bear the judgment due to it, no creature tongue can tell. But when we think of who He was, the eternal Son that ever dwelt
in the bosom of the Father, to whom sin was that hateful thing that it was to God, and when we face the astonishing fact that He was to be accounted that, and that He was to be treated as sin deserved, we cannot but have some little conception of the horrors that loomed before His soul on the night of His betrayal. Murder had been lurking in His pathway from His entrance into the world; persecution had dogged His footsteps throughout the whole course of His public ministry; cold ingratitude was His reward from those who had been enriched by His lavish kindness. Of His disciples one betrayed Him to His enemies with a traitorous kiss, another denied Him, and cursed and swore to the truth of that denial; and the others fled from Him and left Him in the hands of His enemies. But that, however heart-breaking it was, was as nothing compared with that which awaited Him amid the gloom of Golgotha.

Oh, the loneliness, the grief, the anguish, the sorrow of Gethsemane! Outside a world in rebellion against God, and the devil the prince of it, like the dragon that is in the sea, ready to lash it into fury against the Son of God. Never had creation witnessed such a sight as that which in the shadows of that lone garden passed under the eye of heaven. Never had there been a human being in such a situation as this. Beset by enemies, deserted by friends, death before Him as the power of Satan and the judgment of sin: His strength weakened, His days shortened, and the devil doing his utmost to get between His soul and His Father, so that His confidence in His Father might be destroyed. Not that there could be any fear of this resulting from the conflict, but the battle must be fought, the exercise must be gone through, and the holy soul of the Divine Saviour must go through it; not in His own strength, however almighty that might be, but in dependence upon His Father. Therefore He resorts to prayer.

The effect of this attack of the devil is only to increase His dependence upon His Father. He prays more earnestly. As a man of faith He goes through the ordeal. A word from Him would have sent the devil reeling to the lowest hell, as it shall on a day that is fast approaching. But this would have taken Him out of the place of dependence upon God, and the devil even in this would have been the victor. A foundation must be laid in righteousness upon which that which lay in Divine counsel might be established, and this could not be apart from His death, while He lived He could not bring man righteously to God.

Therefore must He go through with that which He had undertaken. He had said: "Sacrifice and offering Thou didst not desire; mine ears hast Thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast Thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do Thy will, O my God; yea, Thy law is within my heart" (Psa. 40'). He will not turn back now, whatever the terrors may be that confront Him. And how great those terrors were, no creature can ever know. But the very fact of His absolute holiness, and also that the bosom of the Father had ever been His dwelling-place infinitely intensified the bitterness of that bitter cup.

We see Him at the grave of Lazarus, groaning in spirit as He looked into the merciless and repulsive face of death, and shedding tears at the misery it was powerful enough to create, even in the hearts of His beloved and devoted followers. But now He has to face it Himself, and that when it was black and bitter with the judgment of a righteous and holy God. Alone and without comforters, He must now face it when standing in the place of the sinbearer, and when all the curse and wrath due to sin must be visited upon His holy head, and when in the hour of His grief and loneliness He must taste what the forsaking of God is.
What words could describe the agony of that moment in which all that God was as against sin must be expressed in the storm that must beat upon His defenceless head? When the flood-gates of divine wrath shall be opened, and when deep shall call to deep, and all the waves and billows of wrath would go over His soul. But in Gethsemane all this is gone into anticipatively, until the inward distress of that terrible hour manifests itself in bloody sweat. An angel is there to support His bodily weakness, but His spirit receives its strength in prayer, and in the sense that He had come to this pass in the pathway of the Divine will. Therefore He comes back from that spot in His usual calmness and peacefulness, to place Himself in the hands of His enemies, enemies that in His presence could manifest nothing but helpless weakness, going backward and falling on their faces when He tells them that He is the One they seek.

He has taken the cup from the Father's hand, and He will drink it to the dregs. His love to the Father, and His obedience to the Father's commandment are perfect. Besides there was the determination to have His own with Him in His glory as His everlasting companions. He could not communicate His life to us until the judgment which lay upon us was removed, and the only way in which He could remove it was by bearing it. He could not connect sinful flesh with Himself in that world of purity to which He was going. Righteousness must be accomplished, our sins must be atoned for, and the guilty nature which brought the sins into existence must receive its judgment. Then in resurrection He can link us up in life with Himself, and eventually have us with Him in His glory.

THE FATHER GLORIFIED.

And the Father has been glorified, glorified in the Son of His love. He spoke the words that His Father gave Him to speak. He did the works that the Father gave Him to do. He perfectly carried out the Father's commandment, and never went beyond it. He was obedient to death, even the death of the cross. It was the cross above all else that put that obedience to the test, but the response on the part of Christ was perfect. He, who ever did the will of God, was delivered into the hands of men, and hung upon a gibbet, and then forsaken of God, but there is no murmuring, no complaining, no ascribing injustice to the Father, like the self-righteous Pharisee: “Lo, these many years have I served Thee, neither transgressed I at any time Thy commandment.” Whatever the Father does is right: “Thou continuest holy.” The grace and love of God have been brought to light, as well as His hatred of sin. God cannot now be charged with indifference to evil, although repentance and remission of sins are proclaimed worldwide. He cannot be charged with carelessness regarding the happiness of His creature man, for He sent His Son as Saviour of the world.

And having thus been glorified by His Son on the cross of shame, the barrier that lay between Him and the blessing of the fallen sinner has been removed, and He can righteously act in grace toward all. By means of that cross grace reigns through righteousness, and the vilest can find a welcome with God. He can not only forgive, but He can justify the believing sinner, quicken him in the life of His Son, bring him into the same relationship to Himself as that Son is in, make him a member of the mystical body of Christ, and give him the bright prospect of dwelling in His house for ever.

THE MORAL BEARING OF THE CROSS UPON BELIEVERS.

Whatever the cross may be as the witness of the enmity of the world against God, it is that in which the believer has the greatest glory. It is the witness to Him of the unfathomable love of God, and it is the greatest
witness of this that he ever has had, or ever can have in the future. It is that which he looks back upon as the scene where that love rose over every obstacle that opposed; surmounting the hatred of the human heart, and laying a foundation of blessing for all men. Even in the glory and splendour of the Father's house nothing in his surroundings shall be such a witness to Him of eternal grace and love as the cross shall be; and upon that cross where His Saviour suffered he shall oft look back in wonderment, worship, and adoration. As a testimony of the grace, goodness, mercy, and love of God, the cross cannot be surpassed, nay, it can never be equalled.

And as to the love of the heart of Him who died upon it, what of this? It surpasses knowledge. Having loved His own that were in the world, He loved them to the end. He loved them through everything. Encompassed by unspeakable riches in heaven He thought upon our wretched condition here below, and left all for our sakes, that we through His poverty might be made rich. He loved us and gave Himself for us. For ever blessed be His holy name! We long for the day to come when we shall see Him as He is, and when we shall praise Him as we would. Lord hasten that day.

But that cross stands between us and a Christ-rejecting world. How could we love that which hates Him? How could we be friendly with that which denied Him His rights, and is stained with His life blood? That cross has severed the link that bound us to things here. We may preach the love of God to the men of the world, and plead with them to be reconciled to God, but we cannot forgive the world-system, for the devil is its prince, and it lies guilty of the rejection and murder of the Son of God, and if anyone love the world, the love of the Father is not in Him. There is nothing in it but lust and pride, and God has appointed a day in which He will judge it by Christ.

The cross stands between us and it. It is a barrier which we cannot pass, without being manifested as traitors of Christ. And speaking of His disciples, our Lord says, They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. How then can we make ourselves of the world? What about its politics, its pleasures, its amusements? Have we not something better to occupy us than the things that are found in the world? Let the morally dead go on with their dead works, but let us who have a heavenly life set our minds upon the things where Christ sits at the right hand of God. We owe everything to Him, and we should show by our actions that we appreciate what He has done for us. We cannot have this world and escape its judgment. The soul that knows anything of the cross, and of the heart of Him who died upon it, will have no stomach for the world's dainties, nor will he have any eye for its glories. His boast will be in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to Him, and He to the world. May that cross have its true moral power over the heart and mind of both reader and writer.

Obedience.

We are not to wait for power to obey a command, but to obey it that we may find power. The Lord did not restore the withered hand that it might be stretched out, but commanded the man to stretch it out that it might be restored. Obedience is the way to blessing; we are not to wait for the blessing in order to obey, but to act on the command, and the blessing follows. God obeyed, and honoured becomes our strength.

On the cross Christ suffered alone, but that finished, and the victory won, and His triumph made manifest in resurrection, does He praise alone? No. "In the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee" (Ps. 22:22).
ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

BUCKS.—The late war has no place in the prophecies of Daniel 11. The king of the south is not Great Britain but Egypt, the power of which is evidently to be revived, along with the spirit and character that formerly marked it. It will help you to understand the chapter if you see the division of it at end of verse 35. The king spoken of in verse 36 is neither the king of the north nor the king of the south, as verse 40 proves, but is Antichrist, hence these latter verses describe events which cannot happen until Antichrist is revealed, which cannot be until the catching up of the dead and living saints according to 1 Thess. 4. Greater detail is given in the paper bearing the title, God’s Foreknowledge, on page 102.

ANGLO-ISRAELISM.

BRISTOL.—There is no Scripture, rightly interpreted, that lends any support to Anglo-Israelism. It denies the heavenly calling and destiny of children of God in this dispensation, occupying them with the prosperity and glory of the British peoples, which are not too apparent to everybody at the moment, instead of with the glories of Christ. It spoils the glowing prophecies that have Israel and Jerusalem as their theme as the centre of Christ’s earthly kingdom which is surely coming. There is scarcely any system of teaching that fails so utterly to rightly divide the word of truth.

“God the Son.”

EPPING.—It is true that the title “God the Son” is not a Scriptural one; yet there can be no question as to the Godhead glory of the Son, the whole of the New Testament would be meaningless without this. But we are wise to keep to Scriptural terms and designations when dealing with subjects that are beyond our comprehension.

The Son of God is commonly used and embraces the true humanity of the Lord as well as what He is as Divine. This title is His as born into the world, and in resurrection He associates us with Himself as sons of God. The “Only begotten Son” is a Divine title in which we could have no part.

FROM THE SOLOMON ISLANDS.

“I want to tell you of a dear lad, Daniel Alanikau. A school was started a few years ago in a wild heathen district, about seven miles south of One Pusut, and until recently Daniel was the only fruit of the teacher’s labour. He came to us for about three years to receive further instruction in the Word, and then went back for a time to help the teacher who had been the means of his conversion. He was brought to us a few months ago very ill, was nursed back to health, and remained on till he was strong again. He used to go with me on Sundays to two heathen villages close by, and he was so glad to have the opportunity of witnessing for Christ. One day, as we were going along to the canoe, he said to me, ‘NO GOOD TOO MANY CHRISTIANS MAKE A HEAP IN ONE PLACE, I want to go and teach people where they never been hear about Jesus yet’. I asked him where he would like to go, and he replied, ‘Anywhere the Lord He want me to go’.

“I could not help thinking of the Christians ‘making a heap’ at home, when millions are waiting for the Gospel. Has the Lord called you to remain at home, or have you never really faced the question and said, ‘Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do’?

“The Lord has given Daniel the desire of his heart, and when the ‘Evangel’ left here last week, he was on
board going to his new sphere of labour. During the three years he was with us, he was a spiritual power amongst the young boys, teaching them to pray, and encouraging them to take their quiet time every day. What struck me most about him was his care for the sick, for it is quite contrary to native custom to take any interest in sick people, unless it happens to be a near relative, and even then they are not very attentive. In the village from which Daniel came, there are now a number of little boys learning about the Lord.

PROBLEMS—ANSWERS.

Answers to Questions on 1. Timothy 3 (March Issue).

1. What is the difference between a bishop and a deacon? Can we gather this from the qualities required in each?

The bishops were overseers in the house of God, the deacons were ministers or servants in it. The office of bishop as described here was totally unlike the modern one with which we are familiar. Here there might be several in one assembly, as at Ephesus (Acts 20, 17, 28). Their work was to care for the spiritual needs of God's household, hence "apt to teach" was one of the qualifications for the work. The deacon's work was to look after the temporal needs of those who composed the assembly, hence this was not a necessary qualification, though they had to hold the mystery of faith in a pure conscience, for none can serve God aright apart from this; the faith is to regulate our conduct in every sphere. It should not be difficult to see how beautifully the qualifications named fit the office which each had to fill.

2. Why are the qualities necessary in the wife of a deacon stated, while nothing is said of the wife of a bishop?

As the bishop's activities were chiefly ruling and teaching, it is evident that his wife could have no part in these, as the woman's place in connection with the assembly is that of subjection and learning; but the deacons, whose labours would take them to the homes of those in need, might often find it necessary to associate their wives with them in their ministrations, so that they would need to be "grave, not slanderers; sober, faithful in all things".

3. In verse 6 we read of the "condemnation of the devil", and in verse 7 of "the snare of the devil". What is meant by these expressions?

The devil was put in the place of rule and fell therefrom. A novice, put in a place of rule, might easily become self-important, and instead of being like Christ who is our pattern in all things, be puffed up as the devil was. No believer can suffer the devil's condemnation and doom, which is eternal punishment, but the charge of being puffed up, the fault of the devil, might be brought against him.

The snare of the devil seems to be that if one had not "a good report of them that were without", he would be on the horns of a dilemma. Either he would become a hypocrite in the endeavour to cover his ill-reputation, or in avoiding hypocrisy become hardened in his conscience in regard to his shame. A snare indeed.

5. What is it that is referred to as the house of God (verse 15)? And why is it called the pillar and ground of the truth?

The house of God is God's dwelling-place on earth, and is constructed of all who are redeemed by the blood of Jesus, and indwelt by the Holy Ghost; it is the assembly of the living God. The assembly of the living God is composed of living stones (1 Peter 2.). The pillar of the truth means that the truth is inscribed upon it; just as on a cenotaph, or memorial pillar, there is inscribed the deeds of those whose valour is thereby commemorated. The church is not the truth, Christ is that; but it has this character, it bears the truth in testimony before the world, it is God's witness to Christ, and the support (ground) of the truth on earth. The truth to which it bears witness and is to uphold comes out in the next marvellous statement (verse 16).

J. D. Fifeshire and others will discern their answers embodied in the foregoing.
The following Addresses were given in Edinburgh during the last week of April, 1921:—

THE ADVENT OF CHRIST THE SAVIOUR.

(EVENING, April 25th.)

J. T. MAWSON.

"But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name JESUS: for he shall save His people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, ‘Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us’ “ (Matt. 1. 20-23).

"When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, ‘In Bethlehem of Judaea’; for thus it is written by the prophet, ‘And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule My people Israel’ “ (Matt. 2. 3-6).

"And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull, they gave Him vinegar to drink mingled with gall; and when He had tasted thereof, He would not drink. And they crucified Him, and parted His garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets. They parted My garments among them, and upon My vesture did they cast lots. And sitting down they watched Him there; and set up over His head His accusation written, ‘THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS’ “ (Matt. 27. 33-37).

It was thought right that the opening address of this series should have as its special theme the person of the Lord Jesus Christ and His coming into the world; and I am greatly encouraged in carrying out this thought by the text that appeared on my favourite Text Calendar this morning; it was—

"Sir, we would see Jesus’; and then followed this simple stanza:—

"We would see Jesus, for the shadows lengthen
Across the little landscape of our life;
We would see Jesus, our weak faith to strengthen
For the last weariness, the final strife."

Yes, if we are to tread our pilgrim way with confidence to the end, we must see Jesus. If we are to fight the good fight and lay down the weapons of our warfare in final triumph at His feet, we must see Jesus. No Christian life can be right in any department of it if clouds obscure His face from us, and the whole fabric of our “most holy faith” must collapse if we do not hold fast to the truth of His most holy Person.

But not only we who have found secure and eternal rest in His person and sacrifice need Him as the perpetual and all-satisfying object of our hearts, but men need Him, and God needs Him. There can be no peace or true prosperity for the world and no glory to God apart from Him. Consider the condition of the world—of these lands, England, Scotland and Ireland—and tell me, what hope is there for mankind if Christ is left out? and what glory can there be for God in this creation apart from Him? But history is only repeating itself, except that the utter bankruptcy of man’s resources is being more and more disclosed. Yet all was
described in graphic terms long ago. Said Isaiah, as inspired by the Holy Ghost, nearly 3000 years ago, "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it: but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores; they have not closed, neither bound up, ch. 1. 6, neither mollified with ointment".

But was it for such a state of things as this that God created the world? or has He been thwarted in His intentions? Let us consider the question. The stars that make the night skies radiant proclaim His power and divinity, and this lower creation makes manifest His wisdom, but His supreme work in creation was man, and His delights were with the sons of men. The persons of the Godhead took counsel together, and said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness"; and "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the earth". In this last act of creation something more than the almighty creative word was brought into operation; a tenderness enters into it that was not manifested before, as the almighty fingers fashioned every member of the man who was to represent God in the earth. How near God came to the work of His hands, when He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and brought the woman to him to be his mate and helpmeet. With man at the head of it, creation was complete, and God pronounced it 'very good', and rested from His work.

But how soon was that Sabbath disturbed, for God's noble and beautiful creature fell before the first onslaught of His arch-foe, and instead of standing for God, and withstanding that old serpent, which is the devil, and Satan, Adam turned his back upon his Maker and allied himself with his destroyer. It looked as though God had been defeated, as though Satan had succeeded in His everlasting discomfiture; for he had attacked the vulnerable spot in the man's constitution and bribed him into becoming a traitor against his God. It looked as though all that expenditure of power and wisdom and tenderness in the creation of man had recoiled upon Himself, and that His choicest work had proved to be God's undoing.

The shadow of sin and death lay darkly over that fair garden, and hidden behind the trees of it, guilty and afraid, crouched the sinner and his wife, when God came forth to seek them. Not as an avenger came He, not as a Judge, but with tender love in His heart, crying after His lost creature, "Adam, where art thou"? But how could God, Who had cast Satan down from his high estate for sin, spare the man? If He does spare him, what becomes of His righteousness? And if He executes His just judgment upon him, what of His mercy, His lovingkindness, His purposes of blessing for men? Here was a crisis; was God able to meet it? The man waited, and the devil waited, and the angels of God waited to see what He would do; to see who would triumph, God or the devil. They had not long to wait, for God announced His resource. He was not defeated, His counsels would stand.

"Soon as the reign of sin began,
The light of mercy dawned on man:
When God announced the blessed news,
'The woman's seed thy head shall bruise.'"

God was the first Gospel preacher, and He announced in that first Gospel word the coming of a Person, the woman's Seed, who should undo the work of the devil. How much this promised Deliverer was needed was proved as the centuries rolled by, for "all we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned everyone to his own way". There was no difference in this, for all sinned alike, and no man was able to deliver himself from the tempter's power. The eyes of those who looked for salvation must have failed them through sheer disappointment if God had not constantly lighted up the gloom with words of hope and
promise, and of these there is none greater than those given by that Gospel-prophet Isaiah. "Behold," said he, "a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel" (Isa. 7: 14).

I boldly speak of this as the greatest of all the prophesies spoken by the prophets, for it is the first of them all that is recorded as being fulfilled in the New Testament. By it is declared what God would do. He shows that He Himself would intervene, taking the cause of fallen man's redemption completely out of his weak and sinful hands. How the critics of Isaiah's day must have mocked at his words. A virgin conceive! That is an utter impossibility! And the man who dreamed such a dream as that was a demented man! Yes, most truly he was, if he was not inspired by the Holy Ghost, in which case it is no dream, but the sure word of God. Such a thing would outrage the whole course of nature, it is impossible! Yes, it is impossible with men, that is the very lesson that God would teach men by the manner of His intervention. This was the sign that He would give. It was the sign of man's complete impotency for his own redemption, but it was also a sign that when men were hopeless, God would undertake their cause; but, also, that this should all proceed from Himself and not from man at all; in this matter man must stand aside, "A virgin shall conceive and bring forth a son". THE WOMAN'S SEED shall bruise the serpent's head.

In the 1st chapter of Matthew this astonishing word is fulfilled; the virgin-daughter of David's royal line brings forth the promised Son, and lays Him in a manger, and His Name is Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, GOD WITH US. God had come to visit men. But we ask the question, If God, who is absolutely holy, comes into the midst of men who are altogether sinful, what will the result be? will not men be inevitably destroyed? There is a wonderful story in Exodus 3. Moses was watching the flocks of his father-in-law in the backside of the desert, when he saw a strange sight. There was a bush, and that bush burned with fire. That was nothing strange in that sun-parched desert, but what was strange about this bush was, that though it burned with fire it was not consumed, and Moses looking upon it said, "I will draw near and see this strange sight", and as he drew near to that burning bush he heard a voice from out of it saying, "Take off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place on which thou standest is holy ground". And Moses found that he was in the presence of God: of God come down to deliver His people and not to destroy them. That bush shall speak to us tonight of humanity, of you and of me, and of all our fellow-men. Poor dried withered humanity! No fruit, no freshness, no life, no love for God! Nothing but sin and hatred of His holy will, a dried, withered, sun-parched desert bush! And the fire burned in the bush and the bush was not consumed. The fire was God Himself, for "our God is a consuming fire". But if God who is a consuming fire comes into the midst of mankind, so dried and withered and fruitless, what must be the result? Surely we say there can be but one result, and that mankind will be consumed with the judgment of God. That is the natural thought; but when we come to the 1st chapter of Matthew, we find that our natural thoughts are wrong. God comes into the midst of men and He does not come to destroy them; for "God sent His Son into the world not to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved". And so Emmanuel has got another name, and that name is JESUS, and Jesus means the Saviour.

I am glad that here in the 1st chapter of our New Testament that lovely name—the sweetest name that our ears ever heard—is given to us twice.
in capital letters, so that we may not miss it. It stands there upon the title page of the New Testament as the title of the Book. But Jesus is Emmanuel, and Emmanuel is Jesus. God has come to us, none less than He could save us. If men were to be saved, God must come down to men to do it. He must come as a Saviour, or His heart will not be revealed, nor His grace made known.

In the person of Jesus, God is with us, and is with us still, for we Christians have the closing words of this Gospel for our constant comfort, words of our Lord Jesus Christ, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end”. Hence we can with confidence follow the lowly, rejected Nazarene; and carry out His word, for God is with us.

There are those who deny that the Deity of Jesus is taught in any Gospel but that by John, and that that Gospel cannot be relied upon; but here, in the opening of the New Testament, we find the blessed fact of the Deity of Christ definitely, most definitely, asserted, and we could not read the Gospel without seeing it perpetually coming before us. It is woven into the very texture of it, as the gold was woven into the ephod of the High Priest, along with the blue, the scarlet, the purple, and the fine twined linen. Take just one instance: He stood in the midst of men, in their sorrows, their sins; and extending His hands to them He said, “Come unto Me, and I will give you rest”, and His word stands. He says to a world, devil-ridden, sin-burdened, sorrow-blasted, “Come unto Me, and I will give you rest”. Come as you are; come with your sins; your questions, your difficulties, your burdens; come, and I will give you rest. Could the greatest of men thus stand up and thus speak? He knew all the sorrows of men, every tear on every cheek had come under His notice, every sigh had entered His heart. He looked upon the world through eyes that saw all and comprehended all, and He offers to relieve all; and we Christians can bear witness to the fact that His deed is as good as His word. He has never promised that He cannot perform. That invitation alone proves that He is indeed the Everlasting God who opens His hand in infinite kindness to satisfy the needs of the creature that He has made, and that in His bosom there throbs a heart that longs to relieve the sorrows that sin has caused.

But His life and His words alone could not have effected that which had to be accomplished, and so we read in the 27th chapter of Matthew that He was nailed to the cross. They led Him to the place which is called Golgotha, and there they crucified Him. Jesus, whose name is Emmanuel, was taken by wicked hands and nailed to the cross, and over His sacred, thorn-crowned head, was this accusation written: “THIS IS JESUS”. Ah, Pilate wrote truer than he knew when he penned with his official hand that indictment, it seems as if the Spirit of God was determined that all men should understand that this is Jesus, and apart from that cross He would not have been Jesus, for apart from the cross He could not have been the Saviour. He might have gone to the glory of God from the mount of transfiguration—as far as He personally was concerned, but if He had done so He would not have been Jesus. The only way in which He could establish His right to that Name, which is above every name, was by going to Golgotha, and there giving up His life in sacrifice for sinners.

It is popular in these Gospel-rejecting days to preach Jesus as a great leader of men, a reformer, a socialist, or anything you like except a Saviour from sins. But such a Jesus is no Jesus at all. Do you say, “Sir, we would see Jesus”? My answer is, Look at the centre cross on Calvary. THIS IS JESUS—the thorn-crowned Nazarene, despised and rejected by men, crucified upon the cross of a
malefactor; this is Jesus, and beside Him there is none other. "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name, under heaven, given among men whereby we must be saved."

The first prophecy which the New Testament records as fulfilled tells us of the greatness of the Person whose name is Jesus. The second prophecy, telling us of the place of his birth, declares that He is to be the Ruler, the Governor of all whom He saves: "And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule My people Israel" (Matt. 2. 6). It should be clear to all that if the Creator comes into His creation He must eventually be supreme in it. We scarcely need the Scriptures to tell us that, though they do tell us it most emphatically. This prophecy had very special reference to His Messiahship, but to-night we look at it in its wider application—Christ is Lord of all. If it is true that you cannot know the Saviour apart from His cross, it is equally true that you cannot know Him apart from His Lordship. He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2. 9, 10, 11). The Spirit of God links up these two things together. The One whose name is Emmanuel is the Lord, and if these two things greet us at the very threshold of the Gospel, at the birth of the Lord, they are also proclaimed from the cross, for the accusation written thereon was, "This is Jesus, THE KING". And faith read the writing and embraced the truth, and cried, "Lord, remember me, when Thou comest into Thy kingdom". How blessed will that kingdom be when it comes, and there can be no peace for this world until it does, men will continue to strive, selfishly, covetously, sinfully, hateful and hating one another, until the universal sceptre is put into the pierced hand. But when Christ does arise as the Sun of Righteousness with healing in His wings,

"He'll bid the whole creation smile
And hush its groans."

And then under His beneficent rule men will make haste to beat their swords into ploughshares and call everyone his neighbour under the vine and fig tree. The reason why lock-outs and strikes, turmoil and strife continue to this day is because the rightful King is rejected, the Prince of Peace is not owned, men will not own Jesus as Lord.

How blessed is the sway that He exercises in that life that owns Him. We do not look for peace in the world that will not own Him, but we may have it, each of us every day, by yielding to His gracious claims, for He has said, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth give I unto you. 'Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid' ". God grant that while we pray "Thy kingdom come", we may know the peace of it before it comes, by yielding a glad obedience to Jesus, who is both Lord and Christ.

"See the side whence flows the fountain
Of His love and life divine,
Riven by a hand unthankful—
Lo! that hand is thine.
See the crown of thorns upon
God's beloved, holy Son."
THE TWO HEADSHIPS.

( Evening, April 26th.)
F. B. HOLE.

"And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth earthy: the second Man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly" (I Cor. 15:45-49).

FIRST of all I want to ask, Do you know that there are two races in the world?—two peoples of quite distinct origin, having quite different heads, and travelling in quite different ways. That great fact lies clearly on the face of these verses. There is a first Adam, and there is a last Adam; there is a first man, and there is a second Man.

Adam is the man who was the great progenitor of our race; mankind springs from him; he is the source and fountainhead, and upon the race his impress is clearly seen. Through the ages Adam has been simply disclosing himself, unrolling himself in the history of his descendants in detail. So when we think of Adam, we think of him as the great head, the head that dominates this poor fallen race, and to which everyone of us by nature belongs. And when we think of Jesus, we think of the last Adam, last, mark you, for there is not a third. I am very glad it says last, because evidently that infers that in the second Man who is the last Adam, God has reached finality. He is the last,—no successor, no need for a successor. First came the natural, then came the spiritual, and we may extract a little remark from its setting in the 10th chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews, "He taketh away the first that He may establish the second".

If you have a fairly general knowledge of the contents of the Old Testament, you will note on reflection that God gave indication of this by again and again choosing not the first but the second,—not Cain but Abel, not Ishmael but Isaac, not Esau but Jacob, not Aaron so much as Moses, not Manasseh but Ephraim. I have only just given to you a few cases that instantly come to my mind, and probably you could add some more. Again and again God makes it manifest that His thought was first the natural, and then the spiritual, and that the second is what God had before Him. And so the Lord Jesus Christ is the last Adam, the great Head of a new race, humanity truly, but new and altogether according to God. So perfect is He that never to all eternity will there need to be a third, the second is the last. Cain was only Adam reproduced in the first generation. You and I are Adam's representatives, perhaps, somewhere about the 150th generation. You travel down the stream of time, and you never meet "the second man" until you come to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now here lies the great importance of that truth which was previously alluded to in these meetings, the truth of the Virgin Birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. People sometimes say unthinkingly, "Well, what does it matter whether we accept this or not? Have we indeed to enshrine this as a great cardinal fact of the Christian faith?" My answer is, indeed you have; let go this, and you let go everything.

To make my meaning clear, turn to the first of Genesis one moment, will you? I am not at all surprised that the infidel leaders now-a-days, the religious infidels in particular, are very keen against the 1st of Genesis, for it gives the lie direct to four of the most popular heresies of the present day. First of all it gives the lie direct to
UNITARIANISM, inasmuch as the word used for God throughout the chapter—Elohim—is in the plural. Now Hebrew, unlike English, has not only a singular, but a dual, and then also a plural. That is, we find its nouns in three forms: a singular form to indicate one, a dual to indicate two, and a plural to indicate three or more. The Spirit of God has not used the singular, He has not used the dual, He has used the plural thirty-two times in the 1st chapter of Genesis concerning God. There is also what we would consider a grammatical error in the first verse of the chapter. We have God in the plural, and then the word 'created' in the singular. How do we explain that? Quite simply. There we have the Trinity in unity—one God—therefore the verb may be indeed in the singular. Yet the very name of God is in the plural, signifying at least three, so that Unitarianism is clearly negatived.

Another thing that is negatived is the very popular idea of PANTHEISM, that God is not to be thought of as outside nature and above it, but as only dwelling in nature, somewhat as the electrical fluid dwells in insulated cables. God is immanent—that is the word they use—and they do not believe in a transcendent God, a God that stands outside of and distinct from nature. You must merely think of Him as a Supreme Mind, a Sense dwelling in all things; that is the 'New Theology'. This Pantheistic idea is plainly denied. You have God before creation, and God outside of nature. The 1st of Genesis clearly presents Him not as an immanent God, but as a transcendent God, One that stands outside of and distinct from creation.

Another thing: you have the root idea of CHRISTIAN SCIENCE denied in the 1st chapter of Genesis. That idea is that matter is evil. Spirit is good, and matter, according to that false religion, is but an illusion. Why, again and again in the 1st chapter of Genesis we read of material things, and "God saw that it was good"—the lie direct to Christian Science.

And lastly I particularly want you to note, that it gives the lie direct to that great idea that has done so much mischief, even in the minds of Christians—EVOLUTION. Over and over again, as a matter of fact, ten times over, in the 1st of Genesis we have the immutable law of God's creation that all things reproduce themselves "after his kind". Ten times over it says "after his kind", and there is not one fact known that denies it.

Now I want you to fix your mind on that for a moment. It is the immutable law of God's creation that everything reproduces itself after its kind, and when Adam became a fallen sinner that law worked with deadly operation in all his descendants. We may be, as I said, the 150th generation from Adam, but we are just simply "after his kind", and we might go on reproducing ourselves, and thus project the first man and his race indefinitely into eternity, we should still only have fallen man. When the fifteen hundredth or the one hundred and fifty thousandth generation was reached it would still be "after his kind". You see—I think—what I am driving at. The awful entail of sin and death connected with the first man has ruined everything it touched with its blighting hand; and there never was a real and original second man until Jesus was born, and then the entail of sin and death was broken. He was conceived by the Holy Ghost's power. Discard the Virgin birth, and you have lost this great foundation truth of the Gospel.

Another, then, has appeared—the second Man is the Lord from heaven—and He appeared here truly a Man, but a Man of another order, a Man of a heavenly order, a Man not after Adam's kind, perfect, spotless, undefiled. He stepped into the scene, and in Him, thank God, there is salvation for such as ourselves. He is the
Founder of a new race, and I want you all to get hold of this, and thus learn to regard the Lord Jesus Christ in this light.

You may ask how do we come to be of His race? Well, we are told in the very verses that I read, “The first man Adam was made a living soul”. As a matter of fact he had a spirit by the breath of the Divine nostrils, as we read in the 2nd chapter of Genesis; but what characterized him was that he was a living soul, though possessing spirit, whereby he was put into intelligent and personal intercourse with God. When we turn to the last Adam, we read not that He is a living soul, but that He is a quickening or life-giving Spirit. The Lord Jesus steps into the scene, a life-giving Spirit, and if you and I are brought into contact with Him, thank God we have been quickened by Him. We have been made to live by Himself, and in Himself as the one who has suffered and died and risen again. In resurrection He has become the life-giving Head of a new race. Oh! to realize that this is actually a fact! We are not taking flights into dreamland; we are talking about things which have actually come to pass on the basis of the death and resurrection of Christ, and by the energy of the Spirit of God. How little we know their transporting power in our souls!

You and I, then, who have come to Him as the Saviour, have come under the life-giving power of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the last Adam, and we live now in Him and we belong to His race, and to His order. True it does not yet appear on the surface. No halo of glory surrounds your head, nor does it surround mine. We go through the streets of Edinburgh with nothing distinctive about us to manifest at the present moment that we are the children of God. The apostle John himself tells us that now are we children of God, but what we are going to be does not yet appear. We are like the caterpillar crawling on the edge of the leaf and eating it. There comes a dainty butterfly and perches beside the caterpillar. Could she pour into the caterpillar’s ear how she too was once creeping on a green leaf, the caterpillar would hardly believe it, but it is true. There you have the caterpillar, and there you have the butterfly. We may be in the caterpillar stage, but we have got the life that is coming out in butterfly colours in a day that is coming. It is not yet manifest what we are going to be; what we do know is that we are going to see Him as He is, and then we shall be like Him. We have got the life of Christ who is the last Adam, and so we are told in these verses that ultimately we are going to bear the image of the heavenly.

In verse 47 we get the first man and his character—he is of the earth ‘earthy’ or ‘made of dust’. Then he says, as is the earthly such are they also that are earthy. We partake of Adam’s life and fallen condition. The ugly features that are latent in the Adamic nature come out more powerfully in some than in others, but all of them lie dormant, to be developed into one set of ugly features in one person and another set in other persons; but we all possess that condemned life, and its condemned nature. But it then says, “The second Man is the Lord from heaven”, and it adds that, “as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly”. Those who are of the heavenly race partake of the character of their great Head. Then there is further added that “as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly”. The infinite grace of God has given us a place and portion in the heavenly Man. A day is coming when we shall come out in our true character, when we shall leave behind us this caterpillar stage, and we shall be the butterfly with all its glorious colours. The grub is essentially an earthy creature; it belongs to the earth; it crawls on the earth; it eats the leaves, and it probably buries itself in the
The Two Headships

If you want to see what the Christian is going to be, look at Christ, risen, exalted, and already glorified as the heavenly Man. As we have borne the image of the earthly, so are we also going to bear the image of the heavenly. We should bear the impress of His character now. We shall perfectly bear it then, even as to our bodies. In this, as in all beside, Christ is everything.

THE DAY OF PRESENTATION. (Afternoon, April 26th.)

We have just sung a very charming hymn, and I would like you to retain your seats and again sing one of its verses:

"Still sweet 'tis to discover,
If clouds have dimmed my sight,
When passed, eternal Lover,
Towards me, as e'er, Thou'rt bright."

I greatly desire that the two words 'eternal Lover' should be deeply imprinted on every heart; for whoever or whatever may change, He is unchanging, and loves His saints with an everlasting love. May this most blessed fact be kept before us, as we meditate, this afternoon, on the unceasing activity of that love. This will, I hope, present itself to us in the three Scriptures which I would bring under your notice.

The first of them you will find in Eph. 5. 25-27: "Husbands, love your wives, even as 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." And what is before my mind is the future presentation of the church to to Himself by our Lord Jesus Christ. We have heard already much about the foundation in which we rest by faith, the death and resurrection of the Lord, and also the rich provision made for us by Christ in glory for all the exigencies of the way. For this we may well render thanks to our God and Father.

We read, in our passage, that "Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it." The measure of that gift was infinite. It was Himself! All that He had was willingly surrendered, and all that He undertook in trial, suffering, denial, shame, reproach, desertion and opposition was most readily borne; but, while all this was true, He did far more, He gave Himself—Himself! There love reached its climax: It could do no more. Yet it did even this. Now that is past. It was the one great and necessary act of total self-sacrifice which, under the judgment of God against sin, wrought atonement for it, and freed all His people from condemnation. Well may we bless Him for such a work and for the love that led the Lord to accomplish it. But His people, as they traverse the desert, become weary and feeble, and contract defilement, so that, though made meet for glory, they need the constant exercise of His care; but we have read that He "sanctifies and cleanses the church by the washing of water by the Word." This cleansing is His present work. It is like the offering of the red heifer (see Numbers 19.) which met the defilement of the people as they crossed the desert of old, though here it is the spontaneous work of our eternal Lover, and is continuous.

His grand object is to present it to Himself a glorious church, no longer
militant as to-day, but triumphant and worthy of such a Lord and Saviour, not having spot (no trace of earthly contamination), nor wrinkle (no vestige of decrepitude), nor any such thing (not the faintest mark of the long wilderness journey), nor a single stain that would reflect on His unremitting attention; but that it should be holy and without blemish, in perfect moral suitability to Himself; thus will the church appear on the coming Presentation-day, when He shall "see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied". What a day for us and for Him. What an answer to all His agony!

Let us now refer to 1 Cor. 11. 1-4. "I have espoused you", says the apostle, "to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ". The Presentation-day fills the soul of this true servant of the Lord. He was jealous of the saints in Corinth with a godly jealousy. He feared, and had abundant reason to do so, lest, as the serpent beguiled Eve—a fact largely repudiated to-day—so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity—the absolute truthfulness—that is in Christ. If the serpent used duplicity in perverting Eve, and accomplishing the fall of man, the Spirit of God employs the truth, and only that, in the formation of the mind of the believer.

That which the Lord does in the cleansing of the saint "by the washing of water by the word", the apostle, who had drunk deeply into his Master's Spirit, did in his solicitude for the church. His great object was to present it as a chaste, pure, unworldly, undefiled virgin to Christ.

Just as a father would hand over an only daughter to the hand of her lover, so did this faithful servant seek to present the church to her true and eternal Lover on the coming day of glory. Were it possible to preach another Jesus, or for saints to receive another Spirit, or accept another gospel, he need not to have been so zealous, but the "Jesus" preached by Paul is inimitable, the Spirit received was the Holy Spirit of God, and the Gospel accepted was that by which they were saved. Outside of this was only error and corruption, and a fearful danger and snare of Satan. The apostle laboured, like his Master, that the bride should be worthy of her Bridegroom on the day of her presentation to Him.

The last Scripture is in the epistle by Jude 24-25. It is one of the finest doxologies in the whole Word of God. “Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy; to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.”

Presented faultless before the presence of His glory! What a thought and what a prospect. For a victorious army to be marched before a monarch, or a veteran to be presented to his king, that were an honour; but here is the church—the saints—presented before the very glory of God, by whose grace they have, in a day of sore temptation, if not actual apostasy, been kept from falling, and are now presented in a blaze of glory, as faultless, by virtue of the atoning death of the Son of God, as victors over the seductive powers of evil, and as, most assuredly, trophies of His saving and sustaining grace. It is well to look forward to that great presentation, and to all the glory attaching to it; while, in view of it, chanting heartily the exultant doxology: “To Him be glory and majesty, dominion and power, from before the whole age, and now, and to all the ages. Amen”.

And so, when the clouds and sorrows, the temptations and trials of this quickly passing ‘now’ are all forgotten, we shall discover that He to whom we are so deeply indebted has, indeed, been our “Eternal Lover”.

May we all prove His love more fully day by day till He come.

Other Addresses will appear (D.V.) in next month's issue.
"FRET NOT."

THAT that has happened to you is not a casualty. Something that happened, but might not have happened; an uncalculated and incalculable event in life. To talk of chance, luck or coincidence is vain talk; it is not so written in the books of heaven. Everything is foreseen, foreknown; no revelation can be made to God, or surprise inflicted upon Him, and you and your affairs are in His charge, even to the hairs of your head. Why do we not rest in His peace? Why do we not say, The enemy can only come the length of his chain? Why should we fret ourselves in anywise to do evil? If we are poor, God knows it, and before the last piece of bread is swallowed another loaf will be provided. Why go into the metaphysics of the theology, or into the mystery of the providence? Bless the bread, and eat it as God's gift. God knows how many sparrows there are, and not one of them falleth to the ground without your Father. Oh, let us seize the truth of this and live it in quiet confidence and peace, and cease to fret.

"IF YE ENDURE CHASTENING."

HERE is a difficulty—which will presently be shot through and through with sunlight, and become a golden cloud—namely, if you are children of God how does it come that you have so much sorrow and affliction? It is the seal of sonship! "If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not?" "If ye be without chastisement . . . then are ye bastards and not sons." "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers trials, knowing that the trial of your faith worketh patience", and to patience God grants the most vivid and beauteous revelations of His grace. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son." Who, then, will shrink from conflict when the guerdon is so glorious? We must be tried in battle. God's is not a paper army, but an army of living souls. We must be tried by fire, for no dross must remain in God's gold. We must be chastened in the furnace of affliction. Life is not a holiday. Life is a discipline, but where the love of God is known it is adorned by a beautiful submission and inspired by a confident hope. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God they are the sons of God." "Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ Jesus." Who will set any afflictions against that? Who will venture to utter his little whimper of complaint against this great promise, spoken with all the thunder of God's power, and yet whispered with all the tenderness of God's love?

"Look again, O soul, behold Him
On the cross uplifted high;
See the precious life-blood flowing,
See the tears that dim His eye.
Love has pierced the heart that brake,
Loveless sinner, for thy sake".
NOTES ON JEREMIAH. No. 2.

A MAN WANTED.

From chapter 4. 3 to end of chapter 6. the prophet Jeremiah deals with the state of Israel. Like the chaos which overtook the distant creation of Genesis 1. 1, ignorance of God and injustice were bringing the same upon the nation. There was no man to save the sorrowful situation (1. 22-26 and 5. 1). Therefore the instrument of God’s anger is raised up! The event to which the book points is to take place! Nebuchadnezzar—the lion of Babylon—the destroyer from the north is coming! The battle standard is unfurled! The trumpet sound is heard! Evil cometh and a great destruction! Set up a sign of fire!

With such language Jeremiah seeks to arouse the people (4. 6, 7, 21, and 6. 1). Dismay and distress take hold of his own being as scenes of suffering and desolation are divinely depicted before him,—“My bowels, my bowels! I am pained at my very heart!” He cries—“O my soul, the sound of the trumpet! the alarm of war! destruction upon destruction is cried” (4. 19-20).

Whilst thus foretelling the doom which was coming upon Jerusalem by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, Jeremiah labours to reach the heart of the people. And it is important to notice it is in this connection we have the first mention of circumcision after the book of Joshua (4. 4). Chapter 9. 25-26 gives the last mention of it in the Old Testament. The prophet seeks true circumcision “to the Lord”, the circumcision which touches the heart, preparing it for Him. With pleadings and warnings he labours thus to reach them. It is the same to-day. Unless we have been reached in the heart, and in the spirit, in the very centre of our being, we are alienated from the living God, though like these Jews we call ourselves “the people of God” and have priests and a form of religion. What though they claim to be a religious nation if the Lord be not exalted! What though religionists claim to be the church if the true Head be displaced. Israel made high claims, but they knew not the Lord! They were “sottish children”, they had “no understanding”, they were “wise to do evil”, but to do good they had no knowledge (4. 22). Woe and anguish must therefore come upon them (ver. 31). But, as at all times, God reserves a remnant. Such turn in reality to the Lord Himself, and they are true in heart to Him (4. 27 and 5. 18); therefore, He will not make a full end of the nation.

From the king down to the man in the street not one could be found to meet the situation. We are told, “There was no man”! There were plenty of strong men and hard men, but they knew not the way of the Lord (5. 3-4). “I will get me to the great men”, said the prophet, but they were alike evil. The eyes of the Lord are upon the truth, yet not one man could be found in accord therewith. The nation was in a pitiable plight. It was the same cry then which we sometimes hear now—“Wanted a man”! Only it was God Himself who said at that time to his servant, “If ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth; I will pardon” (5. 1). God claimed recognition and honour in every circle, but politically they were corrupt, socially they were debased (5. 7-9), and religiously they were abandoned to idolatry (ver. 19); whilst prophets, priests and people were allied in falsification (vers. 30-31). Some specially wicked men are singled out in verses 25 to 29. They have no thought for the needy, yet they prosper themselves. They are cunning, they craftily lie in wait to catch men. From these verses the Holy Spirit seems to take for the letter to the Ephesians to illustrate the sort of men who ensnare feeble Christians to-day—especially
"the babes" in Christ; as we read, "By the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive" (Ephesians 4. 14). As in Israel's day, these deceivers were prominent and great among God's people, even so now in this day of Christian profession and the assembly, or the church as it is commonly, though erroneously, called.

THE MAN FOUND.

Thanks be to God we have no need now to cry out "A man wanted"! The king of Israel might fail as the head of the nation, or, even if faithful, he nevertheless died. The man Christ Jesus, however, who is the Head of the assembly to-day, never fails and never dies. The high priests of Israel were sometimes good and sometimes corrupt; but Jesus, the only High Priest provided for us now, is altogether perfect, and He "continueth ever". No man, no mediator ever lived, who could bring God and man together for abiding blessing; but now there is "One Mediator between God and man, The Man Christ Jesus". With Him there is no failure. This is important for us to lay hold of. It gives stability to the believer. A perfect Man, in whose hands all is maintained for God's glory and for our blessing, has been raised up. He first died, making purification of sins; He then ascended to the place of power in the heavens, and took the highest seat. Faith answers the question "What is man"? by saying, "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour" (Heb. 2. 9); He is exalted, and all authority is in His hands. God has provided a perfect Man, a Man who has settled the sin question, who has overthrown Satan, and redeemed us to God by His blood; a Man who has taken the sting out of death, who has robbed the grave of its victory, who has risen from the dead, and taken the highest place in the universe at God's right hand. This is the Man; the Man of resurrection; the Man of ascension and of glory, who is provided by God for us. When the heart truly grasps this in faith, and in the Spirit's power, the unbelief which marks many, as they look hither and thither for "A man", will be altogether foreign to our hearts. We shall rejoice in the Lord always, looking to Him who never fails, to Him whose fullness is always the same. "The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand." He alone is sufficient for these things; and grace, divine grace, has given our glad hearts to know this ever blessed Man, whose name is not only called "Wonderful", but—let our adoring souls be reminded—also "The Mighty God"! Here we find the secret solved. This marvellous Man is "the Christ, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen" (Rom. 9. 5). All is in safe keeping in His hands. May we be kept in the power of the Holy Spirit ungrieved so that He may make His glories known to us; thus the exaltation of the Lord shall be before us, and not the exaltation of self, individually or collectively.

Covetousness—loving self, money and pleasure—and violence and hatred mark the close of this period. The Lord will bring judgment upon it all. The way of deliverance, however, is always the same; it is found alone in Christ. In Jeremiah 6. we find the same state then: "Everyone of them is given to covetousness" (ver. 13). As in 1 Thess. 5. 3, just before Christ comes, so here, they say, "Peace, peace" (6. 14). Earnestly the prophet seeks to awaken them as to the old paths, the good way, where they should "find rest for their souls; but they said, We will not walk therein" (ver. 16). When the blessed Lord was here upon earth, He graciously invited them to come to Him, and they should find rest for their souls; but man will not take that way. He chooses other ways; so he finds no real rest. Like the troubled sea in its agitation and tossing, he knows no abiding quietude of heart, no peace of mind, no divine tranquillity.
In these chapters (4 to 6), the Lord again declares the cause of all their distress. He says, They have forsaken Me, they have not known Me, they do not fear Me (4. 22; 5. 7 and 19 and 22). This is so at times. Therefore “Reprobate silver shall men call them, because the Lord hath rejected them” (6. 30). There was no man to stand in the breach, there was none that executed judgment, there was none who even sought the truth. What else could come! The desolation of such a nation, which had turned its back to the Lord, was inevitable. Corrupt princes and a corrupt people called for this. The wise man had said before, “By the transgression of a land many are the princes thereof, but by a man of understanding and of knowledge, its stability is prolonged” (Prov. 28. 2). The man was not there. Both the land and the nation must await the coming again of “The Man Christ Jesus”, raised from among the dead, of the seed of David, now hidden in the heavens. They shall not wait in vain!

“If He’ll come to break oppression, To set the captive free, To take away transgression, And rule in equity.”

“THE LORD, MERCIFUL AND GRACIOUS.”

“COME unto Me, ALL YE THAT LABOUR AND ARE HEAVY LADEN, and I will give you rest.” How the greatness of the Saviour breaks forth in this greatest of all invitations. Strange that anyone should question the truth as to His person since He has uttered such words and fulfilled them to the letter. Men whom we have known in our day have addressed themselves to great events and failed in the midst of the process, and their boasting has recoiled upon them. They were great men, and greatly trusted, but their very greatness and the confidence reposed in them does but make their failure the more abject. But in these words Omniscience speaks; here Omnipotence lays bare its arm. The speaker by this very utterance proclaims Himself to be God or a blaspheming imposter.

Again He says: “As long as I am in the world I am the light of the world”. Could any other man who ever spoke on earth make such a claim? What is this claim, being interpreted in plain terms? It is this, All who are blind are My charge, they are the souls that I must look after. If any man says he sees, I have nothing to do with him. But the ignorant, the sinful, the burdened; those who toil, and grope and groan, these are Mine. For these I came, all the lost are Mine. The righteous, those who have no sin, stand outside My kingdom, they have no invitation to My cross or to Me. But the sin-sick and benighted, these I will seek even to the uttermost part of the earth; all such may come, and to each and all I will give rest and light. Ah, here speaks “The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin”. But He speaks in the man Christ Jesus, who felt the sorrows of men e’er He proposed to remove them, and bore their sins that He might forgive them;

“At His feet we prostrate fall, Own Him, Crown Him, Lord of all.”

Man is not all conscience; and conscience reached, with the heart away, will do what it did with the first sinner among men—drive him out among the trees of the garden, to escape the unwelcome Voice.
NOTES FOR PREACHERS.

"There was a man sent from God, whose name was John" (John 16.). There we have the SOURCE of his mission. "The next day after John stood and two of his disciples: and looking upon Jesus as He walked, he said, Behold the Lamb of God" (verse 36). That was the OBJECT of his mission. "And the two disciples heard Him speak, and they followed Jesus" (verse 37). That was the RESULT of his mission.

Many a man claims to have a God-given mission. Here is a simple test. Does he speak of Jesus as the Lamb of God, the one all-sufficient sacrifice for sin? and do those who hear him speak follow Jesus? If not, his claim is a false one.

John knew that he had come from God—he makes that clear in verse 33—but the knowledge of this did not puff him up, it humbled him, as his own witness to his disciples proved, when he said, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (chapter 3. 30). His joy consisted in the exaltation of Christ.

See how he refused to speak of himself. When a delegation waited upon him from the leaders at Jerusalem, His replies to their inquiries were all negatives. And they, astonished to find a man who refused to blow a trumpet on his own behalf, ask, "What sayest thou of Thyself?" Thus pressed he replies, "Just a voice. I am merely a messenger, a herald, to speak of another. I am not to be looked at or made a centre, all that I am here for is to gain your ears". Then when He appeared whose shoes John was not worthy to unloose, He cried, "Behold, the Lamb of God. Look at Him. He is worthy, and He alone".

John was a true servant, a pattern for every preacher. And no preacher is a true servant of God who would make himself famous, for he can only do this by standing between his hearers and Christ, whom he is supposed to preach. God grant to us all the spirit of John, or of that quaint old Yorkshire preacher who used to hide himself out of sight in the pulpit and cry, "Not the man in the pulpit, but the Man upon the cross".

What was it that made those two disciples follow Jesus? Simply this. John's eyes were fixed upon Jesus, and his words were made rapturous by the glory that moved his heart. Those same words might be spoken by another preacher and the congregation remain as dead and unmoved as the head-stones in a graveyard. It is as the preacher's soul is moved, as he sees Jesus, that his words take on a divine fervour and are clothed with living power, and whether men will or wont, they are moved by them.

Oh, preachers, may we be saved from preaching at all unless we preach with Christ filling our vision, for apart from this our words will only tend to harden our hearers. But when Christ fills the soul, the preaching is more than service to men, it becomes incense to God; it goes up to Him as sweetest savour, and goes forth to men in richest blessing.

John was a rugged preacher, stern and terrible, before his eye lighted on Jesus. We have but to read the accounts given by the other evangelists to see that. But here in John's Gospel there enters this new note, this tenderness, this heart-satisfaction in the Object of his contemplation, that sent those who heard him after the One of whom he spoke. It is necessary to lay bare sin's festering sore, and to tell men in plain, strong terms what they are, but God's end is not reached if men do not come to Christ. Those who hear us must follow Jesus.
A BLESSED SEQUENCE.

"Behold what manner of LOVE!" (1 John 3. 1).
"Behold what manner of PERSONS ought ye to be!" (2 Pet. 3. 11).
"Behold what manner of MAN is this!" (Mark 4. 41).

I. BEHOLD WHAT MANNER OF LOVE THE FATHER HATH BESTOWED UPON US! We are here invited to a great sight. We are invited by the Spirit to view and to reverently examine some of the many aspects, the wondrous virtues of the Love of God. It is true "it passeth knowledge", yet in this quest we shall have the aid of the unveiling Spirit. We can of course know but a fragment of the glories of such love, until that time when we know as we are known. Yet it is our blessed privilege and duty to ponder the Sacred Page, wherein that love is expounded and revealed and exemplified.

IT IS A FATHER LOVE. For this great world of sinners, God's compassion is supreme. Yet for all His own, redeemed and regenerate, that love takes a deeper hue, a richer wealth. 'Like as a father pitieth' we are reminded. Yet how much that involves! Once, after a strenuous voyage of visiting in the mission ship 'Evangel', one was sitting, reading and resting, when a man came closely past, leading by the hand a little boy. He was dirty and dishevelled, with great island sores which smelled horribly; he was crying bitterly, too, and was covered with flies.

As the child came closer, I cried out: "Zaccheus, what ARE you doing with that dirty little boy?" The man paused in astonishment, then blurted out: "Why, he's MINE! He's MY SON!" That was all. That was enough, enough explanation to his mind. "HIS SON!" Forgotten were the flies, the crying, and the sores, as he was taking the boy down to the sea to wash. His father's heart saw beyond; he saw the child cured, and grown to manhood, and still the object of his love, his heart. To me the child seemed repellent, save as a matter of duty. But to him, he was "MY SON", and that made all the difference. His father's heart was impregnable to the sores and the crying. And GOD! What of His love? "Like as a father" He says; and what a Father! What love! He, too, sees beyond. His love, too, is impregnable. He loves "to the uttermost" in spite of wounds to character, and bruises and putrefying sores. He beholds His own through the precious Blood, and finally "conformed to the image of His dear Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brethren".

Yes, He is not content to restore us through the one atoning sacrifice back merely to Adam's state of innocency. He would lift us from the 'mud of sin' (as the converts term it locally) right through to the heights of Heaven, would change us from outcasts to heirs, from felons to fellow-workers with His dear Son.

Yet how shall I behold that love? What lens will portray it? What life can expound it? I think indeed of the paladins of faith; of Enoch and Noah who 'walked with God', of Abraham the 'friend of God', of Israel a 'prince with God', and of many another, who, through God's love, were transformed and transfigured.

But none, even, of these giants of faith can give an adequate rendering of such an effulgence. They did not know it as even the babes in God's family may know it to-day, for in their day the Father's Name had not been declared. To find the highest exposition of that ineffable love I must go to the Holy One and the Just, to God's beloved Son, who could speak of that same love that rested upon Him being in us. I must make and take...
time to behold Him, with reverence and godly fear, as the clear shining of His heart irradiates the Sacred Page.

I would see Him first in the mystery of the manger, and bend with the shepherds over the Babe, wherein were combined such helplessness and yet such purity. And bending there I would hear the hurrying world’s careless refrain:

"No room, no room, have we
For such as Thee, Thou babe of Galilee,
Pass on! Pass on!"

So with Him I would pass in mind to that life in strange subjection and silence, through the intervening years at Nazareth, as He shaped with skilful hands those yokes which never galled, and pondered the parables He should utter, which men have never fathomed yet.

Then with the opening of His public ministry, I would recall those wonderful conditions of His offer of pardon to men. How at the outset He made it clear, as with Nicodemus by night, that no personal merit could lift the bar sinister of sin; and yet in contrast, with the outcast woman at the well, He proclaimed once for all, that no personal demerit could baffle His love and pardon for a repentant heart.

But it is in the glare of Golgotha, and the darkness which followed, that the supreme climax of that love is set forth. Well may we rejoice in the triumph of affection and affliction contained in those victorious words, "It is finished"! which seemed at the time so like an admission of defeat. For by that pronouncement, I know that the love of God has triumphed indeed, and I am now enabled by faith to become a member of the body of Christ, just as surely, just as literally as had I been one of the members nailed to the 'tall tree' that spectral day.

2. And as I think of our heritage in such a love, and of our coming exalted destiny, and of the blessed company we even now may enjoy, there come to mind the challenging words of the apostle Peter: "Seeing . . . these things . . . WHAT MANNER OF PERSONS OUGHT WE TO BE?" For by that love there is thrown upon us the onus of having very grateful hearts, and very changed lives. And the strongest incentive for such a change is set forth by the Spirit to be the very imminence of the approaching coming again of the Saviour, for "we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him". And as one who has watched thousands of heathen turn from darkness to light, one can bear established witness that there is no greater spur to holier living and continued missionary zeal than that same premonition of the Parousia, for "every one that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself even as He is pure."

It has been said that Paul knew only two dates in his calendar. They were 'To-day' and 'That day'. 'To-day' to be passed and packed full of blessed service and worship; and "that day" the appointed time for giving account, towards which all his splendid energies were bent. That was long ago, and he went to his reward "more than conqueror". In this age when there are so many "hands so full of money" and so many more "hearts so full of care", God give us a holy aloofness from the world and its goals and its gods. Do not presume to pity, as unpractical, the man who lives "gazing up into Heaven", "looking unto Jesus". We shall run our engines, and sail our ships, and care for our converts, and fulfil our varied ministries all the more earnestly and effectually for the glories we shall behold with such an outlook. God give us then to "see Jesus, crowned with glory and honour", and "so much the more as we see the day approaching".

It is to one of the most blessed spiritual fruits that the apostle incites us: "TO ALL HOLY CONVERSATION AND GODLINESS". It is
true the world will "know us not, because it knew Him not", still less will it care for "the songs of Zion", or the Emmaus walk, or the Patmos vision.

"Yet in these days when lowering clouds and storms
Have come to stay,
And gather denser till our Lord’s Own voice
Call us away,"

may it become ever more true that "our conversation (citizenship) is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour".

3. Yet when we consider what is expected of us, what is reasonable from us; when we remember past failure and worthlessness, we must feel all too hopeless of ever being worthy of such a love and such a Lord. Indeed our hearts should fail us with fear. The only reassurance possible, feasible, for our desperate case, is to cry out with the astonished disciples in the boat: "WHAT MANNER OF MAN IS THIS?" (Mark 4. 41).

The explanation of that remarkable storm on the lake is found in a subtle transposition of words. In verse 35 HE had said, "let us pass over". In verse 36 we find that "THEY took Him". I suppose most of us would have considered Christ's mere presence in the boat sufficient guarantee to ensure a calm passage. Yet it was not so! For THEY were taking HIM. He was a passenger, not the captain. It may have been natural enough. They were fishermen whose business it was to daily sail the lake. They would expect to know more than He did about handling a boat. This, surely, was some service they were competent, unaided, to do for Him. Only the sequel showed them their mistake. Oh! the blessedness of some of Christ's sequels!

It is the same to-day with many a believer. Such may make very sure of Christ's continuing presence in the heart, through the Holy Ghost. They "know Whom they have believed". But too often there is a wrong adjustment to Him. He is indeed an honoured Guest, yet not the supreme Guide and Master. Yet if He is not Lord of all, He is not Lord at all. It is a matter which will have to be frankly faced. It has been said that the sinner has to choose between heaven and hell, the saint has to choose between heaven and earth. This is a true saying. If Christ is not supreme in the life, if the government is not definitely and deliberately placed on His shoulder, there may be no present 'heavenly places' for the Christian, nor joy nor any lasting rest. Christ cannot be content to be merely a passenger in the life. It is far too perilous for the soul. For truly we are "not sufficient of ourselves to think, (much less to do) anything as of ourselves. But our sufficiency is of God".

Yet many souls are still seeking to manage their own storms, their own lives, their own service. And, "most weary seems the sea, weary the oar". Yet He will need little awaking. It is His way to wait till we cry. Then He is the Lord of the storm just as much as He is the Lord of the Sabbath. Indeed, "even the winds and the sea obey Him". And for me, "Well roars the storm to him who hears a deeper voice across the storm".

Surrender, then, to His almighty hands, the oar, the sail, the soul. Having received Him into the heart, enthrone Him in simple faith through the Spirit. Then He can work His wonders, then He will bring a "great calm", with His 'Peace be still'. Then indeed the love of God shall be "shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost". And then we shall be ready to cry with the disciples: "What manner of MAN is this?" and later with the heavenly host: "Blessing and honour and glory and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever!"
NEARNESS TO THE LORD.
Some Correspondence.

(July 21, 1906.)

My dear —, Very welcome is your letter of inquiry this day. It is so evident that no one but the Lord Himself can answer it. Yet He may guide one's thoughts and pen to some helpful considerations.

Being a so-called "missionary to the heathen" is in itself no solution to your inquiry as to how to realize the Lord's presence constantly. I think I used to view such a career with awe, and try to picture to myself how holy a man would be who spent his time for the Lord among distant tribes and idolatrous peoples. But I have found that we have the same trials abroad (only varied in form) of faith and patience as at home; and alas! even there the same tendencies to failure and sin. No thought is there of defilement and impurity, but could find its entrance into our hearts; no malice, no envy, but might secure footing, and mar the work of God; no form of pride but can intrude even into results which He has wrought in conversions.

So that, knowing one's self as I do, it is not from any idea of superiority, but rather as, one learner may put himself alongside another learner, that I venture to write.

You speak, as a seven-year-old Christian, of the hunger you have for the presence of the Lord. Who gave you that almost overwhelming desire do you think? What is it that has made the prospective joy of it to eclipse (in your heart) every earthly thing? Is it not that the Son of God Himself has begun to answer your earnest prayers: that He has at least given you a ray of His glory and a touch of His infinite love, that have withered up other things for you.

"I have seen the face of Jesus, Tell me not of aught beside."

This is the language of a soul that has had wafted to it some message of His unsearchable love.

Courage, therefore; as surely as the desire is formed by Himself for His company, and you are longing for it, does He intend to gratify it. "HE SATISFIETH the longing soul, and FILLETH THE HUNGRY soul with goodness." Let nothing divert you from the quest; set His presence before you as a goal more to be desired than gold or crystal, than pearls or rubies.

But as surely as you seek this most intimate place of His friendship will you have to reach it through His cup and His baptism. I know no other way. It is not the hearing of truth but the living of it that qualifies us for His company. If in John the Lord says at the time of the Last Supper—"Ye are My friends"—"I have called you friends"—He also says in Luke on the same occasion, "Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations". That was it. They had esteemed His company more than the necessaries of life. They were puzzled when He spoke to them of leaven, but it served as a reminder of what they had forgotten: in the joy of having Him and thinking about Him they had forgotten to take bread. Do you think the Lord did not value that? To whom was it then that He gave the disclosure of His glorious Person as the Christ, the Son of the living God—of the church secret—of the kingdom—of Matt. 16. and 17.?

I think, however, that it would be like building on an insecure foundation if I did not point out that Christ is no longer here on earth: and that since He has passed into heaven and the Father's presence, it is only possible to enjoy His company under the conditions which His death has imposed and necessitated. Before He went there as
Man the sin question was settled root and branch for God, and on behalf of believers. Before we can intelligently and fully appreciate Himself and enjoy His society, we must see for ourselves that this sin question has been settled root and branch. In other words, both peace and deliverance—peace, so that I come to God in the glorious sense that every question of my standing before Him is for ever settled in Christ; and deliverance, in that I know how to account for, and to be free from the power of the sin that dwelleth in me still—are necessary. Moreover, the Lord being in the heavens, we can easily see that it is only in proportion as we are enabled to withdraw from the influence of visible earthly associations that we can enjoy His presence in the sense in which you are hungering for it. For the purpose of this withdrawal and for power to retire in the solitude of the Lord’s company, the Holy Ghost has been given you.

So that you have been judicially freed from sin, its thraldom and its judgments—you have had your heart attracted by the love and glory of Christ in His resurrection position—and you have the Holy Spirit bestowed upon you to empower you for the enjoyment of that sacred Presence which is more to you than life.

Have we learned so much from God? Sometimes (though I think not in your case) this sense of a lack to which your letter referred, is owing to the groaning of a soul occupied with itself under the overwhelming discovery of its indwelling sin. Am I right in thinking that in your case it is not so much this as it is a craving to know the Lord Himself in an intimacy which will make intercourse with Him more refreshing than a holiday, and service for Him more restful than sleep?

My love in the Lord,

W. H. Westcott.

August 13, 1906.

My dear —, The very asking for help, as you did in your first, has made me realize more fully than ever how little one is capacitated for showing the way into nearness to the Lord. When I touched the ‘missionary question’ in my answer, it was in reply to your sentence, “I am sure nothing else but the presence of the Lord would keep you away out in Africa”. My idea was to indicate to you that I could not answer your wish on the ground that I had been to Inkongo in the Lord’s service, though we have had much of His presence vouchsafed to us there, and it has sustained us as nothing else could. But in every country where we may go our hearts are the same, and temptations surround us, and busy details serve to crowd out the Object Whom you are longing to reach. So that as a learner I was prepared to seek Him with you, but not as a missionary to teach.

I have longed to know Him! Times have been when the sense of His love and glory have been overwhelming, and one has had to pause for breath—this when alone, at home in England. Other days have been, and especially in the meetings for remembering the Lord, alone with my brother at Inkongo, when one has been loth to return to the duties that must be faced. But one has to regretfully own that these seasons have been more like the Jewish visits to the sanctuary; a very precious privilege and a holy memory, but occasional: enough, nevertheless, to lead one to say with David, “Early will I seek Thee: my soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh longeth for Thee in a dry and thirsty land where no water is; to see Thy power and Thy glory so as I have seen Thee in the sanctuary”. I think God permits us these moments of unearthly joy in beholding Jesus that they may ever afterwards stimulate us to seek His face and His company, and that we may never be content with what is alas! ordinary Christianity.

But after all, how is this intercourse to be obtained and this intimacy to be cultivated to which the way is opened in grace as I tried to show in my last?
How may these occasional seasons become more constant, if not absolutely continuous?

Sept. 25.—A long time has elapsed since I wrote the above. Now, as we near Teneriffe and are once more on our way to the place appointed for us, I may be able to add a word.

I am convinced that nearness to the Lord involves a sacred path of devoted attachment which may mean isolation from many dear ones who are not prepared to yield all to Him. It is not that the path itself is or ought to be an extraordinary one for a Christian, but that most who profess Christianity do not pursue what ought to be quite ordinary for every one of us.

Hence I think that the best and most direct reply to your inquiry is, “Lay yourself out to realize all that Christ is, in the light of the whole Christian position won for you by Him”. But this involves such a tremendous scope of exercise that if you were as well taught as the apostle Paul himself, and as faithful, you would still be hungering and thirsting to know Him more (Phil. 3). This is the best of intercourse with Him, that, far from palling on your taste as do the pleasures of the world, the love and preciousness and the fullness of Christ only expand while they satisfy the spiritual craving that turns to Him. You will never reach a point where you want no more, though you may even by this time have reached a point where, in knowing Him, you want no more of the world than you are obliged to meet from day to day.

I look at the various Christian epistles as having been written along the lines of Psalm 107. 9. There is satisfaction in the Christian’s Saviour and Lord for all the longings created in his breast by the new birth, and directed by the Spirit: while there is His goodness beyond telling, the very goodness of God in Him, which in blessing us puts aught like hunger for ever at a distance. If you, therefore, read to learn Him, praying God to enlighten you, and seeking the mind of the Spirit in inditing the holy Scriptures, you will find that these are the willing disclosures of His beauty to such as love Him. He will withhold nothing that will qualify you to hold sacred intercourse with Him. It was for this He gave Himself—even for you: that He might have you for Himself peculiarly and zealously (Titus 2.), that you might stand by while the deepest springs of His heart are laid open unto His Father (as in John 17.), and His desires for you are uttered to the only One Who can fully take them all in. So great His love for you. The Gospels were written to present His Person and His ways beyond all compare, while the Epistles were written to unfold to us the way to enjoy Him now, and the priceless blessings which fit us to share His love and glory; also those hindrances which we must avoid in following after Him. For your soul to get its full answer you must go the way to learn all that Christ is, and the way to realize all that He has won to make yours for eternity. Did time permit, and were we allowed to write or speak further, it would be a joyful service to try to indicate some outline of His glory from each Gospel or Epistle. But you have an unction from the Holy One, and what you learn by the Spirit is the truth and is no lie. Only seek to learn everything on your knees—spiritually if not actually. My father greatly recommends the reading of their Bibles to young Christians on their knees—a practice he followed himself in private reading. To which I would add, make every passage as you read it an occasion of prayer to Him and talk with Him. I have often marvelled to find how He talked with me when thus engaged, and the words which are usually mere printed matter to the careless reader almost walk with spiritual life and power as He opens them out to one’s heart by the Spirit. Then, whatever you learn—practice. Let nothing induce you to be a hearer of the word
without your being a doer of the work (James 1.).

I must conclude this letter with a verse from Hosea 6. The first verse shows the remnant of the Jews in search of the right Person. The second verse suggests to us that the right way to enjoy life is to follow Him into resurrection: while the third verse shows that being thus associated with Him in life, there is a quiet, progressive discovery of all that He is, if we follow on to know the Lord. His going forth is prepared—everything is ready on His side—for this manifestation to you—as the morning: a little light and the scattering of darkness: then more and more light unto the perfect day. The Lord Himself shine upon you, warm you, reveal Himself to you, more and more.

Affectionately in Him.

W. H. WESTCOTT.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.
The Song of Solomon.

BRISTOL. In the 1st verse of the Song of Solomon, chapter 2, it is the bride that speaks. Conscious of the delight of the Bridegroom in her, and of her beauty and purity in His eyes, she can say, “I am the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valley.” Thus the church appears in the eyes of Christ, Who loved her and gave Himself for her, and He would have us to know it. It is not pride of heart that would lead us to take up such language, for we know that in our flesh dwells no good thing. We could not be more despicable than we are apart from Christ; but, when we take account of ourselves according to His love towards us, and His work for us, and not only on the cross, where He shed His precious blood to cleanse away our sins, but the work that He does in sanctifying and cleansing us by the washing of water by the word, everything is different, we begin to realize then that we are precious in His eyes, and we can joyfully rest in that and tell Him again what He assures us we are to Him, in the happy communion of love.

In verse 2 the Bridegroom speaks. He assures the heart of the bride that she is not mistaken in her conception of His delight in her, and emphasizes what she is to Him in contrast to all besides. She is “a lily among thorns.”

In verses 3 and 4 the bride speaks again. She bears testimony to others of the all-sufficiency of the Bridegroom and His love, and her words speak for themselves. Everyone who knows the blessedness of communion with the Lord will understand this.

Papers on the Song of Solomon appeared in Scripture Truth during the years 1918 and 1919. These verses were dealt with in the August and September issues of 1918.

Feeding Poor Children.

SCOTLAND. One word of Scripture should be enough to confirm you in caring for the children in the district where you live. “As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Gal. 6. 10), and carrying out this exhortation, we are imitators of God, “Who is the Saviour [Preserver] of all men,
especially of those that believe" (1 Tim. 4. 10). Those that belong to the household of faith have the first claim upon us, for they are not only fellow-creatures with us of one Creator, but they are children in the same family; but if we confine our care and good works to these we are not like God. Hear what the Lord has spoken, "Love your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest, for He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil." "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father is merciful" (Luke 6. 25, 26).

We are sure that you will have God's approval in your efforts to feed hungry children and older people too, if you are able, specially if you keep in mind what is higher and more important, the salvation of their souls. In doing this you have no need to join hands, or labour with worldly societies whose object would be very different from yours, but act in faith in God, and according to your faith you will be prospered in your efforts.

Christendom.

PONTEFRACT. In common use the word Christendom covers the whole body of Christian profession. It is not a Biblical word. "The kingdom of heaven" in that aspect of it in which true and counterfeit grow together, is what describes it in the Word. It is presented to us in this way in Matthew 13, 24–30. At the harvest—the coming of the Lord—all that is true in it will be taken out of it, and what is left will come under God's judgment; it will be spued out of the Lord's mouth (Rev. 3. 16). The similitudes of the leaven and the mustard tree in Matt. 13, also describe it. From the leaven we learn that the whole of it will become permeated with evil doctrine, for leaven is always evil in Scripture, and never good; and from the mustard tree, that it will become a great power in world-politics (see Dan. 4); the very opposite to what the truth would have made it. When the true church is taken out of it every evil principle within it will rapidly develop until it—the false church—is seen as Babylon the great, and will fall and be judged as is described in Rev. 17, and 18.

"These which came out of great tribulation." Rev. 7.

Revelation 7. tells us who will come into blessing in the earthly kingdom of the Lord. First a chosen and sealed number of Israel, and then a countless multitude from the nations. These latter are not the church, for the portion of the church is a heavenly one, and that described here is evidently earthly, and there can be no question, we judge, that the church is already seen in heaven in the twenty-four elders, enthroned and crowned. This multitude, we believe, are those who from amongst the nations will believe the "gospel of the kingdom" (Matt. 24. 14) which will be preached during the time of the great tribulation by those whom the Lord calls "My brethren" (Matt. 25. 40). These 'brethren' will be Jews who will be born again and own the Lord as their coming Messiah. This multitude then will be the sheep on the right hand of the King, to whom He will say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. 25. 31–46).
LEARNING IN SOLITUDE.

WHEN a soul is deeply engaged with God and His truth, it necessarily seeks solitude. The very greatness of the occupation, and the engrossment of heart and mind with it, oblige one to stand aside from anything that would distract. When interrupted there is a continual recurrence to it, and one is detained with increasing interest. As the eye lays hold of an object through a telescope or stereoscope: the least shake, or diversion of the sight, and it is lost again: the nearer I come to it, the more earnest and intent am I to grasp what I feel is within my reach. I like to see a soul thus occupied with and interested about truth, not diverted from the wondrous and blessed range set before the eye of the soul, but intent on it until it possesses it, or rather is possessed by it.

You will find that no one learns truth easily. He who built on the rock was not secure merely because he built on the rock: but he also digged deep. What springs up quickly has no root. The more you understand the nature and scope of the Word of God, the more you will see the demand it makes on you, and how unreserved must be your subjection to it: while as you are subject to it, you learn the blessedness and virtues of it, yea, that in keeping of it there is great reward.

For this reason bright days must be succeeded by dark ones. The true value of anything is known only when it is wanted. In the dreary and desolate hour to nature, we begin to know the value of the truth communicated to us in the bright day. The learning is at one time, and the proving at another. In fact, we ought to be prepared for the dark hour: so that, though it be dark, there is something so blessed, so suited, pouring its comfort and sustenance on our souls, that, after all, the dark and dreary hour becomes a more really festive time to the heart, because of the virtues of the truth now made known, than the time of its reception, which was so happy and exhilarating. Fuel for our fires may be provided on bright days: but surely there is often rich compensation for the dark days of December in the cheerful circles formed around the homely fireside. One may eat with an appetite and feel revived: but the sense of life or sustainment from the food in the hour of toil is a far greater and better thing.

Thus, you have to learn now that the Lord is with you, however great may be the winds and waves, and that He is with you to prove to you now the value of the truth about Himself, which He has heretofore taught you. What we really want is intimacy with Him. I cannot have this intimacy intelligently without a knowledge of His mind—of what suits Him. If I were intimate with Him, I could easily and happily do His will; therefore intimacy is the first thing. Martha made serving the first thing, but right serving always flows from heart-acquaintance with His will.

How much there is our souls have to be deepened in every day. I am lost, degraded, but He is my Saviour. The sense of the one deepens the other; the more I know Him as my Saviour, the more I cling to Him; the more I feel I am a lost one, the more I rejoice in having such a Saviour. The Lord keep you simply looking to Him, accepting the day and the hour He gives—not longing, not looking, for bright days, but using the day He gives as He gives it. Plants do not dictate to Him what weather He is to send, but they appropriate whatever He does send.
The following Addresses were given in Edinburgh during the last week of April, 1921:

THE COMING OF THE KINGDOM. (EVENING, April 29th.)

F. E. HOLE.

"Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, according as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue: whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fail: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye witnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with Him in the holy mount. We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts."

I Peter 1. 1-11, 16-19).

FIRST of all as indicating my subject I want to call your attention to the latter half of the 11th verse, where we read of "the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Having mentioned it, the apostle Peter proceeds to assure us that in writing to us concerning that kingdom he is not leading us upon a wild goose chase. We are not following cunningly devised fables. We have that which is absolutely sure and certain; not a poetic dream, but something that is to be established in actual visible fact here in this world. A moment is coming, and coming soon, when the Lord Jesus Christ will rise up, assert His power, put God's rights into visible enforcement in this world, and upon the ruins of all human administration, establish an actual dominion to the glory of God.

I do not know, beloved friends, how you feel as you look abroad over the earth, so far as you are able. I know what I feel—my heart calls out for the coming of the kingdom; and I can indeed say, I have not any hope of peace and blessing for men except in its establishment. The sooner He comes, the sooner He ends man's authority and man's dominion, and extends over the earth God's dominion, the better.

Now the latter part of this chapter presents very clearly before us two things that assure us that the kingdom is to be an actual fact, and the first is the word of prophecy. The Old Testament from cover to cover predicts this
glorious moment; the grand terminus of all God's governmental ways with this world, the moment when we shall see the perfection of earthly administration; just as at the present moment, in the going forth of the gospel, we see the perfection of God's work of grace. As a matter of fact we see that the apostles, as they followed our Lord Jesus Christ here, had their minds full of that kingdom; indeed, it obsessed them, so much so that, not paying attention to all the prophets and all the Scriptures, they overlooked the fact that the only possible foundation upon which could be reared the glories of the coming kingdom was that of the sufferings of Christ. They overlooked the fact that when the Messiah came, He must be the suffering Messiah first in order that the kingdom might be righteously established. Our inclination to-day is to run to the opposite extreme, because we do know by the grace of God what has been done when Jesus came here in humiliation and suffered; and hence we are apt to spiritualize away this wonderful prediction of His coming earthly glory, treating it perhaps as something which may be merged into His ascension to the right hand of the Majesty on High, and thus we forget that the great mass of Old Testament prophecy waits its glorious fulfilment.

We have, says the apostle, the word of prophecy, and that word of prophecy he likens to a lamp that is shining in a dark place. I picked up sometime since an excellent volume by a first-rate Greek scholar who was greatly used years ago in the unfolding of the Word, and, opening at a page where he spoke of this Scripture, I found he took the liberty of substituting another word as giving us the sense of the original. He translated it like this: "a lamp that shineth in a SQUALID place." That is just what this world is. Am I talking to Christians who are enamoured of the present age? You look at all the discoveries of science and men's clever inventions; man is a very active and ingenious creature, especially when it comes to producing engines of destruction—and it all strikes you as wonderful and very imposing; yet the world, my friends, is a squalid place. Men and women are actuated by selfishness; self is the great master-thought by nature of every man, woman, and child; and the filth and degradation of sin is everywhere. When holy angels visit this world they must have the kind of feeling that you and I would have if, having been brought up in fairly decent surroundings, we went down to the dirtiest and lowest slum. This world of ours, in spite of all we have done with our gorgeous buildings, and our wonderful inventions, is the squalid slum of God's wide creation.

I am not surprised that men and women of this world are feeling hopeless; I wish they were more hopeless than they are. Why, man has been experimenting in the art of government for the last 6000 years. We have run through practically every form of government, until we have reached that particularly squalid form of it known as Bolshevism; and it seems as if there is nothing beyond it to be suggested. But just here the light of the coming kingdom shines. He reminds us of an hour when God shall be supreme; a day when government shall rest in the pierced hands of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, when He shall have dominion, and when He will be brought forth as was Joash after the wicked Athaliah had done her worst, and we all shall shout then "God save the King."

The assurance that the Apostle gives at the end of this chapter is that we have the word of prophecy made more sure, or confirmed, by that wonderful private view of the coming Kingdom that he, with James and John, was permitted to have when the Lord called them apart up to the Holy Mount of Transfiguration. They there saw the kingdom, as we might say, in sample. Those who are Bible students will find it helpful to study the accounts in the
The Gospels; if you do so you will notice that the Transfiguration came in just when the Lord Jesus had been breaking to His disciples the news of His approaching death. He knew all their expectations, and the effect such tidings would have upon them. He knew it would blight their hopes. He knew it would cast them down into depths of despair and gloom, so no sooner had He told them that what was immediately before Him was not the establishment of visible glory but His rejection and crucifixion between two thieves, outside the gate of the city, than it was just as if He said: "Now I am going to assure you that though you will shortly see me rejected and crucified, My kingdom is a great reality and shall yet be established." So He called three of His disciples as witnesses, the three chief, just as David had the three mightiest among his mighty men, and taking them up the mount He gave them a little private view of the glories of the coming kingdom.

What did they see? Oh, they saw Himself transfigured before them; His very face shining like the sun, supreme in authority and power; and His very raiment white as the light; and they saw two glorified saints; they saw Moses and they saw Elias. Moses was a man who died under the hand of God, and his funeral was conducted by the same Almighty hand; and Elias was a man that never tasted death, but was raptured to heaven in a chariot of fire. These two saints, two representative saints, were seen one on the right hand and one on the left hand of Christ in glory. They represented the heavenly saints who will be glorified when Jesus comes for His people, according to the 4th chapter of 1st Thessalonians, and who will be composed of two classes: namely, those who have died and are raised in bodies of glory, represented by Moses; and those living, who are changed without dying at all into the same glorified condition in the twinkling of an eye, represented by Elias.

Then, again, on the mountain were the three disciples, just men in flesh and blood, living under the ordinary conditions of human life in this world, as we are. So when the kingdom comes there will be supreme authority vested in the Lord Jesus, and saints enjoying a heavenly portion with Himself, and saints upon earth, basking in the sunlight of that heavenly scene. Heaven and earth will be brought into sweet harmony, all having its centre in the Son of God Himself, the glorified Lord Jesus. Thank God, dear friends, that we have not only the word of prophecy, but we have it confirmed by the fact that the thing has been seen in sample, and we are going to see it in bulk when the grand day of God's kingdom comes.

Now I want to call your attention to the early part of the 11th verse. It says: "For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." In the light of this word evidently there is such a thing as an abundant entrance into that kingdom, and also such a thing as having an entrance which is not abundant; in other words, the character of our entrance into that kingdom depends upon certain conditions. Here I must draw a little further distinction. Do not confound the everlasting kingdom with heaven. Keep distinct that which might be represented, by way of illustration, as the business sphere, from the home sphere.

There is, let us suppose, a wealthy man, and he is thinking of retiring from business, and making his very flourishing concern into a company. He has three sons, and all of them are in the business; and the question now is, what place respectively shall his sons occupy, the father becoming the chairman of the company, and largely a figurehead? What does he say? Well, there is my boy George, a brilliant lad, with a really good head on his shoulders. Yes, he is the man to be at the top and hold the reins, George must be
managing director. Now, there is Harry, a good lad with no end of go, and sufficient push to carry him anywhere, but he has not much judgment. Harry shall be the chief of the sales' department, and have the travellers under him. And then there is our dear boy Frank—very charming, quite reliable, but a dreadful duffer in business matters. Well, what shall we do with Frank? Oh, let us make for him a snug corner in the counting-house and there he must stop. But when they get home in the evening, does he say to George—you are the managing director, you sit on this chair, and have the best of everything on the table? and you, Frank, you shall have the leavings? Never! As a wise man he will not bring these distinctions into the home circle. Here all are on the same footing of relationship, and all are loved equally. That is the difference between the home circle and the business circle, illustrating the differences between the Father's house, where we shall be in the blessed relationship of children, and the kingdom, with its rewards according to our faithfulness and character.

The place we shall have in heaven will not be based upon our qualities or our endeavours; we are accepted in the Beloved if we are accepted at all. If by God's grace you are believers you stand in Christ's acceptance; you have the children's place, and upon you there beams forth the love of the Father's heart without any variation or diminution. No differences are recognized; it is all yours as much as it was the Apostle Paul's if you are a child of God. But there is the kingdom represented in my illustration as the business sphere. The Lord Jesus in that day is going to use His saints in the administration of His kingdom. He is going to give ten cities to one, five cities to another, as stated in that well-known parable in Luke's Gospel. Here there is going to be a difference, and I would earnestly exhort all Christians, especially young believers, who, if the Lord comes not for a few years, have life before them, that they make good use of what is entrusted to them; for depend upon it there are many of us who, though we shall be in heaven in the full blessing of the relationship which is ours in Christ, will have but a small place when the day of the kingdom comes.

Now let me ask this question: What is going to determine the place which we may have in the coming kingdom? That is the point of the earlier verses of this chapter. If you glance at verses 1 to 4, you will see they emphasize the things that are given to us. Verse 1 speaks of what we have obtained! Verse 3 speaks of all that pertains to life and godliness, having been given to us by God's divine power. Verse 4 speaks of our having received great and precious promises. These things are given to us, they are ours. But now, from verse 5, there is a change. He says, "Besides this"—besides all these great and blessed realities that are given to us through the grace of God—"add to your faith virtue [or courage]." Faith obviously is that with which we begin; you cannot be a Christian apart from faith. Then add to courage knowledge and to knowledge temperance or moderation, to that patience or endurance, to that godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity or love, which is the crowning Christian grace; it is the very nature of God Himself. And I am told that the way our translators have put it is not exactly how it stands in the original. It would better be, "Have in your faith, virtue," and so on. When we read: "Add to your faith, virtue," we have some such idea as that of adding brick to brick; but if we read "have in your faith virtue," it occurs rather in this light: There is a little fruit-bud in April on the apple tree. Now, it is a fact that in that bud there is, in a very elementary, very embryonic form, an apple, perhaps half-a-dozen apples; and if it be not there in embryo, it will never be there full grown when September comes. It is
so small as to be microscopic, still it is there, and in the same way our faith really has within it in embryo form all these other graces. What is needed? Why, DILIGENCE under the gracious influence of the Spirit of God, so that we may mature and come to fruition; just as under summer influences the sap flows up through the trunk and branches to the buds and silently yet surely expands them into perfection. Oh! Christian, here is something that is going to determine your place and mine in the kingdom.

Let me put it like this: One thing that will determine your place in that day is the measure in which there has been found in you solid Christian character—the reproduction in your life of those excellent graces which in all their perfection were seen in Jesus—that is the thing that God loves. If there is a saint in whom the character of Christ is eminently seen, you are not going to be surprised—are you?—if the Lord Jesus picks out that saint for a very important place when the day of His kingdom comes.

Time prohibits my reading to you other Scriptures, but if you know the 19th of Luke—that is the chapter where we have the parable of the pounds—you have it taught that service is going to help to determine our place in the kingdom. When the Lord comes back, having received the kingdom, he will call His servants before Him in order that He may know how much each man has gained by trading. Turning also to the 1st of Corinthians, chapter 3, verse 13, you will find how service is to be tested in view of the kingdom to see whether men have built gold, silver, precious stones, all things that stand the fire, or whether wood, hay, stubble, things which are destroyed by fire; for "the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." Let us each, as concerns our service, take to heart those words "how much" and "of what sort," for as we have served our rejected Lord, so will our position in the kingdom be.

Then there is a third thing; if you turn to the 2nd chapter of the 2nd Epistle of Paul to Timothy, you find these words in verse 12: "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him," so that evidently not only service, but suffering, is going to help to determine the place of the saint in the kingdom. Stephen, for instance, did not range over many countries, carrying the Gospel in a wide circle, as Paul did. But Stephen died for His Master's sake; Stephen suffered even when his face was shining like the face of an angel, and a large place in the kingdom will be his.

In the light of these Scriptures I think we can see that three things will determine our place in the kingdom—service, suffering, and character; the character of Christ developed as the fruit of our own diligence, under the hand of God, and amid the stresses of daily life.

Now that the meetings are practically over, I want to give a final appeal. Have you fresh views of divine truth? Is the Word of God more precious to you? Oh! how are you going to use it in view of the coming kingdom? Are you going to be like the men in the house of "Interpreter" whom the wife of "Christian" and her boys saw? You will remember they were taken into a very dirty room, and they saw a man with a rake in his hand, working amongst the sticks and stones and dust of the floor—and they perceived that just behind him was an angel standing and holding up a crown of glory. Yet, John Bunyan says, he did not regard, but went on raking to himself the sticks and stones and dust of the floor. We know his name, do we not? "Muckrake" is what John Bunyan calls him. How many Muckrakes there are among the children of God! How many setting before them merely the getting on in this world, and the question of riches! How many are there setting Christ supremely before
them? His interests; His love; His service, and the day of the glorious kingdom that is coming. God help us each to keep the Saviour, who is coming, shining before our souls as the bright and morning star, and to live in view of the coming of His bright day. If we have it thus, we shall not be caught by the seductions of this world; we shall have Christ and His kingdom our crowning objective. Oh, what glory it will be when we shine forth at His appearing; and even sweeter the enjoyment of the Father's house and all the fullness of the Father's love.

Addresses continued on page 161.

DEATH.

PESTILENCE delights me,
War is play;
Nothing e'er affrights me
Night or day.
Kings before me tremble,
Princes fall;
Rich and poor assemble
At my call.

Pressing on, I vanquish
As I please;
Nor do I relinquish
What I seize.
Old and young I wither
With my breath,
Rushing hither, thither—
I AM DEATH.

Oh thou monster cruel,
Cease to boast,
For in one great duel
Thou hast lost.
Victor now no longer,
Thou must bow,
For there is a Stronger
E'en than thou.

One has dared to enter
Thy domain,
Whom thou could'st not fetter
With thy chain.
Opened is the prison,
Void the grave;
JESUS CHRIST IS RISEN,
Strong to save.

Thou wilt soon, for ever,
To His sway
Every soul deliver
Of thy prey.
To the lake of fire
Thou shalt go;
Thus will He destroy thee—
"The last foe."

From the whole creation
Then will ring
Shouts of adoration
To its KING.
All will bow before Him,
Own Him Lord:
One alone is VICTOR—
CHRIST THE LORD.

"MY TIMES ARE IN THY HAND." (Ps. 31. 15.)

WHATEVER share
Of loss, or loneliness, or care,
Falls to my lot, it cannot be
More than Thy will for me to bear.

And none the less,
Whatever sweet thing comes to bless
And gladden me, Thou art its Source,
The Sender of my happiness.

Add this to me,
With other gracious gifts so free,
That I may never turn my face
In any evil hour from Thee;

Nor on the sand
Of shifting faith and feeling stand;
But wake and sleep with equal trust,
Knowing, "My times are in Thy hand."
FAITH! WHAT IS FAITH?

THERE are many who can sing the Doxology when all things go well with them in this world. They very readily say, "Thank God," if they are delivered from trouble. And if they have bread in the pantry, and health in their bodies, and peace in their homes, and perhaps a balance at the bank—they can praise the Lord with cheerful voice, and say He has always been so good to me I'll never doubt Him. Now that may be gratitude, but it is not faith. We would not despise any of God's mercies, and would indeed be grateful for all that He gives us richly to enjoy, but if I thank Him when the sun shines upon me, while it may be gratitude, it may also be sheer selfishness; a selfishness that rejoices in one's own freedom from trouble, and has scarcely a thought for the difficulties of others.

But faith is different; it says, "Though the fig tree should not blossom," which means, not that there will be a poor harvest, or a late harvest, but no harvest at all. "Though my hands are empty, and every earthly resource has failed, and every human prop has been removed, and the whole world is a wilderness, yet will I confidently rest in the Lord." Faith can pass quietly through the storm; it does not look to any circumstance for help, but it takes hold upon God and finds Him to be greater than every circumstance. Faith can wait, and wait until God moves. It is distrust that is impatient and restless, and would take things out of God's hands, and seize upon the desired object prematurely. Look at Abraham and Sarah, distrustful and impatient, making a sad mess of things in the matter of Hagar; they could not wait for God. Look at Jacob and Rebecca, scheming, shamming, lying, deceiving; they could not wait for God. Look at Moses smiting the rock and speaking unadvisedly with his lips; he could not wait for God. Look at every man, good and bad, whose history God has given us. Most, if not all of them, broke down just here; Satan stampeded them at least once into action when faith would have been quiet and waited for God.

Look now at the lowly Man of Nazareth, hear Him when hungry in the wilderness, disclaiming all resources but God, in the face of the Tempter who had grown bold with 4000 years of success. Hear Him say, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God." And trace His way from thence through every circumstance of trial and sorrow, right on, until at last He lay in a sealed tomb. He never moved on His own behalf. His only concern was the glory of God. How astonished His disciples were that He did not save Himself. When Peter drew his sword and smote the high priest's slave, was there not impatience with the meekness of His Master in that action as well as indignation at His foes? But where is Jesus now? Crowned with glory and honour in the Father's throne. He committed His way to God, and God heard His prayer, and exalted Him when the time came. He is the beginner and the finisher of faith, and in Him was no failure, no impatience, no haste, no discontent, but always perfect peace, because always perfect trust. And He is our pattern; not Abraham, nor Moses, but Jesus. And His peace He gives to us as we follow in His steps and rely wholly upon the Father's love that can never make a mistake.

Then the time comes when faith sings; the circumstances that have tested and tried it have only served to tighten the strings, and give it tone and tune, then it breaks forth into melody and cries triumphantly: "I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The Lord is my strength, and He will make my feet like hind's feet, and He will make me to walk upon mine high places." This is faith, "and without faith it is impossible to please God."
NOTES FOR PREACHERS.

MR. BRAMWELL was a faithful preacher, and his preaching was fresh and with power, for communion with his Master was even more to him than his communications to men. "How is it?" asked one, "that Mr. Bramwell always has something new to tell us?" "Why," was the answer, "you see, he lives so near the gates of heaven that he hears a great many things that we do not get near enough to hear anything about."

Did you ever hear that strange legend of the devil who once got into a pulpit and preached a sermon on hell, so graphically and with such eloquence that all the hearers marvelled greatly and would know who this wonderful preacher was? He was obliged to disclose himself, and when asked if it was not against his own interests to have preached so terrifying a sermon about hell? He answered, "Not at all, there was no unction with it, so that instead of turning people from sin, the effect of it will speedily pass, and leave them harder than ever." There is a solemn moral in the legend, and it is this: Let us shrink from handling great truths apart from the unction of the Holy Ghost.

On a sultry day in a town in Italy we bought a glass of what should have been pure water, for we were exceedingly thirsty, but when we began to drink, a pungent flavour of something that had been previously in the cup, made us leave the rest of our purchase, thirsty though we were. The water was good enough, but the vessel imparted an evil taste to it; the like has often happened to the Gospel. The word preached has been true enough, but the unhallowed savour of an inconsistent life, or a bitter disposition has robbed it of its sweetness. The vessel has not been suited to the water of life that it contained. The first necessity in a preacher is that he should be a vessel meet for the Master's use. (S.)

The preacher's efforts will be vanity and worse than vanity if he have not unction. Uction must come down from heaven and spread a savour and feeling and relish over his ministry. This cannot be if the Bible and prayer are neglected. These must hold the first place, and the last must also be given to them.

Consider more how to get the truth into your hearers' souls than how to get it off your own. "If you had been as anxious to get your sermon into my mind as you were to get it off your own," said a wise man to an aspiring preacher, "you might have accomplished something."

Nothing reaches the heart but what comes from the heart. Murray McCheyne wrote: "I have been more engaged in preparing the head than the heart, this has been frequently my error, and I have always felt the evil of it, especially in prayer."

The nearer you are to the heart of Christ the more you will lay yourself out to rescue souls. If you are in concert with Him, you could not get alongside a sinner without telling him of the Saviour.

There can be no true service without sacrifice in one form or another. When one chooses to suffer affliction with the people of God, the advantages of Egypt must be surrendered, as in the case of Moses. Elisha's first act on entering service was to rend his own clothes. The old order of things is set aside, he was henceforth to serve in the spirit and power of the man who had gone up, and not in his own. But who will sacrifice self and selfish interests to serve the Lord, save he who is constrained by the love of Christ!
Was there such a thing as the cross? Was Christ actually crucified? Did those who clamoured for His death really cry: "Crucify Him, crucify Him"? If so, would not an easier and less agonizing mode of death have sufficed? If death were necessary at all, could not a quiet sunset, like that of Moses, who passed away under the eye of God alone, have been the kind of departure which became the greatest of all prophets?

Why the cross? Why "even the death of the cross"—for the word 'even' is clearly used in order to draw especial attention to the nature of the death through which our most blessed Lord passed. This fact is signified by that which follows: "Wherefore God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name above every name". Having taken, in infinite grace, the very lowest, the most degraded and derogatory position, God at once places Him in the highest and most glorious; and decrees that to Him "every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that He is Lord to the glory of God the Father". The exaltation is commensurate with, and is the only adequate acknowledgment of, His voluntary and absolute humiliation. The height is measured by the depth, and the honour by the unparalleled dishonour. The cross means ignominy. Let us lay hold of that.

Death was necessary if sin had to be atoned for. "Without shedding of blood there is no remission." Divine judgment had to be executed on the sinner's Substitute. "The Son of man must be lifted up", and in that act the Lord was "made a curse for us", "made sin for us".

It was not His suffering at the cruel hand of man, calling forth, as it rightly does, our sympathy and tears, that could work atonement; but it was the far deeper suffering for sin under judgment, that alone could meet the question of sin, our sins, black, vile and numberless as they are. "He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." The Goat died on which Jehovah's lot had fallen. There are two great reasons why ignominy, reproach and shame attach to the cross. First, it exposes man in the totality of his guilt; it demonstrates, beyond controversy, that he is fallen, sinful and utterly impotent in the matter of his own salvation. He is 'without strength'. And, secondly, it casts a pall on all the glory of this world. It writes 'Ichabod' on man, and tells him that that which he "highly esteems is abomination in the sight of God". No wonder then that he should hate the cross of Christ. Nothing could more effectually humble him. Oh! it was not the gracious life of the Lord Jesus that made Him an object of hatred, but His constant moral descent to the death of the cross. That was His one objective. "Can ye drink of My cup?" was the test He applied, and still applies, to those who follow Him.

No wonder that this ignominious cross is repudiated by the world, if not, also, by the professing church, which is, alas, indistinguishable from it. A crucified Christ is the Divine test of fidelity to Him. Studious reader, may I ask you to peruse prayerfully the moral bearings of the cross in the first four chapters of 1 Corinthians, tracing the spiritual purport and intention of its instructions in that section of holy Scripture. See how it is set in striking antithesis to the world in its various forms. If the cross is of God, the world is shown to be of the enemy, Satan.

Hence the cross has a sanctifying power. It separates the heart and life of the true disciple from the ways of the world, whether in its gross evil, or in its religion, or philosophy; or, indeed, anything and everything that is not
of God. The choice of the Christian lies between the world and the cross. And which, dear reader, shall it be with you?

Oh! let there be a clear, definite, uncompromising breach between you and the world. Fear not to make it. Let the glories of Calvary fascinate your whole soul to-day, and until you are lost in the answering glories of His presence in the joy of the Father's house on high.

I do not know a more dreadful characterization of mortal man than that they should be "enemies of the cross of Christ" (Phil. 3. 18). They were not open rejectors of His name, nay, they 'walked' in the outward profession of it; but of His cross and its unworldly demands they were enemies!

Do such exist to-day? Do you, or I, dear reader, profess His name and shirk His cross? If so, our profession is to be estimated by our depreciation of it. He, for our sakes, despised its shame; may we, for His sake, make it our glory. May we daily take our stand, in spirit and most grateful affection, on the "green spot outside the city walls", and let our selfish hearts be melted in the ways of His dying love, so that our willing feet may travel in His holy ways. "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Gal. 6. 14).

THE WORD OF GOD.

THERE is one book that has a larger circulation, and is translated into more languages, than any other, and it is not by any means a modern book. Its title is "The Holy Bible".

Though it is so widely circulated, and possessed and read by so many, and though it is rightly called "THE WORD OF GOD", few honour it as the revelation of the will of the Creator to men, His creatures.

The condition in which we see the world to-day is due to the rejection of the revealed will of God. And herein only can we find direction with absolute Authority behind it.

It is just this which men need, and are seeking for unconsciously; which failing to find, where alone it can be found, they are relying on assumed authority, usurped by arrogant men, who themselves are disobedient to the authority of God.

And it is such claims to obedience, outside the scope of God's sanction, that is the most fruitful source of lawlessness.

If men would accept "THE WORD OF GOD" as the perfect revelation of the will and purposes of God, we should find that obedience to it would result in unity; for there can be no true fellowship amongst men until they have fellowship with God.

Just as the Bible is the pre-eminent book, so is the Lord Jesus Christ the pre-eminent Man. None other such has the world ever known, or will ever know. He is "the brightness of God's glory and the express image of His Person". Of Him it is written, "The WORD was made flesh and dwelt among us".

He too is called "THE WORD OF GOD".

The written Word and the incarnate Word are one.

In the Epistle to the Hebrews it is written, "THE WORD OF GOD is quick, and powerful, and sharper than
The Word of God is 'quick', that is, living, life-giving. And such a 'Word' as this is needed to bring life to men "dead in trespasses and in sins". So we hear Him, who was both "Son of man" and "Son of God", declaring "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God"; and "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My Word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment; but is passed from death unto life".

The voice that said to the earth, when "without form and void", "Let there be light, and there was light", with fruitfulness following, when He was in the world, "God manifest in the flesh", said to a man in the tomb "Come forth", and he obeyed; to the little girl, lying dead, "Maid arise", and she responded; and to the lad, the only son of his mother, being carried forth to burial, "Arise", and he sat up and began to speak.

Such we have seen, wondering and worshipping.

A man on a roof, with burglar's tools in his hands, on plunder intent, hears through an open skylight living words, read from this blessed Book, and he departs from his evil way, a new man in Christ, turning many to righteousness.

A man who had no knowledge of the Word of God, enters a hall, hears the Gospel, and leaves the hall a new creature in Christ Jesus, thereafter to serve God as a Missionary in Africa.

A boy, contented with a life of pleasure-seeking, a burden to his father and mother, hears the Word, believes on the Lord Jesus Christ, and henceforth brings joy to their hearts, and becomes a "servant of God".

Truly it is living, life-giving, this "THE WORD OF GOD".

It is 'powerful' too; that is, 'effectual'. For it is written, "My Word shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it".

Great is the privilege of having the will of God revealed to man, great the joy of those who receive it, but vast the loss of those who reject it.

Not a prophecy, not a promise, not a warning, not a word shall fail, contained in "THE WORD OF GOD".

It is also "sharper than any two-edged sword", for it is "the sword of the Spirit".

The day is coming when, out of an opened heaven, He Who is "Faithful and True" shall appear, in a vesture dyed in blood, Whose name is called "THE WORD OF GOD". "And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations; and He shall rule them with a rod of iron; and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written "—"KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS". What is your relationship to "The Word of God" now, as He speaks to you clothed in grace?

What will your relationship be to Him in that coming day?

Is it true of you, "Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth, through the Spirit, being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by 'THE WORD OF GOD', which liveth and abideth for ever"?
"OUR OLD MAN."

"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin."—Romans 6. 6.

The death of Christ is the grand master-fact which controls all proper Christian life and experience, and it is striking how this comes out in Romans, chapters 6., 7. and 8. In chapter 6., for instance, verse 6 gives us the solid foundation upon which all its teaching rests; a verse which carries our thoughts to the cross of Christ and what God accomplished there.

The apostle is showing how unthinkable it is that the believer should continue in sin, and he appeals to what was common knowledge in connection with baptism, viz., that it is ‘into’ or ‘unto’ Christ’s death, and hence baptism has the character of burial with Him, carrying with it the necessary consequence that our subsequent life is to be of a new order. "We also should walk in newness of life" (verse 4).

In verse 6 our thoughts are turned, not to baptism, but to that immeasurably greater event to which baptism points. Verses 3 and 4 give us baptism and what we are to know in connection with that. Verse 6 gives us the cross and what we are to know in connection with it. Behind baptism lies the cross—if we may so speak. Without it baptism is nothing.

"Our old man" then has been crucified with Him, so that, the "body of sin" being annulled, we should no longer serve sin. ‘Annulled’ is a more correct rendering than ‘destroyed’, as in the A.V. The difficulty which that verse presents is largely found in the two phrases we have put in inverted commas. What do they mean?

"Our old man" is an expression which sets before us an abstract idea, inasmuch as we cannot refer to any particular man as setting forth the idea in concrete shape. We cannot exactly point to Adam, though all the features which characterize the "old man" are just those which lay inherent in Adam as a fallen creature, and which have unrolled themselves in the sad history of his race.

Let us rather spend a moment in mentally visualizing the Adamic being and nature, as set forth not only in Adam but in the whole history of his descendants; it instantly presents itself to us as "corrupt according to the deceitful lusts" (Eph. 4. 22), and we have some idea of what "the old man" is in its moral characteristics.

But our verse deals not with "the old man" but "our old man". An important distinction. "The old man" is a condemned thing, "put off"—i.e., disowned as to its power and characteristics—by the Christian; but it is "our old man" that is said to be crucified with Him.

To make the point clear, refer for a moment to Romans 3. 22, where the distinction is so clearly made between the righteousness of God being "unto all" in the first place, and "upon all them that believe" in the second. The first is the broad and general bearing of that righteousness based upon Christ’s propitiation (verse 25), the second the actual effect of the application of that righteousness, strictly limited to where the faith exists that makes Christ’s work its own in a substitutionary sense. Of this, chapter 4. 20 is an example. As a substitute He died for ‘our’ offences, that is, the offences of believers, and not everybody’s offences.

Now what is true in chapter 4. 25 in regard to offences is true also in chapter 6. 6 in regard to the nature from which offences proceed. It is not "the old man" which is crucified with Christ
any more than it is everybody's offences for which He was delivered. Had He suffered for everybody's offences and had "the old man" been crucified with Him, then pretty clearly no one could righteously be punished for their offences, nor condemned because of what they are in themselves. In other words, we then must logically hold to universal salvation.

Just the same feature is displayed in 2 Cor. 5. 21, though here again there is a frequent tendency to omit in quoting it the two small words which qualify the statement, "for us". The statement is: "He hath made Him to be sin for us"; again we say—not 'for everybody'.

"Our old man" then is our Adamic being and nature as set forth in its moral characteristics—all that we were as children of Adam—and that has been crucified with Christ. Its judgment has been borne by Him, so truly so that in the great judicial act of the cross we, as identified with all that we were, have died also. Hence in verse 8 the apostle takes up just that expression and uses it as a basis for a further deduction. "Now if we be dead with Christ", etc. The world has not died with Christ, but we have.

From all this flows the annulling of "the body of sin"—another abstract idea. Colossians 2. 11 furnishes us with a similar expression. In this verse the words "of the sins" are wrongly inserted, as is generally admitted; the passage should read, "putting off the body of the flesh".

In both these passages the word 'body' seems to have a similar sense as conveying the whole thing, as contrasted with anything partial or sectional. For instance, Amos likened the deliverance of some of Israel to a shepherd taking out of the mouth of a lion "two legs or a piece of an ear" (Amos 3. 12), only fragments were saved. God has not dealt with sin in any such partial or fragmentary way. His purpose was not merely to annul certain ugly features of sin but the whole body of it, and that He did by bringing to crucifixion—a death of shame—our old man—all that we were as children of Adam.

That great judicial act and sentence of the cross decides everything. It means liberty for the believer, that henceforth he does not serve sin. Knowing what the cross has affected, he reckons in accordance therewith (verse 11), and henceforth yields himself and his members as instruments of righteousness unto God (verse 13). The new life of the believer is a life of obedience, for this is what yielding means.

"PARTAKERS OF HIS HOLINESS." (JAMES GREEN.)

"What is it to be partakers of His holiness"? Heb. 11. 10.

Access to the Holiest (Heb. 10. 19) involves a corresponding practical walk in holiness. It is in order that this may be produced, and the affections may be detached from this present world, that God passes His children through various exercises and chastens them for their profit. This is needful, for otherwise the soul would seek its rest in things that are short of God's purpose. Holiness is the right discernment of good and evil; further, it is the quality which delights in good and hates evil. It is an attribute of God, and carries with it the thought of setting apart for sacred use. To partake therefore of God's holiness is indeed a great privilege and high honour, for then we share in His joy, behold His beauty, and learn His mind. God ever seeks the true happiness of His children, and happiness and holiness go hand in hand.
NOTES ON JEREMIAH. No. 3.

THE PLACE OF THE LORD’S NAME.

CHAPTERS 7., 8., and 9. have an interesting and peculiar character of their own, inasmuch as the important truths of the house of God and the people’s relation to it are prominent.

If the prophet begins by exposing the unreality of those that go to the temple and “enter in at these gates to worship the Lord” (7. 2); if he ends by pronouncing punishment upon them along with the “nations that are uncircumcised” (9. 26), showing up in between the vanity of those who boastfully say, “The law of the Lord is with us” (8. 8); he nevertheless calls to any that may have ears to hear, to glory alone in the Lord, who exercises lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth; for in these things He delights (9. 24). It is His exaltation which is always before the mind of the Spirit.

The house of God is that which bears His holy Name, as He saith, “Which is called by My Name” (7. 11, 12, 14, 30). In Old Testament times this could be said of either the Tabernacle or the Temple, but of no other such structure then or since. Both are mentioned here (verses 1 to 11 and 12 to 14).

The house of God to-day is a building not made with hands, for in such God has no pleasure now, nor does He dwell in them as He deigned to do provisionally in the two structures named (Acts 17. 24; and Heb. 9. 1; 10. 9). Believers on our rejected Lord are the ‘living’ material of which the present house of God is constructed, as 1 Peter 2. 4-5 explains. Christ is the Living Stone, and we are builded in relation to Him—“a spiritual house” in contrast to what went before. It is wrong to own any other structure as “The house of God”. It is a denial of the true nature and character of this house (which is the assembly of the living God) to apply the name to any building of brick or stone.

And what a solemn fact it is—judgment fell upon the house “which was in Shiloh”, where the Lord set His “Name at the first” (7. 12); again it came upon the house at Jerusalem, as He said, “Therefore will I do unto this house, which is called by My Name, wherein ye trust, and unto the place which I gave to you and to your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh” (14). And thus it happened. Likewise the apostle Peter again tells us in the epistle from which we have already quoted, “Judgment must begin at the house of God” (4. 17). We see it in the symbolic history of the churches in Revelation 2. and 3. Corrupt Christendom will be judged no less than corrupt Judaism was. According to the thought of God as to it, His house, “which is the assembly of the living God, the pillar and base of the truth” (1 Tim. 3. 15), is marked by the mystery of piety, as it is seen perfectly expressed in our Lord Jesus Christ personally—God manifested in the flesh. When the truth is falsified and true piety is gone, what can come but judgment from God? and more especially so, if this false thing bears His holy Name.

Jeremiah warns them against “lying words”, in verses 4 and 8. “Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, are these.” This might sound very pious and religious, but they themselves were given to oppression and idolatry (7. 6, 9, 18), and wicked trafficking was practised in His house (10-11 and 30). Therefore His anger and His fury should be poured out upon this place (20). They went backward and not forward; truth had perished from their mouth; they had become the
generation of His wrath; their evil practices caused the voice of gladness to cease; judgment from the Lord, who had called so often to them, must fall upon them (21–34). “This evil family” should spread out the bones of the departed before the host of heaven, and even desire death themselves; yet they knew no shame, “neither could blush”; and no man repented him of his wickedness. The prophet feeling all this cries, “Astonishment hath taken hold upon me! Is there no balm in Gilead, is there no physician there”? (8. 21 22). None could be found. There was no man. The coming of Christ is the only hope. “Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears”, mourns the prophet. Adultery, treachery, lying, slander, deception, iniquity, duplicity and ignorance of God marked the people (9. 1–8). “Shall I not visit for these things?” saith the Lord; “yea, I will make Jerusalem heaps”. Who is the wise man, that may understand this? He asks. Wormwood and water of gall should be theirs. Let the mourning women be called; let them teach their daughters wailing; desolation and death cometh (9–22).

And in the last two verses, 25 and 26, he shows that the punishment is not to be confined to Israel; but that it is to fall upon “all nations”. In the two verses between (23, 24), Jeremiah, true to his Name, exalts the blessed Lord before the eyes of faith, saying, “Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth ME, that I am the Lord which exercises lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord”.

“That which Jeremiah speaks of in these two verses can only be understood rightly by those who have a saving knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the One who is appointed to administer righteousness in the habitable earth, having been raised from among the dead (Acts 17. 31); and it is by Him God is made known to us now. The Father’s Name is declared to us by Himself, so that whatever failure may be connected with that which outwardly bears His Name, we can still rejoice in the perfectness of the Son, and our joy be full in communion with the Father and with the Son.

The Name is now connected with a Person, rather than with a place. Though there might be little to glory in outwardly, yet we can always glory in Him. This is pleasing to the Father, and for this reason the Holy Spirit of God is in and with us during the time of His rejection by Israel. Those who own the Lord now are growing to a holy temple in Him, and will be displayed as such in glory when complete; but even at the present time, whilst they wait that day, they are builded together “in the Lord” for a habitation of God in the Spirit (Ephesians 2. 21, 22).


We cannot fail to observe the very impressive and yet very simple way in which this injunction to the servants of the departing nobleman was linked up with the prospect of his return. After His resurrection the Lord Jesus said to His disciple, “Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me more than these?” On receiving the reply, “Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love
Thee"}, Peter was enjoined to feed the lambs.

Simon Peter was not specially commanded to preach, although he was undoubtedly intended to do so. He was the foremost of the band of preachers on that memorable day of Pentecost when thousands passed from death unto life. Peter's special commission, however, was to feed the lambs and the sheep of the flock of God.

This very important duty is too frequently ignored. The apostle Paul deplored that there was no one like-minded who would naturally care for the state of the Philippian believers (Phil. 2. 20). The primary thought in the command is undoubtedly to care for the spiritual state and to feed the souls of the flock in speaking a kindly word, but in doing a kindly service their material needs will not be overlooked.

It is impossible to formulate any scheme of satisfactory occupancy, because there are not two of us who can occupy the same niche in the corridor of time. As the children's hymn puts it so simply:

"In this world of darkness
So we must shine,
You in your small corner,
And I in mine."

But there can be no satisfactory occupancy in the Lord's interests on earth apart from being occupied with Him in the glory. The Psalmist holds out the key which can raise every ward of the lock on the door to tenancy from the Lord, "I will instruct thee and will teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye" (Ps. 32. 8). I cannot be rightly with Him "outside the camp" except in so far as I am with Him "inside the veil".

There are thus two distinct aspects in which the Christian is viewed as a subject in the kingdom of the Son of God's love. In one aspect, he is in the region of eternal life, breathing the atmosphere of the new creation; his life is hid with Christ in God. In the other aspect, he is set up in responsibility to be faithful to an absent Lord in the old creation region. But he can only rightly discharge the functions of the latter region in so far as he carries the energy derived from the enjoyment of the blessings of being in Christ Jesus. He is then empowered to use the apparatus of the old creation, but ever bearing in mind that he is in rejection because His Lord and Master is absent and rejected.

The death of Christ has changed the character of the Christian on earth; while the resurrection of Christ has opened the door into the new creation wherein there is no question of responsibility, but where the Christian is privileged to feast on the fruit of the Tree of life.

Does Proverbs 31. 4-7 sanction the giving of strong drink to those in trouble?

The mother of King Lemuel, in poetical language, warns her son against those things that would rob him of his sense of right and justice and so disqualify him for the position of responsibility in which he was set, and it is on this side that the emphasis lies. It is as though she said, "Let those who have no burden of responsibility but only of sorrow drink if any do it, but don't you do it." We see no sanction at all in this for anyone drinking to excess in order to forget their sorrow. Those who do that will only awaken to find that their sorrow has been increased by their folly. The only way out of misery and sorrow is to turn to God.
THE SIGN IN THE DEPTH AND IN THE HEIGHT ABOVE.

Moreover the Lord spake again unto Ahaz, saying, Ask thee a sign of the Lord thy God; ask it either in the depth or in the height above. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the Lord. And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David; Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also? Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel" (Isa. 7. 10-14).

For unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that Thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; Thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of Thy hands: Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren. Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. And again, I will put my trust in Him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me" (Heb. 2. 5-13).

We learn from Kings and Chronicles that King Ahaz walked not in the steps of his father David, but acted according to the abominations of the heathen. The Lord, wearied by his ways, bid him ask a sign, either in the depth or in the height above. What sign could he ask of the Lord? And what sign could any of us ask of the Lord? Surely our depth would be very shallow and our height of very small elevation.

Ahaz felt his utter incapacity as well as his disinclination to ask a sign, so replied, "I will not ask, neither will I tempt the Lord." The Lord Himself, then, gave him a sign, and, in giving it, gave it in view of all mankind. "Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and thou shalt call His name Immanuel."

How we read in this on the one hand man's utter inability to please God or reach up to His thoughts; on the other hand, that, spite of all that man is, God is set upon blessing him, and that Christ is His Resource in doing so. Behold in Christ God's Sign. It is in following the details given in Scripture as to who He was, as to what He did, as to where He has gone, that the full import of the wonderful sign is seen.

"Behold, A VIRGIN shall . . . bear a Son." This takes us back to Gen. 3. 15. Following hard on the account of man's fall with all its appalling consequences comes the triumphant prophecy: "It [the woman's seed] shall bruise thy [the serpent's, Satan's] head." The woman's seed is clearly Christ.

In creation God has ordained that procreation is by the seed of the man, yet here we read of the woman's seed. Who told Moses this? Surely it was by divine inspiration he wrote down that which apart from inspiration would have been folly. Christ was
born of a *Virgin*. The angel said to Mary: "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 modern theologian often in his blind folly denies the virgin birth of Christ in face of the direct testimony of Scripture, both as in prophecy and in fact. Whilst the Lord Jesus is a true man, yet He stands by Himself even as a man, incomparable and unique. Thus God would draw attention to His beloved Son as to none other. In Him centres all the hope of the human race.

His name was to be "Emmanuel" [*literally God with us*]. This wonderful child of the virgin was none less than "the mighty God, the everlasting Father" (Isa. 9. 6).

The sign then was that God should appear in this world as a Man; but this Man was perfectly unique. "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father" (Matt. 11. 27) is an absolute statement showing that no creature can ever understand the inscrutability of the Person of Christ. God and man, one Person, who can fathom this? This knowledge is confined for ever to Divine Persons. The *how* of it is not revealed, but the fact is presented for our faith. If the finite could grasp the infinite, it would cease to be infinite. That such things should be beyond us is the demand of faith.

"'Tis darkness to my intellect; But sunshine to my heart."

said the Christian poet.

But the full meaning of the sign is not seen in one verse. Hebrews 2 indicates both the depth and the height that were utterly beyond King Ahaz's thought or imagination, indeed utterly beyond the comprehension of any.

"O God the thought was thine! (Thine only it could be) Fruit of Thy wisdom; love divine, Peculiar unto Thee."

Hebrews 2 quotes the wonderful Psalm 8. This Psalm is clearly a night Psalm. David says: "When I consider the heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained" (verse 3). Doubtless this is intended to convey a spiritual lesson. The sun is not mentioned. It was the night of Judaism; the day of Christianity had not arrived. The moon and stars told of light, and in the case of the moon, *reflected* light. So the types and prophecies told of the coming day. Their light was reflected. Faint as it was, they were the harbinger of the coming day.

In the second consideration of this verse the psalmist is impressed by the insignificance of man. There were the heavens, the moon and stars. How puny man looked in comparison. Generations of men come and go, but the moon and stars abide. The vastness of the heavens impressed the psalmist, so he completes his sentence, saying, "What is man [*Heb.*: Enosh] that Thou art mindful of him? and the Son of man [*Heb.*: Adam] that Thou visitest him" (Ps. 8. 4).

What made the psalmist choose two distinct names for man? The English version does not make this distinction plain; but the Hebrew does. *Adam* simply means man, man as God created him out of the dust of the earth, man unfallen, man "who is the figure of Him who was to come" (Rom. v. 14). *Enosh* means man as well, but man as frail, fallen, dying, passing away.

Psalm 144. 3, 4 is in great and striking contrast to Psalm 8. It says, "Lord, what is man [*Heb.*: Adam], that Thou takest knowledge of him? or the Son of man [*Heb.*: Enosh], that Thou takest account of him? Man is like to vanity; his days are as a shadow that passeth away." Here *Adam* unfallen is first. How soon the scene changes and man fallen, hopeless, despairing in himself is seen; his prospects—his days soon passing away,—fills in a picture that is sad beyond words.
How different is Psalm 8. Poor frail, fallen man is looked upon. There is no hope in him. No son of Enosh, no sinful son of fallen man, could bring in blessing and glory. But God is full of compassion and, blessed be His Name, full of resource. So the psalmist changes the word and indicates that One who is not a sinful son of sinful man, and yet whose title is the Son of man, is to have dominion over the works of Jehovah’s hands. Here we see the reason of the guarding of the manhood of Jesus in the virgin birth. God’s resource is in Christ. There is no breakdown with Him, and He is the Son of man, and yet the Son of God, born of the virgin. The Son of man is a glorious title, indicating His wide dominion from pole to pole, but it was also the appellation that He used in speaking of Himself more than any other in His humiliation on earth.

Verse 5 tells us that He was made a little lower than the angels, and that He has been crowned with glory and honour. Here we have indicated, though not explained, the meaning of the depth and height in the sign given.

What a stoop was that when the mighty God took upon Himself humanity! How incomprehensible to behold in that lowly babe in Bethlehem’s manger “God manifest in the flesh.”

But this raises the question, Why did He take upon Himself flesh and blood? And the solemn answer is that He came to die. Death being the penalty of sin, only death could meet that penalty.

Behold the blessed Son of God going on step by step till we behold Him dying on the cross, and at last laid in the borrowed grave. There we get the fulfilment of the sign in regard to the depth. Heb. 2, quoting from Ps. 8, connects the prophecy with Christ and brings in His death as necessary. “We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour” (verse 9).

Christ’s death was the only sign to be given to an unbelieving world. “An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall be no sign given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth” (Matt. 12. 39, 40).

Feeble indeed is our comprehension of the depths to which the Lord went in meeting God’s glory and our need. First from the eternal throne to the stable at Bethlehem, to Egypt, to Nazareth; profounder still, to Gethsemane; awful beyond words, to Calvary; and finally Joseph of Arimathæa’s new tomb—who can measure that road? It surely was the Via Dolorosa of the ages. The cross of Calvary was, indeed,

“...The centre of two eternities
Which stand with rapt adoring eyes.”

But the eye of faith can look up, and see in the highest place in glory a Man, yet much more than a man—the same blessed Person who stooped in grace is now exalted to the very summit of glory.

The wonderful thing for the angels to see was God in this world in the Person of a man; now the wonderful thing for them to see is a Man sitting on the Father’s throne, and that Man their Creator and their God. The same blessed Person who hung upon yonder cross is now exalted and crowned and sitting on the Father’s throne.

Behold in Jesus on the Father’s throne the sign in the height above.

And all this—His intervention in humanity, His humiliation, His death, His resurrection, His ascension, His glorification—was in relation to and for the blessing of mankind.

Alas! that so few get the benefit of all this. But for those of us who are
blessed, Heb. 2 shows how Christ, the Sanctifier, and believers, the sanctified, "are all of one, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren" (verse 11).

How wonderful that all this should have come to pass in order that we, poor sinners, should be brought into blessed and eternal association with Himself.

Well may we admire the wisdom and prudence of God. Well may we worship Him who stooped so low to meet us in our vile estate, that He might lift us so high as to be in association with Him where He is. He, indeed, worked out in His own blessed Person the sign in the depth and in the height above. It is a wonderful story. What mind of man could even faintly have reached out to this? None surely. "For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen" (Rom. 11. 36).

THE PRIESTHOOD OF BELIEVERS. (Evening, April 29th.)

JAMES BOYD.

THE Lamb of God has redeemed us and made us kings and priests to God, and when He reigns we shall reign with Him. All who are redeemed by His blood shall reign, whether we be over one city, five cities, ten cities, or whatever our place may be, we shall reign with Christ, because we are both kings and priests. In kings, you have the expression of power from God downward; in the priests the privilege of approach to God upwards. As priests we approach God; as kings, we reign over the inheritance. In this Scripture the subject is our privilege as priests.

The first chapter of Peter and part of the second show us some great contrasts. What is true in the present dispensation is contrasted with that which was true in the past dispensation for Israel. They were sanctified; but it was an external and positional sanctification only; it was not the sanctification of the Spirit. They had only the sprinkling of the blood of bulls or of goats, and not that of the blood of Christ as we have.

Verse 3: "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." There was not a hope in Christ in any human heart that survived His death. Even Mary of Bethany, who knew more about the Lord than anybody else upon earth, anointed Him for His burial. But His resurrection brings in a new hope altogether for the believer, a hope upon which the shadow of death can never fall. Risen from the dead, He dies no more, death hath no more dominion over Him.

Verse 4: "To an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you." The inheritance that Israel got in the land of Canaan was corruptible, was
defilable; it was possible for it to pass away from them. They corrupted it; they defiled it, and they lost it. But here is an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fades not away, and it is not in any part of the earth; it is reserved in heaven for us who are kept by the power of God.

Verse 5: "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." Not by our own resources are we to maintain ourselves in the grace and favour of God, nor by the fulfilment of our obligations, or it would cease at once to be grace.

Israel's inheritance depended upon their conduct, if they were willing and obedient, they were to eat the good of the land. Do you think—does anyone here think—that his obedience could get him to heaven; that his obedience would secure for him that inheritance that is reserved in heaven for believers? If he does, he is very greatly mistaken, and in having such a thought he is not obeying God but only disobeying Him, for the one who is trusting to his own obedience or faithfulness is not trusting Christ at all; he is not really believing the Gospel. But here it is, "To an inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven" for a certain class of people. "For you, who are kept by the power of God." You are not thrown upon your own resources at all; you are kept by the power of God, and through faith, not through works, but through faith, and unto a salvation ready to be revealed, a salvation that is not yet revealed. Your salvation is not yet revealed. I may tell a man I am saved; he doubts it very much; perhaps he does not know what I mean by saying I am saved until I explain it, but what evidence is there that I am saved? The only evidence that I am saved at all is that I act as one that is subject to God, and as one that is not dominated by the evil that dominates the world, by selfishness, which is sin. Our salvation will be revealed when the Lord comes, but it is not revealed yet.

Verse 9: "Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." Take the salvation that was accorded to Israel at the Red Sea; they were to stand still on the Egyptian side of those impassible waters and see the salvation of God. Moses lifted up his rod and the sea was divided, and Israel marched over to the other side on dry land. That was a salvation the whole earth heard of. Rahab told the spies that went into the land not long after that the report of them had reached the land of Canaan, and they were all trembling because of the God of Israel; that salvation was a public thing; it was a salvation that men could take account of; they could see it with their eyes, and it was a temporal salvation. But here is a salvation that Peter calls "The salvation of the soul." That is not a temporal salvation at all, but a spiritual one. A man might be in the worst of circumstances imaginable, but the word of God reaches him, the Gospel comes to him and he believes it, and by it he is saved, but the next day his circumstances are just the same as they were the day before; they are not altered. The salvation does not refer to his circumstances at all. There is no outward evidence that there is any intervention by God at all; his circumstances are just as wretched as they were before, but the man is different, his soul is emancipated. His soul is delivered from sin and lust and self dependence, and for ever saved from the power of the devil and the power of death. He is delivered from evil, from spiritual forces, from spiritual evils, but he is not delivered from his hard circumstances yet; his salvation is not revealed; it has not come to light; it is not manifested—it will be by-and-by. When he enters the inheritance in heaven he will be like Christ. But, you say, Scriptures say we hope to be saved, "In hope of salvation." Yes, that is perfectly true,
but that has reference to our bodies; they are to be changed, but our souls are saved. We are emancipated from the powers of evil that hold this world, and the people of this world in bonds. If a man who professes to be a believer is dominated by the lust and pride of this world, then whatever he may say about himself he is not delivered; he is still under the power of sin.

Verse 23: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." It is really the bringing into existence of a new being. When you were born into this world, a being was born into it that had not existed before. If you are born again, you are born a second time; born of God, you are a child of God now, which you were not before. The Word of God is the instrument used, that is the seed of God, and it is the only thing that abideth for ever. The passage here is from the 40th of Isaiah, and everything there is grass. The forerunner of Christ is told in the 40th of Isaiah to cry, "All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: the grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the word of our God shall stand for ever." Israel grass, the Gentiles grass, all of us grass; all perishable, none abiding at all. Is there anything on the earth that shall abide? Yes, the Word of God shall abide, that shall stand; if you are born of that, you will abide for ever; if not, you will perish away from the presence of God altogether.

Chapter 2. 1, 2: "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." You feed upon the same thing that has brought you into existence as a child of God—the Word of God has brought you into existence as God's child, and you feed upon that; that is, if you have tasted that the Lord is gracious. Have we all here tasted that the Lord is gracious?

Verse 4: "To whom coming, a living stone, disallowed of men, but chosen of God and precious." It is not disallowed of some men and chosen by others; it does not say disallowed by unbelievers and chosen by believers—no, it is man and God in contrast, not believers and unbelievers—disallowed of men, you and I and everyone else disallowed Him; as children of Adam we all disallowed Christ. But you say, "I don't disallow Him," not if you are born again. You love Him; you know Him as the One that laid down His life for you, and we love Him because He first loved us. In our own natural state we disallowed Him, but being born of God we received Him. Of the disciples it was said, "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." All that were born of God when Christ came received Him, and all that are born of God to-day receive Him. You rejected Him until you were born again; then when you were born of God, you received Him, and so we have it here.

Verse 5: "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." There you come to the contrast between what exists to-day and what existed in the past—here you come to a spiritual house, spiritual stones. The stones of the temple in the past dispensation were hewn from the quarry, were shaped there, and then were brought to the place where they were building the temple, and were put into the building, and the building grew to a holy temple; but it was a material structure, and in it were the sons of Aaron, who officiated as priests; but when you come to the present house of God, the present temple, it is the spiritual house, and the stones and the priests are the same thing—the stones are the priests, and the priests...
are the stones, they are all who have tasted that the Lord is gracious and have come to Him, the Living Stone. We are built together for a habitation of God through the Spirit; we are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, and we grow to an holy temple in the Lord. We are the stones in that vast building; but we are also the priests; the temple is composed of believers, but the priests are believers. Peter says to these newborn babes, you, believers, are an holy priesthood. Oh, but says one, I thought the priest was not the same as the congregation. Is there not a distinction between clergy and laity? But who has separated them in that way? Peter, inspired by the Holy Ghost, tells us that all believers are priests. Who are you to believe? Do you believe God or man? "You are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."

The stones of this house are living stones, because they live in the life of Christ, and they are priests of God, and draw near to God in that same life, and offer up acceptable spiritual sacrifices. In the past dispensation they offered carnal sacrifices—a very rich man brought a bullock and offered it to God, and a very poor man brought a turtle dove, or two young pigeons, or whatever he could get. And there are rich and poor among the priests of God to-day. I speak now of faith; a man might be very rich in worldly goods, and very poor in faith; and a man might be very poor in worldly goods and very rich in faith; but whichever you are, whatever you bring to God must be Christ; it was Christ that was typified in the rich man's bullock and the poor man's turtle dove; it is all Christ that is brought. Those ancient sacrifices would have had no meaning otherwise; they represented God's great sacrifice, which is Christ. The offerer may not have known that; that was a shadow—we have come to the substance, and the substance is Christ. How do we bring Christ to God? We tell God about Him in songs of praise. When the heart is full of Christ we pour it out before God, and it is acceptable to God. He wants to hear about His Son. If a man brought an offering in the past dispensation with a blemish, it was accounted a sin to him, it was not acceptable. You must not bring anything but Christ in your praise and worship; you tell God about Christ, so far as you know Him. You may not know Him as well as some other believer knows Him; you may not be rich in faith, but if you are rich in faith, you bring a large presentation of Christ to God; but if you are only poor in faith, you bring a poor presentation of Christ to God. But we should all be able to bring a great presentation of Christ to God. Get to know Christ better every day, and when we know Christ we are able to offer Him up to God in sacrifices of praise, the praise of our lips. In doing this you are giving to God what He has given to you. He has given you Christ, and as you learn Christ, you will then be able to present Christ to God. He doesn't want anything of what is merely nature from you; He wants Christ. He wants to hear about Christ, He is never tired of listening to what you have to say about Christ to Him—thus you offer spiritual sacrifices to God, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

Verse 9: "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light." This is another side to the priesthood; but believers have both, they are holy priests and royal priests. Holy priests offer up the sacrifices in the spiritual house, the stones and the priests are one—they offer up sacrifices to God, they approach God to present Christ to Him. A royal priest is the same person presenting God to man. Why
did not God take you to heaven when you were converted? He wanted you here. What for? What are lights for in this city, and why in a very dark, wretched corner do you generally get a good light? It is to shine, to drive away the darkness because of the evils that abound in the city; it would be a terrible thing if there were not these lights. Well, you are lights in the world, and God may put you in a very dark corner; indeed the whole world is in darkness, but we are here to shine in it. But how do you shine? By presenting Christ to men. You come out here in the beautiful characteristics of Christ's life; you shine for Him in your words, and in your walk, and in your ways; you whole behaviour here is to set forth Christ. It is well to be a royal priest, but we are both holy priests and royal priests, and the great thing is to exercise the functions of holy priests, and as we exercise the functions of holy priests, we are able to exercise the functions of royal priests; you come from God's presence where all the light is to shine in the darkness; the better you are able to approach God, the better you are able to approach men; the better you are able to exercise the functions of an holy priest, the better you are able to exercise the functions of a royal priest. If you cannot bring Christ to God, you will never be able to bring Christ to men. It is only in the measure that you can bring Christ to God that you are able to bring Christ to men. Jesus was here as the light because He showed God in His true character, and that is what you are here for, along with being here to learn more about God and His marvellous grace, and His counsels, we are here to shine as lights in this world. We are here to shine, shine in the light of Christ, just as the moon shines—it shines not in its own light; it shines in the light of the sun; it sees the sun when we do not see it, and the sun shines upon it, and it shines upon us here in this world, so God says, "Arise, shine." That will be said to the Jew one day, but it can be said to us now. He has shined upon us now, and if He shines upon us, we shall shine here in this world; but we cannot shine ourselves, we must get occupied with Him, and then when we are occupied with Him, we shall be able to come out like Him here in this world, and be witnesses to all those that walk in darkness.


HOME, the pilgrim's toil is o'er; how sweet the rest,
A voice from heaven declares that such are blessed.
HOME, amid radiant hosts of saints in Light:
    HOME, with the SAVIOUR, faith now lost in sight:
HOME, in the Father's house of joy untold:
    HOME, where His glories to our eyes unfold:
HOME, blessed HOME to praise Him evermore:
    HOME, yes at home, for ever to adore.
HOME, where His love would have us near His side:
    HOME, with HIMSELF for ever to abide:
HIMSELF, who died to ransom slaves of sin:
    HIMSELF, who came our rebel hearts to win:
HIMSELF, who rose to GOD'S right hand above:
    That we might sing for ever of His love,
The happy trophies of His matchless grace,
    And praise His Name for ever "face to face"—
Our Blessed LORD. B.
Forgiven.

CONSIDER this riddle, which was put to the Pharisee by the Lord at his supper table. "There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?" It required no special acuteness of brain to find the answer, there could be only one, and Simon was compelled to give it, though he did so without enthusiasm. Of course he could have no personal interest in such a question, for whenever had he harmed anyone! Had he not always promptly met every just due and demand, and as for God, well, was he not a Pharisee, paying his tithes regularly, and was not that enough? He had no need of forgiveness, and so there was no warmth, no music in those words "he frankly forgave" for Simon; they meant nothing to him. This guest of his had evidently no sense of the fitness of things, He should have fiercely denounced the sins of the tax booths and of the streets, then would His host have shown some interest; or the follies of the court and society might have been a timely subject for discussion; but creditors, and debtors, and frank forgiveness! these belonged to a sphere of life of which Simon knew and cared nothing, and so, with Pharisical lukewarmness he gave his answer. "I suppose, he to whom he forgave most."

"The less forgiveness the less love; the more forgiveness the more love; no forgiveness no love; but nothing but forgiveness, nothing but love." So an able writer has put it, and put it well. God forbid that any of us should have no forgiveness and no love like this Pharisee who had ne'er a notion of the utter alienation of his sinful heart from God and of his need of forgiveness, and so lived and died without it; God forbid that any of us should carry in our bosoms a dead heart, as he did—dead and cold as a stone except when some selfish passion moved it to beat with sinful interest. To live like that is to be twice dead; to die like that is to be damned in unforgiven sins for ever. And God forbid that any of us should imagine that we were but little debtors needing only a little forgiveness, for such have little love; they know not the rapture of a glowing and expanding heart; their souls are never fully warmed towards the Saviour who died for them. They must be ever half-hearted towards their Lord, and have little pity or care for weary, burdened, broken-hearted sinners.

We are they, or the Editor misjudges his readers, who like the woman at the great Redeemer's feet, had nothing to bring to Him but her sins, and these were many; consequently we could only look for pardon, though wrath was our desert, and if we have received nothing but pardon then the response must be nothing but love; "for to whom much is forgiven the same loveth much." We each have felt the plague of his own heart, and groaned beneath the burden of his own sins; we have each in his misery gasped out for mercy, and, thanks be unto God, we have not cried to Him in vain. The forgiveness of sins is no mere doctrine to us, it is not an article of a lifeless creed that we aimlessly recite, as a Mohammedan chants, "There is no deity but God, and Mohammed is His prophet." We know the relief, the joy that a full and frank forgiveness yields; the grace that gives it has shone with a marvellous glory into our once dark and burdened lives, and we can sing the song of the Psalmist, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is
within me bless His holy name, who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases." And with David we can proclaim to others, "the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed is the man whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin" (Rom. 4. 6-8).

This blessing has come to us without grudging, and with the greatest possible freeness from God in Christ Jesus, and it defines His attitude towards us until our feet exchange this valley of the shadow of death for the street of gold. God's forgiveness is the inalienable possession of all who receive it; the devil himself cannot reverse it; no court in the universe can bind again upon the soul the sins that God has remitted, and no power can drag the one who has it back again into the gloom of an outcast and unforgiven sinner; it is an eternal forgiveness, given without money or merit on our part.

Ah! says one who knows not the power of pardoning grace, "If forgiveness is so free and eternal, then we may please ourselves and live a life of self indulgence and go on sinning, for all is well." Indeed, Did you ever know what it was in the days of your youth to grieve a tender-hearted mother to tears, and did you feel as you confessed your sin, those gentle arms thrown round you, and was the kiss of forgiveness pressed upon your brow? What did you say then? Was it, "Oh, if my mother forgives so readily and freely I have no need to care, I can indulge myself to my heart's content"? No! you hated yourself for the sorrow you had caused her, and a new fear sprang up in your heart of grieving her; your determination was to make her weep no more. Even so, we read, "There is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mightest be feared." The sinner to whom much is forgiven the same loveth much, and rejoices to do always the things that please the loved Forgiver.

How great is the price that has been paid to secure this blessing for us, and how great a blessing it is! Even in those parts of the Word of God which unfold for us the highest truths we are reminded of it. Ephesians says, "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace" (chap. 1. 7), and Colossians repeats the statement. And John tells us that our sins are forgiven us, "for His Name's sake."

Now we have to make it known to others; for it was forgiven men, such as Peter, to whom the Lord said, "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name among all nations." And forgiven men—such as Peter was, and you and we are—are to be witnesses of these things, to show by our sober yet joyful testimony the blessedness of the forgiven, and to say to others, "What the Saviour has done for us He can also do for you."

Let Simon sit, smug and critical, tearless and cold, in his pharisaical pride, despising alike the Forgiver and the forgiven, with him we have nothing in common, for we have sinned much and been forgiven much; we have been loved much and must love much in return; so we sit not with the Pharisee, but fall with the sinner at those feet which were beautiful upon the mountains, bringing good tidings, publishing peace, bringing tidings of good; feet that were pierced and wounded for us at the cross of Calvary, the feet of Jesus. There we pour out our gratitude and our adoration and feel the strength of those cords of love that bind our hearts to our Saviour and make us His willing slaves, FOR TO WHOM MUCH IS FORGIVEN THE SAME LOVETH MUCH.
"I HAVE SEEN THE SEA."

(A.R.V.)

"To know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge."—Ephesians 3. 19.

A little child was playing by the shore of the broad blue sea,
And oft he looked away across the waves, so wonderingly.
It was a new entrancing sight to him, that watery waste,
The tossing billows breaking on the sand with foam wreaths graced.
And often in his distant inland home, with childish glee,
The boy would say to young and older friends, "I have seen the sea!"
And so he had; the child made no mistake, his words were true;
But yet how much of ocean's vast expanse, had met his view?
Only the waves that rippled on the shore; while far away,
The broad Atlantic in its depth and strength beyond him lay.
And thus we say we know the love of Christ; and so we do;
'Tis no exaggeration or mistake, but sweetly true.
But ah! how much of that unfathomed love do we yet know?
Only the ripples on the shores of time, the nearer flow.
The mighty ocean of redeeming love rolls deep and wide,
Filling eternity and heaven and earth with its vast tide.
We know it by a sweet experience now; yet shall explore
Its breadth and length, its depth and height of grace, for evermore.

HOME, SWEET HOME!

(A.R.V.)


Sweet home of my heart! there is One who dwells in thee,
That once forsook thy glories to die for love of me;
And when His blood had bought me the home I could not win,
Thy gates received the Victor o'er death, and hell, and sin.
   Home, sweet home!
My heart must ever linger where He has entered in.

Sweet home of my heart! it is this that makes thee dear,
And daily wings my footsteps with hope that thou art near.
It is His presence in thee that causes thee to be
No strange and foreign country, but home, true home to me.
   Home, sweet home!
My heart is with its treasure, and thus, by faith, in thee.

Sweet home of my heart! there will come a glorious day,
When faith, and hope and longing will all have passed away;
When Jesus calls me hence, to be with Him where He is,
And find in Him for ever my home of endless bliss.
   Home, sweet home!
My heart may well be singing of prospects such as this.
SOME of our readers will consider the question that heads this paper ridiculous. They have been accustomed to regard Jacob as being the very opposite of perfect, as far from perfection as it is possible for a saint to be. He has even been called a "rascal."

Undoubtedly some of his ways were very crooked, and he had good cause to be ashamed of the name that was such an index to his nature. Yet Scripture makes the astounding statement that "Jacob was a perfect man" (Genesis 25. 27). It is not perhaps to be wondered at that the translators watered down the statement to the more commonplace one that "Jacob was a plain man." But the word they have translated "plain" is the very same as that used with reference to Noah in Genesis 6. 9 and to Job in Job 1. 1 ; 2. 3. To be consistent, we must translate the word "perfect" even when used with reference to Jacob.

In what possible sense of the word could such a man as Jacob have been perfect? Was there ever one whose course was more marked by imperfection?

An examination of the context will show that Jacob's perfection consisted in his unswerving faith in the purpose of God, and his determined pursuit of that purpose. We are sometimes informed that "it was only at the end of Jacob's life that he becomes a true pilgrim." But the first mention of him in Hebrews 11 presents him as identified with Abraham and Isaac in their pilgrim life, dwelling with them in tents, sojourning as strangers in the land of promise. As Jacob was only fifteen years of age when Abraham died, his life of faith began early!

And thus he continued, probably till about the age of seventy, a "perfect" man, "dwelling in tents," while his brother Esau became a great personality in the earth. To Jacob the earth presented no immediate attraction; the promise of God was the dominating influence of his life; he was content to let everything go for the sake of that. On the two occasions when he supplanted his brother, and took from him first his birthright and then his blessing, his object was the same. He was pursuing the declared purpose of God, and earnestly seeking to be in line with the promise given by Him. We would not excuse the carnal methods by which he sought his end. But none the less his end was the end that God had in view for him. If he had had faith to leave the working out of the purpose to "Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will," it would have been better, far better. But as to the purpose of God, Jacob's faith never swerved for an instant. It was the object of his undeviating pursuit, at all events for approximately the first seventy years of his life. In this consisted his perfection.

Moreover, the fact that Jacob clave to the promise of God, and was a sojourner in the land in the power of his own faith, and not merely because his fathers were so, is indicated in Isaac's words to him on the eve of his departure for Haran. He spoke of "the land wherein THOU art a stranger," or, as the margin and R.V. read: "the land of THY sojournings."

Jacob, in his beautiful prayer at Beth-el (Gen. 28. 20-22) fully maintains this character. Though he became wealthy during the twenty years he was with Laban, this was not at all in his mind when starting forth. He would be content with food and raiment and God, coupled with the assurance of his return to Canaan. As the R.V. puts it: "If GOD will be with me [that was the prime object of his desire], and will keep me in this
Was Jacob a Perfect Man?

way that I go, and will give me bread
to eat, and raiment to put on, so that
I come again to my father's house in
peace, and Jehovah will be my God
[note how he reiterates this], then this
stone . . . shall be God's house."

Some have even turned this pilgrim
prayer into another stone to fling at
Jacob, insinuating that his bread and
raiment were ever uppermost in his
thoughts! It almost looks as if such
accusations came from minds under
the influence of an anti-Semitic bias!
Do those who thus accuse Jacob them­selves stand on higher ground? Are
they content with bread and raiment,
so long as God is with them and will
bring them eventually to their Father's
house, the heavenly Canaan?

A further thing to be noted as to
Jacob is that when tested by famine
in the land of Canaan (Gen. 42. 5), his
faith seems to have risen superior to
that of Abram and of Isaac. Abram,
in the face of famine, abandoned the
land of promise, and went down to
Egypt. It was a serious lapse from
the path of faith. Isaac, under similar
circumstances, was warned of God
against doing as Abram did (Gen. 26.
1-3).

But Jacob's faith was equal to the
occasion. He did not betake himself
to Egypt on the appearance of famine
in Canaan. He did not even need the
strengthening word that was given to
Isaac. Feeling the pinch of famine
sore, he yet clung to the land of God's
purpose, and remained a sojourner
there, while merely sending to buy
bread in Egypt. It was not till he
learned of Joseph's life and glory in
Egypt that he went there; and he did
so, not to escape the famine, but to see
Joseph. His motive is clearly stated
in Gen. 45. 28: "I will go and see him
before I die." In this matter also,
"Jacob was a perfect man."

May we not therefore regard Jacob
as one whose faith we are to follow, one
who has left us a noteworthy example?
For the faith that shone in him through-
out the long years that he sojourned
in Canaan, still shone brilliantly when
his last hour on earth had come. Faith
in the purpose of God was what
sustained him "when he was a dying."

To us also is made known the tran­scendent purpose of God. If Romans
9. deals with the purpose which Jacob's
faith laid hold of (see verse 11), the
preceding chapter sets before us the
purpose of which we (Christians) are
the subjects. In a word, it is sonship,
for which, according to Rom. 8. 23, we
wait. True, the relationship is already
ours, but for sonship in its full and
final sense, involving conformity to
the image of God's Son, we still wait.

Think what it means! That the
place which Christ has, as the One who
dwells in the Father's love, is to be
ours, to enjoy with Him for ever; that
along with Him we are to fill the high
position of sons of God, to know the
Father in all the holy intimacy of that
relationship, and be for ever in His
presence as fully revealed in the Son
of His love. All our activities through
eternal days will be the activities of
those who stand in the nearest possible
place to God; the functions of those
who know the Father, without any
reserve on His part, will be ours to
fulfil, and all in blessed, eternal com­
panionship with Christ. Oh, glorious
destiny, all made sure to us by the
unalterable and declared purpose of
God! How the heart burns to express
itself in the terms of this purpose, but
how feeble are mere words as vehicles
for this expression! No human speech
can set it forth; but the heart can
abide in it, and find its unalloyed rest
in all that God has purposed for Christ,
and for us in association with Him.

Is that where we live even now? If
not, however correct our lives may be,
let us not condemn Jacob. For in
spite of all, he lived for and in the
purpose of God. Not that we would
for a moment set a premium on "low
walk" going hand in hand with "high
talk." What we plead for is that, far
from being content with mere correctness of conduct, our lives should be coloured and dominated by that which is to be our eternal destiny, that things of earth should appear paltry and insignificant to us in comparison with the inheritance reserved for us, and that we should conduct ourselves while in this world as those that are the heirs of God, and who have learned to live already in the things that are above, where Christ sits.

"I HAVE GIVEN YOU AN EXAMPLE."

Jesus is the pattern, and every Holy Spirit-led man and woman will copy Him or will at least desire to do so; but He copied nobody. Which of the prophets set Him an example? None. Was there ever an instance when He said, This is a fine example that I Myself must copy? Never. This constitutes a most cogent argument in proof of the deity of Jesus Christ. Never did He ask time to put His thoughts together; never did He withdraw of speech and ask to be allowed to substitute another in its place; never did He amend a solitary sentence that He once delivered. Trace Him from beginning to end, and He owes no man anything. He gives;

that which hinders our joy is not trouble, but being half and half, if the conscience of a Christian reproaches him, he is unhappy if he meets spiritual Christians, indeed, he is unhappy everywhere.

Paul could weep because of some who called themselves Christians who were not true to their profession, but if He receives, it is in return for an ampler love. He said: "I have given you an example.” Many can give advice, many can minister rebukes — many can offer all these but few can set examples which are above criticism. It were not difficult to set an example that might live through a cloudy day — a day so cloudy as to make it impossible to distinguish between one colour and another, but to set an example that should hold its own against all coming and going time — brighten and shine over all the days of tumultuous life — surely such an example is the quietest and completest miracle ever wrought by the Son of God.

REJOICING.

That which hinders our joy is not trouble, but being half and half, if the conscience of a Christian reproaches him, he is unhappy if he meets spiritual Christians, indeed, he is unhappy everywhere.

Paul could weep because of some who called themselves Christians who were not true to their profession, but at the same time he rejoiced in the Lord alway (Phil. 3 and 4). This is not an indifference to sorrow that hinders weeping, but it is a spring of joy which enlarges when there is distress, because of its immutability, and which even becomes more pure in the heart the more it becomes the only one, and it is the only spring that is infinitely pure.

NEARNESS TO THE LORD.

Activity, unless renewing itself in communion with the Lord, may be sincere, but it will degenerate into routine, and is even dangerous; the soul gets far from God without knowing it.

He that is nearest to Christ will best serve Him, and there is no serving Him without it.

The absolutely perfect and living rule is the life of the Lord Jesus Christ. In Him all written rules are united in one solitary living example. Happy is he who keeps by His side to learn how he ought to walk.

Oh, that we had nearness enough to Christ to draw from Him all grace and all devotedness, and to correct in ourselves whatever tends to mar the one or the other.
Addresses given in Edinburgh during the last week in April, 1921, continued:—

THE GREATNESS OF CHRIST. (Evening, April, 25th.)

Heb. 1.; Col. 1. 13-18.

My desire is to follow on the line marked out by the last speaker (See June Issue, “The Advent of Christ”), and to this end I would, first of all, refer to that which the Spirit of God brings before us in the first chapter of Hebrews. You will notice, for it has often been referred to, how very abruptly the epistle begins. It is the God who had previously spoken to the people out of the midst of the thick darkness and the devouring fire, and that by angelic means; and from the whirlwind of the prophets’ fiery denunciations of their rebellious behaviour, or their still small voice speaking of the grace that should come to them at the advent of their long-looked for Messiah—it is the same God who in these last days has spoken in the Person of the Son.

You will notice that “his” is in italics, and should not be there. It is the God who spoke in the past times by means of prophets who has now spoken personally, by no intermediary, but in His own person; become Man that He might be able to do so. It is God, God the Son, speaking directly to Israel in the last days of the legal dispensation.

He is the Creator of all things, the Heir of all that He has created, the perfect manifestation of the glory of God, the very impress of His Being, and the upholder of all things by the word of His power, who having made purification for sins set Himself down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. This is the Messiah, but what Jew had ever such glorious thoughts of the long-expected Ruler of the people?

Next, we have the unfolding of His name in contrast with angels, as found in the Scriptures of the prophets. In the estimation of God’s earthly people, angels were the highest order of created beings, and in a sense they were, though the place that man had in Divine counsel had been overlooked. They were not set over all things, but the Son of Man was, and in that place of pre-eminence He is viewed as having companions. To none of those celestial beings had God ever said: “Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee.” This is said to the Son as born in time. And, “I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son.” But more than this: “When He bringeth His firstbegotten into the world, He saith, And let all the angels of God worship Him.” This does not refer to His coming into the world when born of the virgin, as verse five does, but to the time in which He will bring Him into the world in glory. Then the angels will be called upon to worship a Man, infinitely more than a man surely, but still a Man. God and Man in one Person.

Our brother referred to the passage in Matthew’s Gospel where it says: “Thou shalt call His name Jesus; for He shall save His people from their sins.” Then the Scripture goes on to say: “Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and she shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.” How was the calling of Him Jesus the fulfilment of this passage, in which He is said to be called Emmanuel?

What is the meaning of Jesus? Jehovah the Saviour. The Jews had known Jehovah as Lawgiver, but now they were to know Him in another
character altogether: they were now to know Him as Saviour. But Jehovah was their God, and now He was with them in the Person of Jesus. He was Emmanuel, God with us. God here on earth as a Man amongst men, that He might be able to draw near to men; One whose terror would not make men afraid, whose hand would not be heavy upon them (Job 33. 7). It is this glorious Person the Spirit of God brings before us in Philippians 2: "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant." What a mighty descent that was! Divesting Himself of the outward semblance of God, and taking the form of a servant: who could do this but God? What created being could be anything but a servant? It is this he is created, and this he must remain, or fall away from God, and bring down judgment upon his rebellious head.

But here we have One who was no servant, but God blessed for ever, and who took upon Himself the form of a servant, taking His place in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man He became obedient unto death, and that the death of the cross, in order that a basis might be laid, on the ground of which the counsel of eternal Love might be for ever established. And this basis being laid, the answer of God was not long deferred: "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of heavenly, earthly, and infernal things: and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2.). The Father should see that His Son has equal honour with Himself throughout the whole creation.

But I come back to Heb. 1., where He is placed in contrast with the angels. "Of the angels He saith, Who maketh His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire"; but as to the Son, He is not said to make Him anything; He is addressed according to the glory and greatness of His Person: "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows." Here we hear God in heaven speaking to God upon earth. He has been in the furnace of affliction, and by His obedience unto death has given proof abundant that He loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; and therefore has He title to the throne of the universe, for only those who know how to obey have the right to govern. We who believe shall be His companions in that day of His glory, and of the gladness of His heart.

But again: "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of Thy hands: they shall perish; but Thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt Thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail." And all this is said to Him when in the sorrow of His soul He beseeches God not to take Him away in the midst of His days (Ps. 102.). What a mystery the incarnation of the Son is!

In chapter 3. He is contrasted with Moses, who was a servant in the house of God; but Christ is Son over God's house, for He built the house, and is therefore greater than the house itself. He is also Mediator of a better covenant than that of which Moses was mediator; and it is established on better promises, and in the power of blood of infinite value, and in connection with a tabernacle pitched by the Lord, and not by man. In contrast with Aaron, who was but a feeble, mortal man, He lives in the power of an endless life, is higher than the heavens, a Priest after the order of Melchisedec, and that by the oath of God, seated upon the throne of the Majesty in the heavens. The
poverty of every official dignity in heaven and earth is apparent when contrasted with Christ.

But I come to Col. 1. Here we are said to have been delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of the Son of the Father's love. What a change that is! We are brought out from under that cruel oppressive power that rules in the darkness, and by means of the darkness, over poor fallen sinners. Darkness is ignorance of God, and by this the devil keeps his dupes in bondage. But in the power of heavenly light we are brought out of the darkness, and placed under the rule of the beloved Son of the Father, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

He is the image of the invisible God; that is, the God whom no man can see is found in Jesus. Every eye in redeemed creation shall be lit up with the glory of Jesus. He will represent God in creation, and will present Him perfectly to all. There will be no lack of light, for the One who is the image of the Invisible is Himself God, and therefore as far as God can be seen by the creature He will be seen in Jesus. He could say when here upon earth: "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." In Him, in the days of His humiliation, the manifestation of God was perfect, for He could not be other than He was, and He was God manifest in flesh. When one of His disciples said to Him: "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us," Jesus answered him: "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip?" Philip thought, like many another to-day, that there was something more to be seen of the Godhead than had come to light in Jesus, but what more can be seen than the Father? And He has been perfectly expressed in the Son. In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. When He, the Son, was here in manhood, the Father was also here in testimony, and the Spirit in power in Him; therefore all that God is in His approach to man came to light in Jesus. In His essential Being He cannot be seen. He is the invisible God, who dwells in light unapproachable, whom no man has seen or is capable of seeing.

In past ages He had spoken to creation in various ways, but always as One outside it, but in becoming a Man He took a place in creation; He is Firstborn. He could not take a less place than Firstborn; that is, the supreme place, for He is the Creator: "By Him were all things created," and not exactly "by" Him, but in Him (R.V.). It was in the power that lay in Himself He created all things. He was not an exalted creature to whom was committed this stupendous work, and also the power to do the work. No, "All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made" (John 1. 3). Everything that has received being has received that being through Him. Therefore were He a creature, as some who have turned from the faith tell us, He would have had to be His own Creator.

But, as I have said, it is not by Him, but in Him that all things were created. It was in His own intrinsic power He brought the universe into existence. There is no created thing that does not owe its creation to Him. Whether they be things in heaven, or things on earth; whether they be visible, or invisible, He created them all, and He created them both by Himself, and for Himself; and in His power everything subsists. He holds everything together by the Word of His power.

The eternal counsels of the Father required a universe for the fulfilment of these counsels, and the One Person of the Godhead who was to carry out the eternal will of God created a universe in which that will could be fulfilled. In all the works of God the three Persons are ever said to be engaged; but in certain parts of those
works certain Persons of the Trinity come more into prominence than the Others. Counsel belongs to the Father, creation and redemption to the Son, power to the Holy Spirit; but in each work All are concerned.

He is Head of the body, the church. How closely this brings Him to us, or rather how closely we are brought to Him—members of His body—part of Himself. But He is Head. He is supreme everywhere. In all things He has pre-eminence. Let it be angels or men, living or dead, heavenly or earthly, visible or invisible; He is pre-eminent everywhere. To Him every knee must bow, every tongue must own Him Lord. His name must be great in heaven, and excellent in all the earth. And the day of His glory is coming, and for that day we wait with expectant hearts, and cry, Come Lord Jesus.

THE ONE FOUNDATION.

IT was by the apostle to the Gentiles the Spirit of God said, “Other Foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” In these days, therefore, when every fundamental truth is vehemently assaulted, those who are of the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, do well to see to it that they allow nothing to move them away from Him, but rather have diligence to build one another up in Christ Jesus.

In the Scriptures which we have read (Gen. 49. 24; Isa. 8. 13-16; 28. 16; Psa. 118. 22; Acts 4. 11; Eph. 2. 19 22; 1 Pet. 2. 4 7; Dan. 2. 34-35) the recurrence of the word “Stone,” a title of our Lord Jesus Christ, indicates that construction or building is in the mind of the Spirit; just as when He is spoken of as the Shepherd, a flock is in view. In the former case, however, He Himself is a part of the structure—the most important and the pre-eminent part truly, yet still a part of the building—whereas the Shepherd is distinct from the sheep although He cares for them, and sees that not one of the flock shall perish (John. 10.).

Our verses cover a wide field, showing that Christ, and Christ only, is the Foundation for the nation of Israel, for the assembly, for the nations of the whole earth and for the individual. All national, ecclesiastical, imperial or individual building that has not our Lord Jesus Christ as its Foundation and Corner-stone must utterly fail sooner or later, but that will abide which is constructed upon and in Himself.

There are many other Scriptures which speak thus of the Lord. The first we read shows us His origin. He is from “the hands of the mighty God of Jacob,” not from Joseph, as some might suppose, for, as our last Scripture tells us, He is “cut out without hands,” that is, human hands. He is altogether Divine. He is directly from God’s hands. What a stay for the souls of those who trust in Him! From the other verses we learn first the wonderful fact that He is “Jehovah of hosts Himself,” also that He was tested before He became the Foundation-stone, and that when He was rejected by Israel’s religious and political builders He became the Corner-stone of the assembly of God and the Head of the corner exalted in glory; finally, that He eventually overthrows the world-system—“the great image”—and fills the whole earth with His beneficent administration. The knowledge of such an One, Who is so great, so capable, so perfect and so glorious, gives true stability to the soul.

A SURE FOUNDATION.

In Isaiah 28., where our Lord Jesus Christ is introduced as the sure Foundation, woe is pronounced upon the pride.
179 The One Foundation

of man and upon the excesses of his inebriation: his covenant of lies and agreement of falsehood shall be swept away! The crown of pride shall be trodden under feet and his glorious beauty become as a fading flower! And in that day shall the Lord of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty to the remnant who trust in Him. "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a Foundation a Stone, a tried Stone, a precious Corner-stone, a sure Foundation: he that believeth on Him shall not make haste" (16).

It is the Supreme Ruler who lays this Foundation—the Lord God. He establishes it in Zion. There He sets the only Foundation of lasting order and blessing. The context shows that national establishment is specially in view, but more also is in the mind of the Spirit, for we read of His dealing with "the whole earth" (22). This "cometh forth from the Lord of hosts, which is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working" (29). All building owned of God rests upon the Foundation laid in Zion. There is none other. Sovereign grace is established in Christ, Who, though rejected of men, is exalted to the right hand of God.

What certain hope for eternity can anyone have apart from the only Foundation which God Himself has provided? To ignore it is to court the indignation of God! To refuse it is to secure His judgment! To own any other is presumption, the pride of which will be Divinely punished. Apart from this Foundation all must perish eternally.

"On Christ the solid Rock I stand, All other ground is sinking sand."

The individual who rests here is safe. He is on a "Sure Foundation."

This Foundation has been tested, and it has proved itself to be Divinely perfect. The Stone has been "tried" as the prophet foretold. When we read the Gospels we see the tremendous testings He passed through, testings, however, which only brought into relief His intrinsic perfectness. Did Satan tempt Him in the wilderness—in three tremendous assaults seeking to move Him from dependence on God, to tempt God's care of Him, and to take the world-kingdoms and glory before God's appointed time? The devil was severely defeated, and he left Him Victor on the field alone, where the dependence, trust and patience of the Son of God shone in holy splendour. Was He oppressed and afflicted? No violence marked Him, neither was any deceit in His mouth: He committed no sin, neither did any guile proceed from His lips. Was He provoked, reviled and questioned? He meekly endured, reviling not again, but answered all with grace and wisdom; and, then, enquiring concerning the Messiah that which His questioners could not answer—nor could they propound any further questions to Him—He remained victorious—the sinless, perfect, patient, meek and wise Lord and Saviour, the tested and triumphant Stone, the Divine Questioner who triumphed over His questioners, and the perfect Answer in Himself to His own enigma which they failed to explain; He was David's Son and David's Lord: David's offspring truly, but David's Root as well; and they were silent in His presence.

Did He suffer instead of reigning in royal greatness? He threatened not, but left Himself in the hands of Him who judges righteously. Did unrighteousness surge around Him? It caused Him sorrow, but His own personal righteousness was evidenced the more, for He was consistent in every relationship. Did unholiness and harshness abound? He was grieved, but the Holy One was untainted and Divine love showed itself in all His ways. Did falsehood and cruelty obtain? Truth and grace in blended beauty combined in Him. Did merciless injustice characterize men? In Him was ex-
pressed the mercy and justice of God. Did unhappiness, trouble and unrest fill the souls of men? His joy in communion with His Father was full, and His own peace was undisturbed whilst He invited others to come to Him to find rest for their souls. In contrast to the corruption and oppression which displayed the debasement of fallen man, His tested perfections were seen to be flawless in their moral beauty.

The dreadful onslaughts of the power of darkness did but bring additional lustre to the excellencies of Jesus, just as the afflictions which beset Him from sinful man manifested the infinite worth which was already His, but when we see Him in the depths of suffering which came upon Him directly from the hand of God—when He took our place, bearing our sins and the judgment which was our due on account of them, when He endured the cross, we may well wonder that He could scathelessly come through such a fiery testing as that, and adore also the love that moved Him to bear it for our sakes and for the glory of our God and Father! And when we behold Him arise immortal and incorruptible from the tomb, the Victor over death and the grave, praises, everlasting praises must fill our hearts, songs of rejoicing break forth from our tongues, and His worthiness our mouths must utter; for this "tried Stone" which bore all and failed not is our "Sure Foundation," and the "Precious Corner-stone" of the building of God.

On Him our souls may recline without misgiving! Founded upon the Rock of Ages no tempest can overthrow us! The floods may break and the storms of time rage, thunders may roar mightily and the lightnings flash fearfully, thrones may fall and the nations be moved, men, great men may call to the rocks to hide them—fear may overtake them because of what is coming upon the world—but the tested Foundation upon which the feeblest believer rests in faith abides unshaken, unmoved and immovable! Our Lord Jesus Christ is a "Sure Foundation," and this has been fully proved, for He was the "tried Stone," and He has triumphantly manifested His intrinsic perfection amidst the severest trials. Who can doubt? How stable is this precious Ground of our faith! What stability is imparted to our souls by the knowledge of Himself!

His Name's a Rock which winds above Nor waves below can ever move, Christ is our everlasting tower, He braved the mighty tempest's roar.

A REJECTED STONE.

It must, however, be remembered that the One who is everything to the assembly was rejected when presented to men. As "the Stone of Israel" He was cast away as worthless by the nation. This was foretold, as our Scriptures along with many others show. To the political and religious heads of the nation, Peter said, "This is the Stone which was set at nought by you builders, the same is become the Corner-stone, neither is there salvation in any other" (Acts 4.11, 12). In writing afterwards to those of Israel who had believed on the rejected One, He says, "To Whom coming, a living Stone, cast away as worthless by men, but with God chosen, precious, yourselves also, as living stones are built up a spiritual house" (1 Peter 2.4).

It is the apostle to the Gentiles who writes thus to those who believed at Ephesus, "In whom all the building fitted together increases to a holy temple in the Lord, Jesus Christ Himself being the Corner-stone (Eph. 2.21). The One who was rejected and crucified has been raised from among the dead by the power of God, and glorified at His right hand. Now for those called out from the Jews and those called out from the Gentiles the rejected Stone has become the Corner, where both meet and grow into one building in Him. Although rejected, He is, however, the chosen of God. Israel stumbled at the Stumbling Stone. Man
refused Him, but God glorified Him: man treated Him as worthless and cast Him away, but to God He was precious and He honoured Him in heaven; and now to us the Corner-stone is precious also. Religious structures that are not fitted together in Him cannot be owned of God, for the assembly, the house of God, which is being formed to-day, is "a spiritual house" and Christ is the Corner-stone.

Moreover, this rejected Saviour, whom men despised and rejected, is not only the Sure Foundation of the building of God, and the Corner-stone into which believers from amongst the Jews and from amongst the Gentiles are fitted together, but He is also "the Head of the corner"—the crown and glory of the building! What an answer God has given to man's treatment of Him by thus exalting Christ! He has made Him everything to those who believe! The preciousness of Christ is theirs! He is the Ground of all their confidence—the "Sure Foundation"; the bond of their holy unity—the "Corner-stone"; and the grace and glory of it also—the "Head of the corner." How great is the loss of those who reject Him! How infinite is the gain of those who believe on Him!

The story does not end when the assembly is glorified with her Bridegroom in heaven, for Christ is the Stone from "the hands of the mighty God of Jacob"—He is "the Stone of Israel," thus—therefore, He must return to make way for Israel's national supremacy on earth after the assembly is taken to heaven. He must come as the Stone of Divine origin—from God's hands—as the Stone "cut out without hands"—not of man's providing at all. Of this our last Scripture (Daniel 2.) speaks.

But, let it be marked well, the first action of this Stone is to smite the great image (which is the symbol of the present world-system) upon its feet and break it in pieces. The interpretation is given to us in verse 42. The Stone was cut out without hands, and it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver and the gold. The great God hath made known what shall come to pass hereafter: and "the interpretation thereof is sure." The book of Revelation shows us how this will be carried out in detail, and the second Psalm tells us when He takes the kingdom and the dominion and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession, He will first of all dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Kings and judges of the earth are therefore urged to own fealty to Him before His wrath is kindled but a little, for, it is added, "Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him." Happy indeed are they that truly do so in view of that which hastens to come upon a Christ rejecting world.

After the Divine displeasure has been executed, and the Stone which was refused has ground to powder the godless systems of men, we are told the Stone "became a great mountain and filled the whole earth" (Dan. 2. 35). This is the symbol of Christ's glorious administration when God sets up the kingdom in His hands (44), when His earthly throne shall be established in Jerusalem, the city of the great King, in connection with Israel, and the law shall go forth from Zion and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem to the nations and peoples of the earth (Isa. 2. 3). Like showers upon the mown grass His blessing will fall: "Men shall be blessed in Him: all nations shall call Him blessed." "The whole earth shall be filled with His glory."
Our place—the assembly's place—which was formed in Him during the time of His rejection, will be in scenes of heavenly glory, though we shall share too in His reign over the earth. But, as we said, He will take us to heaven to be with Him first.

"Jesus Thou King of glory,
   We soon shall dwell with Thee,
   And sing Thy love's bright story,
   When we Thy glory see."

Meanwhile, before that longed-for day arrives, the high and holy honour is granted to those who belong to the "spiritual house" which is built upon the "Sure Foundation" to draw near to God by Him, for the Word reminds us that we are "a spiritual house, a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." The house is for God to dwell in, and the stones that form that house are also priests, and the priesthood is to offer thanksgiving, praise and worship to God. Such spiritual sacrifices, "the fruit of the lips," are pleasing to God as we offer them to Him by His beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the one Leader and High Priest of His providing. Having Him as our Foundation, the Corner-stone and glory of the building of God, and the One by whom we may boldly draw near as worshippers, we can offer with confidence and gladness our worship, for it is "acceptable to God" by Him.

"By Him our songs of praise ascend
   To God whose love shall never end."

SIN IN THE FLESH CONDEMNED.

The contrast between the seventh and eighth chapters of Romans is very pronounced. In chapter 7, the Spirit of God is not so much as mentioned; whereas chapter 8, brings Him in again and again—the first 27 verses are full of Him. The bearing of this is quite evident: all proper Christian life and experience is in the power and energy of the Spirit of God.

This being so, the old source of energy, the energy that characterized our unconverted days, stands condemned and counteracted.

Romans 8. 2, names the old energy of our unconverted days, "the law of sin and death." It names the new energy that properly characterizes the Christian, "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus"; and it asserts the superiority of the latter to the former. Let "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" but exert His "law" or "control," and the control of sin and death is broken. The superior law counteracts the inferior.

Then verse 3 gives the basis for this new control in the great act of God in the sacrifice of Christ when He "condemned sin in the flesh." "Sin in the flesh" was the old tyrant. We say tyrant advisedly, for the law of sin and death was tyranny indeed, as witness the miserable experiences of chapter 7., where the workings of its "law" are detailed for our instruction. There is no tyranny, thank God, in the new "law," for it is the law of a new life—"life in Christ Jesus"—and not only so but the law of the Spirit of that life.

Then has the believer two lives? Not from the Divine viewpoint. The new life is his on the basis of the condemnation of the old by God Himself in the sacrifice of Christ. "God...condemned sin in the flesh." The law could never do this. It could condemn very fully the man dominated by sin in the 'flesh,' the man in whom it
impersonated itself. God has condemned sin in the flesh—the very essence of the Adamic nature—and done it in such a way as to deliver the poor child of Adam who believes. This He did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as a sacrifice for sin. We turn to the cross, and in the sacrifice of Christ as bearing the judgment of sin we behold sin in the flesh condemned.

"Sin in the flesh" remember. The Lord Jesus was made flesh—holy flesh. He came in the likeness of sinful flesh. Sin has invaded the angelic ranks, we learn; but sin in spirit-beings lies quite outside this verse.

Remember also that sin in the flesh is condemned and not forgiven. In the administration of human justice there may be forgiveness expressed in the remission of a sentence, yet even so the law maintains its condemnation of the lawless and criminal instincts from which the crime in question proceeded. Thus also it is in the administration of Divine justice, for the human in so far as it is good and right is but a feeble reflection of the Divine. The sacrifice of Christ truly provides the basis whereby forgiveness of offences may reach the believer righteously. It equally sets forth the Divine abhorrence and condemnation of the corrupt nature from which the offences sprang. "Sin in the flesh"—the very essence and nature of the life of fallen Adam and his race—is condemned.

And here are we believers "in Christ Jesus" as to our new position before God, and not in Adam at all! And not only have we this new place, this new standing, but we also have "life in Christ Jesus"; there is a new spring of life within as well as a new position without. And yet, further, we possess "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus," and His law or control ensures that there shall be power to carry out the instincts and desires of the new life, even though the flesh and sin are still actually within us.

No wonder, then, that those "in Christ Jesus" are altogether clear of condemnation! The flesh and sin, still in them while yet dwelling here in mortal bodies, are indeed incorrigibly evil and merit nothing but the fullest condemnation; but in the sacrifice of Christ the Divine condemnation has fallen, and the believer in Christ Jesus is beyond it for ever. For us there is no condemnation. It has exhausted itself in the cross!

"Death and judgment are behind us, Grace and glory are before; All the billows rolled o'er Jesus, There they spent their utmost power."

We can, indeed, exultingly speak of ourselves as "free, because beyond our doom."

While praising God for this, let us not, however, overlook verse 4 of our chapter, where the practical consequences of all this is shown. All is in order that those things which the law so righteously required, and never got, might now be fulfilled in us "who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit."

Find us a Christian who recognizes how God has condemned sin in the flesh at the cross, who ratifies that great act in his own soul, and consequently disowns the flesh in its activities, i.e., he does not walk according to it; and who also rejoices in the possession of the new life in Christ Jesus and the Spirit of that new life who is the power and energy of it, and consequently allows and delights in the Spirit's activities, i.e., he walks according to the Spirit; and we will at once show you a Christian who is fulfilling what He had so righteously required of men. Indeed we will show you one who is going beyond those requirements, for he is learning to walk as Christ walked—and that is a far higher standard than the law of Moses.
NOTES ON JEREMIAH. No. 4.

The Living Lord, dead idols, oppressive pastors.

CHAPTERS 10., 11., and 12. show us that the Living Lord, the King of nations, the King of eternity, the Creator, is the God of truth; also that He shall triumph in spite of the people's idolatry and the brutishness of their pastors. When the people failed in the wilderness after He had redeemed them out of Egypt, unfaithful and untrue to Himself though they were, He said to Moses, "As I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord" (Num. 14. 21). Blessing and order shall consequently follow, notwithstanding the repeated failure of those He took up in view of this. The goodness of Jehovah will only be made more distinct and distinguished before men's eyes; for, coming down in the person of Jesus ("Jehovah Saviour"), by death and resurrection He laid the stable foundation to bring it all about in righteousness. Christ is now alive for evermore, and the pleasure of the Lord, and the exaltation of the Lord, as well as the blessing of men, are safe in His hands. In due time it shall be accomplished in Divine perfection.

The wise men with their doctrine of vanities, and the workmen with their cunning arts in silver and gold and wood, may labour together with Chaldean scholarship to hold the nations by idolatry; but they are all the works of error; therefore, "they shall perish" (10. 15). The God of truth shall triumph over this falsehood! It is in this chapter 10. where the greatness of His glorious Name is declared, the fact that these false gods shall perish utterly is recorded by the Spirit in verse 11 in the Chaldean language! This is exceedingly striking and significant. It is the only verse so written in the whole book. The idolatrous Chaldeans were to take Israel captive, but in their very language God records the utter overthrow of their false gods, and proclaims that Israel, whom he allows to be carried into captivity by them, is His rod (10. 16), and by them He will yet bring about order when they turn to our Lord Jesus Christ.

The signs of heavens dismay the nations! With axe and hammer they make their gods! They cannot speak! They have to be carried! for they cannot go themselves! Silver and gold and blue and purple may cover them, but they are just stocks! There is no breath in them! The "wise men" who teach their doctrines are foolish (1. 15)! Thus the prophet exposes the utter vanity and emptiness of idolatry. The nations vie in curious and cunning arts to form these vanities, but "The Portion of Jacob is not like them; for He is the Former of all things," rejoicingly exclaims the prophet (16). "Israel is the rod of His inheritance, the Lord of hosts is His Name." Bye and bye Israel shall own Him truly to be the Living Lord; they shall swear "The Lord liveth"; and great shall be the blessing that shall follow. Great, because of the greatness of this Living God, whom Israel shall then own; and before whom Jeremiah here shows these dead idols and their votaries to be vanity and falsehood also.

Exalting the Lord in His Divine eminence, and contrasting His marvellous might and majesty with the mean impotence of these dead and dumb idols, the prophet says, "There is none like unto Thee, O Lord; Thou art great, and Thy Name is great in might. Who would not fear Thee, O King of nations?" (6). Again, "The Lord is the God of Truth, He is the Living God, and, the King of Eternity" (10). He is the Creator, and His power, wisdom and understanding wrought in creating and establishing the earth and the heavens (12). The wind he bringeth out of His treasures;
and just here the Spirit records a scientific fact, made known over 2500 years ago: “He maketh lightnings for the rain (13). Scientists have only recently discovered this relation of lightning and rain. Like many other discoveries, in a few words it was stated in the Scriptures of Truth ages ago. God is the Creator and Former of all things; He has hidden vast riches as yet undiscovered in the created universe; and far greater riches still in the new creation, of which true believers through grace form part in Christ; yea, in the mystery now made known to us “are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col. 2. 3). This latter is beyond anything to be found in the Old Testament, although it is the same blessed God Who has graciously wrought it out; the same God whom Jeremiah rejoices to exalt; known then as Jehovah; known to us now as Father, in a relationship of love and life eternal, which cannot be broken. THE GOD AND FATHER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST IS OUR FATHER NOW THROUGH DIVINE GRACE AND LOVE: WORSHIP BECOMES THE RECIPIENTS OF SUCH HIGH FAVOUR.

It was because Jeremiah knew the love of the Lord for Israel, and the importance of their national position before Him that he cries out in pain when he pronounces again their overthrow (10. 17–25). In chapter 2., verses 1 to 17, he once more warns the people, and charges them with unfaithfulness and sin. Therefore, evil should come, and Jeremiah is told not to pray for them. How deeply all this touched the heart of the Lord is discernable in His expressions concerning the sinful nation. “My Beloved,” He calls her; “A green olive tree”; but she rejoiced in evil, and evil should come upon her. In the presence of all their sinful doings, and with full knowledge of it, the prophet suffers like His Lord, of whom he is a type. He is brought “like a lamb” to the slaughter. They had devised wicked devices against him, to “cut him off from the land of the living” (18–19). How like this is to what is said of our blessed Lord in Isaiah 53.; but how unlike His prayer is that of the prophet in the next verse as he asks for vengeance upon his persecutors. Truly it was a perfectly righteous prayer for a Jew to make, with earthly promises and hopes, and it should be answered (21–23), but the Lord Jesus asked His Father to forgive His enemies.

“RIGHTEOUS ART THOU, O LORD,” exclaims Jeremiah (12. 1); yet he pleads with Him about the prosperity of the wicked—“Thou art near in their mouth and far from their reins,” he says. This describes a state which is sadly in evidence in Christendom to-day. The Lord shows His servant that contending with these things is not wise, for even his own nearest relatives had dealt treacherously with himself, he must therefore trust in the Lord. Though the people connected with the place of His name were His heritage, yet He had left them; yea, He had given the beloved of His soul into the hand of her enemies. The true servant must cleave to the righteous Lord (5–9) that is his wisdom.

There were plenty of servants enriching themselves at the expense of God’s glory and of His poor people. The true servant stands out in contrast to this. The pastors many, destroyed the Lord’s vineyard (19), instead of tending it with knowledge and care, so that it might bring forth fruit well-pleasing to the Lord. These pastors had become brutish also and had not sought the Lord (10. 21). The Lord’s honour was not in their thoughts, the true servant was to seek the exaltation of the Lord. These pompous pastors with their oppressive officialism and with their weighty self-importance had trodden the Lord’s precious plants under their feet. Creating, it may be, for their own ends, an unreal conscience, instead of building them up in the truth. “They have made my pleasant
portion a desolate wilderness” saith the Lord (12. 10). It mourned unto Him, and the spoiler should come up upon it. All this is repeated in the history of Christendom, and judgment must necessarily follow, as is so often affirmed in the New Testament. We must be like Jeremiah, keep near to the Lord, and labour for His honour and exaltation, and so for the real help of all His own loved ones.

“Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of My pasture, saith the Lord.” The scatterers have His frown and not His favour. “Therefore thus saith the Lord God of Israel against the pastors that feed My people; ye have scattered My flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them; behold I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the Lord” (23. 1-2). The gatherers of the true sheep are with Him in their labours, for He adds, “I will gather the remnant of My flock.” There is One Shepherd and one flock now, as we read in John 10. His sheep follow Him. They know Him, and they know His voice. He gives them eternal life and they can never perish. They are safe in His hand and in the hand of the Father. True servants encourage the sheep to follow our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and not to follow themselves. He is the “Good Shepherd” who died for them; and He is the “Great Shepherd” raised from among the dead, who lives for them. He is also the “Chief Shepherd” who is coming again; yea, Jehovah saith, He is “My Shepherd.” The sheep belong to Him, and the confident soul can also truly say, He is “my Shepherd.”

"Their times are in His hand, Jesus, once crucified, Now leads them on with tender care, Their Shepherd, Guard, and Guide.”

He is alive for evermore! Our well-loved Lord and Saviour is the living One! It is very precious to be reminded in the last few verses of chapter 12. that He will gather Israel again, and they shall own “The Lord liveth.” For the fulfilment of this they must come under the new covenant of which we will speak later. The pastors then will not oppress His people. He says, “I will give you pastors according to Mine heart, which shall FEED YOU WITH KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING” (3. 15).

FAITH'S CONTEMPLATIONS!

I WEEP as I read of the days
When all who believed were as one,
Yet, Lord, in my heart are the ways—
Thou endest what Thou hast begun.
It is vain to lament o'er the past,
To sigh for the time that is o'er;
But Thou wilt unite us at last,
Unite us to sunder no more.

How blest, in the flowings of grace,
Thy saints "of one heart and one soul,"
Yea, gather'd to Thee in one place,
Thy Spirit their only control.
It is sad to look round on the change!
Oh! how can I choose but to weep?
Afar on the mountains they range
The beautiful flock of Thy sheep.

Ah! once they were happy and free!
Not one had a claim of his own!
Their voices gave witness to Thee,
Thou Shepherd! Thou Chief Corner-
stone;
They reposed in Thy pastures so green,
They drank of the waters of life;
And walking in truth they were seen
Afar from division and strife.

No more would we weep for the days
Or sigh for the hours that are gone,
By grace we would chant to Thy praise,
The glory is hastening on!
To lament o'er the ruin is vain,
The time for repairing is o'er;
Unalter'd Thy Word doth remain,
Our Portion art Thou evermore.
ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Christadelphian Errors.

WALMER: Your Christadelphian correspondent admits that the great question is, "What think ye of Christ?" And asserts that in order to answer the question rightly a person must be acquainted with the writings of Moses, the prophets, and the Psalms. So far so good. We are in accord with him on these two points. But he goes on to contend that, "Nowhere under the many names and titles of the Coming Deliverer of mankind in the Scriptures is there any ground for saying the Lord Jesus existed before He was born into this world." This is a most extraordinary statement for a man to make who quotes Matthew 22. 42 so readily; for what is the point in this challenge that the Lord threw out to the Pharisees? "What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is He?" is the question asked. "The son of David." The very answer "Christadelphian" would have given, and as far as it went it was right; but now comes the test. "How then doth David in Spirit call Him Lord ... If David called Him Lord, how is He his Son"? Did David call a person who had no existence, Lord? They had no reply to that problem; let "Christadelphian" produce one. If "Christadelphian" maintains his creed he must answer "Yes," and so expose his folly. But we suspect that, like the Pharisees of old, he will be silent. The quotation is from PSALM 110., and runs, "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool." There are other PSALMS that speak of the Diety of Christ, and so of His pre-existence, but one is enough to meet "Christadelphian's" argument, and to prove that the Deity of Christ is taught in the Psalms.

Micah the Prophet marked out Bethlehem Ephratah as the place of Messiah's birth, and is quoted by Matthew in the 2nd chapter of his Gospel; but Micah tells us that the goings forth of this ruler of Israel have been "of old, from everlasting," or as the margin reads, "from the days of eternity." The PROPHETS have many passages as to the Person of the Lord as strong as this, but this will suffice to prove that the prophets also taught the Deity of Christ. In the Gospel by John the Lord says Moses "wrote of Me," and if "ye," the Jews, had "believed Moses, ye would have believed Me." "Christadelphian" claims to believe Moses, but he does not; like the Jews, he neither "believes nor understands his writings," and how shall he believe the Lord's words. Amongst His words are these: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I AM." "Christadelphian," to be consistent, should denounced the Lord as an impostor—for He was an impostor of the very worst kind, if Christadelphianism is the truth—and so treat Him as the Jews did when they took up stones to cast at Him, for this saying, in which He claimed to be the great Jehovah of whom Moses wrote. So that from Moses, the prophets, and the Psalms we have taught to us the pre-existence of the Lord. The Gospel of John from its opening verse onwards presents the Lord as existing with the Father before He came into the world, not as a thought in the mind of God, as your correspondent believes, but as a Person—the eternal Word and only-begotten Son; and that Gospel is as much part of the Holy Scripture as Moses, the prophets, and the Psalms.

Your correspondent also states: "The doctrine of the Trinity, which always goes hand in hand with the pre-existence of Christ theory, is a mere figment of the human imagination, and the early Apostolic Church knew nothing of it. It was manufactured
by uninspired men, and no one has yet been able to prove it from the writings of Moses, the prophets, and the Psalms, for the simple reason it is not there."

Upon whose authority does "Christadelphian" state that the Apostolic Church knew nothing of the doctrine of the Trinity? Was not Matthew in the early Apostolic Church when He recorded the Lord's words, uttered after He rose from the dead, when He commissioned His disciples to baptize "in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"? Was not Peter in the early Apostolic Church when he told Ananias that he had lied to the Holy Ghost (Acts 5. 3), and then said, "Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God"? (verse 4). Was not Paul in the Apostolic Church when he wrote, "Christ, who is over all, God blessed for ever, Amen"? (Romans 9. 5). And when he wrote of Him as before all things, by whom and in whom all things were created (Col. 1. 16, 17). Was not the Epistle to the Hebrews written to the early Apostolic Church, in the first chapter of which we read that God said unto the Son, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom"? And again: "And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of Thine hands: they shall perish; but Thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt Thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail" (Heb. 1. 10, II, 12).

And these wonderful declarations of God were not made for the first time in this epistle; they are quotations from the Psalms, in which "Christadelphian" asserts the doctrine of the Deity and pre-existence of Christ cannot be found, nor the doctrine of the Trinity. Did not the early Apostolic Church believe that "CHRIST, through THE ETERNAL SPIRIT offered Himself without spot to GOD"? Does not that statement bring together most blessedly the three Persons of the Godhead in connection with the work of atonement, which work "Christadelphian" also denies? And if in the New Testament the Father is God, and the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God, and yet there are not three Gods but One, how can "Christadelphian" pretend to believe the Scriptures and yet deny the truth of the Trinity? It would not be a difficult task to prove this great truth, as well as every other that he denies, from the Old Testament to which he appeals, but if men wont believe the New Testament, it is no use to talk to them of the Old; and if they refuse the truth as to Christ's holy Person, they can understand neither New nor Old.

"All that the Prophets have Spoken."

WHILE all that the prophets have spoken is truth, it is not all the truth, else there would have been no need for the New Testament. All the truth has come out in Jesus; He is the truth, and the Spirit of truth has come to lead us into full acquaintance with Him. Any interpretation of the Old Testament that denies what the New Testament clearly teaches is a false interpretation. The Jews failed to understand the Old Testament because they did not read it in the light of what Jesus was when He was here; so now those who appeal to Moses, the Psalms, and the prophets, as against the Gospels and the Epistles of the New Testament are ignorant of their true meaning.
Will Children of God be punished hereafter for unfaithfulness and unconfessed sins?

T.S.—You think they will; then we ask, who will escape? For the most devoted servant of Christ will be the readiest to own how unfaithful he is; and who amongst us remembers or knows all his sins to confess them? If what you believe is true, then we fear that all will receive punishment, and if we receive punishment even for one sin hereafter it will be everlasting. You have failed to realize the infinite value of the sacrifice of Christ, and the greatness of the grace of God. Because of the sacrifice of Christ, God says, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." And in regard to the grace of God, "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." "In Christ all that believe are justified from all things." "There is now therefore no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus."

You base your argument chiefly upon the Parables of the Talents (Matt. 25.) and the Pounds (Luke 19.); and your contention is that the servants condemned by the Lord in these parables must be sons of God, in the Christian sense of the word—to be servants. You are surely wrong in this. Every created intelligence, whether angel, man or demon is a servant by the fact that God is God and Creator, else how could He take them to account for their conduct, and judge them for their failure and sin? But the servants in these parables definitely take the place of servants of the Lord, they do not deny the relationship as multitudes of men and the demons do. Yes, but many do that in word only, who have no vital link with the Lord. Consider the unprofitable and wicked servant in the parables that you quote. He says to the Lord, "Lord, I knew that Thou art an hard Man, reaping where Thou hast not sown, and gathering where Thou hast not strawed." Did he speak the truth? Did he not by his own words proclaim his utter ignorance of the Lord? Why, he was describing the devil and not the Lord at all. Would any one who really knows the Lord thus describe Him? Do His lowly life on earth, His tears, His compassion, His words of tenderness and works of mercy proclaim Him to be "a hard Man"? Do His sorrow and blood upon the cross for sinners show Him as austere? Whenever did He take from any one without first giving? This servant was ignorant, wickedly and wilfully ignorant of the Lord, and hence an unsaved man.

Consider further his doom, "Cast ye the unprofitable servant in outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 25. 30). The doom is hell-fire. "Yes, for a time only," you say, "that he may purge his sin by his suffering." Then Christ has died in vain, for here is another way of salvation apart from His suffering. But from whence have you this doctrine of purgatorial fires? Certainly not in the Scriptures. The wicked servant is consigned to hell, and of hell we read, "Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence" (Luke 16. 26). So that when once a soul passes into hell it is there without remedy and for ever. That could not possibly happen to any who are redeemed by the blood of Christ, for of such He says, "they shall never perish."

Many a true child of God will suffer loss because of unfaithful service, as 2 Corinthians 5. 10 proves; and on this question 1 Corinthians 3. 12–15 is an illuminating passage. "If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; but He Himself SHALL BE SAVED: YET SO AS
BY FIRE." The Lord will know how to apportion both reward and loss to all His true servants in that day, but to inflict punishment for sins upon those who look to Him alone for salvation would be to deny His own words and work. If He did not suffer the whole of our judgment for all our sins upon the cross, then we are without hope.

But if the future is all clear of judgment for the believer, for Christ is his righteousness, there is the fact of God's present discipline of every one of His sons, this must not be overlooked. He chastens and scourgeth everyone that He receiveth; and if their ways are not pleasing to Him, He will deal with them in order to awaken their consciences and to bring them into closer accord with His holiness, and He may, and does, as in the case of the Corinthians (chap. xi.) remove some from this life altogether, for there is "a sin unto death" (1 John 5. 16), but even these "sleep," which word describes the death of the Lord's saints. But these dealings of God with His own children are not punitive in the sense in which you use the word, but are corrective and have the condition of soul in view that made the sinful ways possible. But this belongs to this present life, there is no Scripture that we know of that teaches corrective discipline in the life to come. In the case of a sin unto death, corrective measures have failed to affect the soul, and the Lord removes His servant from further dishonouring Him.

Eating and Drinking the Lord's Supper unworthily.
1 Cor. 11. 27.

ED.—In this passage it is the MANNER in which the Supper is eaten, and not the persons who eat it that is in question. Nobody is personally worthy to have any part in the fellowship of the Lord's death, except in the worthiness that God gives to them, and He has given a worthiness to all who have taken Christ as their Saviour. Christ Himself is their worthiness, He is the best robe that is given to every repentant and reconciled prodigal. So that the youngest Christian on earth is as worthy in Christ to partake of the Lord's Supper as is the oldest saint.

You feel how unworthy you are, and how inconsistent your ways often are no doubt; this should make you appreciate all the more what Christ is, and what you are in Him. It is not by repeated efforts to make yourself like Him that you will become like Him; but the transformation takes place as your heart and mind are engaged with Him, and what can so blessedly engage you with Himself as the remembrance of Him in His death, as you partake of His Supper. Do not let self-occupation prevent you from doing that which He expressly desires you should do. We need not say that the privilege carries with it a responsibility, and the responsibility is to be self-judged.

Conduct consistent with our privilege and blessing is described in the exhortation "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us, let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." The feast of unleavened bread lasted seven days, all the week round. And remember it is a feast not a fast, we can only fast from evil things as we feast upon Christ—the true-unleavened Bread. The saints at Corinth were forgetting the sacred character of the Lord's Supper, and reducing it to the level of a common meal, or worse, at which everybody thought only of himself, ignoring everybody else, and ignoring the Lord most of all. They were eating the bread and drinking the wine unworthily. We shall be preserved from treating it thus if we keep in mind its true meaning.
The Lord’s Presence in the Midst of two or three gathered to His Name. Matt. 18. 20.

A.T. Canada.—you find fault with a statement which appeared in our February issue, which ran as follows: “Being gathered to the Lord’s Name means in the first place that He is not here, a solemn fact when we remember that the reason for this is that He was rejected and crucified by the world.” You think that in this we deny the Lord’s words, “There am I.” By no means, we were referring to the world when we said that He is not here. He was cast out of it, and He is now in heaven at God’s right hand, but we, believers, are in the world to be His witnesses and to represent Him, just as an ambassador represents his country in a foreign land; this is the meaning of “in His Name.” Where two or three are gathered together to, or in His Name, there He is surely, but this is in a spiritual sense; thence He can be with you in Canada and with us in England, and everywhere else upon the earth where His saints are so gathered at the same time. Do not think that we weaken the truth of His presence with His own by saying that it is spiritually and not bodily that He is there, His presence is real to faith, and we enter into the joy of it by the Holy Ghost who is given unto us.

“Add to your faith virtue, &c.” 2 Peter 1. 5-7.

BRONDESUBY.—Your request for help upon this Scripture was partly met in the paper entitled “The Coming of the Kingdom,” in last month’s issue of Scripture Truth. It is important that we see that the truer rendering of the passage should be, “In your faith have virtue,” etc. Everything is in your faith; the things that follow have to be developed, just as the rosebud develops into a full-blown flower. The reason why such an important Christian grace of godliness comes fifth and not first or second, is, we believe, because there is development to perfection in the list, for love is perfection—

it is the Divine nature, and it is the crowning grace of the list. Yet you could not have faith without godliness, nor godliness without faith; for godliness or piety is the recognition of God in all our ways, and it is faith that makes Him real to us so that we do thus recognize Him. But these graces can scarcely be said to develop one after the other, as a building grows one brick upon another, they grow and expand together, and we have to use diligence to bring them to maturity, and so have a fully developed Christian life, not one-sided, but marked by Divine symmetry.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON 1 TIMOTHY, CHAPTER 4.

1. Is it possible to discern the working of seducing spirits to-day? (verse 1).

It is comparatively easy to discern the working of seducing spirits in such movements as Spiritism, Theosophy, Christian Science and the like, but their efforts are not confined to such openly anti-Christian movements. Wherever souls are led away from the faith, seducing spirits have been at work, hence we can trace them in higher criticism, new theology, and in the way in which the
unproved theory of evolution is being used to throw discredit upon the truth of man's fall, and of sin, and the need of redemption. Those who speak lies in the things that relate to the soul's relations with God are not putting out their own vain imaginations merely, but spiritual influences are behind them.

That to which the apostle specially refers in this passage was the teaching that meats and marriage, both given by the Creator for His creatures' good, were evil; and so there was produced a false sort of holiness, which ministered to the pride of the human heart, and really set up to be wiser than God. Whatever produces proud sanctified flesh, ministering self-satisfaction, comes from the same source. The end of it will be godlessness and corruption.

2. Why is thanksgiving so important in connection with temporal mercies? (verses 3-4).

Because in it is expressed even more, if possible, than in prayer our dependence upon God and our recognition of His goodness. While He has revealed Himself as a Saviour God, saving our souls, He has not ceased to be the faithful Creator. Men do not generally recognize this, but the Christian must, for he has learned that every good and perfect gift comes down from above, and he takes nothing as a matter of course, but sees in every mercy the character of his God. Further, if we give thanks to God for a thing we cannot abuse it; whatever is truly received as God's gift will not be used for selfish gratification, but in the way intended by the Giver.

3. How are these things sanctified by the Word of God and prayer? (verse 5).

They have been given to us by the Word of God, we are assured by His Word that they are His gifts, and if He has freely spoken to us about them we may also speak to Him about them, asking that we may have the grace to use them according to His will rather than according to the caprice of our own desires. Thus the ordinary things of life enter into our free intercourse with God, and turn out not only for our physical good, but also yield glory to Him, and spiritual blessing to us.

4. What is Godliness? (verse 8).

Godliness, or piety, is the recognition of God in all things. "Acknowledge Him in all thy ways, and He shall direct thy paths," describes what it is and shows how profitable it must be, for He will only guide in those paths that will be for our eternal good. Contentment goes along with godliness, as a later verse shows, and the two going together are great gain.

The Grecians were well drilled in the value of bodily training; this figure the apostle uses—train yourself unto godliness with the same diligence and self-denial that these athletes exercise. "Seek ye FIRST the Kingdom of God."

5. What is the meaning of the Saviour of all men? (verse 10).

It is not here the salvation of the soul that is in question; but God is the preserver of all, as the word is translated by J. N. D. and others. He cares for the sparrows, feeds the ravens, and clothes the fields, and men are of more value than these. All His works and good gifts in creation are for the preservation of the lives of men here; but He has a special care for those who have faith, for they are His children. It would be well if men awoke to the fact, that if God withdrew for a moment His preserving care over them they would perish, we all live and move and have our being in Him.
THE DAY OF ADVERSITY.

"IT IS I." When your whole sky is darkened and you hide your head in sorrow, then is the hour in which to prove that Jesus is a resource and a satisfaction never known before. No one else can come near enough to you. The dignity of sorrow forbids the intrusion of any but the One who can truly sympathize.

"JESUS WEPT." All know that the verses of our Bible are merely a human arrangement, and yet who can doubt that the Spirit of God controlled the One who made it, in putting these two words into one verse? They indeed should stand alone, inasmuch as they afford such an inlet into the recesses of the Lord's heart. They have been the comfort of mourners in all ages, and they will continue to minister consolation to His people until God Himself shall wipe all tears from their faces.

"COME UNTO ME." Untold sorrows lay upon the human race, and this invitation is not confined to those who are laden with sin. Jesus addresses anyone who is bowed with any possible sorrow, any possible bereavement. Whatever the burden upon you, the Lord speaks to you.

"I HAVE LOVED YOU." I have One who loves me ten thousand times better than I love myself, and He cares for me. There is a depth of love which we cannot easily take in in the Lord's desire that we should know His support. He likes to be indispensable to us. It is a marvellous time when one has nothing to cling to, no support, but His mighty hand reaching down from "higher than the heavens."

"SEARCH ME AND KNOW MY HEART." The fires of affliction search out the recesses of our hearts and bring into evidence the hidden selfishness and self-will and pride that is there. Happy indeed it is if in these crucial hours there is grace from God to judge these things rightly in His presence that the precious gold of faith in Him may be purged of all this dross.

"THY FAVOUR IS BETTER THAN LIFE." If we have once tasted the loving-kindness of God, we never enjoy it so much as when we have nothing else to enjoy. When human cisterns all are dry, His fullness is inexhaustibly the same.

"LO, I AM WITH YOU ALWAY." Jesus was as much with His disciples when they came down into the valley as when they were on the mount. That is our comfort. Do not let us suppose that we have lost Christ when the sorrows of the valley displace the mountain-top joys. No. He is near; and He will be light to us when every natural light has failed, and then we may know the consolation of the companionship of the Man of Sorrows. The horror of great darkness is the door into the most blessed unfoldings of His love.

"MY GRACE IS SUFFICIENT." You would not be easily startled by events if you saw the abundance of grace that there is in Christ to enable you to meet everything calmly. You may pass through deep waters and many a furrow of grief may be ploughed upon your forehead, but as you prove His grace, you will also prove that He is greater who passed through the trial with you than is the trial itself.

"LOOK UP." As you feel the dearth and weariness of everything here, simply turn your eye upward; all power and comfort must come now from above. As your eye becomes educated in the exaltation of Jesus, so will your heart be invigorated to endure for Him down here, and though you sow in tears you shall reap in joy, and be more than conqueror through Him that loves you.
WE reproduce this sweet poem, by permission, in the hope of stirring up our brethren to the privilege of serving the Lord in refreshing those who are His tillage (1 Corinthians 3. 6-9) and His lilies (Song of Sol. 2. 2; 6. 3). But only those can do this who are watered first by Him; only as we come to Him and drink will the living waters flow forth for others; only as we are vessels sanctified and meet for the Master's use can He make use of us as He pleases.

The Master stood in His garden, Among the lilies fair, Which His own right hand had planted, And trained with tenderest care.
He looked at their snowy blossoms, And marked with observant eye, That His flowers were sadly drooping, For their leaves were parched and dry.

"My lilies need to be watered," The Heavenly Master said; "Wherein shall I draw it for them, And revive each drooping head?"

Close to His feet on the pathway, Empty and frail and small, An earthen vessel was lying, Which seemed of no use at all;
But the Master saw and raised it From the dust in which it lay, And smiled as he gently whispered, "This shall do My work to-day."

"It is but an earthen vessel, But it lay so close to me; It is small, but it is empty— That is all it needs to be."

So to the fountain He took it, And filled it full to the brim; How glad was the earthen vessel To be of some use to Him!
He poured forth the living water Over His lilies fair, Until the vessel was empty, And again He filled it there.
And so the lilies were watered, Until they revived again; And the Master saw with pleasure His labour had not been in vain.

His own hand had drawn the water, Which refreshed the thirsty flowers; But He used the earthen vessel To convey the living showers.
And unto itself it whispered, As He laid it down once more, "Still will I lie in His pathway, Just where I lay before;
"Close would I keep to the Master, Still empty would I remain, And perhaps some day He may use me To water His flowers again."

There are many right hands that tell not the left hands what they are doing, not because they are so humble, or hate praise so much, but because they have nothing to report.

Not until a man comes without price in his hand, without self-hope in his heart, without self-praise in his mind and says, "God be merciful to me a sinner," can he ever know how worthless is his own morality, how despicable and vain are his noblest deeds.

"TILL HE COME." 1 Cor. 11. 26.

"TILL He come "—A little moment, Now to serve an absent Lord; Till He come to sit, as learners At His feet, to hear His word.
"Till He come " this scene is shadowed By His death and by His cross.
"Till He come " hearts true and loyal, Count for Him earth's gain but loss.
"DEAD TO THE LAW."

The seventh chapter of Romans is mainly a chapter of experience, yet, even so, the first six verses are occupied with what is doctrinal, with a statement of the bearing of Christ's death upon the believer in relation to the law. Verse 4 in particular sets that forth.

Verse 1 reminds us that death sets a term to law's dominion, being, so to speak, the boundary of law's domain. Verses 2 and 3 illustrate the working of that fact by referring to its operation in the relationship of husband and wife. Verse 4 gives the great application of the fact before the mind of the Spirit in connection with the death of Christ. The believer has died to the law in the death of Christ. His history, as under law, was judicially ended there.

We say judicially ended, to distinguish from what may be historic or experimental, but perhaps an illustration may be helpful.

A great lawsuit comes on before the courts, let us suppose. It turns upon the validity of a will disposing of a vast estate, and its result is a judicial decision which destroys the title of the man in possession of the property and establishes that of the claimant. Here, then, at once, the former owner's hold upon the property is judicially ended. For a few days, however, he is still in residence in the ancestral mansion, and then he has to turn out bag and baggage, and the new owner enters amid congratulations of servants and retainers. The former owner's hold upon the property is now historically ended. Even yet, however, there is much to be done. There are many agents and factors, and a host of accounts to be transferred and small details settled. After some months the last item is closed. The whole transfer in all its ramifications is complete. The former owner's hold upon the property is now experimentally ended.

The illustration is as usual imperfect, but it serves to distinguish between what was fully accomplished judicially at the cross, and what is reached historically at conversion; and, again, that which is experimentally learned and accepted by the believer. This last is not something which takes place once and for all, but something to be wrought out "line upon line, here a little and there a little" under the teaching of the Spirit of God.

In verse 4, then, the law is considered as the old husband. Up to Christ, the Jewish saint naturally turned to it for the direction and counsel he needed, and yet, at the same time as he obtained the counsel he got also a deep sense of his own shortcoming and necessary condemnation if law without mercy were applied to his case. Psalm 119. is a fine example of "wifely" affection for the old husband. The law is magnified under many different titles, and the spirit of the whole is, "oh, how I love Thy law!" (ver. 97). Yet all through are interspersed confessions of failure judged by its holy standards, cries for quickening—the law never could quicken (Gal. 3. 21)—and prayers for deliverance.

We, however, have been made dead to the law "by the body of Christ," i.e., by His death, for He took the body prepared for Him in order that He might suffer (Heb. 1. 5-9). Having thus died and our connection with the law having thus been judicially dissolved, the object in view is that we should be "married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead."

The believer then is to look up to the risen Christ as the One with whom his new links are formed—links of a far finer and tenderer character than ever existed in connection with law. Do we want support, direction, wisdom, counsel, all those things, in short, for which the wife should turn to the husband?—if both are according to the divine ideal—we turn to Christ risen with whom all our associations
now are. He is the living Source of them all. Under His love, and direction and fostering care, the believer brings forth fruit unto God.

"Beautiful!" we probably ejaculate in our minds. "The idea is wholly admirable; but, oh, when one comes to take it up as a matter of experience—to work it out experimentally—how deep are the troubles into which we are plunged."

Exactly. Hence the wonderful passage, verses 7 to 25, experimental in the highest degree, which follows. These troubles and exercises, this anguish of mind, are all portrayed from the rich knowledge which Paul himself had of the practical working of the thing.

It is noticeable that in this passage the first streak of light amidst the gloom is when he reaches the knowledge of the utter badness of the flesh (verse 18). The fact is that this is the "Hougomont" of the great "Waterloo" of the soul—the point around which all the battle of exercise and anguish rages. Let that point be really and decisively carried, and the believer soon learns to look away from his worthless self to Christ the risen One, and in His risen life and by His Spirit (chap. 8. 2) all this "fruit unto death" is changed to "fruit unto God" and the path of victory.

WHO VALUES THE CROSS?

When a true idea of sin is realized in the soul, the necessity of the sacrificial work of the Lord Jesus Christ will be understood, and will become the one foundation of human hope. What other man can understand the cross—great, rugged, melancholy cross—save he from whose soul has been wrung the cry, "God be merciful to me, a sinner"? If I approach it from the elevation of the scholar, the philosopher, the theologian, I cannot understand it. But when I feel myself to be a sinner, a trespasser against the law and love of God, whose very thoughts have made me a fit subject for eternal destruction, and whose heart is so unclean that hell itself would be a refuge if it would but hide me from the shining face of God, then I am ready for the Gospel of the cross. And when I hear that Jesus was wounded for my transgressions and bruised for my iniquities, I press my way through all the grammarians, logicians, philosophers, theologians, saying, "This is the Saviour for me;" and if I perish I will perish at His cross, where, thank God, no sinner can ever perish, there I adoringly cry, "The Son of God loved me and gave Himself for me."

THE WILL OF GOD.

The present circumstance, which presses so hard against you, if surrendered to Christ, is the best shaped tool in the Father's hand to chisel you for eternity. Trust Him then. Do not push away the instrument lest you lose also its work.

Do you believe in God? If God be God, whatever He shall plan for us, is positively and surely the best; and could our eyes, at this moment, see by the light of eternity instead of time, we would always choose for ourselves, that which God has chosen for us. "Jesus said unto him, What do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter" (John 13. 7).

God knows the difference between the idle waiting of the desire to escape His will, and the honest waiting of a willing heart to have His will made plain, in order to do it.

"Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him" (Psa. 37. 7).
NOTES ON JEREMIAH. No. 5.

Prophetic signs and their significance.

We have now come to the second twelve chapters of "The Moral Section" of Jeremiah. The significant signs which are here recorded illustrate important truths in an interesting manner. These latter twelve chapters naturally subdivide into three parts of four chapters each; the previous twelve, as we have seen, subdivide rather into four parts of three chapters each. The peculiar order which is maintained all through the book becomes more manifest as we proceed. This order is not historical or chronological as we have said, but it is set out according to the bearing of the word or sign upon the central event of the book. The signs are mostly confined to this second division of twelve chapters which we are now to consider.

CHAPERS 13., 14., 15. and 16., show us the signs of the girdle, the filled bottles, and the drought; also those of the prophet's abstainance from marriage, and from mourning, and likewise from feasting. The teaching of these signs is made plain for us by the Holy Spirit, who at the same time unfolds precious truths concerning the Lord; showing us His attitude in regard to the state signified, and also that of the true servant of the Lord and of the believing remnant.

THE GIRDLE, or loin cloth of linen (13. I–II), first of all shows that the Lord had given the nation of Israel a near and intimate place in connection with Himself. Great indeed was their place of honour! They were unto the Lord for "a people, and for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory" (I I) ! This was the glorious girdle—Israel placed thus near to the Lord. He was enough for them. Therefore it is said to the prophet first, "Put it not in water." Next he is told to hide it in the hole of the rock far away by the waters of the Euphrates. When he returns for it after many days, he finds it spoiled and good for nothing.

Heedless of their high honour, Israel constantly turned to other "waters" (see 2. 18) and, consequently, became idolatrous. They forsook the Lord who was in their midst as a man is in the midst of his girdle. He therefore would cause the waters of Babylon to be their destruction, and so mar their "great pride." If we see in this first of all the Lord's thought concerning Israel's national distinction for His own glory, and then their awful folly and pride, how it ought to give us diligence of soul now to be found cleaving to the Lord in humility of mind, seeking to answer to His far higher thoughts concerning the assembly, in spite of the far more awful folly seen in Christendom to-day. The truth espouses the assembly to Christ as a chaste Virgin. May we have grace to be faithful; for it is revealed in Revelation 18. that the dark waters of judgment shall presently engulf Christendom, there called "Babylon."

THE BOTTLES, or jars, filled with wine (12–14), signify the stupid senselessness with which drunkenness should drown all clear and right thought among the people and their princes. This, doubtless, refers again to their Babylonish inclinations. This wine is referred to as the wine of fornication again in Revelation. But here, as well as there, it brings down the judgment of God. Rationalists may complain that this is a very simple sort of sign, and question it because it appears to refer the blame of their drunkenness to the Lord; but such criticism only exposes their own ignorance of God's ways and judgments. When men depart from Him in any way He gives them up to something else, and unless they repent, their lusts get a stronger hold of them (see Rom. 1. 18–32). In
Israel's case the Lord says, "Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backsliding shall reprove thee, know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God" (2. 19). The Scripture in Romans refers to man in creature responsibility; this in Jeremiah to Israel in national responsibility; 2 Thessalonians 2. 11, refers to Christendom's responsibility. There we are told that God Himself sends them a working of error that they should be carried away by what is false. Why?—To turn aside those who believe on His beloved Son? Perish the thought! It is to manifest clearly in judgment those who did the very opposite, those "who believed not the truth, but found pleasure in unrighteousness."

The petty and puerile criticisms of some, also question the former sign of the girdle and the fact of Jeremiah going twice to the Euphrates. It is not surprising that they fail to understand the sign, but if there is one place more than another which Jeremiah may have had many reasons for visiting, that place is the very one in question. The judgments he constantly foretold were to come from thence, and the people he loved and laboured for were to be captives there.

Affectionate and eloquent is the pleading in verses 15 to 27. "Wilt thou not be made clean?" he enquires of them. Pride and falsehood held them as in a vice (15, 17, 25). If they will not hear his eye should weep sore and run down with tears because of the captivity of the Lord's flock, that beautiful flock (17, 21). Tell the King and the Queen mother to humble themselves; sorrow and travail are coming; they had not only forsaken and forgotten the Lord, but they had sunk into adultery, lewdness and whoredom. No wonder, therefore, that the call to "Give glory to the Lord your God" was unheard and unheeded by them.

THE DEARTH or drought of chapter 14. only shows up their proud obstinacy the more. They will not bend; Jeremiah, however, pleads with the Lord, the Hope of Israel and the Saviour thereof. He reminds Him that they are still called by His Name; and says, "Thou, O Lord, art in the midst of us\) (9)! In that sense they were still His girdle. Why? asks the prophet. Should the Lord be as a mighty man that cannot save? He is told not to pray for them; consuming judgment must be theirs (10–12). Jeremiah tells Him the people's prophets speak otherwise. Therefore they shall be punished as well as the people (13. 16).

The faithful prophet mourns over them and again pleads with the Lord, confessing their sins, and touchingly concludes "Do not abhor us, for Thy Name's sake, do not disgrace the throne of Thy glory; remember, break not Thy covenant with us. Are there any among the vanities of the nations that can cause rain? Or can the heavens give showers? art not Thou He, O Lord our God? therefore we will wait upon Thee, for Thou hast made all these things" (21. 22). This shows how the faith of a true servant of the Lord holds Him in connection with that which professes His Name at any time. I have no doubt that answer then came to such a prayer and confession; though in its completeness the foretold judgment followed later on.

Chapter 15. 1–9 continues to show that no prayer for this people could finally prevail, not even if Moses and Samuel stood before the Lord. They were servants of God who were faithful to Himself, and they loved the people, but nothing could avail, He would cast them out of His sight. Back to Manasseh the evil is traced, the revival since had no real depth. "Thou hast forsaken Me saith the Lord, thou art gone backward, therefore will I stretch out Mine hand against thee, to destroy thee. I am weary with repenting" (6).
SEPARATION TO THE LORD.

There are most important principles concerning the remnant and the servants of the Lord in verses 10-21. Others may be indifferent to the sad state of things, but they feel it all before God. They are to keep themselves separate just as we are also instructed to do now (2 Timothy 2., etc.). In this position of separation, however, they are still a part of the whole. "Thy Words," found and fed upon, become the secret spring and joy of the heart. These servants are connected with the Lord's Name, and they own this. He Himself in what He is fills their thoughts. The finding of His words (verse 16) may refer to the finding of the book of the law, but in any case the true heart makes the Lord's words its own. And though happy himself before God, it puts him outside of the assembly of mockers (17). This causes him pain.

The last three verses are a sort of confirmation to the encouragement given to the Prophet in his call and commission recorded in chapter 1.

In the position of separation to the Lord, standing before Him and taking the precious from the vile, he should be as the Lord's mouth. He was not to return to them, but to let them return to Him. As thus separated to the Lord he should be strengthened; and the Lord should be with him; none should prevail against him. These principles are of immense and immediate importance for us to-day as we seek to follow faithfully the Lord in the midst of the religious corruptions of the present time. We shall always find a remnant, thank God, who rejoice in the Lord and call alone upon Him out of a pure heart whilst pursuing righteousness, faith, love and peace together. This positive position and practice keeps them bright and happy: the purely negative attitude of those who boast in being separate from unrighteousness produces the opposite, and also paralyzes all true prosperity, giving pre-eminence to the most unchristlike who find pleasure and prominence in their Diotrephesian words and works (3 John 9-11). The good is before the true believer; he follows that in separation to the Lord.

"CHRIST JESUS OUR HOPE."

The prophet himself becomes a sign amongst the people (Chapter 16. 1-13). So sure is the punishment that is coming upon them, he is to abstain from marriage, from entering into social relationship with them. He is also to abstain from the house of mourning, signifying that the Lord's peace was taken from this people, that consolation was withdrawn, and also the voice of mirth and gladness, therefore Jeremiah is likewise to abstain from the feast.

Again the secret of all this sorrow is reiterated; "They have forsaken Me saith the Lord"; they have followed other gods and walked after the imagination of their own hearts, "that they may not hearken unto Me" (11-13). It is this wretched subjective tendency which always follows the turning away from the Lord Himself that caused the mighty mischief then just as it is doing now. Doubtless the feelings and frames are considered good and pious and wise, but it is self-occupation nevertheless, and contrary to the true knowledge of the blessed God. To Ephesus, where so much apostolic labour was bestowed, it was written before the apostles had all passed away, "Thou hast left thy first love" (Rev. 2. 4); and here in our chapters (13. to 16.) it is constantly and touchingly repeated, "Thou hast forgotten ME" (13. 25); "THOU HAST FORSAKEN ME" (15. 6); "THEY HAVE FORSAKEN ME" (16. 11); "THAT THEY MAY NOT HEARKEN UNTO ME" (16. 12).

Is there no hope? Certainly not in Israel, nor to-day in the churches; but we are reminded that Christ Jesus is "our Hope" (1 Tim. 1. 1). He is also "the Hope of Israel and the
Saviour thereof" (14. 8). Failure on the part of Israel and of the assemblies has become the means, however sad, for the exaltation of the Lord alone. He remains faithful. Our hope is in Him, and we are to make Him our boast and our glory. This should be understood and held firmly. Israel like a girdle was to encompass the Lord "for a people and for a Name, and for a praise and for a glory; but they would not hear" (13. 11). This was God's original intention (see Deut. 26. 19), therefore it must be brought to pass. Israel failed on the ground of responsibility, but the Lord will not fail. Verses 14 to 21 show this. Greater than the deliverance of Israel from the cruel bondage of Egypt shall the future recovery and restoration be. It shall be said then, "The Lord liveth" who has done this great thing. Truly they shall be brought through sorrowful recompense for their iniquity and their sin—"double" indeed in a governmental way, but our Lord Jesus Christ has made atonement for it all; He alone could do so; none other of that nation (or any other) was sinless and spotless and holy. On the ground of His sacrifice they shall be restored and blessed abidingly, and the nations through them. Yea God hath said, "Therefore, behold, I will this once cause them to know, I will cause them to know, Mine hand, and My might; and they shall know that My Name is the Lord." (21). Then, indeed, His girdle which compasseth Him about shall be glorious. He shall be exalted in the abundance of Israel's blessing, as we read: "It shall be to Me a name of joy, a praise and an honour before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them" (33. 9).

Jeremiah's heart exults in the Lord, and exalts Him anticipatively, in the presence of such precious and priceless promises. He is lifted in spirit above and beyond the sorrowful surroundings of the moment. He pronounces the falsehood and vanity and profitlessness of that which had led people away from the true God, as they themselves shall do in the bright and blessed day that is coming. "O Lord!" he exclaims, "My Strength and my Fortress! and my Refuge in the day of affliction! the nations shall come unto Thee from the ends of the earth" (19)! Blessed it is to the heart, to know Him now before that day arrives; then the assembly, glorified in heavenly splendour with Christ, shall be in administrative relation with restored Israel in her earthly glory, and the nations shall be blessed abundantly, Christ being owned by all as KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. The kingdom and dominion also shall be His throughout all the rejoicing earth! For all this Christ Jesus is our Hope, and He is also the Hope of Israel.

"Hope of our hearts, O Lord, art Thou; The glorious Star of day; Thou wilt shine forth, and chase the night With every fear away."

"ABLE TO SAVE TO THE UTTERMOST." He that made all things, and upholds all things, is equal to, and a match for, any and every contingency that can befall any of His own between Calvary and the Glory. He is enough for us were the path ten thousand times more sad and difficult than it is.

"MY FATHER'S HOUSE." All that makes heaven a home to Christ, will make it a home to me. Lord Jesus this sad world no rest can find! Come, Saviour, Come!
The following Addresses were given in Edinburgh during the last week of April, 1921:

THE PROVISION OF CHRIST FOR HIS PEOPLE DURING HIS ABSENCE. (Evening, April 27th.)

"If ye love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth Me no more; but ye see Me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you. He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him. Judas saith unto Him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him. He that loveth Me not keepeth not My sayings: and the word which ye hear is not Mine, but the Father's which sent Me. These things have I spoken unto you, being present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved Me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for My Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe" (John 14. 15-29).

It has often been remarked, and it with the utmost truth, that there are two great facts that give character to this present dispensation. They are, first, that Christ—the Man Christ Jesus—sits on the throne of God in heaven. I need not say that He could not sit on that throne at all were He not God, but He is there as the Man Christ Jesus. Second, the Holy Spirit of God, very God, is on the earth—Man in heaven, and God upon earth—and we find that these two great facts have their very special bearing upon the gathering out of this world a people for the name of Christ; and apart from these two great facts, this special work of God in this present day could not be accomplished.

In this passage of Scripture that I have read to you, the Lord Jesus Christ was instructing His disciples in the fact that He was going away, and telling them of the provision that He was to make for them during His absence—of His going to His Father in heaven, and of the coming of the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, from the Father to earth.

We can understand in a measure what it must have meant to those disciples to hear that their Lord and Master was to leave them. He had been everything to them; He had taken possession of their hearts; He had filled them with a sense of His love; He had brought them to His feet in adoration; He was all the world to them, and now He tells them, "I am going away," and their hearts were filled with sadness—we can understand that—but He gives to them this most blessed promise, "I will come
again." He tells them that in His Father's house, His own blessed abode, He would find room for them, so that where He was, they should also be, His eternal companions. It must have given them comfort in the midst of their sorrow; it gives us comfort today, does it not? The great and blessed truth of the coming again of our Lord Jesus Christ to rapture His blood-bought saints to the glory is surely a most comforting hope, truly called in Scripture "that blessed hope." To be for ever with Him, loved with the same love wherewith He is loved there in the Father's house, His abode and our abode for ever and ever—this is our prospect! And His coming must be very near; we are surely not far off from that longed-for event—

"Our hearts beat high, the dawn is nigh
   That ends our pilgrim story
   In His eternal glory."

But in the meantime, what provision has He made for us? He begins to tell us in these wonderful chapters. He says: "If ye love Me keep My commandments, and I will pray the Father, and He will send you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever." That was the provision.

**THE CHARACTER OF THOSE TO WHOM THE COMFORTER WAS SENT.**

I want you to notice what was the character of this company of disciples to whom the Father would send the Comforter. They loved Him, and were to prove their love to Him by keeping His commandments. They stand out in this special characteristic in contrast to the Israelites at Mount Sinai. Moses went away from the Israelites into the mountain, and they were left behind to keep God's commandments, and to prove that they loved Him by so doing, and they declared their willingness to be obedient. But when Moses was lost to sight in that mountain, they at once forgot their vow, and they set about to break the very first commandment that God had given to them, and proved thereby that they did not love Him at all. And naturally these disciples were no different to those Israelites, nor are we; for the whole natural bent of the unregenerated heart is to hate God and His will, and do its own pleasure. Then if these disciples were such as loved the Lord, and proved their love by keeping His commandments as they did, a great work must have taken place in their souls. Yes, a great work had taken place in their souls. They were distinguished right from the beginning of this Gospel from the world. In the first chapter we read of the Lord's coming into the world: He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world didn't know Him. The foxes had their holes, and the birds of the air had their nests whither they could repair when the night storms uplifted their voices; but He, the Maker of the world, had no place to lay His head. He came to His own, whom He loved with a great love, but His own received Him not. But there in the midst of them were a few who received Him, and to them was given the title to become the children of God. But then we learn this fact about them, they were not born of nature, nor of the will of man; but of God. Later in the Gospel when the false disciples turned their backs upon Him, these men who were born of God would not leave Him; they said, "To whom shall we go, Thou hast the words of eternal life." They found Him to be the source of their life; the words that He spoke were spirit and life to them, and they had no true life apart from Him.

In the 10th chapter of the same Gospel we find that they were His sheep who heard His voice—His voice was sweet to them; it had found a place in their hearts, and they followed Him. He had been graciously at work amongst them, so that He could say to them, "Now are ye clean through the words that I have spoken unto you." There had been a moral cleansing within
them, and they had been separated from the world to which they once belonged, but to which they belonged no more, and they had been attached to Him to whom they belonged now for ever.

Their Lord says to them, "If ye love Me, keep My commandments," and they obeyed His voice. He had given them two commands: "Love one another" and "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." Fallen nature cannot wait, it is impatient, for it distrusts God. The Israelites could not wait for the coming down of Moses from the mount; King Saul couldn't wait for the coming of Samuel. These disciples were tested at this very point; the Lord said "Wait," and they gathered together in Jerusalem in subjection to Him, bound together in the bonds of Divine love, and waited according to His word. "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren" (Acts 1. 14). They proved their love to Him by their patience, love, unity and dependent expectancy. And He, in His place in the glory, could point them out to the Father as a band of men and women who loved Him, and kept His commandments, the fruit of His own work; and He prayed the Father to send them the Comforter. The Spirit of God came down, sent by the Father, in answer to the prayer of their Saviour. Think of the wonderful tender consideration, the love that is in this. The Lord Jesus in the glory looked down upon His beloved disciples upon earth, and speaks to His Father specially about them. He would not leave them to their own resources; they must have another Comforter, a Comforter as great and wise and able and tender and true as Himself. Those men and women were representative of all throughout this dispensation who believe, and the Lord's feelings for them were not any different to His feelings for us, and what He prayed for them abides for us. The Spirit of God sent by the Father on the day of

of the Lord apart from the absolutely perfect and all-availing sacrifice of Christ. We have that plainly and clearly taught to us in that beautiful type, the cleansing of the leper—the blood, type of the blood of Christ, was first of all to be put upon the ear and the thumb and the toe of the leper who was cleansed, and then upon the blood the oil was to be put, the oil speaking of the Spirit of God. This is emphasized in that it was in response to the prayer of the great Redeemer that the Father sent the Comforter; and if we receive the Spirit of God, and everyone who has believed the Gospel has received the Spirit of God, it is because we are redeemed by the Lord; we have been purchased by a great price, that price is the precious blood of Jesus, and the Spirit of God has come and taken possession of that which God has purchased. But, there is our side also, a work in us corresponding to the work that has been done for us, so that what is characteristic of the redeemed of the Lord is this—they love the Lord, and they keep His commandments. Indeed you cannot separate faith in the Lord from obedience to Him, as many a Scripture proves—to believe is to obey.

These disciples were pattern men, and the Spirit of God was sent to them from the Father, in response to the prayer of their Saviour. Think of the wonderful tender consideration, the love that is in this. The Lord Jesus in the glory looked down upon His beloved disciples upon earth, and speaks to His Father specially about them. He would not leave them to their own resources; they must have another Comforter, a Comforter as great and wise and able and tender and true as Himself. Those men and women were representative of all throughout this dispensation who believe, and the Lord's feelings for them were not any different to His feelings for us, and what He prayed for them abides for us. The Spirit of God sent by the Father on the day of
Pentecost is here still, and what the Spirit of God brought those disciples into He has brought us into; our portion is exactly the same portion as their's was.

The Holy Spirit was given to them to be in and with them; He was their Comforter, their Advocate, their Intercessor on earth, as Christ was their Advocate and Intercessor in heaven. He is also the Spirit of Truth, to bear witness to them of the truth, to bear witness to them of Christ and His glory.

The popular doctrine is that the Spirit of God dwells in every man—plainly that is not the truth, for the Lord definitely tells us that the world cannot receive Him. It is the believer that receives Him, and those that have salvation have no need to pray for the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God has been given to such, for Jesus prayed that it should be so. There are Christians who do not know this; there are Christians who have forgotten the fact, as the apostle had to say to the Corinthians, "What, know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, which is God's."

Then the Lord Jesus adds, "I will come to you." He comes by the Spirit, the Spirit makes His presence a reality, fulfilling His own precious words spoken in the 18th chapter of Matthew, "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst." But He goes further than this, and tells them that any man who has His commandments and keeps them, will be loved by His Father, and that the Lord Himself would show His love to such an one by manifesting Himself to him. The company of other Christians is not necessary for this. John in Patmos, and you in your chamber may have these manifestations. The one condition is obedience to His commands; it is the owning of His Lordship, which every Christian professes to do, but it must be more than profession, not those who say, "Lord, Lord," but those who have His commands and do them, such have these manifestations; to them the Lord will reveal Himself as all-sufficient for their every need, as their true Lover, their adorable Lord.

THE PATTERN OF THE LORD'S MANIFESTATIONS.

We have patterns of the way in which He would manifest Himself to us in John's writings. He showed Himself to the woman of Sychar as the One who had come into the world to save. He showed Himself to Mary of Bethany as the One who was going into death. He showed Himself to Mary Magdalene as the One who had overthrown the power of the grave, having accomplished all the will of God, and was now going back to the Father. There are other manifestations, which shine with the brightness of His love, but consider these three great steps from the glory into death and from death to the glory again, and may He manifest Himself to our souls in them.

The woman of Sychar was a friendless, degraded outcast, but the Lord knew all about her, and He was going to bless her by manifesting Himself to her; but He was in Judea and she was in Samaria, and He was not a rich man—no camel or ass bore Him over those sun-parched miles; He had to take the journey—every step of it—on foot; and at last, hungry, thirsty and tired, He sank for rest upon the well stone. The One that upholds all things by the word of His power waited there for a poor world-sick sinner that He might speak to her words from the Father, words in season to a weary heart. He manifested Himself to her as greater than all her degradation and sin, so that she forgot the great necessity of life, she left her waterpot and the water that filled it;
and went her way to the men of the city and said, "Come," "Come and see," "Come and see a Man which told me all things that ever I did, is not this the Christ?" In manifesting Himself, He had manifested herself to herself, but the grace in which He manifested Himself had made her without fear in His presence, and she could go and bear witness of Him.

The testimony of this woman was, \( \text{He has come whose grace is greater than all my sin.} \) What a manifestation of Himself is this! Have we taken it in? Do we realize that He came from Godhead's fullest glory in such lowly grace as we see Him here, to lift burdens from hearts that are sorely oppressed, and to satisfy with living waters such as this Sychar sinner, and you and me?

Mary of Bethany loved her Lord and kept His word, but the storms had beaten vehemently against her soul, and dumb and broken she brings her sorrow to His feet. To whom could she go but to Him. Then He laid bare His heart to her, for, \( \text{He weeps.} \) Looking up into His face through her tears she sees His sacred cheeks washed with tears also; and Mary's heart found solace in that blessed sympathy, which is ever greater than the greatest sorrow that a human heart can know. It seemed as though He said to her, "I know your sorrow; these Jews who are come to weep with you are but spectators of it; even Martha cannot enter into the inner chamber of your unspeakable grief; but I can; I know it, Mary, the pangs that rend your heart I feel. And I am going into death, I will meet it in all its horror and strength; it shall expend its utmost power on Me, and I will take the sting out of it, and dispel the gloom from the grave, and make Mine own henceforward triumphant over it." No wonder that Mary brought her alabaster box of ointment, and poured its precious contents on His feet! No wonder that she poured out her heart's full adoration before Him. He had manifested Himself in a wonderful way, His love had taken on a new aspect to her, \( \text{HE WAS GOING TO DIE,} \) and she anointed Him to His burial. Do we understand this? This revelation of Himself to Mary shone forth in all its glory at the cross, and if we love the Lord and keep His commands the Holy Spirit will not be slow to make the deep meaning of it a living, bright reality to our souls.

\[
\text{"If sinners ever were to know} \\
\text{The depth of love divine,} \\
\text{All Calvary's suffering and its woe} \\
\text{Blest Saviour must be Thine"}
\]

Mary Magdalene got a wonderful manifestation of Him. She had lost Him, even His dead body was gone, and all was gone for her, and no light pierced the gloom as she wept and sorrowed, until He called her by name; then her sorrow turned to joy, and she learned that He was to ascend to His Father, to receive from Him His full approbation for all He had done on earth, and she and His disciples, and we who love Him here to-night have all our place in that same relationship in which He lives, and shall have our place in the glory where He has gone with Him. These are the manifestations that He makes of Himself, and at every crisis in our lives, if we love Him and are obedient to Him, He will reveal Himself to us in such ways. He will lift our poor hearts this weary world above, and give us rest in Himself. It will not be a question of recalling something we have read or heard, or experienced in the past, but He will make Himself to us "A living bright reality."

\[
\text{THE ABIDING PRESENCE OF} \\
\text{THE FATHER AND OF} \\
\text{THE LORD.}
\]

The Lord speaks in this chapter again of those who love Him and keep His word. The "word," as it should be, I take to be the whole revelation that He has made. \( \text{It isn't His commandments now, it is not simply} \) subjection to His Lordship, but it is
the revelation that He came into the world to make. His word, which He says "is not My word but the Father's word"; it is the revelation of the Father and of the Son; and, said the Lord, "He that keeps My word, My Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our abode with him." When the Lord Jesus spoke those wonderful words revealing the Father's Name, they were not mere words such as we might speak; and the truth of the Father and the Son are not mere doctrines to be learned mentally, and to be talked about, as we might talk about some science, these words revealed living Persons, and when you have got the words, you have got the Persons, and the Persons are the Father and the Son. Isn't this what the apostle says in the first chapter of the first epistle of John, when he said, "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ"? If you have the revelation you have the Persons revealed.

Behold, my friends, the wonderful thing that is held out to us—If we love the Lord; if we keep His word—and if we love Him shall we not keep His word? If we love Him shall we not want to know why it was He came into the world, and what it was He did when He was here? If we learn that He came to reveal the Father, shall we not want to know who the Father is, and what He is? Shall we not read the Gospels that we may see Him and know Him? And as we see Him in the perfect grace of the life of Jesus that was lived in absolute subjection to the will of God, for the blessing of men, and are attracted to the Father revealed to us thus in perfect grace, shall we not treasure in our hearts this revelation of the Father and the Son? Will not the words that Jesus spoke, His Father's words, be spirit and life to us as we muse on them and are taught their meaning by the Holy Ghost? If so, then the Father and the Son will come and make their abode with us. This is the same word as that translated 'mansions' in the second verse of the chapter, as Christ has gone to prepare an abode for you in the Father's house, so do you prepare an abode in your house for the Father and the Son, as you love the Lord and treasure His word. In your garret up the stairs, with perhaps but a few sticks for your furnishings, with not many comforts in this world—but there your Father and your Saviour will abide with you.

Then He says, "My peace I leave with you"—peace made by the blood of His Cross; peace won on the battle-field of Golgotha; peace, the result of His own glorious victory; "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you," MY PEACE, the peace of Christ, the peace that kept Him in the midst of the contradiction of sinners, and all the malice of Satan; the peace that enabled Him to sleep in the storm—the peace that was the result of His Father's presence with Him—He says, "MY PEACE I GIVE UNTO YOU"—you have to be here in my name, and I give you My peace, MY PEACE; "Not as the world gives, give I unto you." The world is oftentimes very benevolent, very generous; the rich man stands at the door of his mansion and gives freely to the poor who gather about him; but that is not the way the Lord gives—He throws open His doors, and says, "Come in and share all that I have got; there is nothing I have got I will not share with you; I want you inside My home; I want you to share with Me everything that the Father has given Me."

"He gives not as the world, but shares All He possesses with His loved co-heirs."

Oh! wonderful Giver, and that He might be this wonderful Giver, He had to give His life first of all. Yes, "All Calvary's sufferings, all its woe, Blessed Saviour must be Thine" if we were to share with Thee this great and wondrous portion!
Then He speaks of His going to the Father, and He says, Your hearts ought to be glad because of this. And our hearts are glad, are they not? We rejoice at His exaltation, His glory; to know the Father has put Him there in the highest place in that glory; that the Father has manifested His full approval of His beloved Son has made our hearts glad. We rejoice in His glory there and in the provision that He has made for us here while we wait to join Him there, to share His home and see His glory for ever.

A WORK OF GRACE AT ANTIOCH. (H. P. Barker.)


The wonderful work of God at Caesarea, and the conversion of so many Gentiles there, evidently acted as a signal indicating that the door was opened of God for preaching the Gospel to others besides Jews. For after it became known that God had granted to the Gentiles repentance unto life (ver. 18), some servants of Christ, coming to Antioch, preached to the Grecians of that city. Their arrival there was the result of the scattering that followed the wave of persecution that arose in Jerusalem in connection with Stephen.

Q.—It appears, does it not, that they were preceded at Antioch by some who preached only to Jews? (ver. 19).

A.—Yes; there are differing measures of intelligence among the servants of Christ; some are slow to move out from the routine to which they have hitherto confined themselves, slow to recognize the action and leading of the Spirit of God.

Q.—But in spite of that, these of verse 19 were true servants of Christ, as true as those of verse 20.

A.—To be sure. And it is beautiful to see the nature of their service. When it speaks of their preaching the Word, the verb used is not one of the two ordinary words for preaching in the New Testament. It is neither κηρύσσω, to herald; nor ἐυαγγελίζω, to proclaim glad tidings; but λαλέω, to talk. They simply talked the Word of God; it was the theme of their conversation; they presented it thus to people wherever they met them, on the road, in the streets, in the markets, in the inns, in the houses into which they entered, everywhere they went. And a most effectual 'preaching' this sort of preaching is.

REMARK.—I was struck with a saying of a dear aged servant of Christ from Argentina. Referring to his visits here and there; he remarked, 'I went to—and told them the Gospel.' The informal nature of it is delightful.

Q.—What significance is there in the fact that to the Jews they preached the Word, while to the Grecians they preached the Lord Jesus?

A.—Preaching the Word seems to convey the thought of carrying a message based upon what was acknowledged as authoritative. The Jews acknowledged the authority of the Old Testament Scriptures, and the new message is shown to be according to them. See 1 Cor. 15. 3, 4 and Romans 1. 2. The Gentiles had no such standard; to them the message was brought as a simple announcement. The hand of the Lord, working with the preachers, secured acceptance for the message.

Q.—May we expect the hand of the Lord to work with us to-day like this?

A.—It is what we should earnestly pray for. The preaching may be clear and Scriptural, and may be manifestly
earnest, but all is in vain unless the hand of the Lord is with the bearer of the message. We have to pray for guidance, for help in preaching; but above all we should seek that the hand of the Lord may be with us, so that there may be fruit from our preaching.

Q.—We sometimes hear it said that all we have to do is to preach the Word, and that we must leave results to the Lord.

A.—That would degrade us into mere hirelings. We are not only servants of God; we are His children. A mere servant does his master’s bidding and is not concerned as to results. A son, when he serves, is concerned that his service should be fruitful, for he has his father’s interests at heart.

Q.—Must we distinguish, in verse 21, between believing and turning to the Lord?

A.—The former, by itself, is value­less. In chapter 8. Simon believed, but he remained in the bond of iniquity. He had not turned to the Lord. We should aim, not merely at securing credence for the message that we bear, but that souls should positively turn to the Lord, that their believing should manifest itself in that way.

Q.—Why is it “turned to the Lord,” and not “to the Saviour”?

A.—It is the recognition of the claims of Christ. When people turn to Him He turns to them (see Luke 14. 25) and tests the genuineness of their faith by affirming His claim to their allegiance.

Q.—What do we learn from the visit of Barnabas to Antioch?

A.—Barnabas was “a good man,” and when he came it was not to criticize, nor to make nasty remarks, such as “Let’s hope they will stand,” or “Time will show if they are real.” He was glad when he saw what God’s grace had done. A good man always rejoices at the work of grace, even though he himself may have had no actual part in it.

Q.—Then follows his exhortation?

A.—Yes; and his rejoicing with those that rejoiced made it acceptable. The point of his exhortation is that they should cleave to the Lord, not by fits and starts, but with purpose of heart. Purpose of heart has to show itself with us in two ways. First, in resolutely turning from evil. (See Daniel 1. 8). Then in cleaving to the Lord. This involves discipleship and reproach.

Q.—Other things are said of Barnabas, besides that “he was a good man”?

A.—Yes; he was “full of the Holy Ghost.” And so should we be. This is a vastly different thing from being instructed in the doctrine of the Holy Ghost. We may know all about His coming at Pentecost, and how He dwells in us, and works in our soul, how He is the seal, the earnest and the anointing. But God wants us to be filled with the Spirit.

Q.—What hinders?

A.—Selfishness, love of ease, worldly-mindedness, pride, and a thousand other things.

Q.—What does it really mean, to be filled with the Holy Ghost?

A.—It means that one is entirely controlled by Him, so that the heart is engaged with Christ, and the eye of the soul fixed on Him. Then, when one speaks, one speaks of CHRIST, and there is power and unction with the words.

Q.—Since the work of God was prospering so wonderfully at Antioch, why should Barnabas want Saul to come there? Were there not enough preachers on the spot? Could not Saul have employed his time and gift to better advantage in some more needy place?
A.—Work always makes more work, and where God has been blessing richly there is always an open door for helpful ministry. When we hear of many souls being blessed in any foreign country, or any district at home, it is often an indication that labourers are needed there, even more than in places where there is no preaching of the gospel.

Q.—Why should Barnabas concern himself about Saul’s movements? Why should he not leave it to the Lord to guide and send His servant?

NOTES FOR PREACHERS.

"NOT by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit saith the Lord of hosts." When the angel of the Lord was conversing with Zachariah, he said, "This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel;—Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit," and it is well for any vessel which the Lord may be using, or which may be waiting on the Lord, if haply He will use him, to bear this in mind. All the might and power when the Lord works in grace among men is by His Spirit. It is good too for the vessel to receive and treasure up the negative "not," as applied to himself. "Not by might nor by power." Resurrection power working amid death, around and within, is what we have to count upon.

I believe that times of seclusion are necessary for each of us in one way or another. I see great importance in the Lord leading His disciples apart to rest awhile, and when He was alone He expounded all things to His disciples. Reading the word and prayer are necessary, and great help comes to us through ministry; but there is another exercise which surpasses all the others; indeed the others are, I might say, invalid without it: I mean meditation. "Meditate on these things, give thyself wholly to them." I believe as your natural constitution requires rest, without which all your power would become enfeebled, however you might eat and drink; so with the spiritual man; however much you may take in, and receive in an honest and good heart, there must be, like a grain of wheat, months underground unseen by any mortal eye—a secret germinating before there is the blade—anything to be seen. The more valuable the grain the longer it requires under ground; thus the deeper the truth one receives, the longer the time of meditation required before it characterizes one.

Think not lightly of the message you carry to men. Remember—think of it continually, and often on your knees—that before you could go forth with the word, your Master and Lord had to tread that weary way from Pilate’s judgment hall to the hill of Calvary, with thorn-crowned head and a cross upon the shoulders. He had to hang upon that cross, with nails making gaping wounds in hands and feet; He had to cry, "My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me," and "I thirst," and "It is finished." And then the blood poured forth from the wounded side; and all this happened that you might first be saved and then carry the Gospel of salvation to others. Thus it behoved Christ to suffer and be raised again the third day, that repentance and remission of sins might be preached in His Name among all nations.
IN CHRIST. (Rom. 8. 1, 39.)

SUBSTANCE OF AN ADDRESS.

By natural generation we are all in Adam, for we all derive from him, and from him in his fallen, not in his innocent, condition. We have our moral nature from him, and are a race of sinful beings obnoxious to the judgment of God. By that one man sin entered into this world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all; for that all have sinned. To this it may be replied that infants die, and that overt acts of sin can scantily be put down to their account. Quite true. But leave them alone for a very little time, and you will find that in every one of them a very strong will quickly manifests itself. And what is that? Nothing else than sin. Sin is lawlessness: it is doing one's own will. Nothing but one will, and that the will of God, should be done in the universe. You and I should do His will, and so should every intelligent being. But in this world people think it quite right to do their own will, and as far as ever they can do it. What waddling is there who for one moment thinks he is here to do God's will? He may, if he is of a generous turn of mind, think that he ought to do all the good he can for those about him, but the good that he supposes he is doing has its origin in his own natural inclination, and not in the will of God, though if he is religiously inclined he may hope that in the day of judgment it will go down to his credit. It is thought that if one is only kind to one's neighbours, does all he can for the good of humanity, and leads a moral life, all will be well with him in the day of judgment.

Surely if we all acted thus we should lead happier lives than we do at present in this hard, selfish, grasping, cruel world. But what about God? While we think upon our neighbour, is He to be ignored? What is the first and great commandment? Is it not, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind"? The second is, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." But men make the second first, last, and only commandment, because in this world there are but few who have any respect for God. People are ready to assume that they have done all that is required of them, when they act fair and square with their neighbours, and abstain from trespassing upon what may be supposed to be their rights. But in most instances the reason this principle is in measure carried out, is because a man's neighbour will not allow his rights to be infringed. He will carelessly trample upon the rights of God, and expect God to take no notice of all that he is doing. Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the hearts of the sons of men are set to do evil. God's day of judgment is long delayed, but man's comes the day he finds you have trespassed upon him. But the "Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil" is sure to come, and then it shall be woe to those that imagined that God thought as little about lawlessness as they themselves did.

Perhaps you will say to me, What would your own works merit in that day? I can only say this, that if God took me up and dealt with me on the ground of the works done by me in my fallen nature, I could get nothing but the lowest place in the lake of fire, because I have sinned against Him in numberless ways, doing my own will when I should have been doing His, and closing my ear against the gospel of His grace. If any of us got what we deserved, what an eternity of unutterable anguish that would be!
In the Son of God I see that which man ought to be, with respect to his behaviour upon earth. Coming into the world, in His servant character, He said: "Lo, I come (in the volume of the Book it is written of Me) to do Thy will, 0 God." Having taken the form of a servant, and being made in the likeness of men, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. He went to the utmost limit in His obedience. In the garden when the cup in all its bitterness was before His mind He said: "Not My will, but Thine be done." There I get perfect Man under the eye of God, and I say, That is what I ought to be in obedience. But in my natural state I am not that. I am a rebel against the authority of God, and without the intervention of God in grace I shall perish for ever. For those in the first Adam—after the old order—after the flesh—there is nothing but condemnation, for that race is a race of God-hating sinners. Death puts a period to man's existence here on earth, and after this comes the resurrection and the judgment, and after that the lake of fire. What else can be done with creatures who refuse to allow their Creator to regulate their behaviour according as He thinks right, and who will not have His interference in their councils, plans, and projects, which are not only destructive to themselves but ruinous to His creation? A God who loves righteousness could not allow such a state of things to continue. He must bring it to an end in judgment. But this is the state and condition of all in the first Adam, the disobedient and fallen head, from whom we all, by nature, have our origin.

But the obedient Man, the Man of whom I have been speaking, is the last Adam, the One who took flesh and blood in order that He might be last Adam, and lifegiving Spirit to all who welcome the salvation that is in Him. In Him are found righteousness, life, salvation, and all else that the sinner can need. There is no condemnation to them that are in Him. If we believe in Him who raised our Lord Jesus from the dead, who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification, these blessings, that we so much need, shall all be ours.

He died for our sins. Having suffered the judgment due to them, He gave up the life in which He bore them, and with the giving up of that life the sins of all who believe the Gospel are gone out of existence. Our sins that would have come up against us in the day of judgment are gone as completely as is the life of flesh and blood in which Christ bore them. Our sins can no more be found than can a Christ in flesh and blood be found.

And now we are held by God to be righteous on the principle of faith, just as Abraham was. He believed God, and God reckoned it to him as righteousness. No man's works can justify him before God, for all men are sinners; but all can be justified by faith, and therefore is repentance and forgiveness of sins preached to all men under heaven.

Perhaps you say, I do things I should not do every day. But all the sins you speak of were laid to the charge of our Saviour on the cross, and the shedding of His blood was the end of them all in the judgment of God. Perhaps you say, I know I am forgiven the past, but what troubles me is the sins I have committed since I was converted. Yes, but I am speaking of the ground laid in the cross, whereby you could be righteously forgiven. It was in the cross of Christ, centuries before they were committed, that God dealt in judgment with them. You were forgiven when you believed; but the work, on the ground of which you were forgiven, was done in the death of your Saviour.

But turn with me to Rom. 6. 6. I read there: "Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him." Here it is not merely that our sins have been dealt with, but the man that
committed the sins has come under the judgment of the cross. It is not only the fruit of the tree that has been condemned, but the axe that has been applied to the tree itself; it has been condemned—root, branch, fruit, and all. Do away with the evil fruit of a bad tree, and there will be another crop of evil fruit in the next season. Our old man is all that we were as in the life of the first Adam. Paul could say: "I am crucified with Christ." This is more than the putting away of sins: the sinner has received his judgment. And what else does he say? He says: "Christ liveth in me." All of us, looked at as after the old order, are in the life of the fallen head. But now the believer is in the life of the risen and glorified Head, the last Adam. He is a life-giving Spirit. Having suffered for us, and having made propitiation for our sins, He can now communicate His own life to those who believe on Him. And in that life I live to God.

I come to chapter 7. 4, of Romans, and there I read: "Ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to Him that is raised from the dead, that ye should bring forth fruit unto God." Oh, then, I see, I am not only dead to sin, but I am dead to the law also. But how have I become dead to the law? Why just as I have become dead to sin—by the body of Christ. Not by my death, but by the death of Christ who died in my stead. He has made me to live by the power of the life that is in Himself. The life that is in the risen Christ is the life that is in every believer. I partake of the life that is in Him who is dead to both sin and the law, and therefore it is my privilege to reckon, that all that He is dead to, to that am I also dead. When He suffered upon the cross that death of shame and abandonment of God, it was not a death that He deserved, but a death that I deserved. I appropriate that death as mine. I say that death that He died was my death: it was my desert, not His.

Perhaps you will say, You have no right to say that that death was yours. It was for everyone else as well as for you. True, but you will find no salvation in it unless you appropriate it; that is, make it your own. I have not only a God-given right to make that death my own, but I should lose my soul for ever if I did not make it mine. It is no use your saying He died for us all. The living Bread is for us all, but it is like your natural bread, no one can eat for you; you must eat for yourself, or starve. You cannot appropriate Christ for your neighbour, your neighbour must take Christ for himself. You cannot blame me if I lay hold of Christ for my own individual salvation. I need Him, and God has brought Him within the reach of all, and though all might reject Him, I stretch forth the hand of faith and lay hold of Him as my own personal Saviour. I shall not blame you if you lay hold of Him, and claim Him as your own; indeed it is just the thing I desire you to do; and I assure you, that if you do not lay hold of Him thus by faith, you will assuredly perish.

Perhaps you say, There is a great deal said about faith, but can you tell us what it is? Faith is just the consciousness in your soul that God has spoken. Have you not heard His voice in the Glad Tidings of His grace? Is the Gospel not the Gospel of God? Is it not addressed to you? Is it not the Word He wishes you to hear, and to submit to? Do you not need the blessings set before you by its means? Why then hesitate? It is for you, and the desire of God is that you might have it.

Do not seek to hinder me from making Him my own. I need Him. I cannot do without Him. I will have no other substitute. I will listen to no other voice. I will have no other name. There is no salvation in any other. His blood cleanseth from all sin. If you believe in Him you come under the cleansing power of that
blood. If you reject Him, that blood will stain your garments in the day of judgment with the guilt of murder.

In His death your sins are gone, and you are justified by faith, and the love of God is shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Spirit given to you. You have also justification of life; that is, you have a life to which sin can never be attached (Rom. 3. 4. 5.). The man that committed the sins is also gone in the judgment of that cross (Rom. 6.). You are now in Christ, in the last Adam, where condemnation can never be.

This is very sweeping, is it not? The sins, the nature that committed them, and all else that was offensive to God—the whole ground is cleared in the judgment of the cross. Not a remnant of the old order left. The flesh may be still in me, and it is, and ready to assert itself, but it is not what I am in my relationship with God. It does not come in there. I am what I am as in Christ, and I am alive to God in Him. It is not what Adam was I am, but it is what Christ is I am.

We have been occupied with the first verse of Rom. 8. Now look at the two verses at the end of the same chapter. The apostle says: "I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." The love of God came into this world in the person of Christ, and came to light in all its power in His cross, and now rests in Him in resurrection, and that is where God has placed the believer. In Christ there is no condemnation, but that is what there is not there. What is there there? You are there, and the love of God is there, and you are both there together. Do you think that Christ can ever be separated from the love of God? Oh no, you say; that would be impossible.

But do you not see that if you are in Christ, where the love of God is, He would have to be separated from that love before you could? Perhaps you are saying to yourself, in the language of the doubting soul: "Oft it gives me anxious thought: Do I love my Lord, or no? am I His? or am I not?" But for the moment I do not want you to trouble yourself about your love to Him, I want you to occupy yourself with His love to you. As I have said, He has placed you in Christ, where His love has found its everlasting dwelling-place, and you are to sit down in His presence with a thankful heart, and bask in the sunshine of that love.

I will refer to another Scripture, and then I have done. Turn to 2 Cor. 12. Paul says there: "I knew a man in Christ." And he speaks of that man as having been caught up into heaven. Now do you not think he must have been fit for heaven, if he was caught up into it? And it was into the third heaven, the immediate presence of God. And he seems to have been quite at home there. Let me ask you a question: Do you think that Christ is fit for that place? Oh, yes, you say, He is perfectly fit for it. But I am in Him, and I have His life; and what is in me that is not fit for that place is that which I was in my natural condition, and that has come under the judgment of God in the cross, and it forms no part of me as in Christ, and in relationship with God.

This evil principle I have to count not myself, and in the power of His Spirit to bring upon it the sentence of death, so that nothing but the new man may be in activity. I may become careless, and then the flesh will surely assert itself. But I should never become careless, but should ever be on the alert to see that it is not allowed in any of its movements.

In Christ is a very abstract term. Paul makes a distinction between the man in Christ and himself as the Corinthians saw him. To know what
a man in Christ is I must know what Christ is, for what He is the man in Him is. In Christ is new creation. There is nothing of the old there. We have a new life, new nature, new relationships with God, with Christ, and with one another. Old things have passed away, and all things are become new. In Christ there is not Jew and Gentile, bond and free, male and female, but all are one in Him. But as long as we are down here these distinctions exist. In Christ there is none of them. And if we are in Christ, Christ is in us as life, and the world should see nothing else coming out of us but Christ.

Well, I must close. I want you to think of these things that lie at the foundation of our relationships with God, because we are face to face with a terrible state of things in the Christian profession. The Bible is of no value to the present generation. It has had its day, but that day is past. So they tell us. Well, John says: “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. And this is the promise that He has promised us, eternal life.” May God bless His own Word.

“THE WORLD PASSETH AWAY, AND THE LUST THEREOF.”

We pity you who have no kingdom but this world. Every night that draws its sable curtain silently attests the shortness of your reign; every grey hair and incipient wrinkle or deep furrow indicate that your monarchy is perishing; every storm that rages threatens to destroy some portion of your territory. Time is eating into your crown, the moth and rust are doing their deadly work on your throne, and you, though you are known as a prince on earth, will be branded as a pauper in eternity. You have made a fearful miscalculation, the glamour that Satan has cast upon the world has deceived your all but blind eyes. You are pursuing the wrong and turning away from the right. You imagine your possessions to be true gold when ten thousand voices proclaim that they are lies and vanity. Your kingdom is corrupt, your treasures will soon, even to you, declare their rottenness. You feel yourself, and that right often, that they are passing away; the awful thing about it is that in your eagerness to hold them you are destroying yourself, you are playing the part of a desperate suicide, refusing even to consider the acceptance of a kingdom which cannot be moved, that God, even our God, offers to you, and still offers it, though you have spurned His offer a thousand times, and still spurn it.

Ah, what will you do when death makes his unwelcome appearance to conduct you from this world into scenes unlighted by a single ray? Death is stern and cruel and will not heed any protest. Go in that day you will, out of your possessions, without a title to any throne anywhere in the boundless universe. Possessions perished and gone, and the eyes that once looked upon them with a sinful pride now looking upon a dreary blank, while a voice, sounding from an inaccessible region, deepens your already insufferable horror by these words, “Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and now thou art tormented.”
ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

What will be the position and occupation of the Church, i.e., the Saints during the Millenium?

AUSTRALIA. The church in its oneness will be the bride, the Lamb's wife, and as such she will come out of heaven as the holy Jerusalem, to be the vessel for the display of the glory of God to the universe. All the nations of earth will walk in the light that shines upon them through it, i.e., whatever wisdom and direction they need for any question—whether political or of any other sort will come to them through the church, for God and the Lamb will be in it (Rev. 21. 9-27).

The saints who form the church will have individual positions in the Kingdom varying according to their faithfulness on earth, as Luke 19. 12-27 teaches; but all will be associated with the Lord in the judgment of the world and of angels (1 Cor. 6. 2, 3).

Matthew 18. 8-9.

The meaning of this statement of the Lord, given in another connection in the Sermon on the Mount, is that if there is in any of us any evil, anything that would be a cause of stumbling it must not be cherished but got rid of. It is no use to plead that it is as necessary to us as a right eye or hand or foot, even if it were so it must be cut off. The one necessity is the salvation of the soul; no evil is necessary; unsparing self-judgment is. To say that sin is necessary, and to cling to it as one would to a member of the body that we deemed indispensable, would be to prove that God's judgment on sin had not been accepted and that His grace was unknown, and would clearly indicate that the one who so reasoned, valued ease and pleasure in this world to eternal life in the next. If one who had professed the name of Christ reasoned and acted in that way it would be a sure sign of departure from Christ, and that there was no true work of grace in the soul. The Lord will surely preserve all His own, and it is not the will of the Father that any of them should perish, but all who are truly His acquiesce in God's judgment of sin at the cross, and desire to judge it in themselves no matter how much they may fail. It is in the power of the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus that we are able to mortify the deeds of the body.

Should the Lord's Supper be taken in the Evening?

QUERY. It does not follow that because the word used signifies an evening meal, that the Lord's Supper should only be eaten in the evening. To lay down such a rule would be to impose a legal regulation upon that which speaks entirely of grace—the new Covenant. Nor does the fact that it was instituted by the Lord in the evening of the day make it imperative upon us that we should partake of it at that hour, for had it been so we should also have had to be particular as to the day of its institution also; which was Thursday and not the first day of the week. Yet the fact of it being called the Supper in 1 Cor. 11. is deeply significant. It was on the night of His betrayal that He gave to us this memorial feast, and it is still the night of His betrayal. Hence it is a Supper, a meal for the night. We find our solace and strength in His love expressed in death for us, and express our loyalty to Him in partaking of His Supper as
long as the night of His betrayal and rejection lasts. We shall breakfast with Him in the morning of His glory when the night has passed away.

It is true that it was on the evening of the first day of the week that the Lord appeared in the midst of His disciples, but that was because they were not ready to meet Him sooner. He was ready at the dawning of that day, but they were not; He had to seek them out; to bind up the heart of one, ease the conscience of another, chase away the unbelief that blinded the hearts and eyes of others by His ministry and presence. He had spent a busy day of service, preparing them for that meeting, and it took place as early in the day as they were ready for it.

The disciples in Acts 20.7 gathered in the evening for the supper; but probably the reason for this was that they were not so privileged as we are of having the whole of the Lord's day to devote to Himself and His service, and since we are so privileged it is surely only right that we should give to the Lord's supper the first place, and partake of it as early in the day as is consistent with that principle of grace "Tarry one for another."

Should the Lord's Supper be taken fasting?

QUERY. What saith the Scripture? "If any man hunger, let him eat at home. That ye come not together unto condemnation" (1 Cor. 11.34). That surely meant for the Corinthians that they had to satisfy the lawful needs of the body before coming, that they might when together be free from all self-occupation and greed, and so be able to wait upon the Lord and for each other without distraction. The same gracious Lord is ours, and the same principle obtains of us. Every legal enactment of the sort suggested belongs in principle to the Old Covenant which has been set aside by the New.

"Not imputing their trespasses" 2 Cor. 5.19.

J. A. D. This describes the way in which God presented Himself to the world by the incarnation of Christ. He did not appear as Judge imputing offences, as He will do at the great white throne; but He came preaching peace by Jesus Christ (Acts 10.36). The coming of Christ had the nature of a great amnesty. God's attitude towards all was one of forgiveness. To make this effective, Christ had to die, and in His propitiatory death God has found a basis of perfect justice on which He can not merely hold back His judgment for a time, but offer eternal forgiveness unto all—but this is only upon all them that believe. But "not imputing their offences unto them" is a very different matter to Christ being delivered for our offences; only the believer can take up this latter statement, for the truth of substitution comes in here, and it applies only to the believer. Offences will never be imputed to the believer, he is clear of them all because Christ was delivered for them, but offences will be imputed to all whose names are not written in the book of life at the great judgment (Rev. 20.). Though God is not now imputing offences to men, but beseeching them to be reconciled to Him.

What is the meaning of saving oneself? (1 Tim. 4.16.)

P. SALVATION is used in a different sense to that in which we generally think of it; it is here preservation from snares and pitfalls that abound; from the seduction of evil spirits and false teachings, and from everything that would lead the feet out of the path of righteousness. As we are watchful, prayerful, walking in godly fear and taking heed to the Word of God—the teaching—we save ourselves from all these things, and in so doing we are also able to save others in the same sense of the word.
THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich."

He reigned in heaven, and angels stood
In silent awe before His throne,
Where rays of glory, like a flood
Of ambient lustre, o'er Him shone:
And heaven's eternal arches rang,
Filled with the echo of His name,
Where thousand times ten thousand sang
With ceaseless joy and glad acclaim;
While ranks of shining seraphim
Struck their bright harps of praise to Him.

He came on earth the Son of man,
He hid His wondrous glory by—
Who in that human face might see
Trace of that power that ruled the sky?
Few were His hours of rest and brief;
His lips refused the cup of mirth—
A man of sorrows and of grief,
He bore the destiny of earth;
A day of toil, a night of prayer,
He taught His wearied frame to bear.

Yes, this is He, and this is love, love unimagined and unknown;
He left the joys of heaven above, turned from His kingdom and His throne;
Yea, cast aside His holy crown, a weary wayfarer became;
Bore e'en Jehovah's bitter frown, endured the cross, despised the shame,
Then conquered hell and burst the grave, and rose omnipotent to save.

"SPIKENARD, VERY COSTLY."

John 12. 3.

It is to Bethany we are called, to join the Saviour in a feast, there to listen to the cadences of that blessed voice, like which "never man spake," there to realize with Him the deepening shadow of His impending cross, and to consider His prophetic anointing. For it was in the pregnant week preceding the world's passover that He was asked to a humble home, to share an evening meal, garnished with love.

Oh, those suppers of the Saviour!
How many sacred memories and precious sayings cluster around them!
For there, the day's work over, the doors closed and the world shut out, in the penumbra of His Divine Presence, the Eternal Word was wont to reveal Himself to the inner circle of His own.

At this supper at Bethany there were two women. We have met them before (Luke 10. 38). It was in connection with the same simple happy function of entertaining, of giving hospitality to the Prophet of Galilee. "Entertaining angels unawares!" why here was the Lord of Life and Glory. Then, as on the present occasion, MARTHA was "serving"; an occupation blessed, yet not the best (the good
is often the enemy of the best). "O Martha, Martha, art still 'busied with much serving,' preparing perhaps, in eastern fashion, an elaborate feast for the Master, Who would have been well content with 'a dinner of herbs where love is,' and who needed the undivided attention of His hosts?"

But MARY was there too; Mary who had lingered long in His presence, had sat at His feet, had treasured His words. And those pondered words had enlightened her mind, and had revealed, as a flash, the way of the Crucified, when all the disciples were preoccupied with the dream of a regnant Messiah. So this thoughtful woman, to the amazement of all present, broke her alabaster box of ointment, and anointed the Lord for His burial.

I. Think first of THE MOTIVE OF MARY'S ACT. That motive was love, pure love. She broke her cruse with no hope of reward, with no pledge of repayment, save to salve her own heart, to give vent to her pent up devotion. She had reached that blessed stage where she had to find an outlet for her love. As has been aptly said, "She must break her cruse of ointment, or else her heart would break." So she found a prophetic outlet which deeply moved the heart of the soon-to-die Saviour. For the shadow of the cross was already heavy upon His heart. The winding sheet of His tomb was high upon His breast. The burden of the world's sin that He was to bear already oppressed Him. So, to His heart, surcharged with sorrow, Mary's act was a tender intimation that she knew the way He went; that she understood something of His travail (perhaps as far as human heart could then understand); that she would anoint Him for His burial. But she did it all for love; that love which "seeketh not its own." Of Mary it might have been truly said:—

"She lives detached days.
She serveth not for praise.
For gold, she is not sold."

No, she served, lived, laboured, and poured out her cruse, "for hire, just love entire."

2. Yet HOW MUCH DID SHE GIVE? Did she carefully pour out upon those sacred feet just enough of the spikenard to make a pleasant impression, just enough to gain for herself the odour of sanctity? Was she like those, who, at the wedding feast, give the cheapest possible gift that will keep up appearances?

Thank God, there was a holy abandon in Mary's giving. There are times when it is unworthy to "count the cost." Such times are when we would give our lives, our strength, our all. Oh! these cold, and cautious, and calculating hearts of ours! "They forsook all, and followed Him"; how often or how long do we really do that for the Master? Does that describe our habitual attitude to Him? Such an abandonment is the surest way to the Father's heart, the surest guarantee of our truest riches; it is the highway into the heavenlies.

Yet what a contrast was Mary's act and attitude to the continual self-seeking, the carnal outlook which obsessed the hearts of the disciples. For at the most tender and sacred moments, the "strife which of them should be the greatest" checked the Saviour's most precious revelations. It sullied even the sanctity of the upper room. It was only exorcised by the Holy Ghost at Pentecost. Oh! for Mary's heart and something of Mary's abandon!

3. THE RESULTING SWEET SAVOUR. First, there is the privilege, the possibility of being a sweet savour unto the world's Saviour. How it evidently refreshed Him, comforted Him that day, at the simple feast made for Him by those lowly loving hands. With the jeers of Jerusalem still sounding in His ears, surely Mary's act of love and confidence must have been the sweetest savour of that day.
and of many days; that which pleased Him the most.

And for us? With our lives often to be lived amidst the commonplace, what is there for us to do? What precious cruse is there for us to outpour in these busy modern days? How can we show Him our devotion, we, whose hands, whose thoughts, must so often be occupied with pressing daily duties? Why, it is still blessedly possible for God to make them the alabaster boxes to be poured out at His feet. FOR HE CAN ENABLE US IN DAILY LIFE, TO DO THE LITTLE THINGS AS THOUGH THEY WERE GREAT THINGS, AS THOUGH THEY WERE GOD'S THINGS. He can add such a factor, can give such a fragrance that “the cup of cold water” will become a draught for the Lord of Glory. There is still room and to spare for poured-out lives, spite of the world’s disdain. And for those so doing, daily He can transform, can transfigure the day. So that though the feet still tread life’s dusty ordinary pathway, heart, brain, and love may move on a higher plane, daily they may dwell on the heavenly horizon.

But are not heaven’s courts His permanent abode? And amid all the hosannas and the homage, the incense and the offerings of the hosts above, can He, will He notice and appreciate our lowly, hidden service? Can the savour of His Own sweetness, which through the Holy Ghost may distil from the humblest hearts, can it still reach even unto Him? Yes, for here we have a very sure, a very comfortable word of prophecy, being assured by the Holy Ghost (2 Cor. 2. 15) that we are indeed “unto God a sweet savour of Christ.”

4. And that savour may extend, too, to those who surround us in life. “The house was filled,” and all were sensible of Mary’s offering. It is our happy possibility to go through life with a radiance, a real fragrance of the Crucified. There is large room, too, and desperate need for many alabaster boxes to-day, for the pouring out of many lives we count the most precious in the darkness of the world’s midnight lands. Never did the Lord so need the fellowship of more of His own in the foreign mission field, never were the rewards so great.

Yet if, in our ardour, we seek to furnish a sweet savour of Him, merely through the historic “imitation of Christ,” we shall be sadly disillusioned. For He is beyond “imitation” by mortal man, and our imitation graces will be only spurious, of self, not of Him. And men do not want an imitation Christ, they crave for “the very same Jesus.” But if, instead of seeking to imitate Christ, we shall so enthrone Him in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost, that He is supreme, then daily, and simply and naturally, we may manifest Christ. And we shall be on sure ground, for it will indeed be the true light “that now shineth” out of our hearts and through our lives. And such shining will be permanent, and inevitable and convincing.

5. THE FIRST SOCIAL GOSPEL. But in spite of the sweet savour, there is still the selfish question of the disciples: “Why was this waste?” this waste of anointing those sacred feet, that sacred head? So, in that solemn moment, even His own would have robbed Him of His due, who was presently to face Calvary for their sakes. Instead of endowing Him (and so themselves), they would have the ointment given to the poor. Here was indeed the earliest beginning of the present day “social gospel,” which too often ignores the claims and rights of Christ (and is therefore no “God’s news”) to centre all effort and attention on alms and good works. There is indeed our pressing duty to our neighbour, “let us do good unto all men.” But first let us “render unto God the things that are God’s.” Then
we may "have the mind of Christ," and His guidance and Divine programme for the carrying of deliverance to mankind.

6. Think next of THE UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY. Mary apparently had obtained the spikenard that she might anoint the Lord's body in burial. Possibly it was only an afterthought which made her decide to anoint Him beforehand in this way. In any case she was well advised to do so. For there were four women later who would have done the same, and set out with their spices, only to find an empty tomb. They failed, for the hour, the opportunity for anointing, had passed. IT IS PASSING TO-DAY! Not in the realms of glory will we be able to share in His sufferings, to pour out our lives and service at His feet, to help in bearing the cross. Here, and here alone, such service may be ours.

And the far-reaching effects, who can foretell or measure? Could Mary have dreamed that the cruse she broke that evening would blazon her love abroad, through all the centuries, wherever Christ is loved. Yet our service, our little cross carried, our poor lives outpoured, may have wondrous and eternal and ever blessed results. Yet for all too many of His own, the cry will come, with the dawning: "Too late! Too late! Ye cannot serve Him now!" not in His humiliation. For the time of the cross bearing will have passed, the time of sharing His sufferings, with all its formative, blessed, sanctifying results. Oh, "to-day . . . to-day harden not your hearts!"

7. BREAKING THE CRUSE. Mary, to make sure that there should be no half measures, that the last drop might be outpoured, not only emptied, but broke the cruse. And for us, in our day and generation, it is still a true and literal and searching fact that only broken hearts and broken wills are worthy to partake of the "broken bread." Hearts broken in the truest, happiest sense of the word. For I think He gently breaks down our wills and our hearts with love and kindness, more often than with a Gethsemane of suffering. Both are often used by the Celestial Surgeon. Yet I believe the normal experience of our days is to continually enjoy "the fellowship" of His joys, even though in the background there is also "the fellowship of His sufferings." And the dreaded sufferings, what shall we say of them? As we look back, the verdict of our innermost hearts may become that of the saint of old who wrote: "I was sometime in being burned; for me, I have forgot it all."

For let us take heart of grace, that when He does lead into Gethsemane He will always minister unto us the merciful anaesthetic of His love, and of the many prayers for us He will arouse in the many saints. So will He soothe the pain, and extract the sting, and gently heal the wound, while working out the benison of His plan for our lives. Yes, assuredly, looking back on His many dealings with the soul, we shall find the joy and the gladness predominate, and that with joy we may be continually drawing water out of the wells of salvation.

Truly,

"Weary the cares, the jars, The lots, of every day. Yet the heavens fill with stars When Christ comes on His way; And where He stays, all joy must stay."

Here, then, and now, may we offer and present unto Him, the Lord of Glory, ourselves, our souls, our service, to be our reasonable, holy and continual sacrifice.
NOTES FOR PREACHERS.

**Love** is the best gift of the evangelist—love to the Saviour, love to the sinner. But when that love rises to a passion, there must be true, burning eloquence. Never, never, O my soul, be content with less than this. Love to the Saviour, love for souls, is good, but the evangelist needs more. Seek that thy love may rise to a fervent flame. The work demands it. Let everything that would hinder thy work be consumed on the altar of entire consecration. Preaching is not teaching, neither is teaching preaching. Appeal to souls, plead with them, lay hold on them, agonize for them. It is a matter of life and death—of ineffable, eternal blessedness; or unutterable, eternal woe. Realize the future in the present, and let thy cry to the God of all grace be that not one soul may go away from the preaching unimpressed, unblessed, unsaved. Heaven is in earnest, hell is in earnest, be thou in deep, deep earnest.

A. M.

A young preacher in conversation with another, older than he, was deploring the fact that he rarely ever saw any results from his labours.

"You don't, of course, expect to get conversions every time you stand up to speak, do you?" asked his friend.

"No, of course I don't." was his reply.

"I see," came the wise rejoinder, "and that is just the reason why you see so little fruit."

In the Gospel of Mark—the Gospel of the true Servant—the twelve apostles were chosen by the Lord to be WITH HIM in chapter 3. They were not SENT FORTH to serve Him until chapter 6. Mark well the order; if we ignore it we shall most surely waste our time, manifest our own presumption, and grieve our Lord who loves our company more than our service, and whose company only can fit us to serve.

Between being chosen for service and sent out to serve He taught them two great lessons. In the parable of the Sower He taught the absolute necessity of the Word of God which He, the great Sower of the seed, had brought into the world. There can be no blessing for men from God, or fruit from men for God apart from the Word of God. The preacher who does not understand this is ignorant of the very first thing in the service of the Lord (ver. 13), and nothing else in Divine things can be understood if this is not known. "Preach the word" is one of the last exhortations, divinely inspired, given by the great apostle to the Gentiles to Timothy.

It is popular to set it aside. Preachers by the thousand consider it to be out of date and substitute their own notions and speculations for it; as well might a farmer expect to reap a harvest of wheat without first sowing the corn, and whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap. Those who thus refuse the Word of God are serving neither God nor man, but the great enemy of both, and must surely answer to God for their sinful folly. Preachers, let this fact be fundamental in all your service—the Word of God is the one indispensable weapon in the conversion of the soul of men.

Chapter 5. clearly demonstrates the personal power of the Lord. Disease and death and demons are all vanquished by His presence and Word, and it was only after witnessing this that the disciples were sent forth upon their mission. We, also, who preach the Word cannot do so with confidence and true success unless we carry in our souls the sense of His greatness and power, His all-sufficiency for every case of need. And it cannot but be
Service is to be carried out in obedience, not in setting ourselves to do something, but in subjection of heart to the Lord. The principle of righteousness comes out really in the obedience of love; and hence there is often needed with us that our souls should be quieted as a weaned child, sitting at the Lord's feet, in order to know something of the manifold grace which He entrusts to the hands of His servants. The reception of the gift of grace is the first thing, then using it as He would have us; this is obedience.

"Humble obedience near the door doth stand,
Expecting a command;
Than whom in waiting nothing seems more slow,
Nothing more quick when she doth go."

THE PRESENT PERIOD A PUZZLE.

By the present period I mean the time that has elapsed since the departure of our Lord to heaven, and to the throne of the Father, where for these nineteen centuries He has been seated, and where He will sit until God begins to make His enemies His footstool.

No doubt, ere that beginning, the church—that is, the saints who believe on Him during these centuries, as well as all who "sleep in Jesus,"—will have been caught up to meet the Lord in the air and to be for ever with Him; but thereafter they come with Him, and that coming will introduce a new era, and a very different state of things on earth. It will be one of government, rule, authority, power, and the sway of a sceptre whose exercise will admit of no disobedience, no self-will, no anarchy. Then a "king shall reign in righteousness"—One in whose mighty arm omnipotence shall rest, whose wisdom is perfect, and whose enemies shall therefore "lick the dust."

It will be the reign of righteousness, and such a reign is quite conceivable. Place in the hands of the ruler these two qualities, perfect wisdom and perfect power; grant an absolute monarch possessed of these two essentials for government, then such a rule is intelligible. The absence of them is evidently the cause of the breakdown of rule in every nation in the world.

Such a reign will be seen in the thousand years of the millennium. It is not seen, nor can be seen to-day. And why not? Because the King sits, not on His own throne but on that of the Father—a purely heavenly throne, so that, instead of being King on earth, He is Head of the body, the church—that wonderful vessel which, called by grace out of all nations to be His companion in suffering now, shall be His Body and Bride in glory when this peculiar period has passed away.

Now, in what way is this period peculiar? Wherein lies the puzzle? It is the day of grace. Grace reigns through righteousness and is, to use a figure, the buffer which prevents collision. Did pure righteousness reign,
The Present Period a Puzzle

there could be no mercy nor long-suffering. The commission of sin would involve immediate judgment, as the millennial day will prove. But to-day and throughout these centuries, grace has reigned in the work of salvation. God does not interpose in judgment. Things take their own course, nations are allowed to plan their own destiny and to fight their own battles. Heaven does not intervene. Governments rise and fall. Man may choose them as he pleases. He may adopt a form after his taste, be it monarchic, or republican, or any other. God over-turns in view of His predetermined King and Ruler. Nations may have self-determination to-day, and make a mess of it. They will all have to accept God's determination, and the place designed for each by-and-by.

Hence the state of things is enigmatical. Often in pious language it is said that "the Lord reigneth." But does He? That He will do so is certain; but the prince and god of this world is His great enemy and ours—Satan. "God is behind the scenes, but He moves the scenes behind which He is," as another has well said. That He overrules is also certain, else He would not be God, but He is out of our sight, while, in Divine wisdom, His people walk by faith.

This period has been called a parenthesis in the dealings of God. Other ages (and this can hardly be called one) have run their well-defined course under clearly marked administrative order, whether patriarchal or Mosaic, with highly pronounced dealings in varied ways by God. Not so this period. The silence is significant. The absence of miracles and signs should awaken attention. A Stephen suffers martyrdom while a Nero may play his flute. The ever-blessed Son of God may be spat upon and nailed to the cross, while the world pursues its course and heaven is silent.

All true, but not for ever! throughout this long and peculiar day the Spirit of God has quietly but very effectively moved over the peoples of the earth in one unerring line. He has been calling out of each nation, whatever its political status, and irrespective of its moral condition, a people for the name of the Lord. This, in the aggregate, forms the church of God; and it is this, and not the special aspirations or aims of the nations, or their leaders, that is the chief interest of Heaven.

The root of the controversy between God and man is the crucifixion of Christ. That is the terrible crux, while sins innumerable and intensified call loudly for the righteous judgment of a thrice holy God. To be right with God on this point is supremely important, so much so that we read: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth in him" (John 3:36). In the light of this fact, the ups and downs, the fortune or misfortune of nations, nay, of the world itself, is exceedingly insignificant.

To those, however, who look and labour for the permanent adjustment of things down here, during this period of heaven's apparent indifference, there can be only disappointment. Their attention is not fixed on that, or on Him, who is God's prime Object, and to whom, spite of all opposition, "every knee shall bow." It is clearly this that explains the enigma of the present dealings of God. It is the key. His hand, which is full of mercy to the penitent, is against the world, which, as in the days before the flood, is devoting all its energy to matters of self-interest and pleasure, to the neglect of the call of God.

Hence, there need be no complaint if such things and worse are put in preference to Him. The apparent puzzle is easily unravelled: the blame rests on man himself.
THE TWO RESURRECTIONS.

There have always been Sadducees in the world—men who have said there was no such thing as a resurrection of the body. The scepticism of modern days is no novelty. When Christ was upon the earth there were those who denied the truth of resurrection. Indeed, one of the most striking proofs of the terrible state into which the Jews had fallen at that time is found in the fact that very soon after the death of Christ the mitre of the high priest was worn by a Sadducee. The Sadducee errs, as the highest authority has told us, "not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God" (Matt. 22. 29).

We do not read much about resurrection in the Old Testament. There are distinct allusions to it, but we must remember that the Old Testament speaks of an earthly people with earthly blessings and earthly judgments, and therefore there is very little in it about a future state. The great theme of Old Testament historians and prophets is the dealings of God with people on the earth. But when we come to the New Testament we find many great truths, which were barely hinted at in the Old, standing out distinctly in the full light of revelation. Resurrection is one of these truths, and when we speak of it we are not groping in the dark or standing upon uncertain ground; we are able to speak with all the assurance that the Word of God can give.

The truth of resurrection is peculiar to Divine revelation. The most cultured and intelligent of the heathen have no idea of it; even those of them who believe in the immortality of the soul have not the remotest idea of a resurrection of the body. The Athenians had heard of the immortality of the soul for at least four hundred years before Paul visited them, and yet they mocked when he began to speak to them about the resurrection of the body. The fact that our bodies will be raised is a truth which lies entirely outside the power of man's intelligence to discover, or of his reason to explain. It is altogether a truth of Divine revelation. We are obliged, then, to turn at once to Scripture for all our information on this subject, for there is absolutely none to be had from any other quarter.

"The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5. 28, 29).

These are very simple words and few in number, but, oh! of what tremendous import to each one of us! All the events, social or political, whether affecting individuals or nations, that have ever happened or that will ever happen in this world, are but as the small dust of the balance if compared with this stupendous act of Divine power which will assuredly be exercised towards "all that are in the graves." Buried in imperial mausoleum or tossed by unceremonious hands into a pauper's grave; laid in the churchyard or piled with a thousand others in a trench on the battle-field; burnt to a cinder in the flame or buried five hundred fathoms deep in the caverns of the ocean-bed, ALL shall hear that resurrection voice, and shall come forth.

There is no wonder that men who love their sins have tried to make themselves believe that this is not true. No doubt you have heard that in the terrible days of the French Revolution, a hundred years ago, they caused an inscription to be placed over the
entrance to the graveyards and cemeteries—

"DEATH IS AN ETERNAL SLEEP."

This is what the ungodly would like to believe, but in reference to such a matter it is a sad thing to believe a lie. We may dread the truth—it may fill our souls with terror—but it is surely the best and wisest thing to look it fully in the face. A dying infidel manifested signs of fear as the end approached, and some of his friends, such as they were, encouraged him not to be afraid of death, for it would soon all be over. He replied, "It is not death I am afraid of; it is the thought of resurrection that haunts me." Ah, yes! it is a solemn thing to think of coming forth from the grave by God’s resurrection power to stand before Him to give account of oneself as to the deeds done in the body. But the Word of God leaves no uncertainty on this matter. The dust of those whose spirits have departed is resting in their graves until the hour when the voice of the Son of God shall thunder to the remotest corners of the earth, and penetrate to the lowest depth where there is a grain of human dust, and shall summon the dead to come forth. There will be no exception. "ALL" the dead shall hear; "ALL" shall rise and come forth. Solemn, stupendous thought!

Having thus learned from Scripture that all will rise, we may proceed to inquire into the difference in character and time of the Two Resurrections which are spoken of by the Lord as the "resurrection of life" and the "resurrection of damnation." All Christians believe that there will be a resurrection, but there are many who do not know that Scripture speaks very distinctly of TWO resurrections. They have been taught that at the end of the world there will be a general resurrection of the righteous and the wicked, and that all will have to stand before the great white throne, and that Christ will then separate believers from unbelievers, blessing the one class and cursing the other. This teaching has no foundation in Scripture, for we find it clearly brought out in the Word of God that there will be TWO resurrections, with a great interval of time between them.

Let us read a few verses which evidently refer to the first resurrection:—

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the Word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent" (or go before) "them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words" (1 Thess. 4. 13,18).

THE THESSALONIAN BELIEVERS WERE WAITING FOR GOD’S SON FROM HEAVEN (1 Thess. 1. 10); they were looking for His coming to set up the kingdom in glory and power here, and they had evidently been distressed by the fact that some of their number had fallen asleep before that glorious time had come. The thought had apparently entered their minds that the believers who had died in Christ would be at some disadvantage. Paul writes by the Spirit to comfort them, and to unfold the wonderful fact that before the Lord appears in glory to judge and to reign, to be seen by every eye, He is going to descend from heaven and call His saints to meet Him in the air. This is not at the end of the world, for
we shall see presently that the world's history will continue for at least a thousand years afterwards, but this is an event which may take place to-day. The rapture of the church and the coming of Christ to reign are not presented in Scripture as distant events, but as subjects of present hope for the hearts of His saints—a hope which is expected to have present sanctifying power over us.

Paul says, "We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord." If it had been certain that the Lord was not coming for a hundred years, he could not have written like this. He would have had to say, "They which are alive and remain." But to suggest such a thing was in no way in the mind of the Spirit. The hope of the Lord's coming was intended to be the constant expectation of believers from the very first. The end of the world is a distant event, but the rapture of the church may take place to-day.

Note well the words which are used, "The dead in Christ shall rise first." There is no thought here of a general resurrection of righteous and wicked together. The resurrection here spoken of is a special resurrection of a particular class. It is the resurrection of "the dead in Christ." No mention of the wicked dead can be found in the passage. We read in another Scripture that "blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years" (Rev. 20. 6). It must be admitted that the resurrection spoken of in 1 Thessalonians 4. is of the same character as "the first resurrection" spoken of in Revelation 20., in which only the "blessed and holy" have a place; and to this agree the words of the apostle when speaking of the resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15., "Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming" (ver. 23). When we see the specific nature of the first resurrection—that it is entirely a "resurrection unto life"—we can understand the Lord's words in Luke 20. 35: "They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from among the dead, . . . are the children" (or sons) "of God, being the children" (or sons) "of the resurrection."

The departed spirits of believers are not in an unconscious sleep, as some people foolishly and unscripturally suppose. They are in the presence of the Lord; they are with Jesus in the paradise of God; they are with Christ, which is "far better." But they have not yet got glorified bodies; they are not yet conformed to the image of the Son of God; and for this crowning triumph of the power by which He will subdue all things to Himself they await the first resurrection. Their bodies, which were sown in weakness, and dishonour, and corruption, will be raised in power, and glory, and incorruption. "Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor. 15. 54).

"Then," when all the dead in Christ have been raised, "we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air." At this time none but the dead in Christ will be raised; none but believers will hear the assembling shout of the descending Lord. The world will know nothing of that trysted meeting in the air. All will be accomplished "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." Scripture gives us no elaborate description of how events will take place. It is not God's purpose to feed our curiosity, or to occupy our minds with mere events. The Holy Ghost is far more intent on setting before believers THE PERSON who is coming than the manner of His coming. It is "The Lord Himself shall descend." It is no unknown voice
that is about to call believers hence; it is the well-known voice of our Saviour, Shepherd, Friend, the voice of Him who loved us and gave Himself for us, and has washed us from our sins in His own blood. And when the Holy Ghost tells us that we shall be caught up, He does not give us a description of the glory to which we shall be introduced. No; it is to "meet THE LORD in the air." It is lovely to see how the Person of the coming One is set before us, and how all the events and incidents of the rapture are eclipsed by the thought of Himself. This is how God would have it, and it is also as the hearts of those who love Him would have it. And the passage closes with the precious words, "And so shall we ever be with the Lord." This is the very essence of heaven. The glory of heaven to a Christian's mind does not consist in thrones, and crowns, and palms of victory. It is not gates of pearl or streets of gold that are the chief joy of heaven. Heaven is the presence of the Lord. We shall be happy, and our joy will be full for ever, because we shall be "WITH THE LORD."

But what about the unconverted, unbelieving, wicked dead? When will they be raised? Scripture is not silent on this matter, for we are plainly told that "the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished" (Rev. 20. 5). For a thousand years will the saints live and reign with Christ before the wicked will be raised. Then the end of the world will come; the great white throne will be set up; and the "dead, small and great," will "stand before God." But, alas! they will stand before God as those whose names are not written in the Book of Life, and they will stand there to be "judged according to their works." This, indeed, is the "resurrection of damnation" of which the Lord spoke. For as it is impossible to find any mention of the unbelieving dead in 1 Thess. 4., it is alike impossible to find any mention of "the dead in Christ" in connection with the scene of judgment described in Rev. 20. 11-15. The nature and the issue of that judgment are both unspeakably solemn. As to the nature of the judgment we are told that "they were judged every man according to their works," and as to its issue we are told that "whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." And, remember, this judgment is in eternity, and for eternity.

Reader, in which of these two resurrections will you have part? The Lord Jesus Christ may call His saints from their graves to-day. He may remove His whole redeemed company from the earth before another sunrise. If so, would you be found amongst them? Do you know Him as your Saviour? Have you trusted His blood? Are your sins forgiven? Are you ready to meet the Lord? Or would you be left behind to be the unhappy victim of strong delusions, and to endure the unspeakable horrors of that great tribulation which shall come upon all the world; left to lie in a sinner's grave through all that blessed time when millennial peace and joy shall cover the earth under the reign of Christ and His saints, and finally to have part in the resurrection of judgment, and to be cast into the lake of fire?

God forbid that this should be thy portion! To render thy escape possible from such a doom as this, God spared not His Son, but delivered Him up to death and judgment on the cross. If thou wouldst escape eternal wrath and secure eternal blessing, be it known unto thee that God is a SAVIOUR-GOD, and Christ Jesus is set forth as a Mercy-seat through faith in His blood. And the message of God to thee—oh, that it might come to thy soul in Divine sweetness and power!—is, "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).
NOTES ON JEREMIAH, No. 6.

The cursed man and the blessed man.

 CHAPTERS 17., 18., 19. and 20., contain most interesting instruction: they give us the signs of the Potter and the clay (18. 4), also the broken bottle (19. 10), and Pashur's new name (20. 3). These will become plain to us as we proceed.

The sin of Judah, deeply engraved in their hearts, and publicly proclaimed on their hills of idolatry, had kindled a fire which should consume them utterly, for the anger of God was roused against them (17. 1-4). What then was any believing individual to do when God had pronounced this dire destruction of the nation? What is the individual to do now who foresees the doom of the churches as foretold in the Scripture of Truth? Let him not confide in man; let him not make flesh his arm, whether claiming scholarship or otherwise; for to so do is to depart in heart from the Lord. Cursed is the man that does this (5). Faith worketh by love; and where the heart, which is the seat of affection and faith, confides in the Lord, that soul will be preserved from transferring his confidence to man and the arm of flesh, and therefore from the consequences which must inevitably follow such a course. May God speak to us as to this, that none may take the path of the cursed man. It leads to places that are parched and sapless. The soul that is there shall see no good coming, even though it be coming for others, for he is moved away from the hope of the Gospel, and dwells experimentally amid destitution and desolation as in a desert (6).

Let us ask again, What is the believing individual to do at such a time? There is no uncertainty in the answer here given: "Blessed is the man that confideth in the Lord, and whose confidence the Lord is" (7). God never leaves us in a negative attitude, simply saying what we are not to do. Too many dwell continually upon that side only. The blessed man is the one who is marked by positive confidence in the Lord Himself. Here is the secret, then, of soul prosperity at all times. If Israel fails, if the assemblies fail, then the more distinctly is the blessed Lord to be exalted before the faith of the true believer. He becomes His confidence entirely. To whom did we turn for relief as poor repentant sinners? To whom did we go for deliverance when we learned there was no good in us—that is in the flesh? To whom is our heart to turn amid the failure of the assemblies now? The answer to all these questions is the same, Not to man, but to the Lord Himself. Here again is seen the true work of Jeremiah, according to the meaning of His name, "THE EXALTATION OF THE LORD."

But what will be the result for the individual who thus has the Lord as His confidence? Instead of being in parched places, he shall find himself where the living waters never cease to flow. Like a tree planted by never-failing moisture, he shall be always fresh and fragrant. He retains his greenness and fruitfulness at all times, for his wide-spreading roots appropriate the plentiful supplies of God. Strengthened to-day by the Holy Spirit in "the inner man," he has Christ dwelling in his heart through faith, and being rooted in God's unchanging and unfailing love he finds Divine abundance there notwithstanding all the outward failure. How like this is to the blessed or happy man described in the first Psalm! There again we are not simply told what such an one does not do, but the perennial prosperity and seasonable fruitfulness so vividly described are
the rich results of positive delight in the law of the Lord and constant meditation therein. There was One of whom all this was true in perfection, and it is that One we are to consider well, our blessed Lord Jesus Christ. He could say, "Thy law have I hid within My heart." He lived by the Father, His love was the joy and rejoicing of His heart, as He daily confided in Him alone. And, oh! what rich fruit in immeasurable bountifulness results from this for eternal ages.

Just another word before we leave these two men. Of each of them it is said, He "shall not see." Both are blind to something! How great is the contrast though! The cursed man is blind to the coming good; the blessed man is blind to the coming evil. The cursed man whose heart is away from the Lord, trusting in man and in the arm of flesh, has no power to lift up his eyes to see the bounteous blessedness that is to be brought by Christ's coming; the blessed man, on the other hand, whose confidence the Lord Himself is, dwells in faith and in the Spirit's power amidst scenes of plenty, and sees not the parching heat which comes with withering force, for his living fountains fail not. This precious portion of the blessed man is open to each one of us to-day in Christ Jesus.

THE HEART AND THE FOUNTAIN OF LIVING WATERS.

The heart of man is incurable, however, and so deceitful is it that no one of Adam's sinful stock can fathom its depravity (9). It is set to do evil and to depart from God, however greatly privileged it may be. The Lord was testing man in the Old Testament, testing favoured Israel under law, but only to prove his utter ruin (10). Judgment must therefore fall. For believers now it has already taken place at the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; governmentally it fell upon the nation as the prophet foretold, and even the covetous King Jehoiakim becomes an individual example. From his ill-gotten goods he was cut off in the midst of his years (at 36), like a partridge might be taken from her many eggs. As Nabal, at his end, he was a fool (11); so is every man who follows the subjective promptings of his own heart and forsakes the Lord.

It is true that the believer on our Lord Jesus Christ to-day has a purified heart, but that does not alter what is said here. Indeed Scripture is careful to tell us that those who have heard and believed the Gospel now have their hearts purified by faith, and also that they receive the gift of the Holy Spirit from "the heart-knowing God" (Acts 15. 8-9). It is no matter of works or process on our side, although it results in our loving one another "out of a pure heart fervently (1 Pet. 1. 22). It is good to find such choice company in these days of strife and contention—contention, sad to say, not for "the faith once delivered to the saints," so as to walk together in it in peace, but contention for self and man's opinions. Where the former are found, they will be marked by following righteousness, faith, love and peace whilst they CALL ON THE LORD HIMSELF OUT OF A PURE HEART (2 Tim. 2. 22). It should be noticed, it is not "the Name" of the Lord in this verse which is called upon as it is usually quoted. This is important, for there are many subtle reasonings based upon this misquotation. The deceitful heart of man has "found out many abstruse reasonings" (not "inventions"); and He would even say like some of old, "The Lord hath left the earth"; and add, "We only have His Name now." Sad and solemn statement; we hope it may have been said in ignorance, and not as an excuse for light behaviour; or, as in Jeremiah's day, because the Lord is "near in their mouth and far from their reins" (12. 2).

To abide with the Lord, and call upon Himself, is our present privilege. Surely we may know Him also to-day
as "The Fountain of Living Waters." This preserves the believing heart from turning to other streams. It was Israel's great sin that they thus turned away from the Lord, but Jeremiah cleaves to Him. "A glorious high throne from the beginning," he says, "is the place of our Sanctuary." He rises in faith above the failure, and glories in what was "from the beginning." This is the way of the blessed man whose confidence the Lord is. He gets to the place where living waters never fail, where the streams thereof gladden his rejoicing heart. For him this "Sanctuary is the Lord Himself" (Ezek. 11. 16), as is also the "Glorious High Throne" (Isa. 22. 23). It is from the Sanctuary the healing and life-giving waters flow, whilst the Lord is Himself the Fountain of those living waters. What folly then it was for Israel to turn away from Him, and to endeavour to maintain the national position by their own boasted efforts! What folly it is to turn away from Him to-day! Yea, what unutterable vanity, with the advantage of these writings given for our warning and learning, to turn from Him who is the living Lord and the living Head of the assembly now, and become engrossed in proud efforts of no avail, seeking to rebuild that which is to be judged, as we see in Rev. 2. and 3. True wisdom confides in the Lord; He is our Hope in every way. May all our expectation be from Him.

The prophet continues, "O Lord, Thou Hope of Israel, all that forsake Thee shall be ashamed, and they that depart from Me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken THE LORD THE FOUNTAIN OF LIVING WATERS" (13).

Four times only in the Bible is the Fountain of Life spoken of, although a fountain of life is often mentioned. In Ps. 36. 9 we read, "With Thee is the Fountain of Life." Twice in Jeremiah we have the above beautiful designation (2. 13 and 17. 13). The fourth is found in Rev. 21. 6, "I will give unto him that is athirst of the Fountain of the Water of Life freely." Jeremiah realizes how entirely he is shut up to the Lord, and with confidence and assurance he prays, "Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved; for Thou art my Praise" (15). In verse 17, after speaking of the reproach which came upon him for following the Lord, he says, "Be not a terror unto me, for Thou art my Refuge in the day of evil." Unlike the Lord Jesus or the believer now, he prays for the overthrow of his persecutors (18). This was righteous for a Jew, but the blessed Lord asked for forgiveness for His enemies.

It is of the last importance to-day to see to it that nothing be allowed to rob us of the perfection of the salvation which is in Christ Jesus. It is a serious matter to be negligent of that. Departure from the truth had begun when the Holy Spirit inspired the Lord's servant to give us this echo of Jeremiah: "See, brethren, lest there be in anyone of you a wicked heart of unbelief, in turning away from the living God, but encourage yourselves each day, as long as it is called To-day, that none of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we are become companions of the Christ if indeed we hold the beginning of the assurance firm to the end" (Heb. 3. 12–14). To put the assembly or anything else in the place of Christ is a sure sign of departure from the living God, and evil consequences will follow.

One might have thought that Israel would have gladly welcomed from the Lord the prophet's words to cease from burden bearing on the Sabbath day, to be at rest, and so secure national prosperity and permanence (17. 19–27), but activity is preferred to hallowing a day "to the Lord." When will men see that the way of abiding blessing is to honour Him first, to give Him that which is due to His Name?
A STONE, ELECT, PRECIOUS.

In a day that is coming, we are told, "Fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon (on Jesus Christ, the only Foundation) he shall receive a reward" (1 Cor. 3. 13). It is said, the day shall declare it (when the work is manifested), because it shall be revealed in fire. The "wood, grass, straw" mentioned will be burned, and those who build with materials which these things signify will suffer loss: on the other hand, the "gold, silver, precious stones" will abide, and those who build with what these represent will be rewarded by God. This is to encourage us to possess and build with the latter, for in all construction you must first have your materials.

The apostle had spoken of Christ being made redemption to us from God (1. 30). It is in Him redemption is ours through His blood. Silver represents this in Scripture. It is also said, He is made unto us righteousness, which gold is used to signify. Christ, who knew not sin, was made sin for us upon Calvary's cross, that we might become God's righteousness in Him. Amidst the darkness of Golgotha the sin was judged: in the splendours of God's glory the righteousness will be displayed when the assembly shines forth as "the city of pure gold" (Rev. xxi. 18). Then also the foundations of its wall will be "adorned with every precious stone."

Building with precious stones, gold and silver may not loom so large before the eye as that of wood, grass and straw, but the intrinsic value is greater by far. What do the "precious stones" symbolize? Surely, the perfections and excellencies of our Lord Jesus Christ. What but the personal worth and distinctions of Jesus could these precious stones signify? There are two stones specially distinguished in God's Word as being designated "precious" by the Spirit. The first is found in Job 28. 16—"the precious onyx." The second is in Isaiah 28. 16—"a precious Cornerstone." Also in 1 Peter 2. this is spoken of as a living Stone, chosen of God and precious, which had been cast away as worthless by the religious builders of that day. Nevertheless, this is the "Corner-stone, elect, precious," and to those who believe on Him His preciousness is accounted, for if Christ be the chosen One, they in Him are "a chosen race"; if He be the King and Priest, they are "a kingly priesthood"; if He be the Holy One then they are "a holy nation"; and if He be the One in whom God finds His eternal pleasure, they also are "a people for possession, that they might set forth the excellencies of Him who hath called them out of darkness into His wonderful light." This indicates what we have said as to the meaning of "precious stones" used for building now, and found in the wall of the heavenly City hereafter.

The two stones designated "precious" have very significant places. The precious onyx is the first stone named in the Bible (Gen. 2. 12). Gold and bdellium [which manna was said to be like in colour (Num. 11. 7)] are mentioned in the same verse. We find the onyx on the shoulders and breastplate of the high priest in Exodus 28.; again in Job 28. in relation to wisdom; and later in Ezekiel 28. 13 decking with other gems the King full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. The precious Stone of Isaiah 28. had been tried before being set as the Corner-stone, just as in 1 Peter 2. it had been rejected of men but became the living Stone to whom the redeemed come, and in relation to whom those who are also living stones are built up a spiritual house; for, whilst He is the Foundation, He is the Corner-stone as well as "the Head of the corner," the crown and glory of all.

The precious onyx therefore speaks of Christ, the Son of the Father's love,
known to us as "The Firstborn of all creation" (Col. 1. 15), who is to have the pre-eminence in all things in the heavens and upon the earth, whether they be thrones, lordships, principalities or authorities. The Stone, elect, precious, tells of Christ as "the Firstborn from among the dead" (Col. 1. 18). He is the living One, the Head of the body, the assembly, that He might have the first place in all things, for in Him all fulness dwells. In each circle therefore He is the First: in the wide creation and in the new creation He is supreme. All building must be adorned with His perfections and excellencies; His own worth and distinctions are to be displayed in the assembly: He is to be glorified in His saints and wondered at in all that have believed. The loveliness and beauty of the Stone elect and precious are yet to be admired, although refused once by men: exalted on high with Himself, the assembly to which His infinite perfections have been ministered, shall be the means of displaying their Divine lustre and illumination. The nations shall yet walk in the light of God's glory thus seen.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.
Did Christ die for the sinful Adam nature in everybody? Was it in this way "He was made sin?"

J. A. D. We do not think that the Scriptures present the death of Christ in the way that your first questions implies. As you say, "No one is responsible for being born with a sinful nature." Hence, of course, they will not be judged on that ground, nor is that the question that arises between God and the sinner. The early chapters of Romans clearly show that the first question is the question of sins. What a man has done, for that he is responsible, and a full provision is made for him as to this, if he will turn to God, for "Christ died for the ungodly," and "God commendeth His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us" (Rom. 5.). It is when this question is settled and a man is justified that the question of the sinful nature arises, and we find that that, too, has its solution in the death of Christ, but it applies to those who belong to Christ, and so have the privilege of reckoning themselves to be dead unto sin and alive unto God in Him.

"He was made sin for us" (2 Cor. 5. 21) is true for all who will put themselves by faith into it—for the "us" is the Christian "us,"—and the door stands wide open for everyone to do that, but it should be plain that it is only true of those who are made the righteousness of God in Him. He became all that we were under God's judgment that we might become all that He is in God's favour.
THE LOST LOCOMOTIVE, or "The Oppositions of Science," (falsely so called).

In the 1st epistle to Timothy, 6th chapter, and 20th verse, that young disciple of the Lord is particularly warned against "The oppositions of science falsely so called."

Of these so-called sciences, the one most diametrically opposed to Scripture is that of evolution.

Now, be it distinctly understood at the outset, that between Holy Scripture and science—that is truly such—that cannot possibly be any conflict or opposition. For science, in its simplest definition, means simply knowledge. This is the primary meaning given to the word in all our standard dictionaries, both British and American. The historic origin of the word is from the Latin scio, "I know." And Leverett (Lexicon, sub voce) says, "Scientia: knowledge, science, skill," etc. And even Professor Huxley himself says, "Knowledge, upon many subjects, grows to be more and more perfect; and, when it comes to be so accurate and sure that it is capable of being proved to persons of suitable intelligence, it is called science." This all believers can, in the main accept. But let us come to Davis. He says ("Theory of Thought," p. 2), "A science is a perfected system of real truths. . . . Few branches of knowledge have reached this ideal perfection; if not the mathematics, none have done so." Yet Huxley ("New York Lectures," i, p. 3) was compelled to admit that his own materialistic theory of the origin of the universe can never become anything more than a probability. "We must recollect," he says, addressing a body of those of his own opinions, "That any human belief, however broad its basis, however defensible it may seem, is, after all, only a probable belief." To this confession of the great exponent of Darwinianism, we add the words of Professor Bowne; he says ("Studies in Theism," p. 55), "The bulk of our so-called knowledge is theory, and is far from being either self-evident or necessary."

And, as another has remarked "The history of science is full of such examples."

What, then, is there so imposing, so conclusive, about this thing called science, that we should hear its voice above that of the Word of God, as found in the Scriptures? Yet this is just what many, to their great discredit, have done and still are doing, spite of the above exposures of its fallacy. To the pronouncements of science they give all their credence, aye, they would to this fetish even abjectly bow in worship, even as ablest arch-priest, Mr. Herbert Spencer has instructed them; for he says, "Science must be judged by itself; and, so judged, only the most perverted intellect [!] can fail to see that it is worthy of all reverence." Amazing words, when to his mind Darwin’s doctrine of descent was science!

This time-worn doctrine of descent rests for its conjectures chiefly on the findings, or, rather, conclusions from these findings, of its sister science of geology. Because the stratified rock composing the upper crust of the earth contained fossils which appeared to assume higher forms as the beds...
approached the surface, it was concluded that all the higher forms, even man himself, had been by a very slow process of development evolved from lower forms of life; and the lowest, or earliest, the original form was a single cell, or a bit of slime, "a jelly-like substance" christened protoplasm. But it has been proven to these theorists that so far as historic observation goes, there had been no such development, or process of evolution discovered. Ex-president Tefft, of Genesee College ("Evolution and Christianity," p. 52) says: "As to the last step in this stream of imagination—that man has developed from the ape, or that apes have a natural trend toward the human constitution—no person has ever given us, or can give us, one case in point. The oldest human fossil is as perfect, as far advanced in physical character, as the latest living examples of the race, while existing apes are identical with their fossil species of the very oldest date; and when we are told, that giving the supposition time enough, such a transformation may be imagined possible, it is enough to say, in answer, that imagination is not science." And this brings us to the leading title of our paper,

THE LOST LOCOMOTIVE.

"A locomotive," says an American newspaper, dated July 1, 1883, "ran through a broken bridge on the Kansas Pacific Railway, across Kiowa Creek, several years ago, sinking in the mud at the bottom, and has never since been heard of, though repeated efforts have been made, by digging and boring, to recover so valuable a piece of property. The bottom is quicksand, but even quicksands have limits; and it seems very singular that the longest boring-rod has failed to find any trace of the sunken engine. By-and-by the silent, mysterious operation will drain the quicksand, and harden it into rock; and then, long after the Kansas Pacific road is forgotten, and the Kiowa Creek has vanished from the map, some future scientist will discover a curious piece of mechanism, undoubtedly the work of human hands, lying under so many hundred feet of sandstone, and will use the fact as a basis of calculating how many million years old the human race must be." Precisely so, if they should happen to be anything like as credulous concerning such finds as a certain class of geologists and biologists appear to be to-day.

But of what worth or weight are their conclusions? They require for their fanciful scheme of evolution infinite ages of time, almost; so the first appearance of life as at present seen on the earth must be pushed back as far, and even farther than the mind can travel. And to show some appearance of reason for this they refer the incredulous to the beds of sandstone and other rocks, and claim warrant for their amazing statements by the immense thickness of these beds. And, they argue, that since their deposition was so very slow (as they suppose, or are supposed to suppose) it must have required these incalculable ages for their formation. So the "future geologist" of the American newspaper might argue on finding the lost locomotive—it was found embedded so many hundreds, or thousands, of feet in the formation; and then by calculation—so many inches of deposition in a century—they would prove to their astonished non-scientific fellows just how long ago the strange piece of mechanism had been fashioned. And if some piece of fossil bone or shell of whatever period had happened to have been carried down with the engine from its original position on the plains of Kansas, they would also conclude that it, too, must represent an animal living in the same age!

Well said Professor Geikie ("Geology," p. 123) that "regarding the earliest stages of the earth's history, no direct evidence is now to be obtained from the rocks."
And better still comes this from the pen of the late learned and observant J. N. Darby, in his admirable "What has the Bible taught? and what has Geology proved?" "It was a settled point, that human remains, according to the known geological process of orders of fossil fauna, could not be found in any deposits before our present world. The human petrification from Guadaloupe, in the British Museum, was held to be recent, as were some since discovered; but the question, after all, remains, if that is just. At any rate, the whole theory seems upset now. It is alleged that in Brazil and in North America (in the last case in so old a deposit as old red sandstone), unequivocal human remains have been discovered in strata too old for them, according to geological systems. In the caves of Gayleureuth, they are mixed with fossil remains of species belonging to anterior formations; and at Mialet, in a cavern, in which the hunted pastors of the eglises du desert found constant refuge, and a place of common meeting and resort, human bones, and those of the cave bear and others, have been found. Dr. Phillips says as to this, 'he will not hazard a definite conclusion'. . . .

Since all this, however, rude instruments, constructed by human skill, have been discovered in drift of an epoch, according to geologists, very long anterior to that in which man ought to be found. I think in the Eocene formation. But the facts and data as to this are anything but clearly ascertained. One celebrated naturalist has, on his own data, according to the President of the Geological Society, made the period required forty thousand times too long! A man who makes mistakes of this kind on very simple questions discredits all his reasoning. But all his data are denied by Sir R. Murchison. Further, as to the remains in the drift, or diluvium, the great proof of antiquity are the remains of extinct mammalia at any rate of Pliocene date, as Hippopotamus major and Elephas antiquus, and some others. But those who maintain the antiquity of man are obliged to admit the question remains. Are not these animals of more recent date? As Mr. Tubboch admits, 'We may do this by bringing these animals down to a later period, as well as by carrying man back to an earlier one.' Now in point of fact some animals which have been insisted on as proofs of Pliocene age have been found in far more recent, such as glacial deposits. Bos longifrons and Elephas primigenius clearly much later still. I have no hesitation in saying that all the data require far fuller examination, and that nothing is yet proved. As it has been said, 'He knows most who believes least.' The haste with which conclusions are drawn is unscientific. . . ."

"And what conclusions do you draw from these facts?" one asks him.

"None; save that geologists, as Lyell has admitted, are but on the threshold of the science. That the conclusions of the earth's antiquity, and of the formation of strata cannot be sustained, and that we must wait for further light and additional facts before any conclusion can be drawn."

It will readily be seen, from the above, how much of uncertainty attaches to that which proudly calls itself science. Of true science the Bible has nothing to fear; for God, being the Author of both it and nature, there cannot possibly be any contradiction or antagonism between the two. Nor is the Christian prejudiced against science—that which is really such—as Herbert Spencer complains. He says, "What is science? To see the absurdity of the prejudice against it, we need only remark that science is only a higher development of common knowledge, and that, if science is repudiated, all knowledge must be repudiated along with it."

Exactly so; but the intelligent
believer in revelation is not prepared to accept as science-knowledge, those speculations, conjectures, theories and fancies he and his school would palm off on the credulous as science. Christians, as a class, read scientific works and books on nature more, perhaps, than do unbelievers of like intelligence; for "the Scripture of truth" assures us that "The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein" (Psa. 119. 2).

To show, in closing, that much of what passes to-day as science is, in reality, only "science falsely so called," we quote from the testimony of men of highest rank in the scientific world. Professor Elliott Conée ("Biogenesis," p. 7) says, "The scientific fact is—and, by scientific, I mean something positively known to be true—that life has never been ascertained to have any other origin than in antecedent life." And Sir William Thomson ("Nature," vol. 4. p. 269) says, "This seems to me as sure a teaching of science as the law of gravitation, that life proceeds from life and nothing but life." Even Haeckel himself, who bewails the fact that among naturalists of note he stands alone for Darwinianism ("History of Creation," vol. I, p. 327) says, "Most naturalists, even at the present day, are inclined to give up the attempt at natural explanation [of the origin of life], and take refuge in the miracle of inconceivable creation." And well they might, for their reputations' sake, if no other reason. It is only the pseudo-scientist, or his little imitator, who proclaims his belief in evolution from the platform or pulpit, teaches it in the class room, or argues it in the shop or on the street. They appear to take a certain pride in it and would win admiration from their fellows as men of intellect and learning,—"smart," as the ignorant say.

Mr. J. N. Darby says, in his "Christianity and the Education of the Word," the following salutory words: "I have always remarked of infidels, or infidel writers (for it is always better to call things by their names), that they can make you doubt (no wonder) of many things, but they can give you nothing. They never give you one certain truth. The Word of God gives you many certain truths. It makes you doubt of nothing. It has no need; for it possesses the truth, and gives what is positive. This is an immense difference; it stamps both morally. When infidel minds speak of a love of truth, they never, that I can see, go further than Pilate: 'What is truth?' It is never holding fast truth they have got, but casting doubt upon what others believe.'

So, Christian reader, be not moved, or even awed, by this bugbear of "Science." You have nothing to fear from it; for no fact of science ever has proved or ever can prove one single statement of Scripture to be untrue. "Knowledge" it is written, "shall pass away," like heaven and earth, "but the Word of our God shall stand for ever." Our faith, as believers in revelation, does "not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of God." He, through His Son made the worlds out of nothing, He alone is "The Author of life," and "by Him all things consist"—cohere, hold together (Col. 1. 17). In other words, the so-called law of gravitation is nothing less than the almighty power of the Son of God exercised everywhere in His universe, and without whose control all worlds, planets, suns, would instantly crash, fly apart, or, in whatever way be plunged into complete chaotic ruin. "For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things; to whom be glory for ever. Amen" (Rom. 11. 36).

And to this we adoringly add with all our being's powers, heart and mind, soul and spirit, "Amen and Amen."
AN IRISH SAINT.

The book published under this name has become the subject of much wonder, and is greatly in demand in certain circles. It is the record of the life of Ann Preston, generally known as "Holy Ann." She lived to the good old age of 96, and died a few years ago in Canada. She was utterly uneducated, could not write, and could read no book but the Bible.

She was remarkable for the childlike simplicity with which she turned to God about any detail of life as to which she needed direction, and for the marvellous answers to prayer that she received. We confess that much that appears in the story of her life sounds incredible. But there is adequate and reliable testimony to the fact that these things really did happen. We cannot pretend to understand it all. Nothing in our experience has been quite of the same nature. But one or two things strike us in reading the memoir of Miss Preston.

She never seems to have really grown up in the things of God. She remained, spiritually, a child, and retained all the charming simplicity of childhood. A little child can say things to his parents that an older one cannot; he can make requests that it would not be becoming for older children to make. And a father will give things to his little children that he would not give to the grown-up ones. Now while we should ever aim at retaining the simple, artless faith of a child, yet it is undoubtedly the will of God that we should grow up spiritually, and learn ever more and more of His wonderful things. This is more than experiencing His tender care and guidance in connection with our things. When a cat is shut up in an oven, it is good if God guides us to open the door that the poor creature may be released, but God has something infinitely higher to tell us about than things of this kind.

While Ann undoubtedly knew much of God's tenderness and accessibility to the cry of faith, it seems always to have been in connection with the things of wilderness life.

There are many truly pious souls who, as to their experience, are yet in the wilderness. Like the Israelites of old, they prove God's goodness in providing for them, shielding them from their foes, and guiding them in marvellous ways. And, unlike the sons of Israel, they go through the wilderness with grateful, happy hearts, full of confidence in God. This is all very good. But to have passed out of the wilderness in the experience of the soul, and to have reached Canaan, where God is known in connection with His own purpose, and where one is enabled to taste the joys that will actually be ours for ever in eternal association with Christ as His brethren—this is a different thing altogether!

We have no desire to say a single syllable that would even seem to reflect on Ann's piety and devotion. She was a shining saint; and the church would be the richer for more of the Billy Bray and Ann Preston type. But we must learn all we can from her story, and one thing is particularly noticeable. A favourite expression of her's was: "If I am what I profess to be, then"—her prayer would be answered, and the thing she desired be given. And it was generally so.

Yet the basis of our relations with God, and the reason why He graciously answers our prayers, is not because we are what we profess to be, but because Christ is all that He is declared to be. It is because of Him, because of all that He is, giving such delight to the heart of God, that God blesses and hears us.

When the woman of Shunem returned from the land of the Philistines with her son, whom Elisha had raised from the dead, she found some one in possession of her house and property. To the king himself she carried her appeal for its restoration. Just as she arrived in the royal presence, the king was listening to a narrative, from the lips of Gehazi, of "all the great things that Elisha had done." Elisha was extolled, and his wonderful deeds recounted. Even as he was speaking, Gehazi's eyes fell on the woman, and he exclaimed:—

"O King! This is the woman, and this is her son, whom Elisha restored to life!"

Whereupon the woman is invited by the King to tell her own story. She
does so, and her prayer is fully granted. But why? Not because of anything that she was, but because of what Elisha had done; because she brought her petition to the place where he was extolled, and his name magnified. It was because she was one to whom he had shown kindness; one who was bound by links of gratitude to him.

Even so it is with us. We bring our petitions to the place where Christ is glorified. We draw near to God with a sense in our souls that He is delighted with Christ, the One to whom we are bound by a thousand ties of gratitude and with whom Divine grace has linked us for ever. It is as those who belong to Him that we approach God, realizing something of how the perfections of that blessed One fill the Father's heart. In the precious fragrance of His Name we come and present our prayers. God has regard to all that His Son is, and for His Name's sake does for us exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.

But for all this, the story of Ann Preston acts like a tonic to the soul. It helps one to realize that God is a living God. To read this memoir will be a blessing if it sends us to our knees with the prayer of Solomon upon our lips: Give me, also, O God, the hearing heart (1 Kings 3. 9, margin).

[We may mention that the book is quite a small volume, and has reached its sixth edition. It is published at 692, Eighth Avenue, New York. Order through any bookseller.]

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.**

**Was Jacob a perfect man?**

**SOUTH DEVON.**

DEAR BROTHER.—With reference to the article by Mr. H. P. Barker, "Was Jacob a perfect man?" in the current issue of *Scripture Truth*, would you be so kind as to say whether the statement has been verified that the word translated "plain" is the very same as that used with reference to Noah in Gen. 6. 9, and to Job in Job 1. 1; 2. 3."

Beyond the ordinary version, I have only Mr. Darby's French with me, and he follows on the line of the authorized using the word "simple" and not "parfait" as in the references to Noah and Job.

It would be interesting to know whether Mr. Darby was amongst those who failed to see what apparently is so obvious to Mr. Barker. There is one thing we know, he would not be classed amongst those who were inclined to water down anything nor be influenced by an "anti-Semitic bias."

I am, yours sincerely,

R. N. F.

Mr. Barker's statement in regard to Gen. 25. 27 is correct. Only in this instance is the word in question translated "plain." Nine times it is translated perfect, twice undefiled, and once upright. In another form it is translated fourteen times as perfect, eight times upright, and forty-four times as without blemish. The fact that this word is used to describe Jacob in contrast to Esau is deeply instructive, and we question whether it will bear any other interpretation than that given to it by Mr. Barker in his very interesting and helpful paper. It may not be "anti-Semitic bias" that has made us all dwell so much on the crooked side of Jacob's life, probably it is not, but simply that we understand that side better than his purpose of heart to pursue the blessing of God which gave him the right to be called a perfect man.

**WALSALL.**

DEAR EDITOR.—Having read and enjoyed the paper by Mr. H. P. Barker, "Was Jacob a perfect man?" I mentioned the same to another brother, who said he had enjoyed it also, but asked how I could reconcile the statement with a paper in the May number of *Scripture Truth* entitled, "Measure for measure," wherein Jacob is said to be a "hypocrite" and a "cheater," so
I venture to pass this question on to you. Perhaps you will help us.

Yours affectionately in Christ,

I. H. B.

Both statements as to Jacob are true. The paper in our May issue brings out what he was naturally, the paper in the August issue shows what he was as laid hold of by the purpose and grace of God. His ways were crooked, and for these ways he suffered continually, for God could not approve of them; but his purpose of heart was straight, faith in God's promise was there from the beginning and it shone out most brilliantly at the end. In God's government he reaped what he sowed; for instance, he deceived his blind father with the flesh and skin of a kid, and his sons deceived him in his old age with Joseph's coat dipped in the blood of a kid. God did not shield him from the consequences of his sharp dealings, hence He cannot be charged with overlooking his subtle ways, but how gloriously his faith rose up above all his natural tendencies, when he blessed both the sons of Joseph and worshipped, leaning on the top of his staff; then God was justified in that He loved Jacob in the sight of all those who had eyes to see. There is no history given in the Holy Scriptures more instructive than that of Jacob's; we learn valuable lessons from his failures, and God's patient discipline of him, and we have dwelt much on this side of his chequered life; it is just as well that our attention should be called to his faith.

The Body of Sin.

DEAR BROTHER IN CHRIST. In Scripture Truth for July is an article—"Our Old Man"—in which the author speaks of the annulling of the body of sin as an "abstract idea." Would he make deliverance from the body of death in Rom. 7. 24 to be also an abstract idea?

In Rom. 5. 12 we read of sin entering, and death by sin; and, as it passed upon all men, it makes the body to be a sinful body, and a mortal body. These are not abstract ideas, but grim realities. The annulling of the sinful body, or "the body of sin," is, I hope, a reality also, and not a mere abstract idea, as also the deliverance from "the body of this death" is, I think, to the one who has had the wholesome experience of Rom. 7. 14-25, more than an "abstract idea," is it not? I hope it has gone further than that with most of us; if not, the teaching of the apostle has not been of much practical use to us; the result desired would not seem to have been attained.

In this connection it might be profitable to ask ourselves, How much is Rom. 8. 2 a mere abstract idea?

Let us connect Rom. 5. 12; 6. 6; 7. 24; 8. 2.

We are surprised that our correspondent should confound the mortal body with "the body of sin" (Rom. 6. 6). In this he is surely wrong. We are not aware that the mortal body is ever spoken of in Scripture as "the body of sin." It has been with every one of us the instrument which sin made use of, and will still be if we do not yield ourselves to God, but on the other hand every member of it may be, and should be, a servant of righteousness unto holiness (chap. 6. 19), "the body of sin" could never be this. It is spoken of in 1 Thess. 4. 4 as a "vessel" and it is to be possessed in "sanctification and honour." There is surely neither sanctification nor honour about "the body of sin." The Holy Ghost indwells our mortal bodies, and in consequence it is our privilege and responsibility to glorify God in them (1 Cor. 6. If), 20); and we are besought to present them to God a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God. Could we do this with "the body of sin"? How could our bodies be "the body of sin" and "holy, acceptable to God" at the same time? Instead of the body of sin being presented a living sacrifice to God, it had to be destroyed, i.e., annulled, or broken up; it cannot be tolerated, put to a good use, or quickened, then it cannot be the mortal body that is referred to in this important passage of Scripture.

What then is "the body of sin"? It is the whole force and volume of the will of man that carries him on in the
very teeth of God's will; the body of a river has been used to illustrate it. Sum up all that sin is in its defiance of God and mastery over man, that is "the body of sin"; that it might be annulled or broken up so that we might be no longer borne along by its power "our old man" has been crucified with Christ. The paper in question goes fully into the meaning of this.

Our correspondent does not say that "the body of this death" is the mortal body, but as he refers to it in the same connection it may be as well to say that it cannot be the mortal body, for thanks is given at the end of chap. 7. for deliverance from it, and this deliverance was certainly not from the mortal body. It is the evil corrupt nature that was felt to be like a corrupting corpse hound upon the wretched captive, a burden that he could not cast off, but from the power of which he found deliverance at last through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our brother complains of the use of the term "abstract idea" as applied to the "body of sin" and "our old man" as though it meant that they were not great realities. But the author of the paper did not so use the term, nor is it correct to speak of what is said to be abstract in contrast to what is real, but in contrast to what is concrete. The mortal body is concrete, a thing that can be seen and handled; but "the body of sin" is not a thing, but a force and power which cannot be handled, but which can be felt in the soul as an awful tyranny. We do not see how else the author of the paper could have described it, but if the term used weakens the sense of the reality of that which is so described, then discard it and adopt another instead of it.

We may profitably consider the passages that our brother links together, and thrice happy is the man who can triumphantly use the last of the series—who is set free from one terrible principle by the operation of a greater and beneficent principle, "the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus."

Soul and Spirit.

MR. BOYD, in Scripture Truth, October 1913, says, "Soul and spirit seem to be used in Scripture interchangeably for the same thing." [?Luke 23. 46; Acts ii. 27; Acts 23. 8, 9. Rev. 20. 4; Rev. 6. 9.]

It seems to me to weaken the ground taken against Annihilationists, etc., to have to make a statement like that; but I don't know. If animals have, or are called, souls, why should their souls be killed when the body is killed any more than of men? It must be because of the "spirit of man" formed within him? (the "understanding"?) N.

To this enquiry Mr. Boyd replies as follows:—

"There is nothing in the statement to which your correspondent refers that would in the slightest help annihilationists, because man was not made a living soul except by God's breathing into his nostrils the breath of life. The beasts came into existence by the fiat of God. If your correspondent will carefully read once again the passage to which he refers, along with the extract I take from the writings of beloved J. N. D., he may see the matter a little more clearly:—

'As to body, soul and spirit: soul and spirit are often used for the same thing, the soul in contrast to the body, the one expression or the other. But when both words are used, then the spirit is the higher part, soul being that which is joined to the body, and causes this to live; spirit, for the part in which man is in relation with God, inasmuch as God had breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. If there were nothing but soul, he would be no better than the beasts, but inasmuch as God, when the body was already formed, breathed into his nostrils in order that he should become alive, he is in relation with God Himself, and is eternally miserable if he is separated from God. Soul is often used for life, and for the soul properly so-called, in the same sentence, because in the Greek language there is only one word for the two, ψυχή. If a man shall lose his ψυχή for the love of Jesus, he shall gain it (Matt. 16. 25, 26). The first time it is only life; the second it is much more.' Also, 'He that will save his ψυχή shall lose it,' where the thing is still clearer."
Palm Trees and Willows of the Brook.

WHEN Israel had finished their wilderness journeyings and arrived in the promised land, they had to keep, amongst other feasts, the feast of Tabernacles. God commanded them during the week of this feast to dwell in booths made of the branches of goodly trees and thick trees and palm trees and willows of the brook, and to rejoice in the Lord their God (Lev. 13. 40). This feast, with all it speaks of, will be fulfilled in the millennium, but that is not our subject now; we speak of it as a reminder to them of the way that God had led them; they looked back and remembering all His goodness rejoiced before Him in the booths that they had made.

The palm branches would speak of their victorious and joyous days, the willows of the brook would speak of the days of sorrow and darkness and defeat; but in this feast of gladness they had to weave the two together in making their booths, and own with thanksgiving as they sat beneath them that God's way was the right way, that His way was best. So shall it be at the end of every Christian's pilgrim journey; but faith can own this now.

There are some who seem ever able to wave the palm branches; they walk with lightsome steps upon their high places, with their stringed instruments always tuned to sound the praises of God. But with the majority it is not so, they have their days of triumph, also, but they are sometimes, aye often, in heaviness of spirit through manifold temptations, their harps hang sometimes upon the willow trees, and they have no song, for no chastening for the present seemeth joyous but grievous. And others tread with leaden foot the deepest shades of the valley of the shadow of death, where day is turned to gloom and the heart quails at the desolation until assured of the company of the Lord.

Is it possible to take the branches of the palm trees and the branches of the willows of the brook and weave them together as being both alike a proof of the goodness of our God, and of His way with us which is always right and best? Yes it is. We do not question His love and care when joy fills our hearts, and victory attends our way. Then we sing:

"How good is the God we adore."

But let us cast no slight upon His character when the clouds gather darkly over us,

"For aye the dews of sorrow Are lustred with His love."

He is the same God with the same gracious intentions for us when His chastening hand lies heavily upon us, and we sigh instead of sing; and with mercy and with judgment our web of time He weaves, and the willows of the brook have their appointed place in His ways with us just as truly as the palm branches, and though it may be often difficult to discern His way and purpose, and to glorify the Lord in the fires, yet when we reach His glory we shall understand it all.

"We'll bless the hand that guided, We'll bless the heart that planned, When throned where glory dwelleth In Immanuel's land."

Adorning the Doctrine.

THE knowledge that the love of God lies behind all our circumstances keeps us from desponding and makes us trust in Him at all times, it lifts our hearts this weary world above, and gives us quietness and rest, so that we are not hindered in adorning "the doctrine of God our Saviour in all
things" (Titus 2. 10). Here is a most marvellous thing—Christians old and young, rich and poor, whether in joy or sorrow, may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things, in every circumstance, duty and relationship of life.

We are inclined to ask, but how can that be? How can we adorn the Gospel? Surely it is beautiful enough since Jesus our Saviour is its theme! Yes, it is beautiful in our eyes who believe, it could not be more beautiful than it is, and it is sweet to our taste, sweeter than honey and the honeycomb. How dark and bitter would life be to some of us without it; but the world sees no beauty in it, to the world it is without form or comeliness, as was the Lord when He was here, and it is the Christians' part to bring out its beauty in practical daily life.

Take the hyacinth bulb as an illustration. We heard of a man who brought home a bag of hyacinth bulbs and laid them down within the reach of the servant maid who had never seen such things before. When dinner time came round she said to her mistress, "I cooked them onions, mum, that the master bought, but they had neither smell nor taste and so I threw 'em out." The Gospel is like the hyacinth bulb to the world, they do not know it, they cannot understand it, and so they cast it out and turn from it. But let one who understands those dry and uninteresting bulbs give them the right conditions and cultivation, then will they develop and grow, and throw out their glorious spikes of flowers and shed their fragrance everywhere.

The Words of Jesus.

In the words of Jesus is the universal element and not a transient speech to an assembly which dissolves in the very act of listening to it. His words spread themselves out over all time, and they look out with Divine grace upon every tribe, and kindred, and people. He is the first and the last, the beginning and the end, and to Him be glory and honour for ever and ever.
CHRIST AS LAW FOR THE UNIVERSE.

It is of the utmost importance for the growth, development, and establishment of our souls in our relations with God, that we have a clear and well-founded apprehension of what His mind is for those who are to be in eternal blessing with Himself. If we have failed in our apprehension of this, we are sure to be haunted with a vague uncertainty with relation to all our movements, which will hinder our spiritual advancement, cripple us in service for the Master, obscure our spiritual vision, so that we shall fail to discover the path He would have us tread, and our testimony for Him will be of a very vague and indefinite character. The end to which God is working, and to which all His ways are tending, we require to be well acquainted with, if we are to walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing (Col. 1. 9, 10). If God is working to one end and we to another, we shall be at cross-purposes with Him, and certainly this can be but detrimental to all spiritual progress, grieving to His Holy Spirit, and leaving us without His approval and support.

The advent of Christ into this world was the resistless proof that man was a lost creature, and that he had, under the trial to which he had been subjected, proved himself to be so. Had there been any strength in man to effect his own recovery, there had been no necessity for a deliverer. Therefore our Divine Redeemer says: "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which is lost" (Luke 19. 10). Man is a lost creature, and apart from the intervention of God he would have been lost eternally.

But not only is this so, but the cross of Christ is the witness that man cannot be recovered as a mere child of Adam. It was not enough that God should be propitiated on account of our sins; for if that were all, or if it could have been all, and man on the foundation thus laid, forgiven—a forgiven sinner with a nature at enmity with God he would have forever remained, and that would neither have met God's requirement, nor the need of the creature. The Adam life, or life of flesh, was in its nature corrupt and rebellious, and therefore was a new life necessary for man if he was to be saved. This life is in the last Adam the Son of God.

But if man was to be a partaker of this life, it was necessary that the old life and nature, as well as the sins, the fruit of that life and nature, should come under the judgment of God. Hence not only were our sins atoned for, but "our old man has been crucified with Him." The old nature, that could not be mended, has judicially been ended. Therefore in resurrection Christ can righteously take the place of lifegiving Head toward all, and can quicken, with that life that is in Himself, the believer. He is the last Adam and Head of a new race, which have been brought into being by His quickening power.

Therefore the apostles preached Christ: "Whom we preached" (Col. 2. 28). Righteousness, life, and salvation, were in Him for every sinner, and all who believed the Gospel possessed these blessings by possessing Him, for He Himself is the blessing. It is not only that I have every blessing through Him, I have every blessing in Him. In Him I am "of God" (1 Cor. 1. 30). As in Him I derive my moral and spiritual existence from God: I am born of God: I am a "new creation" (2 Cor. 5. 17). What I am as in Adam forms no part of that which I am in Christ: "Old things have passed away: behold, all things have become new."

Now the One in whom I have found acceptance with God, and the One who is my life, has been down here among men, and during His sojourn here
below set forth all that was pleasing to the heart of God. All that is not of that order, though it may be tolerated in the patience of God, must eventually find rejection with Him. In Him I see the great thought of God for man. The first Adam was not that, the last Adam is. And the last Adam is the Adam of divine purpose. The Son becoming man, accomplishing redemption, and having a race of men after His own order, was not a mere redressment of our fallen condition; our fallen condition but gave occasion for the bringing in of the original thought and purpose of God for man. Now that the Christ has come, Adam is seen only to be a figure of Him (Rom. 5. 14).

Of this Person, the second Man and last Adam, two things are true: one is, that in Him the perfect revelation of God has come to pass, the Father has come to light in the Son. And second, He is the only order of man that can stand in the light of that revelation. The first man was as perfect a man as God could make after that order. He was of the earth, made of dust, and the light in which he as a living soul stood in relationship with his Maker was all that was needful for His perfect happiness, indeed more light he would not have been able to take in.

But the last Adam stands in the light of God perfectly revealed. No other man, that is, no other order of man, could stand there. The light that the sun in the heavens gives us is perfectly suitable to our physical condition. Our eyes want all the light it gives, but they would very soon be made blind were the sun’s rays a little more powerful. The Son’s place is in the full light of God; and all that are of His order, that is, who derive from Himself as having His life, have their place there also. But they are there as having His life, and they are there in the power of the Holy Spirit of God. This is really their own native element, for they are born of God, know God, and are heavenly in life and nature.

This life, which is the life of the last Adam, the Son of God, has been manifested here below; and before the eyes of men all its heavenly and Divine characteristics were brought to light, and brought to light in Him without any admixture of the frailties and imperfections that belong to the old order, now fallen and under sin’s dominion. It is the life of God, the Divine nature exhibiting itself in flesh and blood; on the one hand revealing the invisible God, and on the other bringing to light the life that God had promised for man before the world was. There are these two sides to that life: perfect man under the eye of the blessed God, and God before the eye of the erring creature. Man here doing the will of God, obedient unto death, and that the death of the cross. Never once calling into question either the wisdom or the love of the Lord of heaven and earth. Not only not calling these into question, but finding His delight in contemplating, and submitting to the ways of God, however they might seem to militate against His happiness. In prospect of the cross, and the drinking of the bitter cup, His sorrow knew no bounds, and yet His heart was glad, and His glory rejoiced, for in the end He knew His justification was certain. The path marked out for Him was the path of death, for it led there; but it was the pathway of the will of God, and therefore the path of life, for He knew that through resurrection it would end in the presence of God, where there was fullness of joy, and to His right hand, where there were pleasures for evermore (Psa. 16.). His devotedness to the Father’s glory was infinite, and His confidence in the Father’s love was just as infinite. His sorrow knew no bounds, for the darkness of Golgotha meant the abandonment of God; but the joy of doing the Father’s will was as boundless as the sorrow.

Here we behold God come down into death in grace and love for the deliverance of man, and Man gone down into
death for the glory of God. And both these wondrous truths seen in the one work and in the one Person. Alas, the heart of fallen man is also exhibited in its hatred of all that is of God. Here at the cross is a light above the brightness of the sun, revealing the heart of God, the heart of Christ, and the heart of fallen man. The heart of God in love to His erring creature, the heart of Christ in love to the Father, and the heart of fallen man in hatred against Both. Only in Christ we have exhibited a love upward and a love downward. The love upward is the love to the Father, and it was this that brought Him to the cross. I use the term upward as referring to the place that He took in Manhood (Psa. 16. 2; John 14. 28), for in the Godhead the three Persons are one, but as to the relative places taken by Them in the work of redemption there is a difference. His love to the Father brought Him to the cross, and this was the most powerful spring of all His actions down here. But there was His love to His own. Paul says: "He loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2. 20). He also loved the church, and gave Himself for it (Eph. 5. 25). In the work of the cross, as in everything else, the Father and the Son are of one mind.

We have to learn Christ both in the revelation of God in His Person, and in His setting forth of man according to the thought of God. Everything is learned by us as we learn Him. He is the Saviour, and He is also the Law-giver. Therefore is He not only preached as Saviour to sinners, He is also taught to those who profess His name; for whoever says that he abides in Him is responsible to walk, as He walked (1 John 2. 6). He left us an example, that we should follow His steps (1 Pet. 2. 21). Nothing else will do for God, and when we get even a little acquainted with the moral excellencies that everywhere shone forth in Him, nothing else will do for us. But these excellencies do not break all at once upon our mental vision. We are glad, in the first instance, to have Him as a means of escape from the judgment that we know awaits the soul who has to appear before God in his sins. It is only when this question has been gone into and settled, so that we have peace with God, knowing that we are justified by faith, that the light of that heavenly life of our Saviour begins to dawn upon our renewed hearts and minds; and only then, and that by the Word and Spirit, are we able to enter into the great truth, that God has taken us up to conform us to His Son's image; and only then are we able to sit down in the presence of God, and contemplate the heavenly characteristics that shone out in His adorable Person, and that made Him the object of our hearts, as He ever was the object of the heart of God. Everything and everyone becomes eclipsed by the moral glories of the Son of God.

Moses gave a law to Israel, which had they kept it would have been the law of all the nations of the earth, as it will yet be when once that law becomes written upon the hearts of that people. But that law was not set forth in Moses, for Moses was only a sinner like the rest of us. Whatever made him to differ from others was the grace that was bestowed upon him of God; it was not anything that he was by nature. But the law that he gave to Israel was written upon two tables of stone, which were placed in the ark, typical of Him who could say: "Thy law is within My heart."

But something even greater was within the heart of Christ. The law of Moses was only that which man as a child of Adam should be, but it was not the measure of what the last Adam was. The law given by Christ is the law that regulates the conduct of one walking in the light of God perfectly revealed. It is in that light the believer walks, and his walk is in the power of the Holy Spirit, by whom he is able to keep the cross upon the old Adam nature, that is so ready to assert itself, and by whom
also Christ is kept before the vision of his soul; and the effect of this is that we become changed into His image (2 Cor. 3. 18).

The Epistles of the New Testament set the truth of Christianity before our souls, as God has been pleased to give it. The Gospels portray that glorious Person, the Son of God, in His pathway of humiliation, and as the faithful and true Witness, in the midst of a world hostile to the light that shone out in His ways, words, and works. In the Psalms we have the inward exercises and sorrows of the Saviour more in detail than anywhere else, along with His confidence in Jehovah, and His faithfulness at all times to the trust committed to Him.

We have His life. We have His Spirit. We have His Word. We have His example. And to Him we are going to be conformed. In the meantime we are left here to reproduce Him in our ways amongst men, and in doing this be lights in the midst of the surrounding darkness; hated, perhaps, by the men who are about us, but well pleasing to the heart of God, and letting men see, if only in a little, that which shall characterize in the coming day the whole redeemed creation.

THE PATIENCE OF HOPE.

(£. Cross.)

Oh! 'tis all brightness yonder, no clouds nor din,
But joy, and peace, and gladness, and rest from sin.
Oh! 'tis all glory yonder, for Christ is there,
In blest effulgence shining beyond compare.

And there's no sorrow yonder, nor grief, nor pain;
They live to serve and worship the Lamb once slain.
And there's no morrow yonder, 'tis one to-day,
There shines with fadeless splendour the sun's bright ray.

For Christ's the sun and sunshine of that bright place,
There we shall learn His glory, as here His grace;
And now we wait with patience His blessed will;
The stormy wind and tempest His word fulfill.

They're servants of His pleasure—He bids them come;
Then by a word they're silenced, and all is calm,
And we shall reach in safety, the moment bright,
When we shall see His beauty in radiant light.

And if, meanwhile, He calls us to face the storm,
His Shepherd care surrounds us, and His strong arm
Shall guide us through in safety the long dark night,
Till earth-born clouds shall vanish in morning light.
NOTES ON JEREMIAH. No. 7.

The Potter and the Vessels.

THE striking sign of chapter 18, when rightly understood is sufficient to cause us to cleave to the Lord alone. The circle of civilization is to Him just what the workshop is to the potter. As the latter holds the clay and moulds it into variously formed vessels, so the Lord holds in His hands the nations, fashioning and forming as He thinks good. Who shall question the work of God? Who indeed is capable, even if he dared so to do? The potter rejects faulty material rightly. Cannot the Lord speak concerning a sinful nation, or concerning an unrighteous kingdom. Let it be plucked up, broken, and destroyed? Who shall say Him nay? Where is haughty Assyria, and corrupt Babylonia? How low has He brought Persia and Greece and Rome for their sins! What desolations He hath wrought among the nations which were around His well-loved Israel! How debased and desolate the once oppressive and independent nation of the Nile! Broken and rejected kingdoms, like the potter’s useless earthenware, strew the face of the ground. O Lord, what desolation Thou hast made in the earth! Yet Thou art righteous in all Thy ways. And Thou art long-suffering and merciful also. For unlike art Thou to the potter in this that Thou hast said; “If that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turn from their evil, then will I repent of the evil that I had thought to do unto them” (verse 8).

In the case of the privileged nation of Israel, we have a special example of the long-suffering of our God. So solicitous was He for their good, that, “rising up early,” as He so often expresses it, He called to them again and again to return to Himself and find the establishment and blessing which His gracious heart desires for them; but they would not, for they said, “There is no hope” (verse 12). They did not, however, forget to seek self-gratification; but they forgot the Lord, only to bring evil upon themselves (verses 11-17). They also devised devices against Jeremiah and sought his life. The prophet prays against them, for they recompensed his good with evil, and though this prayer was not unrighteous in a servant of the Lord connected with earthly promises and hopes, yet it would not be suitable for those who know the surpassing grace of God now, for such are connected with the heavenly purpose and hope, and this rises far above what was then made known. They were then against Jeremiah unrighteously, and he prayed to the Lord to righteously reward them. Those who know the true grace of God to-day have received favour for which they had no merit or claim; they are saved, justified and blessed eternally in Christ Jesus; and for such to pray against others when they themselves have been thus treated by our blessed God and Father would be inconsistent indeed. For us now, no lower standard than our Lord Jesus Christ is placed before us, and we become like Him in this as in other things if His glory is the delight and study of our hearts. The Holy Spirit is here to enable us to do this without legal effort, and it becomes the joy of the one who knows the love of Christ to behold the glory of the Lord; and as he does so, without thinking of himself, he becomes “transformed according to the same image from glory to glory” (2 Cor. 3. 18).

“Like Him in faith, in meekness, love, In every beauteous grace; From glory into glory changed, Till we behold His face.”

The earthen bottle of chapter 19. is figurative of Jerusalem and the people.
In the previous sign the significance was the right of God to handle any nation or kingdom as He saw fit, and also His ability to do so: here it is the solemn sign that the city and its surroundings and people shall be publicly punished for their sin and idolatry in a way that when others hear of it their ears should tingle. It thus becomes an eloquent witness of the awfulness of sin, so that the vile names of Tophet and Hinnom could not be expressive enough to describe the place of their punishment; it should be called The valley of slaughter (verse 6). To the prophet the Lord said, "Then shalt thou break the bottle in the sight of the men that go with thee, and shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord of hosts: even so will I break this people and this city" (verses 10, 11).

Pashur, the son of Immer the priest, hearing that Jeremiah prophesied these things smote him and put him in the stocks (20. 2); but he himself is made a sign; for, though his name Pashur meant "Prosperity round about," it is changed to Magor-Missabib, meaning, "Fear round about." There is something startling and pointedly expressive about this sort of naming in the Scriptures of Truth—the naming of the omniscient God we might say. He becomes a terror to himself and to his friends; and because he had prophesied lies he and his should be taken captive to Babylon and die and be buried there (verse 6). Moreover, all the wealth of the guilty city should be given to their enemies. The strength thereof, its riches, its gains, its precious things and all the treasures of the kings of Judah should be carried away by them to Babylon.

THE PROPHET'S EXPERIENCE AND OURS.

To pronounce this was no perfunctory duty to the prophet. Deeply he felt it all; and the more so because he knew the importance of this people and city to the Lord and to the whole world also. He loved them, and he knew how the Lord loved them; he knew however also that the judgment must come. It is a wrong translation in verse 7 which makes Jeremiah accuse the Lord of deceiving him. It should read, "Lord, Thou hast enticed me," being the same word as in verse 10. The word of the Lord became a reproach unto him and a derision daily. He said he would speak no more in His name; but he could not keep quiet, for it was like a burning fire within him. His persecutors defamed and watched for him to stumble: the Lord was with him, however, as a mighty and terrible One: they should stumble and be ashamed; confusion everlasting and never to be forgotten should be theirs (verses 8-11).

"ALL THINGS ARE OURS."

( J. N. D.)

EVERY possible glory indeed is ours. The blessedness that is in God Himself, as far as it can be communicated, for we dwell in God and God in us. Relative blessedness, for we are children. Associated blessedness, in union with the blessed One, for we are the bride. Official nearness and glory, for we are kings and priests. Human blessedness, for we shall be perfect men, after the image of the second Adam. Corporate blessedness, for we shall have joy together. Individual, for we shall have a name given which no one knows but he that receives it; and we shall have the fullness of the Holy Ghost dwelling in us, unhindered by these poor bodies; yea, clothed upon by a vessel suited to the power of the Divine inhabitant, so as to be able in full largeness of heart to enjoy all this.
IT has been surmised that the Epistle of Jude was the last of the inspired epistles. In any case it is very appropriately placed, in our arrangement of the Scriptures, immediately before the book of Revelation; for while Jude speaks of the corruption and apostasy of the Christian profession, the Revelation foretells the judgment that must follow in all its terrible detail.

Jude having taken his pen in hand purposed to write with all diligence concerning the common salvation, but, led by the Spirit of God, he is constrained to write concerning a special evil which made it of all moment that he should exhort the saints to contend earnestly for the faith.

There are common evils—the world, the flesh, and the devil—to which all who enjoy the common salvation are exposed at all times and in all places, Jude, however, writes neither of the common salvation nor of the common evils. He has before him a special and very terrible form of evil—the corruption of Christianity by ungodly men inside the Christian circle.

To obtain a clear conception of this appalling evil, let us remember that the apostle John had already written of those who “went out from us, but they were not of us” (1 John 2. 19). Jude likewise traces the evil of which he speaks to those who are not “of us” for he says in verse 4 they are “ungodly men.” There is, however, this important difference, the ungodly men of whom John speaks “went out,” whereas the ungodly of whom Jude writes “crept in.” In result, the difference is very great. If ungodly men “go out”, they will become opposers to the truth outside the Christian circle. If the ungodly creep in, they will become corrupters of the truth inside the Christian circle. To oppose the truth is indeed solemn, to corrupt it is far worse. It is of this special and terrible evil that Jude writes. He lays bare its insidious commencement in the days of the apostles; he exposes its deadly character; he traces its evil course through the succeeding ages, and foretells its overwhelming judgment at the coming of the Lord. Its continuance through the dispensation clearly proves that corruption inside the Christian circle is an evil that no accession of light can arrest, no revival can check, and no reformation can remove. The Lord alone can deal with it at His coming. First then Jude presents before us

THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE EVIL (4.).

Corruption inside the Christian circle commenced through certain men creeping in unawares. That they came in unawares clearly shows that they deceived the saints by a good profession and a fair appearance. They made a profession of Christianity and were received as true Christians. Really the ministers of Satan, they appeared as ministers of righteousness. The evil, too, commenced in apostolic days, for Jude is not simply warning us of evil to come in the last days, but of evil that was present in his day. Paul had said, “I know that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you not sparing the flock.” But when Jude writes, the grievous wolves are already at their nefarious work. He does not say there will be certain men but “there are.” Having thus indicated the commencement of the evil, Jude proceeds to set forth

THE CHARACTER OF THE EVIL (5.10).

We have seen that the men who brought in the corruption were
in fact "ungodly," however fair outwardly. The character of their ungodliness is twofold.

First they turned the grace of God into lasciviousness. In the Epistle to Titus we learn that grace is the principle on which God is saving men, and by which He teaches the believer to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world (Titus 2. 11, 12). The great principle by which God is saving men from sin, and teaching them to live soberly, is made the occasion by these ungodly men to gratify the flesh and indulge their lust, at the same time keeping up a fair profession and moving in the Christian circle.

Secondly, they deny "our only Master and Lord Jesus Christ" (R.V. and N.T.). This is the refusal of all authority. They do not deny the name of Christ, but they will not submit to His authority. They deny "our only Master." This is lawlessness, and lawlessness is the determination to do one's own will.

Here, then, we have the two great characteristics of this corrupting evil—lust and lawlessness. Of necessity lust leads to lawlessness, for the man who is determined to gratify his lust will be impatient of every kind of restraint. Who can deny to-day that that which bears the name of Christ upon earth is marked by lust and lawlessness? Truly the evil may take many different forms and show itself in very varied degrees, but on every hand there is increasingly manifest a spirit of self-will and self-indulgence combined with a spirit of rebellion that rises up against all authority.

Moreover, Jude not only portrays the character of the evil, but he also shows what it involves and whither it leads. It involves the hopelessness of apostasy and leads to overwhelming judgment. To prove this beyond all question, Jude recalls three terrible examples in the history of the world. First he reminds us of those who were saved out of the land of Egypt but afterwards were destroyed in the wilderness. What was the secret of their downfall? Lust and lawlessness. They lusted after the things of Egypt, and they rebelled against God (verse 5).

Secondly, Jude brings forward the angels which kept not their first estate. The reference is not to the fall of Satan and his angels, for, as we well know, they are not at present in chains but are allowed to wander on this earth. This is a second fall of angels, presumably referred to in Gen. 6. The secret of Satan's fall was pride, by which he sought to exalt himself to the throne of God. The secret of this second fall of angels was lust, by which they left their own habitation and kept not their first estate (verse 6).

Lastly, Jude recalls the dark history of Sodom and Gomorrha, cities that gave themselves over to lust and lawlessness (verse 7).

In connection with these three examples there are several facts we do well to remember:

Firstly, the underlying evil in every case was lust in some form.

Secondly, the effort to gratify lust led to rebellion against the authority of God.

Thirdly, rebellion against God involved the abandonment of the position in which God had placed them. This is apostasy.

Fourthly, in every case apostasy brought about overwhelming judgment. There is no hope for the apostate.

Israel fell to lusting, rebelled against God, and thus abandoned their position of outward relationship with God in which they had been placed. This was apostasy and led to their judgment—they were destroyed. The angels lusted and abandoned the angelic position in which God had set them.
This, too, was apostasy and in consequence they are abandoned to judgment—"reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." Sodom and Gomorrha lusted and abandoned the natural order which God had ordained. This again was apostasy, exposing them to the judgment of "eternal fire."

How intensely solemn the warnings of these terrible examples! How loudly they proclaim that the corruption and rebellion that marks the great Christian profession of to-day is leading to the hopeless horror of apostasy—the total abandonment of the Christian position. For apostasy there is neither recovery nor remedy. There is nothing in front of Christendom but the judgment, long foretold, at the coming of the Lord with ten thousands of His saints.

However, Jude does not leave us to make the application of these examples, for the facts adduced he himself applies to the corrupters of Christendom (verses 8-10). They, too, are marked by the lusts of the flesh. Not governed by the revelation of God, they become infatuated with their own filthy dreams which defile the flesh. They, too, are marked by lawlessness. In the eager pursuit of their dreams they revolt against all authority; as it is said, they "despise lordship and speak railingly against dignities" (N. T.). Mere natural men, they can know nothing of the things of God, for "the things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God." Of these things that they know not, they speak evil, and in the things which they know naturally they corrupt themselves, for, as one has truly said, "man cannot become as a beast without debasing himself far below the beast; and that which only testifies in the beast to the absence of a moral element, in man will testify to the presence of an immoral one."

Here then we have all the elements that mark corrupt Christendom. Filthy dreams instead of the revelation of God; the body defiled rather than being used for the glory of God; lordship despised in place of submission to the authority of Christ; dignities railed against in place of due recognition; evil spoken of spiritual things and natural things corrupted. Such is the solemn picture, not of degraded heathendom but, of civilized Christendom. To this condition there can be only one end. But before presenting the terrible end of the corruption Jude portrays in a few brief sentences

THE COURSE OF THE EVIL (11-13).

He vividly sets forth the development of the evil by the use of three more illustrations drawn from the Old Testament. Recalling the history of Cain he exclaims of the corrupters of Christendom, "Woe unto them! for they have gone in THE WAY OF CAIN." The way of Cain was the way of natural religion. Cain was a religious man, but his religion was according to the thoughts of fallen man and not according to the revelation of God. His natural religion led him to belittle sin, to despise God's provision to meet sin, to attempt to draw nigh to God on the ground of his own works, and to persecute the true child of God. Alas! through the corruption of ungodly men, the large mass of professing Christians have gone in the way of Cain. The popular religion of the day ignores the revelation of God, and takes no account of sin in the sight of God. It treats the fall as a mere myth and hence, denying that man is fallen, has no use for the atonement. Rejecting the propitiatory work of Christ, it naturally falls back on the works of men for the ground of acceptance with God. Moreover, it holds in great contempt, and special hatred, all those who, cleaving to the revelation of God, trust in the atoning blood as their only plea, and love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth. Upon all those who follow
in the way of Cain God pronounces "Woe."

Jude continues by appealing to the history of one of the most depraved men in the Old Testament. He says of these corrupters, they have run "greedily after THE ERROR OF BALAAM for reward." This desperately wicked man was governed by covetousness. In the pursuit of gain he would fain make merchandise of the people of God, and was even ready to proclaim error if by so doing he could obtain the reward. This has been rightly called the ecclesiastical error, or how many there are who hold high official position in the professing church who simply use the position to make merchandise out of the people of God, and are ready to teach error to obtain rewards. This evil rises to its greatest height in the corrupt system of Rome marked, as it is, by "merchandise of gold," and every choice and precious thing that man's heart can covet, from "gold and silver and precious stones" down to "the souls of men." If the professing church can make merchandise with the truth of God, it will not hesitate to barter with the souls of men (Rev. 18. 12, 13). Such is the modern repetition of the error of Balaam.

Lastly Jude says of these corrupters, they have "perished in THE GAIN-SAYING OF CORE." The sin of Korah was twofold; on the one hand, he openly rebelled against Moses and Aaron saying, "Ye take too much upon you . . . wherefore . . . lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord"; on the other hand, not content with his own position, he usurped the place of priestly intercession that alone belonged to Aaron (Num. 16. 3, 9, 10). He sought to degrade Moses and Aaron to the level of the congregation, and to exalt himself to the level of Aaron. Alas! the modern answer to the gainsaying of Core is only too manifest. From pulpit and press, from convention and conference there flows an ever-rising tide of rebellion against the Christ of God, combined with the exaltation of man. Christ is degraded to the level of fallen man, and man is exalted to the level of God. Religious infidels masquerading as Christians dare to say that too much is made of Christ, while claiming for man rights and honours that alone belong to Christ. This rebellion against Christ linked with the exaltation of man is the very essence of apostasy and will end in the appearance of that great apostate, "the man of sin," "who opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he sitteth in the temple of God showing himself that he is God" (2 Thess. 2. 3, 4).

Such is the terrible course of the evil by which Christendom is being corrupted. Commencing with the way of Cain—or religion that, ignoring revelation, is framed according to the natural heart of man—it develops into the error of Balaam, making religion a matter of merchandise; and ends in the gainsaying of Core, which is apostasy.

Jude multiplies metaphors in expressing his horror of these evil corrupters of the professing church. They are sunken rocks* leading to shipwreck; clouds, giving promise of refreshing showers but in reality without water and the sport of every wind: trees, for a time making a fair show but bringing forth no fruit, twice dead (by nature and by profession), and in the end rooted up: raging waves of the sea, making a great display of power, but in reality foaming out things that are to their shame; wandering stars, appearing with meteoric brilliancy for a time only to wander into "blackness of darkness for ever."

Thus Jude ranges over land and sea and sky to find figures wherewith to expose and condemn this fearful evil. Yet let none think by reason of these

*Translated "Spots" in A.V. See R.V. and note in New Translation by J.N.D.
striking figures that these represented are monsters of iniquity in the sight of men. Rather, indeed, they appear as angels of light and ministers of righteousness feasting in company with Christians, and feeding themselves without fear; showing, indeed, on their part, that they have no conscience, and on the part of the Christians, that their true character is not discerned.

Having thus learnt the character and source of this great evil we are finally permitted to see

THE JUDGMENT OF THE EVIL (14-16).

For the backslider there is a way of recovery; for the apostate nothing but a certain fearful looking-for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries. Apostasy ends in the crushing judgment, foretold by Enoch, and fulfilled when the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints. Enoch in his day, surrounded by the world of the ungodly, looked to be caught up to heaven, and foretold the judgment that was coming. Once again the Lord's people find themselves surrounded by the ungodly, they too look to meet the Lord in the air, and they know that judgment must follow upon apostate Christendom. In that day not only the "ungodly deeds" will meet their due reward but "all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him." From the days of the apostles to these last closing days the Person of the Christ has been the constant object of attack by ungodly corrupters within the church. But no "hard speeches" "against Him" have been forgotten. All will be remembered and all will be recalled only to recoil in judgment upon those who have so lightly dared to sit in judgment upon the Son of God.

But those who have belittled Christ have ever exalted man. If they have spoken "hard speeches" against the Christ of God they have also uttered "great swelling words" concerning sinful men. The degradation of Christ is ever linked with the admiration of man. Moreover, behind the hard speeches against Christ there is ever a low walk. Such are "murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts." Lust is the real secret of antagonism to Christ and admiration of man.

Hard speeches against the Christ of God must raise the righteous indignation of the true children of God; and yet they can to a very large extent afford to treat the authors of these hard speeches with silent contempt, knowing that the time is soon coming when all will be dealt with in judgment. The irreverent handling of God's revelation, the wicked perversions of Divine truths, and the blasphemies against the Person and work of Christ, whether on the part of higher critics, religious infidels, or graceless professors, have not been passed over by a Holy God. For centuries He has kept silence, and borne in long-suffering patience, while men, ever growing bolder in rebellion, have heaped up wrath against the day of wrath; but at last every "hard speech" will receive its crushing answer, and every opposer will be silenced and condemned, for "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him."
FOUR INTERRUPTIONS.

The communications of chapters 13. and 14. in the Gospel of John were given to His disciples in the house where the Lord celebrated the last Passover. His love was about to lead them out from this world—with all its wondrous record of the mercies and ways of God, and all its sad story of the hatred, treachery, and failure of man—to the Father. He had first made Himself dear to them by the glories and graces recorded in chapters 1.—12., gathered them round Him as sheep around a beloved Shepherd; and then by departing would cause a movement of their hearts in the direction He took. Ultimately they were to be with Him, as chapter 17. 24 shows; but in the meantime every facility was to be furnished for the flow of affection between Himself and His followers.

The last testimony was borne to the world in chapter 12., and was rejected as the first had been. In chapter 13. we seem to enter a retreat where Jesus is alone with His disciples. In faithfulness to His own institutions for Israel He takes the passover supper; and having thus completed His relations with the earth for the time being, He prepares for the entire change from the Jewish position to the Christian by girding Himself for service and washing the disciples' feet. This was not for the correction of failure; we should lose greatly by supposing that this washing of the feet is for reasons of breakdown in walk. The dust of travel is one thing, the soil of sin is another. No one would accuse the Eastern traveller of wrong when he reached his friend's house with dusty feet. Comfort and suitability required that the traces of his journey be removed, in order that he might not be distracted in his host's presence by any thought of his own untidiness; the washing of feet was as much necessary for the visitor's comfort as it was in keeping with and in suitability for the divans of the host's house. The Lord was to introduce His disciples into the Father's things and into the atmosphere of the Father's house, and love would make them perfectly at home there, free to enter without distraction into each of the thoughts of Divine love.

How often when we go to a meeting are we quite a time before we get into the spirit of it. Our minds revert to the circumstances out of which we have come, our homes, our families, our business, our work for the Lord. It is the same when we would fain have a quiet time alone with the Lord. Our thoughts wander away to memories of earth, past experiences, persons, places, books—things which in themselves are perfectly right, but which at that time, and in view of what we are then seeking, are intrusions, things out of keeping with the communion we long for. In all this there need not be sin; it is the dust of earth which clings to us as the result of our travel across it. But obviously it distracts us in the matter of communion with the Lord in His own things; and here comes in the Lord's gracious personal service to wash our feet; i.e., to remove from our minds the memory and thought of the way we have been travelling, and to bring about by His word the displacement of this "dust," so that we may be free and happy and undistracted before Him in the new position He has taken in resurrection.

The major operation of bathing, the Lord refers to in chapter 13. 10. This seems to cover the great work of regeneration when the Word of God is applied for our conversion to God, with all that it implies. It is the time when our whole being is brought under the power of God's truth; when, as with Naaman bathed in the waters of Jordan and made anew, we first submit to the Son of God, trust in His death for us, are
cleansed, and receive eternal life. This is once for all.

But the need of feet washing remains. For though we have eternal life, the enjoyment of that life is often intercepted by the things of earthly life and service. Nothing but the love of the Lord on the one hand, and His very gracious service in feet washing on the other, can give us sustained enjoyment in the Father's things. And what the Lord does in this way for us, we should each seek to be spiritually capable of doing for each other. Be it noted that only He who abode in His Father's love was capable of washing all His disciples' feet; and only when we are sufficiently near to the Lord are we capable of so helping another saint. This is the minor operation which is repeated as often as may be necessary.

In chapter 13. 30 Judas goes out. Love's last service has been laid at his feet, only to be spurned, and he goes out into the betrayer's night. The contrast becomes very marked between the communion of the world outside in its thoughts and purposes of evil, and the communion of this other world inside, where the thoughts and purposes of love are unfolded. JESUS was alone with His true disciples.

Chapter 13. 31 then begins the most intimate disclosures, where the Lord in unreserved confidence speaks of all that is in His heart. How privileged are those whose feet are washed and whose hearts are true.

The Lord prefaces His communications by deep unfoldings of the meaning of His wondrous death. Not now the human side of it as in the foretellings of the other Gospels, the betrayal, the shame, the spitting, the crucifixion. It is here presented as the glory of the Son of Man; the crowning presentation to God of the Son of man in a love that did not falter and an obedience that would not fail. He presents it also as that by which God should be glorified; every ray in the bright glory of God Himself brought into fullest and deepest display, so fully revealed that God would owe it to JESUS to glorify Him in response; the Son delighting to honour God, and God delighting to honour JESUS. But in this none could be at His side; He is alone in atonement and in this supreme act which reveals God and secures glory to Him in the scene of man's sin.

Simon Peter is the first one to interrupt. Knowing that His Master was dear to him, and dearer than his own life, he avails himself of the intimacy afforded by the Lord's grace, and proffers his company and his assistance, his devoted assistance, in this approaching moment. Poor Peter! say we. Had it been possible for ardent love to bring another to the Lord's assistance in the great work of bringing glory to God in this world of sin, and in relation to sin, Peter had been the man. But while the Lord stands for God in the breach, not only does Peter recede from the position, following afar off, but in the end repudiates the One he loved, and invokes a curse on himself for the very suggestion of possessing a link with Him. He denied his Lord with oaths and curses. How truly was the Lord alone; and how truly His love distances that of His most ardent disciple. Single handed He laid the foundations of blessing, and constructed the road into blessing and the Father's House.

Thomas, materialistic Thomas, next interrupts. JESUS had spoken first of His death as glorifying God; then of the Father's house into which He would enter in risen life, not for Himself alone but as preparing the place for them too; assuring them, further, as proof of His deep love for them that He would personally come again to usher them into it, that they might ever be with them. This may seem clear enough to us when we read it in communion with God. But Thomas failed to grasp its meaning; not apprehending the Lord's objective, the place into which the Lord was travelling through death and resurrection to have them with Him, he asked, "How can we
“know the way?” The Lord goes beyond his question in the answer; for He says, “I am the way, the truth, and the life,” and adds, “no man cometh unto the Father but by Me.” With the eye steadily fixed on JESUS we can read the Way. Dying alone out of life here, He rose again, not alone; Head of a new Race now, His true disciples are associated with Him as the risen Man; and He has ascended to His Father. But it is after such a fashion that the One who is His Father is our Father too, the One who is His God is our God. We are given the same place in relation to His Father and God as He has in relation to Him (chap. 20. 17). The steps He has trodden in reaching that objective are an education to us; and while the position is defined for us in the place that JESUS has taken, it seems clear that for the practical enjoyment of that position we need to learn the lessons which His death out of this world, His resurrection, and His ascension, so plainly teach us. But He is not only the Way, He is the Truth also, He is the Exposition to Us of all that the Father is. The Father’s name, character, love, glory, purposes, are all completely revealed in the Lord Jesus, so that in proportion as we study the Lord Jesus in His new position do we become instructed as to the Father; and acquaintance with the Father makes the Father’s house doubly dear to us. Finally, He is the Life. For, after all, neither the Father’s house where JESUS has gone, nor the Father Himself, could be understood or enjoyed now or hereafter, had we not the life that is suited to that enjoyment. In JESUS we see a life of relationship and affection which is wholly in consonance with the place into which He has entered; and as those who have been identified with Him in His death for us, and through faith in that death, we participate with Him in life. We are of His order; eternal life is ours. And it is life eternal in order that we might know the Father and Jesus Christ His sent One (chap. 17. 4).

Philip is a third interrupter; yet always in the intimacy of love, and giving the Lord His due place. “Lord,” he says, “show us the Father, and it sufficeth us.” Slowly do our minds rise to the conception of the majesty of Godhead glory. Little do we apprehend of the relations between Divine Persons. If we thought to see the Father in a form different from the Son, or the Spirit in some independent form, would it not divide our attention at once? In JESUS all the fulness was pleased to dwell; in Him we see the gracious and mighty activities of the Spirit, and in Him all the glory of the Father. The Lord patiently explains to Philip that in Him as a Man here, and in His communications and activities, He was a complete and blessed setting forth of all that the Father is. His words were the Father’s words; His works were the Father’s works; He was before the disciples’ eyes, but the Father was in Him, and He in the Father. In looking at JESUS the Son as Man here, they were looking on what the Father is, for there is no disparity between the Father and the Son. The Son is the Son, the Father is the Father, the Spirit is the Spirit, yet is the Father revealed in the Son. It is privilege untold that we may behold Jesus, follow Him in the recorded details of His life here, and feel that we are in contact with the Father in every word and work.

Judas brings in the last interruption to the ministry of the Lord in the upper chamber. He voices the inquiry which we all long to have answered, “How is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us, and not unto the world?” Of His public manifestation to the world we are told in a hundred places. The Jewish mind was ever looking forward to it. But here the Lord had brought together two seemingly contrastive ideas, “the world seeth Me no more, but ye see Me,” and again, “I will manifest Myself to him.” How reconcile His concealment from the world
and His manifestation to the individual? This is subsequent to the Lord's intimation of the coming of the Comforter (verses 16, 17). "Ye see Me" is the privilege of disciples, open to all. The subjective state of the disciples, which would enable them to enjoy the manifestation of the Lord, is found in verse 21. While the world is not able to see Christ, the disciple is allowed the manifestation of Him. Heart-love to the Son of God produces obedience to His commandments; and where obedience to the revealed will of the Lord is the fruit of love to Him He vouchsafes the disclosure of Himself, His glories, His offices, His graces. The cloud or fog may intercept the fair shining of the sun, but when the veil of fog or cloud is removed, the sun's brightness is revealed and the sun's warmth is felt. Yet even this external revelation of Himself to the obedient and loving heart is not the whole extent of the thoughts of love. It is as though the Father and the Son were yearning for closer intimacy than the mere revelation of glory could admit of, and propose to make the disciple the dwelling place of their affection even though he be still actually on earth. For this, with this in view, the Lord says to Judas, in reply to his question, "If a man love Me, he will keep My word"—i.e., love not only obeys when it has a direct commandment as suggested in verse 21, but when through a deeper acquaintance with its Object it becomes acquainted with His tastes and the whole revelation for which He is set, it acts with the intuition of what is acceptable to His mind. It may have a commandment, and then it acts in swift obedience; it may not have a commandment, and yet through intimacy with its Object does instinctively the right thing and avoids the thing distasteful to Christ. Where there is this spiritual sensitiveness, the keeping of "My word" (as it should read in verse 23), the Father responds to this affection for the Son, gives a peculiar sense of His (the Father's) love, and Father and Son come in holy and happy freedom and unreserved delight, to hallow as Their "mansion" the individual who thus loves Jesus. Of communion so rare and sweet, of such a foretaste of heaven itself on earth, who can write or say much? It is remarkable of those raised from the dead, none have told us their experience when in Hades. Paul, caught up to the third heaven, into Paradise, heard unspeakable things which it is not lawful for man to utter. Human language fails to utter "fullness of joy" as found in God's presence, or "pleasures for evermore" as found at God's right hand (Ps. 16.). If in Psalm 36. 1-4 we get the machinations of evil (in the midst of which Judas would find himself in going outside in John 13. 30), in the latter half of the Psalm may we not see something of the joy of the true disciple with his God? "They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Thy house; and Thou wilt make them drink of the river of Thy Edens." (For the word translated "pleasures" in our Bibles is the plural of Eden in Gen. 2., God's Edens! One Eden, once seen in this poor world, has left us all hankering for its renewal. The lowly disciple to whom Christ is everything may have the presence of the Father and the Son, with all of Divine delights that Their presence brings, Edens of Divine delight; the river of God's Edens flowing into and through the soul.

May writer and reader drink of the river of His pleasures more and more. Then will there be the blessed ministry of the Comforter, as found in John 14. 36; then daily, hourly peace in the midst of the world's unrest (verse 27); then joy in the Lord's exaltation in the Father's presence (verse 28); then the acceptance of the Lord's own path of faith, love, and obedience, in this world in which Satan rules (verses 29-31). Then can we come out from our sacred intercourse with the Lord where He is, to be here for Him in the place where He was.
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

"The Eternal Spirit."

"RE your answer, 'Christadelphian Errors' page 187, 188, August No., Dr. Anderson Berry in his 'Seven Sayings,' etc., says, 'Observe that it is Christ's own spirit, not the Holy Spirit, of which it is said here, 'by virtue of (dia pneumat\(\iota\)s aionion) an eternal spirit.' The virtue of the higher element of Christ's personality is introduced here to give value to the 'how much more.'""

N. N.

We entirely dissent from Dr. A. Berry's interpretation of this wonderful text, though we know that others besides he have taught the same thing. To exclude the Holy Spirit from it in our judgment spoils it greatly.

In no statement in Hebrews, which is the Epistle of contrasts, is there a greater contrast than that which is here drawn between the blood of the ancient sacrifices and the blood of Christ's sacrifice. They were carnal and temporary, His was in the power of the Holy Spirit, and consequently eternal; they effected an outward and ceremonial cleansing in view of an outward relationship with God who was not as yet made known; His purifies the conscience, it goes to the innermost being of a man and has a spiritual effect upon him, and makes him a worshipper in spirit and in truth.

Every act of Christ's life was in the power of the Holy Spirit. It was by the Holy Spirit that He was conceived of the Virgin (Luke 1. 35); it was by the Holy Spirit that He was anointed for service (Luke 3. 21, 22). He was the Antitype of the oblation of the meat-offering which was mingled with and anointed with oil (Leviticus 2.), the oil being, as is well known, a type of the Holy Spirit. Every word and action of His was by the Holy Spirit, as Luke 4. beautifully proves, and this so much so that when the leaders of the Jews said He cast out devils by Beelzebub they blasphemed against the Holy Ghost. The great culminating act of His life was the offering of Himself without spot to God. Could this be any less by the Spirit than His whole life had been? Most surely not.

Mark well what it means. The Jewish sacrifices were perpetual and ineffectual, but there is one that will never have to be repeated, it is eternal in its efficacy, for the seal of the eternal Spirit is stamped upon it and the living God has accepted it, and by it has been secured for us an eternal redemption (verse 12) from every foe that we might receive an eternal inheritance (verse 15).

In the Synopsis, Vol. 5, pp. 289, 290, J. N. Darby has the following beautiful comment, and as the subject is of great importance we venture to quote it in extenso. "Here the precious offering up of Christ is viewed as an act that He performed as man, though in the perfection and value of His Person. He offered Himself to God—but as moved by the power, and according to the perfection of the Eternal Spirit. All the motives that governed this action, and the accomplishment of the fact according to these motives were purely and perfectly those of the Holy Ghost, that is, absolutely divine in their perfection, but of the Holy Ghost acting in a Man (a Man without sin who, born and living ever by the power of the Holy Ghost, had never known sin; who, being exempt from it by birth, never allowed it to enter into Him) so that it is the Man Christ Jesus who offers Himself. This was requisite.

"Thus the offering was in itself perfect and pure, without defilement; and the act of offering was perfect, whether in love or in obedience, or in the desire to glorify God, or to accomplish the purpose of God. Nothing mingled itself with the perfection of His intent in offering Himself. The offering of Christ was one which being perfect in its moral nature, being in itself perfect in the eyes of God, was necessarily eternal in its value. For its value was as enduring as the nature of God who was glorified in it. It was made, not of necessity, but of free will, and in obedience. It was made by a man for the glory of God, but through the Eternal Spirit, ever the same in its nature and value."
Christ on the Throne of God.

DEAR Brother in Christ,—

"As a sincere friend of Scripture Truth, may I call attention to a statement in this month's issue (Sept., p. 201), 'Christ—the man Christ Jesus—sits on the throne of God in heaven. I need not say that He could not sit on that throne at all were He not God, but He is there as the Man Christ Jesus.' Similar statements have appeared in your valuable periodical on various occasions.

"The Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, as also His holy humanity, are of course (two natures in one Person) unquestionable. But that does not touch the point in question. Christ as Lord personally sits at the right hand of Jehovah (Psa. 110.), and as the Overcomer in the pathway of faith, sits with the Father in His throne (Rev. 3. 21). Soon He will sit on His own throne—His mediatorial throne—and govern heaven and earth for 1000 years.

"But where does Scripture assert that He sits on the throne of God? He sits at God's right hand—see Heb. 1. 3; 8. 1; 10. 12; 12. 2—'Is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.' God as such has never descended His throne and never shall. The throne came into existence consequent on the creation of the first intelligent, responsible being. Thus while Jehovah is eternal, the throne is of old (Psa. 93.).

"I trust the foregoing will be taken in the spirit in which it is written.

"I am,

"Yours affectionately in Christ,

"W. S."

We are sure that there is no real divergence of view on this subject between our correspondent and ourselves. He, with us, delights to maintain and proclaim the true Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our object in publishing his letter and our answer is to give emphasis to this great and fundamental truth of our most holy faith.

The exact expressions of Scripture as to the Lord's present position are as our correspondent points out. He has sat down in His Father's throne (Rev. 3. 21), and He has set Himself down on the right hand of the Majesty on high (Heb. 1. 3). We feel that we are right in saying that in both instances it is the throne of God that is in view. But there are other Scriptures. Isaiah saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up... and one [Seraphim] cried unto another, and said, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts" (Isa. 6. 1–3). John 12. 41 tells us that Jesus was the One whose glory Isaiah saw; and Jesus said, "What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where He was before" (John 6. 62). Again in John 17. the Lord prayed, "And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was."

When the throne of God comes into manifestation, as portrayed in the Revelation, the only visible occupant of it will be the Lord, for God is the invisible God, and is only manifested in Christ. He it is who in chapter 4. is like a jasper and a sardine stone to look upon; He it is who in chap. 5. is "a Lamb as it had been slain." And thenceforward it is "the throne of God and the Lamb"; and He it is who in chapter 20. will sit upon the great white throne to judge the dead, small and great, with the final judgment of God. Yes, a Man occupies the throne of God, whether for grace, government, or final judgment, but He could not be in it at all if He were not God.


J. N. DARBY, in his Notes and Comments, Vol. iv, pages 245 and 261, seems to imply that 'the people of the Prince to come' (Daniel 9. 26, 27) will be the Jews, and the prince will be Antichrist. Is not this different to what was formerly taught in his Synopsis, that 'the people' will be the Romans? I should be grateful for your thoughts on the matter. Perhaps I have mistaken his meaning."

The Notes and Comments referred to were rough notes made by their author at different periods of his life and not published until after his death, so that
they were not revised by him, and not intended by him for publication. The editor of them should certainly have compared them with works that had been revised by their author, and had he done so you would not have been puzzled by this contradiction. A brother, probably better acquainted with the writings of J. N. D. than anyone else, writes us that he believes the Notes and Comments on Daniel in vol. iv of that series of volumes were made before he wrote the Synopsis.

Bible Readings.

"WOULD you mind giving some help on the question as to whether the Reading Meeting [Meeting of the Study of the Word] is an assembly meeting as described in 1 Corinthians 14.?"—P. S.

Every gathering together of the saints of God should be unto the Name of the Lord (Matt. 18. 20); for when they do come together it is surely because they belong to Him, and Himself, His truth, His interests are their object. Malachi 3. 16 gives us a beautiful description of what the Reading meetings should be, and Hebrews 10. 25 would also justify such gatherings. If what these three Scriptures sets before us were always kept before the hearts of all who gather there would be no profitless or dry readings. None would be there simply for the purpose of pressing their own opinions or special views of Scripture; but edification and blessing, the binding together of hearts and the glory of the Lord would be the result of each such meeting, whether few or many were present.

Yet we would not say that this meeting has the full assembly character as that described for us in 1 Cor. 14. In this latter gathering the Lord is the Administrator, and by the Holy Ghost He directs all according to His perfect knowledge of the needs of His assembly. The assembly is there gathered with the express purpose of ministering to the Lord (Acts 13. 2, 3), and to be ministered to by Him. Such a gathering as this is not the place for discussion, which may be perfectly proper in a meeting for the reading of the Word if carried on in the spirit of grace and forbearance, though questions evidently might be asked by brethren (1 Cor. 14. 35), for the elucidation of anything that had been said that was difficult to understand.

We should not come together less often for the reading of the Word, but we believe that we should all profit greatly if we were oftener together according to 1 Cor. 14., for there, if there is the recognition of the Lord as Administrator and Head, and of the presence of the Holy Spirit, it is a question of what Christ can be to us in the fullness of His resources, and not merely how we can help one another.

"The Bread which we Break."

"DEAR Mr. Editor.—We are continually hearing here at the Lord's Supper of the unbroken loaf, especially in giving thanks for the same. Will you kindly answer through the magazine what part we have in the unbroken loaf?"—E.

"My dear Brother.—My inquiry re 'unbroken loaf' is not concerning that aspect of the Lord's Body, of which we are regarded as being members,* but

* It is not said that we are members of the Lord's body, but of the body of Christ.
His personal body  When we are gathered together to eat the Lord's supper, before the bread is actually broken, thanks is given for the unbroken loaf. I find no reference to the unbroken loaf in Scripture in connection with the Lord's supper. It is an unbroken loaf, or bread before us at the supper, does it not suggest the thought that death has not taken place, the body not broken and blood not shed?" —E.

In the Lord's Supper it is the Lord in death that we remember, and the symbols that bring Him before us in death are the bread and the cup. The former was given to the disciples already broken by His own hands, and it was a broken loaf of which they partook, it is a broken loaf of which we also partake. The significance of this is undoubtedly that His body was given for us, as He said to His disciples when He handed it to them, and the giving of His body was His own voluntary act. The two elements—the bread and wine—being distinct, speak of a dead body and shed blood.

The Scripture does not say that the loaf represents the one body of Christ of which all believers form a part, but that it is the Lord's body, i.e. His dead body.

It might be well to say that when the Scripture speaks of "the bread which we break," it is the thought of partaking of it together, it is a matter of communion. It is not the bread which "he breaks" or that "I break," but which we break. It would not be according to the truth for a Christian to do it alone, for it is not an individual supper, but a communion supper, hence responsibilities attach to it on the part of all who partake of it.

The following letter by J. N. D. in the third volume of his letters may be helpful on the question raised:—

"My dear Brother.—I entirely dissent from the view you refer to as to the bread at the Lord's supper. [That the loaf should not be broken before it was passed round, and that each should partake of an unbroken loaf, as a symbol of the unity of the body.] There is nothing new in it: B— took it up at one time, and had to give it up as untenable. The name of the ordinance is sufficient to show its wrongness. Some refer the breaking to each individual's taking a part; but if this were so, then each individual ought to break the unity of the body for himself, which is absurd.* It puts the unity in the place of the memorial of Christ, as the principal thing. Christ, when He had given thanks, brake the bread; the disciples never partook of any but a broken loaf. So Christ was made known to them in the 'breaking of bread'—not the full Lord's supper, I admit, but bearing of bread—not the full Lord's supper, I admit, but bearing the stamp of the same truth. That breaking is of the essence of this institution of Christ: it is 'the bread which we break,' 'they continued in... the breaking of bread.'

"There is no such thing in Scripture as partaking of an unbroken loaf. The unity is referred to our partaking of one loaf, not to its being unbroken—which it certainly was not when Christ gave it to His disciples to eat. There is no variation in the account given in the Gospels, nor in I Cor. 11., nor in the Acts at Troas. The not doing it departs from the original institution, and what gave it its essential name. We show forth the Lord's death in it, though as all partaking of one loaf (not breaking it, which would be absurd) we are all one body: 'the bread which we break,' 'the cup which we bless' (a word identical with giving thanks)—both of them the actions of the Lord previous to the disciples partaking, and this the apostle did at Troas. It is an entire departure from the original institution, and from the essential character and meaning of the ordinance, which shows forth the Lord's death till He come; though the unity of the body is be-tokened in us, in partaking of one loaf. But the body is the body of Christ in the ordinance, as is expressly said (I Cor. 10. 16)."

* That is, if the loaf is a symbol of the unity of the body.
ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The Man of Sin and the falling away. 2 Thess. 2. 3.

Do you connect the falling away with the man of sin, and would the falling away refer to what has gone on all down the stream of time?—N.

This falling away does not refer to any gradual departure from God but to a very definite apostasy, it is the apostasy. It is more than the giving up of the Christian faith, it is the public and entire casting off of God, and this will give the man of sin his opportunity; and empowered by Satan he will say, “I am God,” and men will yield to his claim and worship him, but in doing so they will really be worshipping the dragon (Satan) who is behind him (Rev. 13. 4). This apostasy cannot take place as long as the church is on earth.

The mystery of iniquity and that wicked one.

Do you connect the mystery of iniquity with the wicked one, or the lawless one?—(verses 7, 8).

Would lawlessness be the clay in the feet of Daniel’s image (chap. 2). Kings must obey the people?

The mystery of iniquity, or of lawlessness prepares the way for the coming of the lawless one. It is the work of Satan that is going on now in the world, the object of which he does not reveal to his dupes; but the child of God who is instructed in the Word sees and understands, it is no mystery to him. This work of Satan is preparing for the apostasy. It is the sapping of the foundations of the faith, and of every institution that God has ordained for the good and preservation of men, such as the government of nations, and marriage. These institutions, as well as the Christian faith are being secretly and publicly attacked, and the attacks are increasing in their boldness; and though men don’t see it, yet all this is working for the moment when God and all His institutions will be utterly disowned. God holds the reins and curbs the devil and his schemes for the time being, and will do so until His church is taken out of the world according to 1 Thess. 4. 13-18. But when this takes place and the Holy Ghost goes from the earth with the church in which He dwells, the reins will be thrown free, and every institution of God will be destroyed, and the counsels of hell will prevail in the world; and the wicked one, or the unbridled one will be revealed, and men will know for a brief space what the unfettered will of the devil means.

Lawlessness is more than what is merely political—the clay in the feet of the image—it is man’s will in opposition to God’s in every circle—political, social and religious, when God withdraws the restraint and the lawless one appears, he will make haste to over-turn everything that is of God in every circle.

The Man of Sin and the Beast of Rev. 13.

In Scripture Truth Dec., 1910, reference is made to the man of sin, and it is stated that he answers to the beast of Rev. 13. Is this so?

Yes, we believe that the man of sin is the same great and evil personage spoken of in Rev. 13. 1-10. A careful comparison of the description given of him in 2 Thess. 2. 3, 4 with Rev. 13. will, we think, make this clear to all. But the wicked one (verse 8) seems to us to be the second beast of Rev. 13. 11-18, for subtlety and deception mark him. He is spoken of as the prophet of the first beast, and we believe is antichrist. These two with and under the control of the devil make up a trinity of evil.
When will "the day of the Lord" begin?

WALMER.—The day of the Lord is His intervention in the affairs of men in judgment, it will be a day of wrath, consequently it cannot take place as long as the church is on earth for "God hath not appointed us [the church] to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 5. 9). He is our Deliverer from the wrath to come (chap. 1. 10). This deliverance or salvation will be effected by the catching away of the church to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. 4. 16, 17). The church will thus be removed from the sphere in which this wrath will be manifested before it commences.

Further, the Lord will not intervene in wrath until evil has reached its climax, so we read in 2 Thess. 2. 2-4 that the "falling away"—the apostasy—must first take place. The revelation of the man of sin is the consummation of man's day, when that is reached the day of the Lord will immediately come. It is a subject of which the Old Testament speaks much, and there it is specially connected with Israel. The nation itself will know its terrors (Jer. 30. 7) and all the proud within that nation will be broken and humbled (Isa. 2. 12). But their enemies will also come under its power. It is spoken of as "a day of darkness and of gloominess . . . there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it" (Joel 2. 2).

We conclude from the consideration of these and other Scriptures that it will commence for Israel at the time of Jacob's trouble—the great tribulation—and will come to its full fury against an apostate world when the Lord comes forth personally as King of kings and Lord of lords, to tread the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God (Rev. 9. 11-21).

Has the believer eternal life in him?

I have come across the teaching that the believer has not eternal life dwelling in him, and "this life is in His Son" (1 John 5. 11) is quoted in support of it. Can you help me on the question?—AUSTRALIA.

The branch of the vine has not life in itself apart from the vine, its life is in the vine, and yet the same life that is in the root is in the branch as long as ever it abides in the vine. To all who believe eternal life has been given, they possess it as the gift of God, but it is not in them apart from God's Son; he that hath the Son hath this life, and if a believer could be cut off from Christ he would cease to have it, for he only has it by having the Son of God, by being in Him, just as the branch only has the life of the vine as it abides in the vine. There should be no difficulty about that.

We know that no true believer can be cut off from Christ, hence no true believer can cease to have eternal life, but this life is in His Son. He is the source and object of it; in Him we see it fully revealed in every lovely feature of it, and in all its blessed power. We cannot know it by examining our own hearts, or by looking at the traits of it as we are able to express them, but we must look at the Son of God. And we may do this, for John writes, "For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us" (1 John 1. 2). It is presented to us objectively in the Son of God, and we can say as we learn of Him with deepest admiration and adoration, that is our life, but that life is in us subjectively or we could not have fullness of joy in Him in whom it is perfectly presented to us. "Which thing is true in Him and in you" we read; we are bound up with Him in this blessed life. But we are to see it in Him, for "this life is in His Son"; but "we 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" (5. 20).
THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST. (T. Oliver.)

"That the trial of your faith... might be found... at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 1. 7).

There are two words in the original language of the New Testament for which the word "appearing" has to do service in our authorized version, viz.:

\[ \text{ἐπιφάνεια (Epiphaneia), literally "outshining."} \]

\[ \text{ἀποκάλυψις (Apokalupsis), literally "unveiling."} \]

In the old dispensation, the people of God were made well aware of the outshining of God's glory. Even a beast coming near to Mount Sinai was destroyed. But there was never an unveiling of glory until God came forth fully declared in Christ.

The "appearing" is spoken of in the above passage in the sense of revelation or "unveiling," and immediately the apostle puts in contrast the fact that his readers had not yet seen objectively the one they loved. That is opposed to all human experience. We cannot be permanently in love with an ideal, we must have in the mind a concrete impression of the object we love. In the first instance all human affection springs from sight. But the key to participation in the circle of Divine affections is supplied in the second sentence, "In whom... believing." Then follows rejoicing with joy unspeakable and "glory-tinged."

In our present condition we cannot bear the full outshining of glory. When a medicinal preparation is too strong for assimilation by the human organism, it is diluted with water, but the essential virtues of the medicinal qualities are unimpaired. In the same way, our joy in the Lord is glory diluted. It does not differ in quality from the fullness of joy which we shall experience in the glory with the Lord Jesus Christ. The present foretaste is but a scintillation of the glory in which we shall dwell for ever.

From the Solomon Islands.

As many of you know, it is our custom in giving Bible lessons, to give the same lesson for several days, and when the boys have gripped it, each one is expected in turn to stand before the class and give out the lesson. Recently in one of my Bible classes I had been giving them a lesson on Assurance, the key-note of which was "They shall never perish." We sought to teach them from the Word that a backslider could not be lost; that once made a child of God by the new birth, nothing could alter that relationship. While emphasizing that side of truth, one had to touch on the other side also, that backsliders would suffer loss in that day when our work is tested. It was very enlightening to me afterwards to listen to their prayers. One dear boy apparently had not had assurance of salvation, although he had trusted the Lord some months previously, for after having that lesson he scarcely ever prayed without thanking the Lord for such a wonderful Saviour, and that he could never perish. It was the other side of the lesson that appealed to another boy. He thought of what it would mean to the Lord if he did backslide and of his own loss in the future. He said, "This word stick fast in my heart. When I go for quiet time, or when I work, no matter what I do, I think about this little word; if we slack back, we grieve the Lord who died for us."
EDITORIAL.

The Last Benediction.

The Scriptures were completed, the work of the Holy Ghost in inspiring men to record the whole will of God was finished, and there was nothing more to be said by way of revelation; but John, the last of the inspired penmen, was not allowed to lay aside his pen until he had placed upon the sacred page the final benediction of the Holy Ghost. We may be sure that these closing words describe for us the fullest, richest, and most needed blessing, for the Holy Ghost speaks to us, and of us, and for us, with the wisdom and the love of God; and since He is one with the Father and the Lord Jesus, we may read in them the will and desire of God for our blessing—who is revealed to us in the Scriptures as Father, Son and Holy Ghost. What, then, is this final benediction? It is not that wealth, or health, or ease, or preservation from sorrow and trouble be with all the saints—these are things that often have an exaggerated value in our eyes, and are not always blessings, and the Spirit of God has nothing but pure, unmingled blessing in His thoughts for us—hence the word is, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all the saints, Amen." Nothing could be greater than this.

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ!" It is a phrase with which our ears have become familiar, for it often occurs in the New Testament, but the more we hear it and consider it, the more will it sing its sweet comfort to our souls. One great text that describes it springs to the mind, "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich" (2 Cor. 8. 9). We know that grace; every Christian has tasted that the Lord is gracious; we know it from experience, for when we came to our Lord Jesus Christ when first we realized our need of Him, how accessible we found Him to be. He made us feel that He was glad to see us, that He knew all about us and loved us in spite of all. But our experience of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is not the measure of it; for this we must consider Him in the boundless wealth of His eternal power and Godhead, becoming poor for us—for our sakes. We must measure the distance—

"From Godhead's fullest glory
Down to Calvary's depth of woe."

There we see the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and learn it, until we can say we know it. It is His love in its activities toward us.

"Love that bore the stripes and sorrow,
Love that suffered on the tree."

And it is this grace—invincible love in activity towards us in all our need, that is to be with all the saints until they meet the Lord in glory. It means that our Lord Jesus Christ is exercising the same love on our behalf that filled His heart when He died for us. Yes, the selfsame love, for He is "the same yesterday, to-day and for ever."

If we lived in the realization of this, what support we should find in it. How this grace would carry us through if we but drew upon it, and depended solely and simply upon Him whose grace it is! Is there a trial, a sorrow, or a circumstance in which any saint of God can be found that this grace is not equal to? None. For our Lord Jesus has said, "MY GRACE IS SUFFICIENT." It is enough to make us more than conquerors at all times through Him that loves us. In this grace we are rich, its inexhaustible resources are ours; the One who became poor and died for us cannot allow us to be any longer poor, but He
blesses us with grace that surpasses all earthly wealth. It is His grace—it is Himself in all the infinite tenderness of His heart serving us still, because perfect love must serve the loved objects.

The saints of God are called to walk together in love, to be of one mind, to live in peace; and we might well ask how this can be done since we are all so different in temperament, and so ready to disagree; the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is the answer. This by its mighty enabling will make it possible for us to do what is not possible to nature. Think of the grace that made Him say to His disciples, "I am among you as He that serveth." Remember that it is written of Him, "Even Christ pleased not Himself." Consider Him, when He knew that the Father had given all things into His hand, laying aside His garments and girding Himself with a towel and stooping to wash His disciples' feet. This is the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ in service, and if this grace flows into our hearts we shall act as He acted, and feel towards each other as He feels towards us all. Strife and division and harshness, and judgment without mercy, are impossible where the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is active amongst the saints. We are in this world to show forth His praises, to make manifest His life and grace towards all saints, and this can only be as the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is with us all.

And will this grace cease when we meet Him in glory? No, it will not, for the end of our need will not be the end of His grace; it overabounds our need and has set itself to fill our cup of joy to the brim; with nothing less can it be satisfied. He has told us, "Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching; verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them" (Luke 12. 37). This Lord is Himself. How wonderfully will His grace shine before our eyes amidst all the radiance of His infinite glories! But it shines now, also, shines in the gloom, shines to comfort and cheer us, to lift our often broken hearts and tired spirits above all depression and defeat, and to keep our feet in the heavenly way, looking with earnest eyes for the coming of Him who has said, "Surely, I come quickly." Again we repeat that no sweeter or more needed benediction could the Holy Spirit bestow upon us; and, verily, no richer wish or words could rise from human hearts to human lips, and this is our wish—these words we take up, they are our desire for you all. As we pass on the editorial pen to another for a few short months, if the Lord tarry, we say fervently and affectionately to all our readers, THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST BE WITH YOU ALL, AND WITH ALL THE SAINTS. AMEN.

No toiling yonder, and no weariness,
No disappointments and no more distress,
The future bright, the past all understood,
We'll see that all the way He led was good.

No parting yonder, and no sad good-byes,
No pain, no sickness, and no weeping eyes,
But best of all, my Saviour I shall see,
No cloud will come between my Lord and me.
THE EPISTLE OF JUDE.

No. 2. Encouragement.

If the warnings of this short epistle are intensely solemn, the encouragement is exceedingly precious. In the opening verse the saints are addressed as "called," "beloved," and "preserved" (N.T. and R.V.). Neither the corruptions of Christendom, nor the failures of the saints, can thwart the purposes of God. "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance." However dark the day, there are those who are called according to the eternal purpose of God; and those He has called are the objects of His unchanging love; and those He loves are the subjects of His preserving care. This speaks of what God is for the saints rather than of what the saints are for God. God has "called" us; God "loves" us; God "preserves" us. What God is for His people is thus presented as the abiding and only ground of their blessing and security. Later Jude will indeed exhort us as to our responsibilities, but as ever under grace, we do not attain to a place of privilege by carrying out our responsibilities, as our legal hearts might think, but being set in a place of privilege certain responsibilities follow.

Were it not for the call of God, the love of God, and the preserving care of God, all would be swept into the corruptions that abound on every hand. Moreover the blessings of "mercy" and "peace," and "love," can still be enjoyed however dark the day. And not only enjoyed, but "multiplied." If evil abounds and difficulties multiply, then mercy and peace and love will also be multiplied (verse 2).

Having thus reminded us of our privileges, Jude proceeds to instruct us in the mind of God for His people in the midst of abounding corruption. However dark the day God has a path for His people. First then we are exhorted to

CONTEND.

We are to earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints. "The faith" of which Jude speaks is not the personal faith by which we believe, but that which is to be believed—the truth. When error prevails and opposition raises its head it is not sufficient that we should expound the truth, we must contend for it. This implies conflict, but when Christ is assailed, and the truth is at stake, we must not shrink from fighting the good fight of faith under any plea of Christian charity.

Moreover it is "the faith" for which we are to contend, that is, the whole circle of truth. We are not simply to contend for a particular truth. This indeed has been done, with the result that the truth as a whole has been lost, and sects have been formed to maintain a particular truth such as holiness, the presence of the Spirit, the unity of the church, or the coming of the Lord.

Further let us note that the faith for which we have to contend is the faith "once delivered unto the saints." The word "once" has the force of "once for all" (See R.V.). It admits of no addition, no modification, and no development. There is no fresh communication of truth to the saints. It has been delivered to them once for all. We may have much to learn about the truth. God may grant fresh light upon the truth already revealed, and we should grow in our apprehension of it. But the truth itself has been once for all delivered to the saints. And for this we are to contend. Not the truth held in measure by the Fathers, or handed down by tradition, or crystallized by
the creeds, or obscured by faulty teaching, but the faith once delivered to the saints in the very form in which it was delivered.

Again, it is well to remark that we are not called to contend with error. Many sincere souls have done so and formed crusades against different glaring evils. There are occasions, indeed, when contending for the truth necessitates the exposure of evil. But the great business of God's people is with the truth, not the error. Jude does not say earnestly expose the error, but "earnestly contend for the faith."

If then we are to stand for the truth, there is another word used by Jude that we do well to emphasize. In verse 17 he says,

REMEMBER.

"Beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ." If we are to contend for the faith, how deeply important that we should "remember" the very words in which the truth has been delivered to us through the apostles. The so-called Higher Critics may call in question the apostolic words, theologians may belittle their words, but the Word itself states that if a man is spiritual he will acknowledge that the things written by the apostles are "the commandments of the Lord" (1 Cor. 14. 37). Moreover, submission to apostolic teaching is the great test which proves by what spirit a man speaks, "He that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error" (1 John 4. 6).

Here, however, it is the prophetic warnings of the apostles that we are more especially called to remember. What a comfort that we have not been left unforewarned of the terrible evil. Enoch prophesied of the evil; the apostles warned us of it. So while we cannot but grieve over the corruption, there is no ground for surprise, and no need to be disheartened; rather should our faith be confirmed as we see the fulfilment of the apostles' words. The prophetic words of the apostles confirm the warnings of Jude. They too have warned us of the appearance in the last days of men who would make sport of Divine things, being led by their own unholy lusts. Such, while nominally associated with the people of God, actually walk apart as having no fellowship with them. They are natural, not having the Spirit of God. They may occupy prominent places in the pulpits of Christendom but, as one has said, they deride the simple faith of their forefathers, preach a so-called morality instead of Christ, and seek in every possible way to undermine the inspiration of the Scriptures, and the truths of Christianity.

If however we are to contend for the faith, we are further reminded in verse 20 of the necessity for individual BUILDING.

We cannot rightly contend for the faith unless we are building up ourselves in our most holy faith. We are not called to build ourselves up in all the different forms which evil may assume. We shall not be able to resist error by simply having an acquaintance with error. We can only meet error as we are built up in the truth. Moreover, our faith is a "most holy faith." So that in being built up in the faith we are not only gaining a deeper acquaintance with the truth, but we are increasingly wrought upon by the truth. It has a holy, sanctifying effect upon our souls, leading to a greater separation from the evil by which we are surrounded (John 17. 17). Furthermore, Jude has linked up with "building" the importance of PRAYING.

This, to be effectual, must be "praying in the Holy Ghost." There is
much said about prayer to-day, but we may well pause and enquire: "Is it prayer in the Holy Ghost?" Two things will mark such prayer. It will be prayer according to the mind of God as revealed in His Word, and it will have Christ and His interests for its object. The Holy Spirit can never lead in a way contrary to the Word of God, and ever has Christ before Him. The great mission of the Holy Spirit in the world is to exalt Christ. He has not come to make the world that cast out the Son of God a pleasant, decent, and happy world. He is here to take a people out of the world for Christ. The "building" will lead to "praying." The greater the diligence with which we build ourselves up in our most holy faith the better we shall be able to pray in the Holy Ghost, and the greater will be the conscious need for praying in the Holy Ghost.

But praying in the Holy Ghost leads to a further important exercise expressed by the word

KEEPING.

"Keep yourselves in the love of God" (verse 21). Prayer in the Holy Ghost puts the soul in close touch with God, and to be in touch with God is to enjoy the conscious sense of His love, for God is love. As Christians we all admit the fact that God loves us, but it is another thing to live in the consciousness of His love. Yet what is more important, or more blessed, than to walk in the constant sense that we are loved by God! The religious world—Cain's world—may hate us; many of God's dear people may misunderstand us, but God loves us. Circumstances may be difficult, sorrows may accumulate, and evil may abound; but if we keep ourselves in the love of God, none of these things will be allowed to call in question the glorious fact that the love of God, expressed in Christ, is streaming down upon us through the opened heavens. Just as we are kept in the love of God, we shall be delivered from love of the world (1 John 2. 15); kept in love with the saints (1 John 5. 1); and led out in love to the sinner (2 Cor. 5. 14).

Moreover, this love will not be satisfied until we are with Christ and like Christ. Then indeed God will "rest in His love" and joy over us with singing (Zeph. 3. 17). This leads to a further exercise brought before us in the word

LOOKING.

Keeping ourselves in the love of God, will lead to "looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." Mercy upon mercy meets our need every step of our pilgrim way, but the crowning mercy will take us right out of the scene of need to meet the Lord in the air and enter into the fullness of life in life's eternal home. On earth we may have caught a glimpse of its glory, enjoyed a taste of its sweetness, in heaven we enter upon its fullness.

Building, praying, keeping and looking express the mutually dependent exercises by which the soul is kept in the midst of the prevailing corruptions of Christendom. Such exercises are, however, largely individual, but this does not signify that we are to think only of ourselves in forgetfulness of others. Jude having led us into the fullness of eternal life, takes one look back into the welter of evil, and in the midst of it, and associated with it, he sees many of the people of God. "Have you taken heed to yourself?" then Jude seems to say, "You will be able to care for others." Hence his words are

HAVE COMPASSION.

If your heart is kept in the love of God, your heart will go out to those that God loves. Yet we are not exhorted to have compassion upon all. It is only of "some" we are to have compassion, making a difference. The leaders in apostasy are treated with
horror, not compassion. But there are those that are led, not wilfully, but ignorantly, and for such we are to have compassion. Others are involved more deeply in the evil, the fire seems ready to kindle upon them, but even so we must seek to rescue such, pulling them out of the fire, at the same time hating the evil in which they are found. Unbounded compassion for the people of God must ever be linked with uncompromising separation from the evil with which they are linked. Even as it was with Christ, of whom one has justly said: "In Christ there is a compassion that knows no limit to the sinner combined with infinite separation from his sin." To show compassion we shall need Divine love; to make a difference will call for Divine wisdom; to pull any "out of the fire" will require Divine power; and to "hate the garment spotted by the flesh" will demand Divine holiness. How great then the need for building ourselves up in our most holy faith, and praying in the Holy Ghost.

Jude has exposed the evil in all its horror, and warned, encouraged, and exhorted the saints; but his final resource is God Himself and all that God is for His people. The magnitude of the evil and the weakness of the saints fades from his view, and God alone remains. Hence, he can close the most solemn epistle ever penned with the most glorious burst of praise. Jude has gazed upon the ruin of that which professes the name of Christ; he has taken a backward glance at the beginning of the corruption; with prophetic gaze he has looked on to its solemn end; but, at last, from the midst of the wreck and ruin of a corrupted Christendom, he looks up, and at once, in spite of the dark outlook, he breaks into praise, "Unto Him that is able to keep us from falling, and present us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy."

Jude seems to say, "I see the corruption that has come in, I see the rising tide of evil, I see the saints may fail in 'building,' and 'praying,' and 'keeping themselves'; but I see there is One in the glory who is able to keep them from stumbling, bring them safely home, and present them faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. I see the judgment day is coming for the ungodly professors—a day of gloom and sorrow; but I see the presentation day is coming for all His saints—a day of glory and exceeding joy." It is for us in like faith to take up the language of Jude. As we view the ceaseless stream of blasphemies poured out by Christless professors and received with indifference, or even applause, by the great mass of Christian profession; as we see the foundations attacked, truth fallen in the street, and evil men and seducers waxing worse and worse, we may well enquire, "What will the end be?" But, thanks be to God, for the comfort and encouragement of His people, He has left us in no uncertainty as to the end. Jude tells us the end for the corrupters, the end for God's people, and the end for God Himself. All will end by the apostate corrupters meeting their just judgment, the saints of God being presented faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, and God Himself will receive "glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever." The passing sorrows of time will give place to the exceeding joys of eternity. Our joy to be there, His joy to have us there. "He shall see of the fruit of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied." The One whose soul was once exceeding sorrowful even unto death, will be filled with "exceeding joy" for eternity. Well may we exclaim with Jude, "To the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."
"THE TABERNACLE OF GOD WITH MEN."


(E. CROSS.)

THIS is one of the most remarkable passages in Scripture. The primal purpose of God is at length fulfilled, and the whole "dramatis personæ," if one might so say, of the eternal state, in the moral elements that compose it, are, so to speak, staged in a few verses, that embrace in principle everything that is purposed in the mind of God from eternity in the past to the eternal future. Any one of these subjects would occupy the mind of man all his little lifetime, and would not be exhausted then. Here we have the picture of eternity delineated for us exhaustively, so that you can neither add to it nor take from it, in a few verses so full and yet so simple in their expression that at first they attract no particular notice until you seek to realize their meaning, which the more you contemplate the more marvellous it becomes as it recedes from your gaze in its unfathomable and inexhaustible fullness.

It was God's purpose from the beginning to dwell with men (Exod. 29. 45, 46; Prov. 8. 27-31). The record of it runs through Scripture. Here at length it is effectuated. The picture of it which He gives us here is conceptual and in no way phenomenal now. "Behold I make all things new," is the concept of His mind not yet made manifest; no doubt it will be manifested in the most real and actual way in due course, but for the present time it does not visibly exist. We cannot see the tabernacle of God dwelling with men. Christ came to dwell here, the true "temple of God" (John 2. 19), but they cast Him out, and Jerusalem is trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled (Luke 21. 24). We cannot see "the holy city Jerusalem descending out of heaven as a bride adorned for her husband"; such a sight is yet to come:

we cannot see a whole world above and below where neither sin is nor its effects; where there is neither pain nor sorrow, crying nor death, for the former things are not yet passed away; but we wait for the healing hand of God to wipe away the anguish of this sin-sick scene and to fill creation with the joy that fills His heart. Now all His dealings with the world are carried on mediatiorially, and through the mediatorial work of Christ all blessing flows to-day; all is dependent on the Lamb of God, the Sin-bearer of the world, until that work is finally accomplished in the judgment and putting away of evil in the lake of fire, when His mediatorial work will have ended and there is no further need of it: but here when the mediatorial kingdom of Christ having accomplished its work in the subjugation of every power hostile to God, the Son Himself has become subject to Him who put all things under Him that God may be all in all (1 Cor. 15. 28). There is therefore here no mention of the Lamb, but God in the freedom and fullness of the Trinity, Father, Son and Spirit, alone remains. Henceforth God's dwelling-place is with man, and man dwells with Him in the fellowship and intimacy of the eternal life, that by the free-giving of God (John 4. 10) is provided for us in the Son (1 John 5. 11).

And now, see as, "in the beginning He made—laid down—all things by the Word" (John 1. 1, 2)—"logos" in its root meaning is the same as lay, lay down, legen. He laid it all down by His Word. By His Word He framed the constitution of the universe. "He spake and it was done; He commanded and it stood fast" (Psa. 33. 6, 9)—so now, He adds His signature and secures it. "Write," He says—and the writing, "Scripture cannot be broken"—"for the words are true and
faithful. And He said unto me 'It is done.' I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit these things—coming into his possession by the title of their prenatal and inalienable family rights—and I will be his God, and he shall be My son.'

But if the Lamb is not here mentioned the Lamb's bride is, adorned in her beauty and prepared for her Husband. In verse 9 she is called 'the bride, the Lamb's wife.' It is interesting to note the different ideas connected with these two expressions.

Kallah, bride, maiden betrothed, so called from her being crowned with a chaplet, from kallal, to complete, to perfect, to put a crown upon (Gesenius), gives the idea of completion, ornament, perfection, and of the attractiveness connected therewith (cf. Isa. 49. 18; 61. 10). There is the idea also of selection or choice, as we see in Cant. 4. 9; 6; 8, 9 (Spouse here is the same word as bride). She stands as one among many: the chosen one from among the rest. Adam had no bride: there were none from among whom he could choose. "The Lord God said I will make him a help meet for him," and from the rib He took from him He builded the woman, isha, the fem. of ish, the counterpart of himself in the feminine gender, the replica of himself in the subjective form, his helper in all his work.

In Psa. 45. the Queen is called the King's daughter, for Jerusalem will be what Christ by His royal presence will make her. In Cant. He calls her "My sister, My spouse," for, like Rebekah, (Gen. 24. 3, 4) she is, like Himself, of the true and direct Seed of promise, not stained by alien and idolatrous blood (cf. John 8. 39-49).

From Rev. 21. 9 et seq. the angel proceeds to show John "the bride the Lamb's wife" in the world to come immediately and onwards, not merely as the bride in her attractiveness, but as the wife in her usefulness as His helper, His instrument in the administration of the coming kingdom. Her capacity is already shown in that she makes her own adornment, and so excellent was her workmanship, that "to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen," more beautiful and more costly than the finest silk—"bright and pure: for the fine linen is the righteousnesses of the saints." No higher appreciation of her worth could be accorded her than to be allowed to grace the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, clad in the beauty of her own manufacture (cf. Psa. 45. 14; Prov. 31. 10-31). No one who has not seen really fine linen—which by the way is sold privately, not on the market—can imagine its beauty; and it is not without significance that while the world generally and Babylon in particular provide themselves with silk, the cynosure of attraction at the marriage supper of the Lamb is linen and "needlework" (Psa. 45. 14); and as the bride stands by her very constitution for that which is subjective and "within," this trait of her composition is finely marked in Rev. 22. 17, where her outward adornment and her inward sentiment agree with the mind of the Spirit, as shown in the blending of the cry common to them both, as two pipes with one sound, "Lord Jesus, Come!" May this harmony of feeling, thought, and sound, be ours more truly every day.

This is the great Apocalypse, the revelation of the mystery of God in its climax, that for which the mind of God is waiting according to His eternal purpose for eternity, that for which He expects our minds to wait with Him. No pilot navigates his vessel by a light he places in the prow. He navigates by the fixed stars in the distant heavens, and thus he steadies his course successfully through the trackless sea. "While we look not," says the apostle, "at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things that are seen are temporal, but the
things that are not seen are eternal” (2 Cor. 4. 18). And here we find converging on the same spot the mystery of Paul’s Gospel and the revelation given to John. By the incident of Paul’s conversion, and the Gospel through him that flowed straightway therefrom (Acts 9. 3-5, 20), evidently this mystery was inherent in his ministry and gave its character to his life work, as his mind was formed by it and he carried in his mind the issue of it all. He and John seem to have had but comparatively little personal intercourse with one another in their respective paths of service; but it is beautiful to see how the same Spirit that gave them each his special sphere of labour conducted them both in the carrying out of their respective stewardships in perfect harmony as to the great issue in which they were finally to coalesce. However different Eph. 5. 22-32 may be in the expression of its terms from Rev. 21. 1-7, so that at first it might seem difficult to blend them, yet in execution as in design they are perfectly harmonious as the concepts of the same Spirit, and it would not be easy to say whether Paul would sit more enraptured in listening to John expatiating on “the bride of the Lamb,” or John would be filled with more delight by Paul’s unfolding of the economy of the mystery which throughout the ages had been hid in God, but is now revealed, that through the Church, which is “the bride of Christ” (2 Cor. 11. 2) might be made known the all-various wisdom of God. The ministry of each was complementary and helpful to the other.

Then as the preceding verses set forth the blessing unmixed of God’s dwelling with men, verse 8 sets forth the terrible contrast in the case of those who are cast out from His presence, whose part is in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.

The book may be said to end here. The remainder is occupied with a detailed picture of “the bride, the Lamb’s wife,” with certain warnings and directions, and with the assurance of the Lord’s return “quickly” to fulfil the sayings of the prophecy of the book, and to cheer the hearts of His waiting people.

PROGRESS IN PRIESTLY MINISTRATION.

(The category of unrivalled glories enumerated in the first chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews, is given to fix the attention of the reader on the person of the Son of God, who in the character of Apostle had come out from God. These glories are personal and positional, gained and given, inherent and inherited. No name may be mentioned along with His, yet such is His grace, and such the far-reaching effects of His mission to the earth as Son of God and Revealer of the Father, that the first allusion to those that learn this grace is, that they are spoken of as ‘sons’—a term which is applied to the Lord Himself.

Even this dignity is expanded, and the sons are spoken of as sanctified, being brought to glory, His brethren; they are a company of worshippers in the midst of whom He delights to be.

Within the compass of four verses (chapter 2. 10-13) they are spoken of as sons, as brethren, and as children, as though every degree of intimacy or position that could be named were ungrudgingly, nay lovingly, bestowed on those whose sins He, in gracious condescension had stooped to purge (chapt. r. 1. 4).

But in order to do this, the Great Apostle—the Son of God had to be
made like unto His brethren, to become Son of man, and finally, Priest. These two titles had never before been associated with Him, but as soon as they are introduced they are discussed at length, and of the two, the priestly character is the more prominent, the major portion of the epistle, up to chapter 10, 22, being devoted to it.

The whole of these passages form a succession of steps, each in advance of the other, each meeting some new difficulty, trial or sorrow, or presenting a fresh phase of the efficacy of His service.

It is evident that these new activities of the Lord Jesus are uppermost in the mind of the Holy Ghost in penning the epistle, by the remarkable fact, that in the summary of the epistle's teaching given in the beginning of chapter 8, no mention is made of any other subject save that of the priest, as though that were the only theme that had been considered hitherto.

What, then, is the reason for the preeminence of this service, and for the fullness and variety of the ways in which it is here considered? Is it not that saints, though beset, tried, and tempted in every way by Satan, might enjoy as a present portion that which has been secured for them in heaven while on their way to the rest of God, that is to say that which is set forth with such precision in chapter 2, 10–13?

A MERCIFUL AND FAITHFUL HIGH PRIEST.

The FIRST of the seven aspects of the Priesthood of our Lord Jesus which are here presented, has two marks that differentiate it from that of the priesthood of earlier days, mercy and faithfulness. Those whom He supports know His gentleness and care, whilst His faithfulness to God is seen, for not one is left to perish in the wilderness. He is faithful to God, whose sons we are, and will bring us safely home to God, the way in which He does it displays His mercy to us.

During His sojourn in this world, there was no sorrow, temptation or loss that 'His own' could ever be called upon to bear, that was unknown to Him. He was made perfect through suffering, He suffered in order to be able to enter into the affliction of His people.

On His part there was no yielding to pressure, no response to the suggestions of the foe, no failure to maintain the right, no ear for the allurements of His arch enemy—those things that are so often found in us. Temptation caused suffering, not a ready answer, in Him. Knowing the temptations, He now administers the succour to those who are tempted, in order that they may not fall. For those who succumb to temptation another kind of activity is needed, for such He is the advocate, and as such happily He is always available for them (1 John 2. 1).

THE PRIEST FOR TIMELY HELP.

The SECOND STEP is in chapter 3, which opens with an appeal to the holy brethren to those who partake of the heavenly calling.

In addressing them thus, the Spirit of God reminds them of their grave responsibilities and of the only way in which they can be carried out, He would conduct them a step further. This step, as well as every other, in the heavenly pathway can only be made by being occupied, steadily and continuously, with the One who is at the end of the way—Jesus Christ the Apostle and High Priest of our confession.

There is no other way in which holiness can be maintained, and faithfulness to the heavenly calling secured.

The first step in priestly service, relieves the saint in outward pressure; the second upholds him in spite of inward frailty and infirmity.

For this the perfect detachment of the Priest from everything below is emphasized. He has passed through
the heavens, He is Jesus, the Son of God.

But although so high, He is touched with the feeling of our infirmity, and the abounding resources of the throne are always available for those who draw near to the place where grace is supreme.

Succour for the tempted.
Grace for the infirm and needy.

THE SAVIOUR PRIEST.

The THIRD STEP is in chapter 5. 5–6.

This passage contains quotations from the Psalms, which show that the Messiah long expected, was both Son of God and a Priest for ever, hence He was a far greater One than they had imagined Him to be; but after this declaration of His majesty, the details of the bitterness of His earthly experiences that were essential to His occupying such an unexpected place as priest are given. His deep sorrows, sufferings, strong crying and tears and, finally, His death, are reverently dwelt on; but beyond this, the most encouraging fact for His people is 'that He was heard.'

Thus, our incomparable Jesus knew for the first time those lessons of human misery, so that He might be able to save out of similar circumstances those who 'obey Him.' He trod the path of obedience to the end of it, and endured in it every form of suffering that that pathway entailed!

There is no depth that He has not fathomed, no sorrow that He has not felt. He is the Saviour Priest and ever abides such, and theseministrations are perennially fresh and are carried out in an entirely different way from those under the Mosaic dispensation. This way is after the order of Melchizedek.

Melchizedek is the first-named priest in the Scriptures, which suggests that he is the model priest, and his service the model service too.

He is the one who comes forth with bounteous gifts in his hands for the overcomer, and for him, who in times of pressure refused the world's assistance, gain or patronage, and in dependence on unseen resources, stood for God and overcame the world (Genesis 14).

The Holy Spirit desires us to contemplate the Son in this new and attractive character. He wishes to captivate our hearts and render them proof against that which would deceive us, and turn us aside from the true way.

It is deeply interesting to note, that in the early chapters of the epistle, much prominence is given to two things in connection with the Lord Jesus, one, that He is ascended to the throne of the majesty in the heavens, and the other, that He is the One who has suffered here in order that He might be the stay and comfort of His own though they are left in a world of trial. From this it might appear that this was His sole office. But this is far from being the case!

For, as soon as His being a Priest after a new order, and the new functions of this priesthood are named, there is no more reference to His earthly pathway, to His sufferings, or to His sympathy!

This seems to imply that the service, for which He has gone on high, is not specifically in connection with infirmity, but that though these must be dealt with, it is in order that the saint may be freed from them, and be in a state of soul to enjoy that which is His especial delight to minister to them.

But, ere he does this, he pauses and expresses his doubts as to whether his hearers would profit by what he wished to say to them, for they had declined in spiritual affections; they had become dull of hearing, babyhood instead of robust manhood marked them, truth once held had been let slip. It was essential that all the lost ground should be recovered, and the decline overcome, before he could speak of
the great truths he longed to bring to their notice, namely the unfolding of the hitherto undisclosed greatness of the Melchizedek priesthood. Hence, instead of ministering this refreshment to their souls, he utters a solemn note of warning as to the dangers to which they were exposing themselves.

They were imperiling their Christian position, as well as quenching the Spirit, and he desired that these warnings should be a lever that would raise their spiritual state, so that they would profit by what he had to say. These grave warnings are found from chapters 5. 11; 6. 10.

After uttering these solemn words, he proceeds in a beautifully gracious way to say, that he is persuaded that the lapse was but temporary, and that they were really desirous of continuing in the path of faith, and exhorts them to diligence and vigilance, and to follow those who through faith and patience had inherited that which had been promised. He holds out, too, the unchangeability of the counsel of God as an additional encouragement and strong consolation, for them to set their hearts on that which is beyond. He would occupy them with Him who had gone within the veil.

THE GREATNESS OF THE NEW PRIEST.

This brings us to the FOURTH STEP.

In chapter 7. the invitation to consider “How great this Man was” is given; whereupon the Spirit proceeds to set forth fresh aspects and a galaxy of almost bewildering glories of this wonderful Person.

He is the Forerunner, which gives assurance to those that follow that their place is secured for them.

He shines in new lights beside which all others are dim.

He is King. He is priest.

He is King of righteousness, also King of peace.

He is the recipient of homage. He is an abiding priest.

He is the only one of whom it could be truly said, ‘He liveth.’

He bestows sustenance on and refreshment to the overcomer.

He fills the scene.

He is greater than the patriarch Abram, and the priest Aaron.

He is eternal too, so that there cannot be any lessening in His interest in His own.

Nothing that can add dignity, or give confidence in Him is omitted, His greatness and glory, His strength and stability are presented in order to prove that “He is able to save to the uttermost those that come unto God by Him,” for He is the way to God (chapter 7. 25).

It is the supreme object of the epistle to develop the unique thought that GOD WILL HAVE HIS OWN BROUGHT TO HIMSELF, and to secure this He has given His own Beloved Son, now made higher than the heavens.

THE MINISTERING PRIEST.

THE FIFTH STEP. In chapter 8. 1, two fresh phases of the priestly function are presented. He is the minister of the Sanctuary and He is the Minister of the True Tabernacle which the Lord pitched.

In the first capacity He is in the presence of God, the delight of His heart. He is there as the One who offered the infinitely precious blood which has secured everything for God’s glory. He is the sweet incense beaten small, the fragrance of which, when subjected to the fiery test of the golden altar, is fully appreciated by God, and from which the rising odours find ready acceptance.

As Minister of the true tabernacle He is in the midst of those He brings to God. He is the priest in His presence FOR THEM.

The boards of the first tabernacle
were set in silver sockets and covered with gold, neither their excellencies nor defects being seen; they were bound together by no external bond, and were hidden under the folds of the beautiful veil; they enclosed the golden lampstand, and the table on which in orderly array stood the loaves of shewbread, and in the midst of which Aaron, the high priest, bore on his breast and shoulders the names of the twelve tribes in everlasting remembrance. But this first tabernacle was only a figure of that which has now come to pass; the saints brought to God on the ground of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, are made the righteousness of God in Christ, and bound into one, by unseen joints and bands; they are clothed in the beauty of Christ, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, and set in order under the eye of God. They form the true tabernacle in the midst of which our great high priest bears the names of His own in affection and strength, before God.

Thus not only does the blessed God find the utmost delight in His Son, but in those that He brings to Him, so that in this essentially wilderness epistle we get a glimpse of the wondrous favour into which the believer is brought. "As sons with Him who is above."

This is the high priest that "we have," this is He that is seated. In the first chapter the Apostle is seated. Here it is a new thing. It is the Priest. The same person in two different characters.

HIGH PRIEST OF GOOD THINGS TO COME.

The SIXTH STEP is in chapter 9. 11, Christ being come a high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle ... by His own blood He entered once into the most holy place (N.T.) having obtained eternal redemption.

In chapter 1. 4 none could challenge His perfect right to sit down on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens. He had risen up from thence, and He returns.

But now the question of the rights of others to enter heaven has to be met.

What is the title of those whom He brings?

It is His precious blood! And such is His matchless condescension that He, too, will go in on the same basis as they.

His title is theirs! What grace!

As high priest of good things to come all has been put into His competent hands.

Every good thing with which God will bless His people, is not only at His disposal, but it is His pleasure to bestow it upon those whom He has redeemed, with the intent that they should serve Him, not in any servile fashion, but as being themselves priests; that is to say, He would find Himself reflected in those that have been brought to Him.*

Cleansing, access, purged consciences and acceptable service are all consequent on the shed blood of the great Redeemer.

He also appears in the presence of God for us.

In what character does He appear?

A true answer to this question can only be given by recalling the fact that His being there for succour, for infirmity, and for timely help, has been already set forth; so that it follows, this appearance must be in some new capacity, or in some new service.

It is this new sphere that is developed in the SEVENTH and highest step:—

THE GREAT (N.T.) PRIEST OVER THE HOUSE OF GOD.

In chapter ro. ro we read that the will of God has been done, and a new order (the Second) established.

* All service in this epistle is reverential not servile.
God's will has been done and He is eternally satisfied.

Christ's perfect offering has been accepted (verse 12).

The Holy Ghost's testimony has been rendered to it (verse 15).

The worshippers are sanctified.

They are perfected for ever.

The whole Trinity is thus at rest as to the question of sins and iniquities (verses 14-17).

There is, therefore, not a single obstacle to the opening up for us the innermost and holiest place in heaven, and to the announcement that there is the fullest liberty given to the 'holy brethren' to approach that place of light and love.

This is the climax of the epistle.

This is the end of its teaching. The Spirit has been conducting the saints to this point. The Great Apostle came from God, and the Priest has gone in to God to secure this. The perfections of Jesus are held before our eyes, so that we may "endure as seeing Him that is invisible," and respond to this gracious invitation.

It is the privilege—and boldness is given for it—of the tried and tempted pilgrim to enter these courts; it is as undeniable to them as it was to the King of Glory to enter the everlasting and uplifted doors, for it is He that has made the way clear, He that invites, He that welcomes those that enter. It is He that reveals the wealth of the resources of the place, into which He brings those who "draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith."

MODERNISM.

All true Christians have been shocked by the recent rationalistic utterances of different public men holding high official positions in the religious world.

Alas! there is nothing new in attacks upon the Word of God and the Person of Christ. Such were made in the early days of Christianity and have continued, in different forms, throughout the era. During the past century many such attacks were made in a subtle, veiled, and more or less refined form, as in the case of the famous (or infamous) "Essays and Reviews." Today, however, what is somewhat new is the open boldness, and coarse effrontery, with which so-called ministers of religion have become leaders in propagating the obscenities of spiritualism, in rearing the red flag of revolution, in the introduction of every form of worldliness, and above all in assailing revelation, and attacking the Person and work of Christ.

In order that the Christian should be preserved from underrating this great evil on the one hand, or from being overcome by it on the other, it is of the first importance to view it in the very full light afforded by Scripture.

In the light of Scripture the appearance of evil teachers, amongst the professing people of God, cannot occasion any surprise. It is foretold in numerous Scriptures in the New Testament which plainly warn us that, in the last days of the Christian era, difficult times would come in which men would arise having "a form of godliness" but denying "the power thereof" (2 Tim. 3. 1-5); and that there will be false teachers "who privily shall bring in damnable heresies even denying the Lord that bought them" (2 Peter 2. 1).

Moreover we must not look for any improvement, for we are expressly warned by Scripture that "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (2 Timothy 3. 13).

Again, we must be prepared for these evil doctrines becoming increasingly popular with the great mass of lifeless
Modernism

professors, for we read, "The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth and shall be turned unto fables" (2 Timothy 4. 3).

On the other hand, the light of Scripture will prevent us from over-rating the evil effects of false teachers. They will never be able to pluck one of Christ's sheep out of His hand. For has not the Lord said of His sheep, "They shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand."

Scripture also exposes the true character of these false teachers and makes abundantly clear their utter incompetence to understand, or expound things which can only be known by the Holy Spirit. A man may have had the best university and theological training, he may possess the very highest intellectual abilities, he may be a Doctor of Divinity, a theological professor, and fill the highest position in the ecclesiastical world, but all these things, so highly esteemed by men, will not in themselves give him any capacity to comprehend, or competency to expound, the truths of God. Before giving heed to one who professes to instruct us in Divine things, Scripture warrants us in requiring some evidence that such an one has discovered himself to be a sinner in the sight of God, and, through faith in a living and personal Saviour, has received the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost. If he knows nothing of "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ," he is simply a natural man not having the Spirit.

Is there anything, we may well ask, in the utterances of these modernist teachers that would give any real hope that they are truly converted men? In a day of ruin and confusion we gladly fall back upon the Scripture that tells us, "The Lord knoweth them that are His." On the other hand we are also told, "By their fruits ye shall know them," so that we have no right to reckon amongst the children of God those whose utterances deny the vital truths of Christianity.

Here then, we fear, is the simple explanation of these foolish and evil statements in regard to the Bible and the Christ of God. They are the statements of men who we can only regard as unregenerate—natural men, not having the Spirit. And without the Spirit, Scripture definitely states there is no capacity to understand the things of God, "For what man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. 2. 11). And not only is he unable to enter into Divine things, but they are actually foolishness to him, as we read, "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2. 14). Thus, for example, in the eyes of Canon Barnes and others, the story of Creation as unfolded in the book of Genesis is just a foolish myth, the product of an unenlightened age. So, too, Dean Inge, a man of great natural ability, is, in things Divine, so utterly dense that he tells us he cannot see that the story of Jonah has anything more to do with the "Christian religion"* than the story of Jack and the Bean Stalk.

*We might, of course inquire, What does the learned Dean mean by "the Christian Religion?" Does he mean Christianity according to the Revelation of God or Christianity according to the conception of man? We can only suppose the latter, seeing that the Dean appears to set such little store by the Revelation of God. In this case we should be inclined to agree with the Dean that the story of Jonah, as indeed much else that is in the Bible, has little or nothing to do with it. So much the worse for modern Christian religion. No one, however, who believes in an infallible revelation from God, and in the absolute authority of the Lord Jesus, will fail to recognize that the Lord Himself has for ever linked the story of Jonah with the most vital truths of the Christianity of the Bible (Matt. 12. 39, 40).
Truly the natural eye can be trained to see marvellous things in the realm of nature, the ear can enjoy entrancing sounds, and the heart of man be moved by the deepest human emotions, but even so, there is a whole world of blessing and glory which lies entirely outside the range of the finest natural intellect. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." But, to the people of God these things have been revealed by the Spirit of God. This, however, is a closed world to the natural man, for unless born of the Spirit, no man can even see the things that belong to the Kingdom of God, much less enter that fair kingdom (Matt. 18. 3 and John 3. 3).

For the men, who in the presence of the light of the Gospel are content to remain in an unregenerate state, the Christian can only have pity; for their profane and infidel utterances nothing but unmingled contempt.

There is, however, another phase of this modernist movement which is characteristic of the last days. The natural man has never been truly subject to a revelation from God; at the same time, for many generations, professing Christians have been outwardly controlled by a more or less orthodox traditional religion. To-day, however, we are witnessing a great change. Men are casting aside the trammels of tradition. We are thus faced with a great mass of people who, while retaining a profession of Christianity, are no longer governed by the revelation of God, or the tradition of man. The result being that the natural heart of fallen man is expressing its enmity and opposition to God and to Christ without any restraint. This means in fact that Christendom is heading for apostasy.

The dull-grey condition of orthodox tradition is passing, and men are declaring themselves as either black or white, a sure sign that we are nearing the end.

This, however, implies that there is also a distinct movement among the people of God, evidences of which are increasing on every side. It is written, "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him" (Isa. 59. 19). Are there not signs of a movement of the Spirit whereby the people of God are purging themselves from the vessels to dishonour; definitely asserting that "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God"; contending "for the faith which was once delivered to the saints"; announcing the Gospel in season and out of season; and looking for the coming of the Lord.

The Lord is separating the precious from the vile, thus forming two distinct companies: one the lifeless profession, indifferent to Christ and tolerant of every evil, passing on to apostasy, to be spued out of Christ's mouth as utterly nauseous to Him; the other a company of blood-bought people, that keep His Word and will not deny His Name, passing on to that long-looked-for moment when at the shout of the Lord they will be caught up "together" to be for ever with the Lord.

If these things are so, it behoves every true believer to declare plainly to which company he belongs. When Christ is assailed and the Word of God attacked, no true-hearted Christian can remain neutral. The word is very plain—"Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord," and again, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? (2 Cor. 6. 14-18).
NOTES ON JEREMIAH. No. 8.

The Son of David.

IN the consciousness of being personally right before God, who tries the righteous and sees the very reins and the heart, Jeremiah casts his cause into the Lord's hands. He asks to see His vengeance on his enemies (12), and then, as if prayer had freed his soul from an oppressive burden, he breaks out:—

SING UNTO THE LORD!

This is always the way with the one who has experimental and conscious dealings with the blessed God. Mere theology never produces this. The prophet continues his gladsome strain: Hallelujah! he cries; and he gives a very good reason for such gladsome praise. "He hath delivered the soul of the needy from the hand of evildoers!"

To-day it should not be an outburst simply, for the sacrifice of praise should be "continually" upon the lips of the believer now (Heb. 13. 15). The knowledge of deliverance and eternal redemption should produce this. Truly the note may be more sweet at one time than at another, and the song may be louder; but praise and thanksgiving to God by our Lord Jesus Christ should ascend with characteristic continuity from the believer, as he makes melody in his heart, to the One who loves him with an unchanging love.

Jeremiah's praise had scarcely left his lips when, like Job, he curses the day wherein he was born (14), and the man also who brought the tidings of his nativity to his father, because he slew him not. He asks, "Wherefore came I forth out of the womb to see labour and sorrow, that my days should be consumed with shame" (18). This deep depression is often seen with the godly souls of the Old Testament. It stands in complete contrast to what is characteristic of the New, where we have the blessed God fully revealed in the Son and the believer eternally blessed in Him. Many pious people, however, go back to the experiences of the Psalms, and live there; only to rob themselves of the fullness of joy that is properly ours now in the elevating knowledge of the Father and the Son. This exalted privilege is ours continuously; no failure in the assemblies need be allowed to interrupt it, for there is no failure on the part of our living Lord in His present service of love for us; and it is pre-eminently in the last of the inspired writings, after failure had come in, that this fullness of joy and eternal life are made known for our faith to appropriate.

"It more than satisfies, as here we glean The foretaste of His love, till all be light."

THE ROYAL HOUSE OF DAVID.

The next four chapters will complete the first main section—the "moral section" of the book. In the first twelve chapters the prophetical pleadings with the people are prominent; in the second twelve the signs and their significance strikingly stand out. Another noticeable feature of this whole section is the almost entire absence of dates, which frequently occur in other parts of Jeremiah.

In our present four chapters all the kings of Jeremiah's time are spoken of. In a very significant style they are grouped together in a small space; then follows the triumphant style of the coming King, Jehovah Tsidkenu; and lastly, completing the section, in chapter 24, we are given the sign of the two baskets of figs along with the explanation.

We see clearly in chapters 21. and 22. that the order given by the Holy Spirit in Jeremiah is not chronological,
for in the twenty-first we have king Zedekiah, and in the next chapter the kings who reigned before him. The contents of these chapters illustrate, however, what we said before, that the ordered arrangement is according to the bearing of the word upon the central event of the book, i.e., the overthrow of the metropolis. This involved such tremendous issues, not only for Israel, but for all the nations of the earth, that we can quite understand why it should be so signalized. Indeed, chapter 25., which commences the next section, gives the formal statement of this, setting out explicitly the sad consequences in a concise manner, as we shall see.

The first king brought before us in chapter 24. is the last. It is Zedekiah. He is disturbed by the approach of Nebuchadnezzar, who was to overthrow Jerusalem. The king sends to Jeremiah to enquire of the Lord for them, but the answer gives them no hope, and only shows that the Lord Himself will fight against them (1-7). To the people it is said, "Behold, I set before you the way of life, and the way of death." To live, they must fall away to the Chaldean army, which God was bringing; to die, they need only stay in the sinful city (8-10). Then the house of the king is addressed as "the house of David" (12), for the great question is now to be raised concerning the fulfilment of God's promise as to David's Seed. How can this possibly be carried out if consuming judgment falls upon this whole family? Where shall anyone then be found to sit for David upon his throne as God had promised? Where shall the king come from of David's royal line, who is to order and establish the kingdom and fill the earth with the glory of the Lord?

Such a king must "judge with justice in the morning, and deliver him that is spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor" (21. 12). Zedekiah failed in this, therefore the fire of judgment should consume their dwellings and the royal dynasty be overthrown. This whole question of "the house of David" and "the throne of David" is of the most momentous importance. If David's seed has failed for ever then there is no Gospel for us to-day! for the Gospel makes known the sure mercies of David! Neither is there any coming age of world-wide blessing for this earth, for He that rules and reigns to that end must be of David's line! Our present four chapters, however, show that that day will come, and with the help of the Holy Spirit we shall be enabled to see the explanation.

THE ROYAL FAMILY CONDEMNED.

Beginning with king Zedekiah in chapter 21. we end with him in chapter 24. He and his princes and the residue, like bad figs, are to be cast away from the land of their fathers. The recurrent expressions "House of David" and "Throne of David" (21. 12; 22. 2, 4, 30), and "unto David" (23. 5) emphatically show us what is in the mind of the Spirit. If there was one of that family to be found executing righteous judgment and mercy, then there should be given "kings of this house sitting for David upon his throne, riding in chariots and on horses he, and his servants, and his people" (22. 4); but if not, "I have sworn by Myself, saith the Lord, that this house shall become waste" (5). Those who afterwards beheld the desolation should know that it was because they had forsaken the covenant of the Lord their God and served other gods (6-9). Following upon this statement, it is shown that the kings Shallum (Jehoahaz), Jehoiakim (18), and Coniah (Jehoiachin, 24) are to be all alike the subjects of the judgment of God; and though this royal house was as Gilead and the summit of Lebanon to the Lord yet it should be devastated. Shallum's father, Josiah, is spoken of also (11 and 16); but only to contrast him with the wickedness of his sons. Most striking is verse 16, which tells us "He judged the cause of the poor
and needy; then it was well with him:
was not this to know me? saith the
Lord." For those who rightly value
the importance of the true knowledge of
God this is a notable verse. It should
be well weighed by every believer.

After dealing with each of these
kings of David's line, the chapter ends
by emphasizing the ruin of this royal
dynasty upon which the world's peace
and prosperity depended. The whole
earth is called to listen to what is
said to Coniah (Jehoiachin): "O earth,
earth, earth, hear the word of the
Lord! Thus saith the Lord, write this
man childless, a man that shall not
prosper in his days: for no man of
his seed shall prosper sitting upon the
throne of David, and ruling any more
in Judah" (29, 30). The significance
of this verse is not that he should have
no family, for it speaks of his seed;
and Matthew 1. 11, 12 shows his
descendants. What we are told is,
God had decreed that as far as the
throne of David was concerned he was
to be written childless, for none of his
seed should rule any more in Judah.
God had determined the end of this
sinful stock.

The pastors also, who should have
cared for the sheep of his pasture, were
to be punished likewise, for they had
destroyed and scattered the flock (23.
1-3); nevertheless God will graciously
gather them again and richly supply
them with abundance of blessing (3, 4);
but for this long-looked-for day to
dawn, we know from many other Scrip-
tures, a King of David's royal line
must be found to introduce it. Where,
then, is this deeply desired King, this
One upon Whom so much depends?
Is he living to-day? What is His
Name? The answer to these ques-
tions is given in 2 Timothy 2. 8:
"Jesus Christ of the seed of David
raised from among the dead."

THE SEED ROYAL PRESERVED.
The New Testament opens with the
genealogical proof that Jesus Christ is
of David's royal line; yet the Old
Testament foretold that He should
suffer and be put to death before He
took the throne; and thus it came to
pass: He was cut off out of the land of
the living; God, however, raised Him
from among the dead and exalted Him
to His right hand. The heavens now
conceal him from the sight of Israel.
The time of their repentance will come
and He will return for their salvation
and blessing. Indeed, a few weeks
after they had rejected Him it was said
to them, "Repent, therefore, and be
converted, for the blotting out of your
sins, so that the times of refreshing
may come from the presence of the
Lord, and He may send Jesus Christ,
who was fore-ordained for you, whom
heaven indeed must receive till the
times of the restoring of all things" (Acts 3. 19–21). They did not repent,
as we know, and the nation is still
without Him. The apostle Paul in
Acts 13., speaking of David in verse
22, continues, "Of this man's seed
according to promise has God brought
to Israel a Saviour, Jesus"; they:
however, compassed His death; but
being raised from among the dead,
"He said on this wise, I will give
you the sure mercies of David" (34).
Those who believe on Him now truly
come into a far higher order of blessing
as members of His body, the assembly;
but, when will these sure mercies be
brought to Israel? Not till after our
Lord Jesus Christ has taken the assem-
ibly away to her heavenly home to
be with Himself. Afterwards He will
revive, recover, and restore Israel. He
will come out of heaven for that pur-
pose. Like Thomas, who is a type of
the repentant remnant of Israel in
the future day, they will exclaim when
they see Him, "Our Lord and our
God"! Indeed, as our chapter in
Jeremiah tells us, "This is the Name
whereby He shall be called JEHOVAH
TSIDKENU" (23. 6).

SON OF DAVID AND SON OF GOD.
Notice the definite way the prophet
first foretells His connection as Man
with the house of David: “I will raise up unto David a righteous Branch” (5). That has been fulfilled as we know, but being cut off, as was plainly prophesied, He has been taken by God to heaven. Jesus Christ was raised from among the dead of the seed of David. The great Gospel treatise, written to the believers at Rome, begins by showing that this is the foundation of all the rich blessings which are afterward unfolded for faith; and upon this firm basic truth, coupled with the fact that our Lord Jesus Christ is also the Son of God, they rest securely. Thus we read, “Come of David’s seed according to the flesh, marked out Son of God in power, according to the spirit of holiness, by resurrection of the dead.” Here, then, lies open before us the revealed secret of the believer’s blessings now, and of Israel’s blessings by-and-by. This also explains many apparently obscure passages, some speaking of Him as Man, and others of Him as God, and sometimes both being involved in one verse even. Oh, how it cheers the heart to think of the great and glorious Son of God, the One who was rich in Godhead glory, coming down to us in our lost estate; becoming poor—a poor man asking for a penny—owing to the darkness and distance of the cross, that we, and Israel too, through His poverty may be rich; a Man who has come close to us: God over all, Who is ever above us! Blessed Lord and Saviour, we may well worship and adore Thee.

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

How bright and beautiful does this splendid promise, given in verses 5 to 8, shine out after the stormy blackness which forebodes the destruction of the house of David after the flesh. Clearly and calmly its rich radiance beams before the eyes of the believer now blessed through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, for there is no longer anything unexplained; all is intelligible in the light of the Person and work of our blessed Saviour. How rejoicing to the heart are these priceless promises, these precious words, whereby, we are told, we become partakers of the Divine nature:

“Behold the days come, saith the Lord, That I will raise up unto David a righteous Branch Who shall reign as King and prosper, And shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In His days Judah shall be saved, And Israel shall dwell in safety; And this is His name whereby He shall be called, Jehovah Tsidkenu (The Lord our righteousness). Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, That they shall no more say, The Lord liveth, Who brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt; But the Lord liveth, who brought up And who led the seed of the house of Israel Out of the north country, and from all Countries whither I have driven them; And they shall dwell in their own land.”

These words describe a greater deliverance than that whereby God made His Name to be known among the nations when He brought Israel out from under the tyrannous oppression of Pharaoh, for it tells of the salvation and national settlement of Israel in righteousness through our Lord Jesus Christ, of the Seed of David in resurrection power; a power which has already triumphed over Satan, in that Christ is now in the place of supreme authority; and under Him Israel will become again the national head of the world, while the assembly will be united to Christ in His exalted universal supremacy. To God be the glory for ever and ever.
THE CHRISTIAN ASSEMBLY.

Some Notes of an Address on 1 Corinthians.

The Christian Assembly is a community formed upon earth by God Himself, for His own pleasure. It is the ecclesia of God, that is, His called-out assembly; it is "God's husbandry," "God's building," "God's temple" (chap. 3. 9, 16).

It has been called out of the world in which God can find no pleasure, and "sanctified in Christ Jesus" in whom is all His delight, and He has ordained that its sole glory shall be the Lord—Christ, crucified, risen and exalted. That the assembly should have no glory but the Lord He has been made everything to it—"wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." WISDOM on the cross, solving every question that He only could solve, and only there. RIGHTEOUSNESS in resurrection, for He was raised again for our justification. SANCTIFICATION in the glory, for He has set Himself apart there that we also might be sanctified through the truth (John 17.), and He is the measure of our sanctification. REDEMPtion at His coming again, when He will change our vile bodies by His mighty redemptive power and complete the wonderful story of grace in His glory above. "Wherefore let him that glorieth glory in the Lord."

The assembly is made to owe everything to Christ, but not to Christ in the greatness of His creative power, as the Epistle to the Colossians presents Him, or in any other manifestation of power that might fill men with wonder and awe, but to Christ crucified, to Christ on a cross of weakness and shame. The assembly owes its very existence to that cross. There God dealt in wisdom and power and righteousness with every offending element and opposing force, that he might establish what is of Himself and for Himself upon an immovable basis.

Christ must be supreme in His assembly; it has been ordained of God and formed by the power and presence of the Holy Ghost that His rights might be maintained in it. It is the circle of His rights; the spot where His love can flow out to His loved ones, and where He can administer for the glory of God; and within its sacred enclosure all should be subject to Him. It is no place for the display of the greatness of man, his will should have no place there, the cross settles that question. It were a less heinous offence to be godless outside than self-willed inside the assembly. As all within it are subject to Christ it will be in concert with heaven, and as "all the mind in heaven is one," so there will be one mind in the assembly, and this is the gist of the exhortation "be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." That same mind is not the mind of this leader or that elder, or the other esteemed brother; of this council or that committee, but the mind of God as expressed in Christ. "We have the mind of Christ," said the apostle.

In the great worldly communities men are great; debaters, orators, men of great mental ability and administrative powers are acceptable and applauded there, but God's assembly is not composed of such as these, but of the weak and poor and foolish things, that no flesh should glory in His presence.

Nothing that the world possesses, neither its wisdom, power, nor wealth, can contribute to the well-being or excellence of the assembly of God. This should be clear from the fact that not merely did the world by its wisdom not know God, but it failed to discover Him when He showed Himself to it in Christ; and it went further, it hated that revelation and crucified the Lord.
of glory. This is an appalling fact. The world had no use for the Lord of glory. He was a perpetual menace to the structure it had erected. Every word of His was in direct opposition to its whole course. His whole life was an exposure of its insincerity and corruption. He was for God, and it was for self; it heard Him, watched Him, and hated Him, and after taking counsel together it crucified Him. The consummation of the world’s wisdom was to award the Lord of glory a malefactor’s cross. It should be plain, could anything be plainer, that since the sole glory of the assembly is Christ it can have nothing in common with the world that judged Him to be worthy of shame—shame without measure, shame to the uttermost.

The assembly rallies to Christ whom the world crucified. It has been called out of the world that crucified Him and is no longer of it; it is the ecclesia of God, sanctified in Christ Jesus, whom God has raised up from the dead. How exclusive of the world would the assembly have been if this had been understood, and if it had been held in power by it.

While all the members of the body of Christ on earth form one assembly, it is manifestly impossible for them all to meet together in one place, so that we have assemblies in the various towns and districts that the Gospel had reached. But these assemblies were not independent congregations, each able to act as it thought best regardless of all others, for “there is one body and one Spirit.” Independent assemblies may be the principle of congregationalism, but it is not a principle of the assembly of God. What Paul wrote as inspired by the Holy Spirit to the assembly at Corinth was for all who in every place called upon the name of the Lord; and everything that was done at Corinth under the direction of the Lord by His Spirit would most surely bind all those who were subject to Him in every place. The same God that formed the assembly at Corinth formed those at Ephesus, Thessalonica and Philippi; they were all built upon one foundation, they all had one Head, and were indwelt and energized by one Spirit; consequently what was of God in one place would be accepted by all, or God would be divided against Himself, the Spirit would have two minds and Christ would be divided! Impossible! Yes, and equally impossible are independent assemblies when the truth is fully carried out and when all are subject to the mind of Christ as it is expressed in the Word.

Paul, who laid the foundation at Corinth, was not sent to baptize, but to preach the Gospel; it was by the Gospel that Paul preached that those who composed the assembly were called out of the world; and it was not by their baptism by water that they entered the assembly. Baptism sets forth our individual identification with the death of Christ. There is another baptism spoken of in this epistle, the baptism of the Holy Ghost; this is not individual but collective, or rather corporate, for it is into one body that we are thus baptized; this is a baptism of life, by it we are introduced into a sphere of life, the assembly of God. The assembly has its institution that identifies it with the death of Christ; the Lord’s Supper does this, but that Supper is not an individual supper, but a community Supper; it is the bread which we break, and the cup which we bless, “for we being many are one bread, and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread” (chap. 10. 16, 17).

There were famous schools of philosophy in the days when Paul wrote, and men joined themselves to these schools according to their own choice, but the assembly of God has not been so formed; it is not our choice that has put us there, but His call. He has called us effectually into the fellowship of His Son, and being called into this fellowship, we may be assured that here we shall find what these schools
of men’s wisdom debated over in vain—the knowledge of God. The Son of God reveals God to us; the knowledge of God is the very life of the fellowship, it is both light and life, and Jesus Christ who has revealed Him is our Lord. We must be subject to Him.

It should yield great satisfaction to every heart that is loyal to Christ that there is a sphere in which His rights can be upheld, for these were utterly denied Him when He was on earth. He was in the world and the world was made by Him, but it knew Him not. He came to His own and His own received Him not; but when He gathered His disciples together on the resurrection day and stood in the midst of them, showing them His hands and His side, eloquent witnesses of the price that He had paid to make them His own, they were glad, for they saw THE LORD. They were glad for the Lord was with them, glad to own His authority, to hear His voice, and to be subject to Him. Such is the assembly of God when things in it are normal and the Spirit of God has His way, for He has come not only to form the assembly but to maintain the rights of Christ in it. Let no one then talk of his rights in the assembly of God, but let all acknowledge the rights of Christ, remembering that the fellowship to which God has called us is the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

The assembly is spoken of as “the Christ”; it is a body in which His life and character is to be seen, and this not only in a clear witness to God in the world, but in the intimate loving care which each member of the body exercises to all the others. Not much of this do we see, alas, nevertheless that is no excuse for any of us to say it cannot be, for the Lord abides as the Head of His assembly whose grace is inexhaustible, and the Holy Ghost abides as the unifying power in the assembly; the Word of God abides as direction in every difficulty for the assembly, and God abides who will have glory through the assembly by Christ Jesus throughout eternal ages.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Jacob’s Ladder.

YORK.—What is the meaning and teaching of Genesis 28. 12?

The meaning of this vision for Jacob was that God greatly cared for him. This care was shown in the fact that though he was a homeless wanderer he was the object of angelic ministry. This was because he was the heir to the promises that God had made to Abraham, and it was necessary, if these promises were to be fulfilled, that he should be preserved in the path of faith which he was treading. We may learn from it God’s faithfulness to His own Word and so be encouraged to hold fast our confidence to the end; for we also look for our inheritance, as Jacob did, not an earthly, but an heavenly one, which God in sovereign grace has promised us. In this privileged relationship with God we are objects of angelic ministry as Jacob was, for of angels we read, “Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?” (Heb. 1. 14). And God has pledged His word to us, as He did to Jacob, that He will never leave us nor forsake us (chap. 13. 5).

But the vision had also a prophetic outlook. It spoke of the time when Jacob’s Seed should inherit all the promises, and when through that Seed all the families of the earth should be blessed. This will be fulfilled when the Lord reigns as Son of man. He it is who will fulfil the vision and put heaven and earth into visible and continual communication, as His own words show (John 1. 51).
The Church in the Eternal State.

Will the Church be in the new heaven or the new earth (Rev. 21. 1)? And, is the Holy City Israel or the Church?

The holy city is the Church, i.e., believers gathered out of the world during this period of grace, and not Israel. Its glory is heavenly (verses 10, 11), while Israel's is earthly; it will be the eternal vessel of the glory of God (Eph. 3. 21), and His eternal dwelling place (Eph. 2. 21). It will be the eternal bride and will maintain its distinctive place for ever, while all distinction between Israel and the nations will cease when the Lord gives up His mediatorial kingdom, and the earth as we know it ceases to be. In the eternal state, as described in these verses, those who dwell upon the earth are simply men; all national distinctions which belong to dispensations of government are gone, and God dwells with men; righteousness dwells also (2 Pet. 3. 13).

The Church will be God's tabernacle, and it will come down from God out of heaven to be upon the earth; and the prayer will be fulfilled, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," and heaven and earth will be practically one.

Free Will and Sovereign Grace.

PONTFRACT. Man exercised his free-will in Eden and disobeyed God, and so fell into sin; he thereby acquired a sinful nature which is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. The very essence of this nature is enmity against God, as the Scripture declares (Romans 8. 7), and of all men it is true. "All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned everyone to his own way" (Isa. 53. 6). Adam ought not to have exercised his will in Eden; he ought to have remained gladly subject to God's will, for only in that will lay his blessing; but turning from it, he and all his race became subject to the law of sin and death (Rom. 8. 2). So that from that time onward man has not been free, but a slave, needing to be freed from the principle of sin that enslaves him; and only the sovereign grace of God can set him free. It is not by his own choice that any man is free, for we all loved our bondage rather than God; but "by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of ourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2. 8, 9). "Ye must be born again" proves the utter hopelessness of men ever choosing God, and declares a sovereign act on God's part for his deliverance from that state.

No burden yonder, not a single care
When home is entered, not a load to bear,
No burdens yonder, all will be laid down
Before we share His glory, and His throne.

No trials yonder, all the testing done,
The schooldays over and the prizes won,
No much-tried faith, like gold in furnace heat
The purifying will be all complete.