

# SCRIPTURE TRUTH

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VOLUME XIV. 1922

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“Thy Word is a lamp unto  
my feet, and a light unto  
my path.”—*Psl. 119. 105.*

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THE CENTRAL BIBLE TRUTH DEPOT  
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# Scripture Truth.

Vol. XIV.

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

No. 1.

## “THAT THEY SHOULD BE WITH HIM.”

An Address to Christian Young Men on Mark 3. 13-19 ;  
4. 35, 36 ; 6. 7-12.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

I FEEL sure that in the hearts of all who know the Lord Jesus Christ and His wonderful grace, there is the desire to serve Him. That is one of the first instincts of the new life. Divine love is not satisfied unless it is serving its objects. We see that in all its perfection in the Lord Jesus Christ. He is serving every one of us to-day, though He sits upon the throne of God in highest glory, and He is going to serve us when He gets us there in the glory, according to His own words. Since the Lord has put into our hearts a love which is responsive to His, it follows that we desire to serve Him, and it is a great thing to see the way in which the Lord prepares us for service.

In Mark 3. the Lord calls His disciples. He did not send them forth till the 6th chapter. They spent the intervening hours with Himself. It is most important to notice that He called them to Him that they might be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach. First, that they might be with Him, and I am sure you will agree with me that everything depends upon our being with the Lord Jesus Christ. How otherwise could we possibly serve Him in a way that will be acceptable to Him? First of all, there is His sovereign call. We did not seek Him ; He sought us. We did not first call for Him ; He called us. We did not choose Him ; He chose us, as He said to His disciples in John 15.,

“Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you.” Blessed be His name ! He had a right to choose us. He had a right to call us. Is He not Lord of all ? If Lord of all, it is perfectly right that every one of us should acknowledge that Lordship. But He has gained for Himself the right to call us by the love that told itself out in suffering on the cross. Love that bore the stripes and sorrow, love that suffered on the tree demands that we should be entirely at His disposal, and so He has called every one of us who have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us rejoice in that fact and remember that the first thing is that we might be with Him.

Why is it necessary that we should be with Him ? It is necessary that we should be with Him because there is no safety apart from Him.

“ ’Tis only in Thee hiding,  
I feel myself secure ;  
Only in Thee abiding,  
The conflict can endure.”

We must be with Him if we are to be maintained, if we are to be kept from the snares of the devil, if we are to live aright, if we are to please Him. We must be with Him for the safety of our Christian living. We must be with Him in order to be preserved by the grace that is in Him. You remember how that comes out in connection with David and those who gathered round

him in the cave of Adullam. David said to Abiathar, the priest, "Abide thou with me, . . . with me thou shalt be in safeguard." As long as we abide with Him we are in safe keeping. If we wander from Him, we shall be the playthings of the devil.

Then He has chosen us that we might be with Him as the guardians of His Person. David had his bodyguard in those 400 men that went down to him in the cave, and the Lord has chosen us that we might be His bodyguard. He Himself personally is no longer in this world. He does not need our protection. He does not need that we should use the sword on His behalf. He did not need that His disciples should do that when He was here. But nevertheless there is a sense in which we are to protect the Person of the Lord. He is not here, but the truth as to His blessed Person has been committed to us, and that truth is the point of attack. We who have been chosen by Him, and called to be with Him, have this great privilege, that as His bodyguard we should stand up for the truth as to the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ. I do not suppose the devil cares very much what else is maintained if the truth as to the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ is allowed to slip. Oh, beloved Christian young men, everything depends upon it, that you maintain first and foremost, and consistently unto the end, the truth as to the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, His eternal deity, His holy spotless manhood, His sacrificial death upon the cross, His bodily resurrection, His ascent to the right hand of the Majesty on high, His coming back again. Oh, how precious it is to us whose eyes have been opened to receive it! He

Came from Godhead's fullest glory,  
Down to Calvary's depths of woe.

He trod through a sinful world a straight path of light, a path uncheered by earthly smiles, leading only to the cross; but every beat of His blessed heart as He trod that path was altogether for God's glory. He was just as

holy when He hung upon the cross of Calvary as He was when He sat upon the throne and made the angels, just as holy in His manhood as He was in His Godhead. And He is our Saviour! This we must maintain, and lay down our lives if necessary in order to maintain it. We must not give it up. We are the bodyguard of the Son of God. We are to maintain the truth as to His holy Person.

Then we have been called to be with Him that we might share His fortunes. If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him. We must not forget that He is the rejected Christ, still rejected by the world, and we are called to share in His rejection. The reigning day has not come yet: it is coming. The crowning day is coming by-and-by, when the great God will bring Him forth, His brow decked with every diadem that the hand of God can put upon it, when the wide universe from the highest angel in the glory down to the meanest demon in hell will confess Him as Lord. That day is coming, and in that day we shall share His glory. But then, in anticipation of that day of glory we are to be here sharing His rejection. Just as those 400 followers of David shared his fortunes when he was rejected, and so shared his glory when he was exalted, so we are called to share our Lord's rejection now, and His glory presently.

We are called to be with Him also that we might take character from Him, for in our service to the Lord the way in which it is done counts for very much. The Spirit of God may be able to use one who is very unlike the Lord, but such an one is scarcely a vessel meet for the Master's use; and so we need to be with Him that we might take character from Him. We are formed by the company we keep—every one knows that—and if we keep the Lord's company, if we are with Him, then we shall be formed in His likeness. His character will become impressed upon us. We shall become like Him in meekness and in every

beauteous grace. We shall not assert ourselves. We shall not be pushful, aggressive men when it is a question of any interest that may be ours particularly. We will be prepared to go into the background that our Lord and Master may be put into the foreground. "He must increase, but I must decrease,"—that is the lesson we learn as we keep the company of our Lord and Master. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus"—and then we read of His glory, and we come down to His shame. He made Himself of no reputation, but became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Oh, what a wonderful education it must have been for those disciples to have been with the Lord! Hear Him say, "I am among you as He that serveth." And were those merely words? Oh, no! They had seen Him going down and doing the most menial acts in order to serve them. It is written of Him, "Even Christ pleased not Himself." If we are with Him we shall bear His character, and we shall be marked by the things that marked Him. It is necessary then that we should be with Him that we might be impressed with His character, and so be witnesses as well as servants, showing forth in life, as well as telling forth by lip, the blessed truth of God.

But then there was another reason, and this is the most touching of all. The Lord chose those disciples to be with Him because love cannot be satisfied without the company of the loved ones. Their company was more to the heart of our Lord Jesus Christ than all the service they could render to Him. He wanted them to enter into the most intimate fellowship with Himself. He wanted to have them as His friends. "Ye are my friends," He said, and a friend is one to whom you can communicate your innermost thoughts. That is what He wanted. He wanted them near to Himself because He loved them. There is a very touching appeal in the Song of Solomon on the part of the Bridegroom to the Bride. The

Bridegroom says to the Bride, "Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the companions hearken to thy voice; cause me to hear it." It is as though our Lord said to us, "You come together, and you talk to each other *about Me*. You are dwelling in the garden I have planted by My grace, and you have sweet things to say. Let Me hear you talk *to Me*." The Lord chose the disciples that they might be near to Him, that He might have them in His company as His friends, that there might be the most intimate communications of love between them; and so it is to-day. Oh, that our hearts might respond to Him, delighting in the Lord's company, because we know the blessedness of His love!

Then, after He had named His disciples, using His sovereign right in that respect, it says, "they went into an house." That is, He did not send them forth upon the public streets at once. He took them into the house, into the home, and I think if you carefully read through Mark's Gospel, and Luke's Gospel as well, you will find a great deal about the home. Jesus often went into houses, and sent other people into houses, and I believe it would be for us a most instructive study to mark out all these different passages, and to learn the meaning of them. From the fact that He took them first into the home, I gather that there was to be made manifest first in the domestic circle the power of the grace that He would communicate to them. If we are to be successful servants in the outer circle, if we are to go forth into the world and serve the Lord there, there must be first the manifestation in the inner circle of the home, the most difficult circle, where we are most and best known. It is there the Lord would have manifested first of all the grace with which He has blessed us.

But then He went with them. He did not send them in and stay outside. He went with them. They had Him there, and so, if they were in doubt as

to any matter, there He was. They could refer to Him. Indeed, they had only to keep their eyes upon Him, and do just as He did. They had only to tell Him all the difficulties. He was there, the wisdom of God, in the midst of them. A greater than Solomon was there, and with Him there in the home, things would be very easy, very simple, as long as they were simple and dependent. Oh, how blessed to have the Lord in the home, and ourselves with Him, learning in the innermost circle first of all the power of that grace that He would have manifested through us in the wide outer circle of the world's need.

Well, now we come to the 4th chapter. Between this 3rd chapter and the 6th chapter, where they are sent forth, you will find two very important things. The 4th chapter is very largely taken up with the parable of the sower, which brings out the absolute necessity of the Word of God. The Lord said to His disciples, "If you do not know this parable, how will you know all parables?" This lies at the very beginning. Are you going to serve the Lord? You are absolutely dependent upon the Word of God. That is the seed that produces the harvest. Apart from that you have nothing. I know that men who profess to be servants of the Lord are ashamed of the Gospel. Like the man in the parable, they put the pound in a napkin, and bury it in the earth; and then go forth doing business with their own base coin, upon which there is not the image and the superscription of the King. We must have the Word of God, for only the Word of God can do the work of God. So the beginning of chapter 4. emphasizes that fact—that if we are to serve the Lord aright it is by using the Word of God. In the 5th chapter we find they had to learn the mighty power of the Lord Himself. He met the power of the devil; He met the demons. These disciples were with Him when He manifested before their very eyes His personal power. We

must know the absolute necessity of the Word of God, and we must become acquainted with the personal power of our Lord Jesus Christ. "All power is given unto Me," He says. We do not serve one whose arm is weakened, and whose outstretched hand cannot save. The One who made the worlds, and broke the power of the devil in death, is enthroned above all principalities and powers, and from that place of exaltation He ministers His power to those who are serving Him. The more truly we are held by the thought of the might of the Lord, the more successfully we shall serve Him. "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." There is no evil force in this world that can stand before the power of His might. These two things they had to learn; the Word of God necessary for the work of God to be done, and the might of His power by which it is all accomplished.

I read that little verse in connection with the crossing of the lake, because there is one point there which is of great importance. At least, I want to hang a very important point upon what comes out there. The Lord said, "Let us pass over unto the other side." I wonder if we realize that there is *this* side, and there is *that* side, and the Lord would have us pass over from this side to the other side. What is this side? This side is the place where they spat upon His sacred cheek and crowned His head with thorns. This side is the place where they laid the cross upon His shoulders, and led Him with a rabble at His heels to Calvary's hill, and there crucified Him upon a malefactor's gibbet. This side is where they cried, "Away with Him! Away with Him!" and mocked His sufferings until His head was bowed in death. What is the other side? The other side is where they cried, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and let the King of Glory come in!" And up through the plaudits of the countless hosts of heaven He ascended to the

throne. Oh, beloved Christian young men, do we know what it is to pass over to the other side, to transfer our hopes, our affections to that side, to sever our links, as far as we may, with the world that cast Him out, and lay hold of that scene where He has been exalted, and where He is glorified. To which world do we belong? That is the question—to which world? Oh, surely not to the world that crucified Him, but to the world that has enthroned Him. Then let us pass over to the other side, and in our service to the Lord let us be unworldly. Let us turn our backs upon this world and all its allurements, and every effort it may make to draw us away from this outside pathway. Let us pass over to the other side. Blessed be God! that is our destiny, and there we shall be, but oh, that we might be there in heart and spirit now!

Then it says they took Jesus with them even as He was. We must have Him even as He is. I was talking in the train the other day to a man of some prominence in the socialistic movement, and he was telling me that he was quite ready to accept the Sermon on the Mount. Well, I was pretty certain he was not, so I said to him, "If you read the Sermon on the Mount three times carefully, you will be no longer ready to accept it." He said, "I believe in Jesus and the Sermon on the Mount. I believe in the Carpenter of Nazareth. I believe in the Man that went about doing good." But he would not have Christ on the cross. They are saying to-day, as they said when He was here, "Come down from the cross, and we will believe on you." What would have been the use of any of us believing on Him if He had come down from the cross? The only way in which He could save us was by remaining there, and if we receive the Lord Jesus Christ, if we take Him at all, we must take Him as He is, Christ crucified, the power and the wisdom of God. But then you say, "If I stand up for a rejected Christ, I will meet with a great deal of opposition." If

you do, you will find the power of the Lord put forth on your behalf. What could have been apparently weaker than the Lord asleep on a pillow in the stern, which is the helmsman's seat? I can understand those disciples saying, "Why, the Helmsman is asleep. If we had only put sturdy Simon Peter there, or one of the sons of Zebedee, we might weather this tempest." Ah, but He understood. Does it seem as though you were left to battle with the tempest alone? Do not lose your confidence in Him. They came to Him, and said, "Carest Thou not that we perish?" What was the result? They doubted His love, but His love was not changed by that. They doubted His care, but that did not alter Him. He rose majestically and spoke one word to that raging tempest, and it came down to His heel as a dog would come to the heel of his master. He was Master of the tempest, and He stilled it. Oh, if we have put our lives into His hands, all we need is quiet, simple confidence in Him; and, be assured of this, He will never, never fail us. Does service for the Lord make demands upon us? Suppose in obedience to the Lord's command you went forth to preach the Gospel in Russia, or in some other country in which the servants of the Lord are persecuted, that would mean great suffering for you. It would mean the tempest and the storm; but then, if you have been called of the Lord to that, and if you have been with Him, learning of Him, and conscious of the wonderful power that is in Him as the Master of every tempest, then, instead of being like those disciples, filled with great fear, you would be perfectly confident. If we are with the Lord, and conscious that He is with us, then we can go forth in rest and peace of heart, and that is how He would have us go forth. We will be free from all distraction, to wait upon His service. A distracted heart cannot serve, and if we are thinking of ourselves, and of our safety, we are distracted. When we have confidence in Himself, when the peace of God

garrisons the heart and the mind, we can serve and follow Him.

Then it is in the 6th chapter they are sent forth. He calls them and sends them out with His messages, and they go forth to preach that men should repent. You may be sure of this, that those who go forth thus to serve Him at His call, who have passed through the experience of the preceding chapters, will serve Him successfully and according to His mind. The day of service, we are sure, is not going to be very long. We shall hear His blessed

voice calling us soon to meet Him in the air, and then the day of service will be over. But, oh, what joy it will give Him to receive His servants into that glory, and to say to them, "Well done!" His voice will send a thrill through our hearts; but, be sure of this, His joy will be infinitely greater than ours, His joy in bestowing the reward, His joy in giving His approval, will be far greater than ours possibly could be in receiving it. The Lord, then, help every one of us to understand, first of all, how to be with Him, and then how to go forth and serve Him.

## "THE AUTHOR AND FINISHER."

(J. C. MOLSON.)

I HAVE been looking at the Author and Finisher of Hebrews 12. 2. To apprehend the precious truth there unfolded, one must keep the race-course in full view. Some of the gladiators are named in chapter 11. There are women among them. More are unnamed, and summarized in brief epitaphs. The attention is, however, riveted upon JESUS known as the ARKEEGOS (Author) and TELIOTEES (Finisher) of FAITH. HE leads in faith, HE walks by faith, HE triumphs by faith. But, in the competitive games not only were there the onlookers to acclaim and applaud their favourites, but the whole atmosphere (if one may so speak) was stimulatingly helpful, and all combined to self-effacement in superhuman effort as one by one the warriors entered the arena, and, turning their eyes upon the Emperor, uttered the memorable words "Ave! Imperator, morituri te salutant!" But it was otherwise with our ARKEEGOS and TELIOTEES. The sun was darkened; the prince of this world, holding the power of death, was there in that place called Golgotha. There were no approving voices. HE looked for some to take pity, but there was none; for comforters, but HE found none. All His disciples forsook Him and fled, and there alone between two thieves HE

"endured" the cross and despised its shame.

This word "endured" is the same as the Greek for "tarried behind" in Luke 2. 43. On that occasion HE had been to the City of Solemnities upon HIS FATHER'S business. That business required HIS presence in the city after those who had been to celebrate the Passover had turned their faces homewards. After three days' quest, Joseph and Mary find the object of their search in the temple in the midst of the doctors. The pathetic question of His mother is the cause of a memorable answer, "How is it that ye sought ME. Wist ye not that I must be about MY Father's business?"

Twenty years have passed, but HE is once more in the same city, at the same feast and on the same business. As on the earlier occasion, that business requires HIS presence and none but HE can finish it. HE "remains behind" when all others have left, and, when sought, was only found (as on the earlier visit) after three days.

If the start be thus auspicious what will the end be? Let Revelation 5. supply the answer when the ARKEEGOS, the Leader in and the Finisher of Faith, shall be the cynosure of every eye, the theme of every tongue.

# "JESUS HIMSELF DREW NEAR, AND WENT WITH THEM."

(W. BRAMWELL DICK.)

## A Word to the troubled. Luke 24.

THEY were two distressed, disappointed, sorrowing disciples who were journeying to Emmaus. It may be their trouble was due in large measure to their lack of intelligence, as most of our troubles are. Anyhow, they were filled with grief. Not only were their hopes blasted, but they had lost the One who was everything to them. The astonishing tidings brought by certain women, and confirmed by other disciples, seemed only to increase their perplexity, and to deepen their gloom. As they trudged along their weary way and "talked together of all these things which had happened," their grief doubtless made the road seem longer; not a glimmer lightened up the darkness; and no explanation of the strange events was forthcoming. But "JESUS HIMSELF DREW NEAR, AND WENT WITH THEM."

Blinded by sorrow, filled with doubts and fears, they knew Him not. Gently He gained their confidence; tenderly He reproved them; graciously, and in His own inimitable way, He poured into their ears such ministry "concerning Himself," as made their sad, slow hearts to burn. Then, yielding to their constraint, He entered their home; took His rightful place there as Lord; revealed Himself to them, dispelling their fear, banishing their sorrow; and vanished out of their sight. The revelation of Himself to them had made them forget themselves and desire to share their joy with their fellow disciples at Jerusalem.

What may we learn from this? You, beloved reader, are troubled. A few months ago all was bright with you. You had not a cloud in your life; you were singing all the day and every day. Now all is different.

Trouble has rolled in and you are overwhelmed; everything is dark; look where you will there seems to be no escape; when you kneel down to pray you imagine that the heavens are brass. The enemy has been repeating the well-worn lie of Eden that God is not so good as you thought He was; that if He loved you He would not permit you to suffer thus. Your faith has been shaken; your communion has been interrupted. Listen! this message is for you. Jesus draws near: the One whom you trusted as your Saviour and confessed as your Lord, the One whom you have found to be a never-failing Friend. Jesus! the One whom you have worshipped as the Son of God, and in whom you have delighted as the altogether lovely One, whom you expect so very soon to see. Jesus draws near and goes with you.

Observe the exquisite touch of the Holy Spirit. He does not simply tell us that "Jesus drew near, and went with them"; but that "JESUS HIMSELF DREW NEAR, AND WENT WITH THEM!" Yet they did not know Him.

It may be that tears blind your eyes; that sorrow obscures your vision; that unbelief fills your heart; but oh, let Jesus *Himself* draw near and go with you just now! He will listen so patiently to your tale of sorrow; He will come right into your circumstances and minister Himself to your soul. He will put you in right relation to Himself; then He will enter your home and adjust everything there. Thus He will wipe away your tears; relieve you of your burden; make your heart burn with the sense of His love; cause you to rejoice by the revelation of Himself; and then, freed from your

own load of sorrow, will send you out to share your joy with and minister comfort to those who *are* in like condition as you *were* (2 Corinthians 1. 3, 4).

It is not that at the present time He explains why the trouble has come, but He makes Himself so unspeakably precious to our heart that "afterward" as we look back we say, "We would not have missed the sorrow, for had we not tasted the sorrow we should not have known the joy." It is the "afterward" that is the climax of that illuminating verse, Hebrews 12. 11, and it is in order that He may lead us to the "afterward," to know its joy, that "Jesus Himself" draws near, and goes with us. When we reach home in His likeness, and standing in the full blaze of Divine love, with the capacity to understand, we look back upon the journey, and recall the days of doubt and darkness and distress, and also His unwearied love; how He Himself drew near and went with us; then

"We'll bless the hand that guided,  
We'll bless the heart that planned."

When we were children we could not understand all our parents' ways with us, and sometimes we chafed under them; now we realize that love prompted all that they did, and that they only sought our greatest good and our ultimate prosperity. So shall we learn in that day. We desire, however, that you, dear careworn fellow-believers, should know the sweetness of His *present* service; should know in your own experience that He who Himself drew near and went with those two disciples is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever" (Hebrews 13. 8), and that with regard to you it might be said: "JESUS HIMSELF DREW NEAR, AND WENT WITH THEM."

"Jesus! it speaks a life of love,  
Of sorrows meekly borne;  
It tells of sympathy above,  
Whatever makes us mourn."

## "HE SAW NO CORRUPTION."

Some notes relating to Incorruptibility.

(H. J. VINE.)

THE apostle to the Gentiles urged this fact concerning our Lord Jesus Christ upon those who heard him at Antioch: contrasting Christ with the Psalmist he said, "David indeed having in his own generation ministered to the will of God, fell asleep and was added to his fathers and *saw corruption*. But He whom God raised again *saw no corruption*" (Acts 13. 36, 37). This fact is of fundamental importance for us to-day, and those who deny the actual physical resurrection of Jesus are committed to the denial of the fulfilment of God's Word given in Psalm 16. 9-11; also to the blasphemy that Christ saw corruption; and, as a consequence, to the foretold apostasy from the faith; for it is written, "If Christ be not raised your faith is vain" (1 Cor. 15. 17).

So great was the significance attached to the truth contained in this *fact* that we find the apostle to the Jews also urging it with equal earnestness upon those who listened to him at Jerusalem, enforcing his argument as to the exaltation and enthroning of Jesus by saying, "Neither has He been left in *hades nor His flesh seen corruption*. This Jesus has God raised up, whereof all we are witnesses" (Acts 2. 31, 32).

So accustomed are we to the presence of both material and moral corruption in a world like this—however much we shrink from it—that the thought of a body being dead and the flesh seeing no corruption, but contrariwise being raised from the tomb in life and incorruptibility, seems impossible; but such is the fact and such is the truth as it is



in our Lord Jesus Christ. He is now in the heavens in a body which saw no corruption, in a body which is eternally incorruptible—the Firstfruits from among the dead and the pledge that the bodies of all believers will be thus raised also, though in their case they *saw corruption*.

By the Gospel, proclaimed in all its fullness and meaning since the ascension of Christ to God's right hand, "life and incorruptibility are brought to light" (2 Tim. 1. 10). This could not have been said before. Troubled minds may have yearned for such things, especially when they saw what was so dear to them corrupt before their eyes; but now in Christ risen all is eternally secure, and life not death, incorruptibility not corruption, are before us, and indeed may actually be possessed by us at any moment, "in the twinkling of an eye," at Christ's coming again. How glorious is this element of the faith of God's elect!

In Romans 2. we read of those who seek incorruptibility, to whom will be rendered eternal life in all its rich blessedness, in contrast to those who are contentious, disobedient to the truth, obeying unrighteousness and working evil, to whom will be rendered wrath, indignation, tribulation and distress. The path and the end of those who seek that which is Divine and glorious is vastly different, as we read, "In patient continuance of good works [they] seek for glory and honour and incorruptibility," and God will render to them "life eternal" (Rom. 2. 7) in its fullness. This will of course embrace immortality as well as incorruptibility, when our body of humiliation shall be transformed into conformity to Christ's body of glory (Phil. 3. 21), for His is both immortal and incorruptible.

#### FORMS OF CORRUPTION.

Incorruptibility involves purity, probity, perfection and perpetuity; but corruption is the opposite to this—

impurity, putrescence, depravity and vileness mark it. Ever since sin entered into the world through the fall of man, its debasing defilements have been progressing. As early as Genesis 6. it is Divinely recorded, "The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted His way upon the earth" (11. 12). Mark, corruption had affected the earth itself, for man had also corrupted God's way. Material as well as moral corruption was present. The varied forms of their defiling developments are multitudinous. In the wake of sin corruption has prospered increasingly; and, sad to say, its willing victims, through lusts of the flesh and of the mind, hasten to spread its appalling influences, being themselves "*servants of corruption*" as the Scripture saith (2 Peter 2. 19). When the sons of God appear with our Lord Jesus Christ in glory, honour, and incorruptibility, the creature shall be "*delivered from the bondage of corruption*"; their service will be the opposite to that of the servants of corruption, bringing the creature into the liberty of the glory of the children of God (Rom. 8. 21). Meanwhile, how awful is the groaning produced by the bondage of corruption!

We will not attempt to follow out the disastrous ramifications of this dreadful evil, but simply point out its main features so that we may the better understand the distinctive glory of incorruptibility secured for us through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, and which stands in glorious contrast to the shame and degradation of the former. At least eight forms are patent to every observant eye, and of these Scripture itself speaks, showing their hatefulness in God's holy sight, being obnoxious to both His character and nature. These corruptions are personal, mental, material, moral, doctrinal, spiritual, commercial, and social.

1. *Personally*.—It is humiliating to have to say it, but man himself (the offspring of fallen Adam, the appointed head of the earth) is *personally* designated in God's Word as "*corruptible man*" (Rom. 1. 23). This is true of each person in Adam's fallen race, and though the body may be in view, specially in this Scripture, it nevertheless is true of man—spirit, soul, and body. How soon it shows itself when death claims the last part!

2. *Mentally*, too, he is the subject of corruption. Truly some are more affected thus than others, and Scripture singles out a certain class as "*men corrupted in mind and destitute of the truth*" (1 Tim. 6. 5). Even true believers are warned "lest by any means, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craft, so your *thoughts* should be corrupted from simplicity as to the Christ" (2 Cor. 11. 3).

3. *Materially*, also, corruption is evident everywhere, in the decay, decomposition, and defilement of various substances. Even the body of a saint, watched over by God in view of the resurrection, is designated as "*this corruptible*" (1 Cor. 15. 53), though surely it shall "put on incorruptibility."

4. *Morally*, corruption is widespread. Deceitful lusts are so rampant that not only individuals but whole communities are often termed immoral. Lust has so gripped the whole moral state of fallen man that it is thus spoken of in Ephesians 4. 22, "The old man which *corrupts itself* according to the deceitful lusts."

5. *Doctrinally*, there have been most appalling corruptions. Very early men "turned the truth of God into falsehood" (Rom. 1. 25). This is common also to-day. Many, too, are the corrupt words and teachings which proceed out of men's mouths, but it is written, "If any one corrupt the temple of God, him shall God destroy" (or corrupt, for it is the same word, 1 Cor. 3. 17).

6. *Spiritually*, corruption comes very near to what we have just spoken of, and we are "expressly" warned concerning "*deceiving spirits* and teachings of demons speaking lies" (1 Tim. 4. 1).

7. *Commercially*, corruption abounds. It did so in Solomon's day when he said, "A bribe blindeth the eyes." It did so in our Lord's day when they made the temple even a den of merchant thieves. It does so to-day in the trickery of the low and in the rivalries of the high for corruptible crowns of reward.

(8) *Socially*, there obtain such abounding pollutions that the *social evil* is everywhere spoken of! The corruptions of all forms of society are heartrending! Paul wrote of the fornication, uncleanness, and unbridled lust of the first century—of things done in secret darkness and ignorance of God which are shameful even to name—What could be said of this day? Foreseeing all, Scripture says, "Even what they understand by mere nature in these things they *corrupt themselves*. Woe to them!" (Jude 10.) Again in 2 Peter 2. 12 their end is foretold. "As natural animals without reason, made to be caught and destroyed, speaking injuriously in things they are ignorant of, shall also *perish in their own corruption*"! How solemn, too, is that word in the last chapter of the Bible: "The time is near! Let him that does unrighteously do unrighteously still, and let the filthy make himself filthy still."

What unbounded mercy has been granted of God in turning us away from the pathway and end of these forms of corruption to the holy Lover of our souls—to the One who died for our sins and was made sin for us that we might become God's righteousness in Him—to our precious Saviour, our risen Lord—the One who "*saw no corruption*!" How elevating to the renewed mind, how cheering to the believing heart, how gladdening to our redeemed souls, to gaze upon the One

who knew no sin and who did no sin : the One who ever did those things that were pleasing in God's sight, and who is now glorified in heaven, being exalted at God's right hand ; knowing also, as through grace we do, that, notwithstanding our share in the fall of man and his sinfulness, we are now taken into God's favour in His well-beloved Son ; and soon, apart from the world's pollutions altogether, we shall be before Him according to His eternal purpose "holy and without blame in love" (Ephes. 1. 4). What a glorious manifestation that will be of the triumph of God over the corruption of sin.

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

### INCORRUPTIBILITY.

Let us therefore take full advantage of the infinite mercy of God, and see to it that His rich grace toward us is not in vain, but by having definitely before our minds the positive realities of our faith, as they are revealed to us in Christ Jesus our Lord, make advance in those things that are incorruptible and therefore eternal. Thus we shall outdistance the things that once held us in bondage, and progress in the ways that are pleasing to our God and Father.

In contrast to the downgrade pursuits of the world, the apostle tells us we were called at the very start "by glory and virtue"; and to those thus called are given the greatest and most precious promises, that through these we might "become partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Pet. 1. 4). We are consequently exhorted not to be negligent now we have escaped, "but for this very reason also, using therewith all diligence, in your faith have also virtue," and those incorruptible things that are according to the Divine nature, for how can we express the

excellencies or virtues of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvellous light unless they are first made ours? Unto us who believe belongs the preciousness of Christ—the Stone rejected by Israel's builders and cast away as worthless. His worth is ours. It is incorruptible, and we are to possess this in Him. We have been redeemed by His precious blood from bondage so that we might enter into the abiding riches given to us by grace.

We have said that incorruptibility has come into manifestation since the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ; and that incorruptibility, speaking generally, involves purity, probity, perfection, and perpetuity; for, as we shall see, there is moral as well as material incorruptibility, just as there were both in the opposite, as we have pointed out. The Holy Spirit Himself mentions incorruptibility in the Scriptures in nine different connections. May He who has inspired the writing of these abiding riches enable us to make them our own through faith, so that what He has given to us in the Word may have an abiding place in our hearts.

First of all there is the (1) "*incorruptible Seed*" (1 Pet. 1. 23). The perpetuity and durability of this seed is such that it "lives and abides for ever," because it is nothing less than the Word of God. These facts are of great comfort to those who believe, for we are assured that the Word of God which has rooted itself in our hearts is unlike seed which may corrupt: it abides as well as lives for eternity. Moreover, we are distinctly told, "This is the Word which in the Gospel is preached to you" (24). The very first Divine implantation in our souls is in its very nature living, abiding, and incorruptible. No wonder the Son of God said of those who received Him, "They shall never perish." How can they? Such are born of *incorruptible Seed*! They are born of God!

Secondly, we are told in 1 Peter 3. 4, what this seed produces. It is something which in God's sight is of great price, namely, (2) "*the incorruptible ornament of a meek and quiet spirit.*" In contrast to outward adorning, this beautiful and enduring grace is to enrich "the hidden man of the heart." Those who believe are born of water and of Spirit. The Word of God is operative in such, and "that which is born of the Spirit is *spirit*," we are told. This lovely and eternal ornament results—the meek and quiet *spirit* which is of such value to God.

Next we have what is of great importance to those who are born again, (3) *incorruptible doctrine* (Titus 2. 7): this is necessary to the spiritual growth and prosperity of those who have been saved by the grace of God. It is essential also to direct our steps aright, and to guide us in those "good works" which we are told to maintain as we walk through this world which has rejected our Lord Jesus Christ, as we follow Him who saw no corruption, and press onward to the glory where He is enthroned.

Then there is that which is true of all those who truly know the Saviour, (4) *incorruptible love* (Ephes. 6. 24). The apostle wrote, "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruption." Just as the incorruptible seed produces the right fruit, so the Word which makes known Divine love produces this also in the hearts of those who believe. It is written, "We love Him because He first loved us" (1 Jno. 4. 19). Of such it said, "We have known and have believed the love which God has to us." That love has been expressed to us in Christ upon Calvary's tree, and it is commended toward us "in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." The incorruptible love for our Lord Jesus Christ which marks all saints is begotten in their hearts by the knowledge of Divine love manifested in Him. Soon He will take the assembly, which He loved and

gave Himself for, to be with Him in the Father's house, to share eternal joys in that home of eternal love.

"Then we shall behold His glory and grace,  
And heaven shall be found in the light of  
His face."

To see Him as He is it is necessary for us to be like Him. We are therefore told that the saints will possess in the resurrection (5) *incorruptible bodies* (1 Cor. 15. 53). We have seen that the body of our Lord Jesus Christ saw no corruption, even as Psalm 16. foretold, and as Peter and Paul preached. When our Saviour returns from heaven He will transform our bodies of weakness and humiliation, and fashion them like unto His own body of glory. In immortality and incorruptibility we shall then appear, for when Christ who is our life shall be manifested, then we also shall be manifested with Him in glory. It is indeed a wonderful and stimulating fact—each saint shall possess an *incorruptible body*, which is also spiritual, immortal, powerful, glorious, heavenly and like Christ's (1 Cor. 15.)!

The effect of this marvellous fact will be to energize us to strive for what the apostle called (6) *an incorruptible crown* (1 Cor. 9. 25). The honoured entrants who contended in the Corinthian games for an earthly prize only had a corruptible crown to win after all: those who have been called by grace into the heavenly race have the high honour of contending for a crown that never fades away, for the Divine approval which will remain for eternity. This may entail much present self denial, endurance, and suffering as the runner urges towards the goal where Christ is; but the Spirit of God and of glory strengthens him, and he can sing on the way—

"What a day that will be when the Saviour  
appears!

How welcome to those who have shared  
in His cross!

A crown incorruptible then will be theirs,  
A rich compensation for suffering and  
loss."

When that glorious day appears it will reveal the One who is the true Potentate called (7) "*The King eternal, incorruptible*" (1 Tim. i. 17). To Him who is infinitely worthy is ascribed "honour and glory to the ages of ages." In Him all that is due to Divine majesty and sovereignty shall be for ever maintained. Painful corruptions have been witnessed in this world in regard to kingship; how encouraging and energizing it is when the Spirit fills our gaze with the abiding excellencies of the King who is incorruptible in every sense. Many diadems shall be honoured with a place upon His royal brow, and all shall be worn in untarnished perfection.

And then how blessed it is to our rejoicing hearts to be reminded by the Holy Spirit that the One whom we worship is (8) "*The incorruptible God*" (Rom. i. 23). In accord with His own eternally glorious Being He surrounds Himself with those who partake of that which is pure and perfect. He has counselled this in His love and wisdom, and made known to us the immutability of His purpose in Christ as well as the immutability of His confirmatory oath, that by two unchangeable things we might have strong consolation (Heb. 6. 18). His word, His promise, His glory, yea, Himself abide incorruptible, and shall result in scenes of eternal splendour and holy love.

Finally, that which the heirs of God shall possess, when they are glorified as Christ's co-heirs, is spoken of by the Spirit as (9) "*An inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you*" (1 Peter i. 4). We may well bless our God and Father who has opened out for us such a bright and blessed hope through the One who saw no corruption, the One He raised from among the dead in life and incorrupti-

bility. Because of this the Spirit speaks of it as "a living hope." All is secured livingly in the Firstborn from among the dead, the pre-eminent One whose glory shall radiate throughout the breadth, length, depth, and height of that heavenly inheritance. Israel's inheritance in the land of promise might be corrupted and defiled, but not this. It is kept for us and we are kept for it by the power of God through faith, but our Lord Jesus Christ shall shine in supreme splendour where all subsists in vitality and incorruptibility, where hosts unnumbered sing the praises of Him who redeemed us by His blood, triumphing over death and the grave; and amidst those glorified myriads He shall be enthroned as they celebrate His worthiness in their unfading and incorruptible inheritance, while they rejoice in the glorious fact still that "*He saw no corruption.*"

"O day, too bright for mortal eyes!

When all the ransomed saints shall rise  
To sing His praise in yonder skies—

Called up with Christ to reign."

What a blessed fruition is this resulting from the implanting of God's Word in the hearts of sinners in this world of corruption, the precious outcome of the sowing of the incorruptible seed in the soul; the abiding fruit in the heavenly land of eternal love, where the incorruptible God is all in all, and the Son who became Man is the crown and glory of those who share the riches of that inheritance, still characterized for ever by the ornament, teaching, love, features, and approval which are eternally incorruptible, as they reign for ever and ever with Him who is the King eternal, incorruptible.

May those who sow the seed to-day take heart. Their labour is not in vain "*in the Lord.*" A rich, golden harvest for eternity is sure.

# THE CHURCH OF GOD.

(HAMILTON SMITH.)

## 1.—Prophetically Announced. Matt. 16. 1-18 : 18. 15-20.

NO Scripture perhaps will give us so deep a sense of the value of the Church as that which tells us "Christ as so loved the Church and gave Himself for it." He did not simply give up His kingdom and throne, with all His earthly rights and glories; *He gave Himself*. If, then, Christ loved the Church with love so great, we may well be at some pains to enquire what is the Church, of whom composed, and why so precious in His sight; what are its privileges, its responsibilities, and what its glorious destiny?

Moreover, the Church is Christ's chief interest on earth—the subject of all God's present dealings. During the period between the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and the coming of Christ at the rapture, God is not dealing directly with the world, whether Jew or Gentile; He is taking a people out of the world to form the Church for heaven. Without Scriptural thoughts as to the truth of the great mystery concerning Christ and the Church we shall not be able intelligently to enjoy Christian fellowship, or take up the service of the Lord, or even fulfil the ordinary duties of life, for when we come to examine the Epistles we shall find that everything in Christianity takes its character from Christ and the Church.

At the outset it may be well to define what we mean when we use the word "Church." It is used in so many different connections that it has become an exceedingly ambiguous term. However, in the original there is no such ambiguity. The Greek word is used one hundred and fifty times in the New Testament. In three instances it is correctly translated "assembly," but in every other instance by this unfortunate word "Church." In Tyndale's translation of the New

Testament, the basis of the Authorized Version, the Greek word is rightly translated by the word "congregation"; but in our Authorized Version of 1611, King James, for political reasons, insisted that the ecclesiastical word "Church" should be used, and the Revised Version has unfortunately retained the word. In the New Translation by the late J. N. Darby the word "assembly" is used, and beyond all question this is the simple and proper translation. The context must decide of whom the assembly is composed, but this occasions no real difficulty, for in the New Testament, with the exception of two passages, the word invariably refers to the assembly of God. It may be well to mention that both these exceptions occur in the Acts of the Apostles. In chapter 7. 38 the word "Church" is used in reference to Israel. It should be translated assembly, and of course refers to the congregation of Israel in the wilderness, and has no reference to the assembly of God in the New Testament. The other occurrence is in Acts 19., where the word assembly is used three times, and refers, as the context shows, to an assembly of heathen people.

In using, then, the word Church, it must be always understood to mean an assembly of people, and the assembly of which we speak is the Assembly of God.

With these preliminary remarks we may turn to Matthew 16.

In this important passage we have the first revelation concerning the Church. The Person of Christ is presented as the test of the Jewish system about to pass away, and as the foundation of the new structure that Christ was about to build—His Assembly, the Church.

A great crisis had been reached in the path of the Lord. The most perfect witness to the Messiah had been rendered in the midst of Israel. Signs had been given, miracles had been performed, and prophecies accomplished. The highest moral perfection, in word and life, had been exhibited before men, accompanied by love, grace, and sympathy, that abounded to all, without distinction or limit. Alas! all was in vain. The unbelief, the scorn, the deadly hostility of the leaders increased with every fresh display of grace. At length all is brought to an issue by the great test question, "Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?" Some said "John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets" (verses 13, 14).

The reply shows that, in spite of a perfect testimony, men could only advance idle opinions and speculations which left them in hopeless uncertainty. The fact that men are content to speculate about Christ, and willing to remain in uncertainty, is a solemn proof that they have no sense of need on the one hand, and no faith on the other. With a sense of need they would have had discernment, and with faith they would have obtained certainty. Moreover, with all their speculations never once did they approach the truth. Thus is demonstrated the utter incapacity of man, as such, to discern the glory of Christ, even under the most favourable circumstances and in the presence of the Son of God Himself.

In the opening verses of the chapter this unbelief comes to a head. The Pharisees and the Sadducees, who cordially hated one another, are united in their still greater hatred of Christ. The ritualists and the rationalists of the day join hands to tempt the Son of God, and both reveal their utter blindness to the glory of His person by asking for a sign from heaven (verse 1). As one has well said, "Such is unbelief, that it can go into the presence of the

full manifestation of God, can gaze at a light brighter than the sun at noonday, and then and there ask God to give a farthing candle." Nothing could bring out more clearly their utter rejection of Christ than this request for a sign. They had rejected Christ and now, after long patience, are rejected by Christ. They are a wicked and adulterous generation for whom there is only one sign—the sign of Jonas, speaking of imminent judgment. The Lord exposes their character, pronounces their doom, and left them and departed (verse 4). Solemn moment for Israel. The Lord of glory was there; the God that made heaven and earth was in their midst full of grace and truth, but the darkness comprehended Him not. He commenced His ministry of love and grace by coming and dwelling in the land of Nephthalim, so that it could be said, "the people which sat in darkness saw great light and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up." But darkness could not comprehend the light; evil spurned His goodness, and hatred flung back His love. Hence we read those sad, solemn words, "He left them and departed." He left them in the darkness and under the shadow of death.

But does the wickedness of man exhaust the grace of God? Never! On the contrary it becomes the occasion of unfolding the deeper counsels of His heart, and yet greater purposes of grace. The rejection of Israel makes way for the revelation of the Church. The moment has come when the first intimation of this great secret, hitherto hidden in God, should be given.

The question that had tested all men is now pressed home upon the disciples, "Whom say ye that I am?" (verse 15). At once Simon Peter replies, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." How different this reply to the idle opinions of men. Peter's faith may indeed be weak, for has not the Lord just said, "O ye of little faith," but it was a living faith—a faith that

discerned the glory of the Person of Christ, and confessed Him with the utmost certainty.

### THE REVELATION OF THE CHURCH.

Immediately upon this confession, the Lord lifts the veil that throughout the ages had concealed the eternal counsels of God, and in one brief sentence shows that the glory of His Person as the Son of God "involves depths far beyond an earthly dominion, however glorious."

"Blessed art thou," replies the Lord to Simon Barjona, "for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven, and I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build My Church; and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it" (verses 17, 18). Here, then, we have a twofold revelation. First the revelation by the Father. Flesh and blood, as we have seen, could not discern the glory of the Messiah. Only by a revelation from the Father in heaven was it possible for a man on earth to discern that Christ was the Son of the living God,—a title which involves that the Son is One in whom is life and life-giving power. It has been well said that as the Son of the living God, "He inherits that power of life in God which nothing can overcome or destroy."

### THE FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH.

But there immediately follows a second revelation—a revelation by the Son, for the Lord says, "And *I also say unto thee.*" The Father had revealed the glory of the Son to Simon Peter, and based on the confession that follows this revelation, the Son also reveals to Peter the great secret, never before made known to man, that upon this rock the Lord was going to build an entirely new structure which He calls "My Assembly." The Church is raised on a solid and Divine foundation—the Person of the Son of the living God.

Here indeed are truths that flesh and blood could not reveal. When God is communicating the law, Moses and the angels are equal to the occasion; but when it is the glory of the Son, and God's counsels as to the Church, the revelation must, in the first place, come from the Father and the Son. We pass into a region where flesh and blood, as such, can neither communicate nor receive.

### THE PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH.

Moreover, we learn at the outset that the Church is Christ's. He can say it is "*My Assembly.*" The first great thought is, not that Christ is for the Church, but that the Church is for Christ. The Bride, in the Song of Songs, thinking first of her own need, exclaims, "My Beloved is mine"; but at last she is brought to view all from the standpoint of the Bridegroom, and then, with great delight, she can say, "I am my Beloved's, and His desire is toward me." Here, too, in this first great revelation of the Church all is viewed from Christ as the centre. The Father begins with His glory and the Church is viewed as for Him—His Assembly.

### THE STRUCTURE OF THE CHURCH.

Peter, moreover, is viewed as a stone. On that eventful day when Andrew went forth and found his own brother Simon and "brought him to Jesus," the Lord announced that Simon should wear a new name, that he should be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, a stone. Christ as the Son of the living God was the rock on which the Church is built; Peter was a stone, deriving his life from Christ, and destined to be built into this new structure.

### THE BUILDING OF THE CHURCH.

At the time of this revelation the Church was yet future, for says the Lord, "*I will build.*" Moreover, the work would be wholly Christ's, and



therefore wholly perfect, for the Lord says, "I will build." No wood, hay, and stubble would be built into Christ's Assembly—none but living stones would have a place in Christ's building. Hence the Lord can make this further great statement that against His Church "the gates of hades shall not prevail."

### THE STABILITY OF THE CHURCH.

The gates of hades signify the power of death wielded by Satan. Through sin man has passed under the dominion of death, a terrific power that lays man's glory in the dust. But in the very world where nothing has withstood the power of death, the Lord foretells that at last He will establish His Church over which the gates of hades will have no power; and this will be brought to pass because it is based upon the Son of the living God. All else in this world has been based upon Adam—a dying man, and the sons of dying men. But nothing can overcome the power of life in God, whether that life be in God, in Christ, or those to whom He communicates the life. Christ's Assembly is composed of living stones, not dying men. It is built upon Christ, the One who inherits a life that nothing can destroy, and built of stones that possess this life and therefore superior to all the power of death.

The Son of the living God is the everlasting foundation of the Church. Hence there can be no true apprehension of the Church until the glory of the Son is seen and confessed, and the more we apprehend His glory the more we shall appreciate the unique character of the Church.

In this introductory passage we have the revelation of the Church; we are instructed as to the foundation on which the Church is built, the purpose for which it is built, the character of those who compose the building, the One who builds, and the eternal stability of this new and Divine structure.

There is no word as yet of the Body of Christ, or the Bride of Christ. Nothing is said of the exaltation of Christ or the coming of the Spirit. All those great truths so vital to the formation of the Church will be unfolded in due time, but in this first communication "life" is the great thought. Life in the living God, life in the Son, and life communicated to those who compose the Church. Life against which the power of death cannot prevail.

In due time Peter will unfold to us further and precious truths concerning Christ's Assembly. He will tell us how the building grows, as the living stones are drawn to Christ the Living Stone, and for what great end we are built up a spiritual house. John, too, from his island prison will pass on to us a vision of the Assembly when the last stone has been added and the building is displayed in glory as the New Jerusalem. Then at last it will be seen that, though fashioned in time, Christ's Church is destined for eternity, and though built upon earth it will be displayed in heaven.

There is one other passage in Matthew in which the Lord refers to the Assembly. In Chapter 18. 15-20, we learn two truths of immense importance to the Assembly. First the Lord instructs us how evil can be excluded from the Assembly, and second how His presence can be secured in the Assembly.

The Assembly is passing through an evil world, and while on earth the flesh remains in those who compose the Assembly; hence on earth offences will come, and even brother may trespass against brother. But the Lord instructs us how to deal with the offender. If he refuses to hear the Assembly, it may even lead to his sin being bound upon him and his exclusion from the company of the Lord's people on earth; and if he repent, his sin can be loosed from him by his reception once again amongst the Lord's people. This solemn action on earth of binding

and loosing—if rightly taken—is ratified in heaven. In the Epistles to the Corinthians we see a solemn example of both actions.

But many difficulties will arise which we have neither wisdom nor power in ourselves to meet. But we have a resource, we can turn to the Father in prayer, and the Lord assures us "That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven." Here we have two statements at first sight so surprising that we may well ask, how can these things be? How can it be that acts on earth will be ratified in heaven, and that requests on earth shall be granted by heaven? What is it that makes such things possible? One thing alone, the presence of the Lord in the midst of His people when gathered to His Name. "For," says the Lord, "where two or three are gathered together unto my Name, *there am I in the midst of them.*" He is present to confirm their acts. He is present to guide and answer their prayers.

His presence, however, is only promised to two or three *gathered unto His Name*. What do these words signify? First the promise is given to "two or three," words which, of course, applied to the brightest day of the Church's history, but adapt themselves so blessedly for a day of weakness, when the numbers gathered unto His Name in any given place may be reduced to the smallest possible number.

Then the "two or three" do not simply come together, they are "*gathered*" together. This involves a power that gathers. There is something that draws them together; what

is it? It is the apprehension of what His Name sets forth, for we gather *unto His Name*, not "in His Name," as we have in our version, which would simply mean that we gather by His authority. His name expresses all that He is, and it is our mutual apprehension of Him in the glory of His Person that draws us together. We are drawn together by what we have found in Him. He is the powerful and all-sufficient bond. There may be great differences in age, social position, education, nationality, intelligence, spiritual growth, and gift, but none of these things form the bond of the Assembly. The Assembly is not a meeting of young people or of old saints, or like-minded people, but a people who are drawn together by what they have discovered in Christ as set forth in His Name. The Assembly has no other bond, refuses all other bonds, and, gathering together thus, the Lord promises to be in the midst, even if it be but two or three who are thus gathered.

We do not gather to Himself, but to His Name. The passage distinguishes between Himself and His Name. *Gathering to His Name supposes His absence, but secures His presence.* In such a gathering He is truly present, not indeed bodily, but in spirit. When on earth He could speak of Himself as the Son of Man which is in heaven; bodily upon earth, but in spirit in heaven. Now He is the Son of Man in heaven, but in spirit on earth in the midst of His people when gathered together unto His Name. Present to give sanction to the exercise of discipline and to give effect to the prayers of His people.

## The "I Am."

OUR Lord says not, "Before Abraham was I was" but "I am." He claims pre-existence indeed, but He does not merely claim pre-existence; He unveils a consciousness of Eternal Being. He speaks as One on whom time has no effect, and for whom it has no meaning. He is the I AM of ancient Israel; He knows no past, as He knows no future; He is unbeginning, unending Being; He is the eternal "Now."

# FREE WILL AND SOVEREIGN GRACE.

(J. N. D.)

This subject is so important, that in further answer to a question of last month, we append part of a letter by the late J. N. Darby which may be of help. Our explanations are inserted in brackets.

“The doctrine of free-will helps on the doctrine of the natural man’s pretension not to be entirely lost, for that is really what it amounts to. All men who have never been deeply convinced of sin, all persons with whom this conviction is based upon gross and outward sins [and not upon the fact of a sinful nature within, see Romans 7.], believe more or less in free-will. This idea completely changes all the idea of Christianity and entirely perverts it.

“If Christ has come to save that which is lost, free-will has no longer any place. Not that God hinders man from receiving Christ—far from it. But even when God employs all possible motives, everything which is capable of influencing the heart of man, it only serves to demonstrate that man will have none of it, that his heart is so corrupted and his will so decided not to submit to God, that nothing can induce him to receive the Lord and to abandon sin. If, by liberty of man, it is meant that no one obliges him to reject the Lord, this liberty exists fully. But if it is meant that, because of the dominion of sin to which he is a slave, and willingly a slave, he cannot escape from his state and choose good, while acknowledging that it is good, and approving it, then he has no liberty whatever. He is not subject to the law, neither indeed can be; so that those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

“And here is where we touch more closely upon the bottom of the question. Is it the old man that is changed, instructed, and sanctified? or do we receive, in order to be saved, a new nature? The universal character of the unbelief of these times is this—not the formal denial of Christianity, as heretofore, or the rejection of Christ openly, but the receiving Him as a person, it will be even said Divine, inspired, but as a matter of degree,

who re-establishes man in his position of a child of God.

“For myself, I see in the Word, and I recognize in myself, the total ruin of man. I see that the Cross is the end of all the means that God had employed for gaining the heart of man, and therefore proves that the thing was impossible [i.e., God could not have proved His love in a fuller way than by sending His only-begotten Son into the world; men answered this by putting Him upon the cross, hence the cross is the utter condemnation of man]. God has exhausted all His resources, and man has shown that he was wicked, without remedy, and the Cross of Christ condemns man—sin in the flesh [see Romans 8. 3]. But this condemnation having been manifested in Christ’s having undergone it, it is the absolute salvation of those who believe [for they are now in Christ, and no longer in Adam (see Romans, chapters 5. 6. 7. 8.)]; and condemnation, the judgment of sin, is behind them; life was the issue of it in the resurrection. They are dead to sin, and alive to God in Jesus Christ our Lord.

“Christianity teaches the death of the old man and his just condemnation, then redemption accomplished by Christ, and a new life, eternal life, *come down from heaven* in His person, and which is communicated to us when Christ enters us by the Word. Arminianism, or rather Pelagianism, pretends that man can choose, and that thus the old man is ameliorated by the thing it has accepted. The first step is made without grace, and it is the first step which costs truly in this case.

“I believe we ought to hold to the Word; but, philosophically and morally speaking, free-will is a false and absurd theory. Free-will is a state of sin. Man ought not to have to choose, as being outside good. Why is he in this state? He ought not to have a will, any choice to make. He ought to obey and enjoy in peace. If he ought to choose good, then he has not got it yet. He is without what is good in himself, any way, since he has not made his decision.

"Finally, man has a conscience; but he has a will and lusts, and they lead him. Man was free in Paradise, but then he enjoyed what was good.

"He used his free choice, and therefore he is a sinner. To leave him to his free

choice, now that he is disposed to do evil, would be a cruelty. God has presented the choice to him, but it was to convince the conscience of the fact, that in no case did man want either good or God." —(*Collected Writings*, Vol. iii, Doctrinal, pp. 292-95.)

## NOTES ON JEREMIAH. No. 9.

(II J VINI)

### The Truth and the Knowledge of God.

[T is for the believer to know the truth which sanctifies him, and to stand in it; for "the eyes of the Lord are upon the truth." From verse 9 we have a solemn indictment against the prophets who did not stand in the truth. Carnality, unreal activity, lightness and lying marked them, though they spoke in the name of the Lord. He asks, "*Who hath stood in the counsel of the Lord?*" (18), and, again, He saith, "*If they had stood in My counsel, and had caused My people to hear My words, then they should have turned them from the evil of their way, and from the evil of their doings*" (22). It is in regard to standing in the truth that failure has been at all times. "Having done all TO STAND," is said in Ephesians 6., and that in the face of unseen powers of darkness. Let the word of the prophet be remembered and we shall be strong to stand in the truth: "Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord" (24). We are to be strong in Him, not in ourselves; not in self-confidence, but in the Lord. From verse 33 to the end of the chapter we see that the people, the prophet and the priest are all alike walking in vanity and not in the truth. They use the Name of the Lord in vain; therefore saith the Lord, "I will utterly forget you, and I will forsake you." They should be cast out of His sight, and be a perpetual shame (39, 40).

CHAPTER 24. the last of our sec-

tion, shows by the sign of the two baskets of figs that a remnant shall be preserved, though the rest as bad figs are utterly rejected. Sad and solemn as it is to think of these latter, it is nevertheless cheering and comforting to think of those who are represented by the very good figs. Even in the land of the Chaldeans the eyes of the Lord are upon them for good. They should be restored again, too, and established in the land of Israel; but, better than the best of the land, they should know the Lord; and, better than returning to the place, they should return to Him, as He saith: "I will give them an HEART TO KNOW ME, that I am the Lord: and they shall be My people, and I will be their God: for they shall RETURN UNTO ME WITH THEIR WHOLE HEART" (7).

When the new covenant is established with Israel, the Lord says, "They shall all know Me" (31-34). That will, indeed, be a glad and glorious day. Then they will plenteously prove that the One who was forsaken and forgotten by wayward Israel is truly "the Fountain of Living Waters." So rich is this blessing that it will be like life from the dead, and truly it will be eternal life, though not in the same measure and relationship which belongs to the believer now. They will know Jehovah: *we* are brought to know the Father and the Son: "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee [the Father] the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast

sent" (John 17. 3). May we esteem this exalted privilege with worshipping hearts more and more.

Since in Christ we have redemption,  
And with Him the church is one,  
Now we taste our endless portion,  
Know the Father and the Son.

## THE YOKE AND THE COVENANT.

The second section of the book which we are now to consider, contains teaching and principles of immense importance. Beginning with a formal declaration of the destruction of Jerusalem and the effect upon all the nations of the earth, it ends by showing us the accomplishment of God's word concerning Jerusalem, the city of His Name and the proper metropolis of the earth.

This second section embraces fifteen chapters (25. to 39.). We have called it "*The Covenant Section*" because that expresses the prominent thought in it. The word itself occurs fifteen times in this second section, whereas it is used but eight times in all the rest of the book. Another fact is also very prominent in these chapters, namely, *The yoke of Nebuchadnezzar*. God had given him the dominion, Israel and all the nations therefore must submit to his yoke—his government. Israel had broken the covenant of the Lord and had not repented, therefore he removed from Jerusalem the central authority and gave power to Babylon, so the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar must be accepted. God, however, gave the great promise of a "New Covenant" in Chapter 31.; a "New Thing" is to transpire in the earth, and this involves Jerusalem's supremacy once more. It will be for the good of all the world, for Babylon could never be the proper metropolis, not having the name of the Lord attached to it. A more complete title for this second division is therefore "*The Yoke and Covenant Section.*"

Although *the signs* are significantly confined almost exclusively to the second twelve chapters of the first

section of Jeremiah, yet we have an exception here in the case of the yokes (see chapters 27. and 28.); and also in the purchase of a field (chapter 32.); but this emphasizes what we have said and helps us to understand the remarkable arrangement of this book. Another feature of this section is the abounding of dates, so sparingly used previously, as we have seen; also the illustrative incidents so interestingly grouped together at the close (34. to 39.).

In our chapters we have the rise of the Gentile power and the overthrow of Jerusalem; the covenant of the Lord broken and a new covenant promised; Jerusalem desolated but to become the exalted habitation of justice with the Name of the Divine Son of David (23. 5, 6) named upon her (33. 16), so that both "He" and "She" are to be called "*Jehovah Tsidkenu*"! The interesting details which abound with instruction may be considered as we proceed.

Like the first section this also falls into two main divisions, namely, chapters 25. to 33. and 34. to 39. These again subdivide as follows: (I) chapter 25. stands alone, and is followed by three chapters together, 26. to 28.; chapter 29. is also alone, but the four following stand together, 30. to 33. (II) The six chapters 34. to 39. fall into two equal subdivisions of three chapters each. The Divine numbers 1 and 3 characterize this second section all through. The exceptional group of four chapters (30. to 33.) contain the new covenant promise and prophecies which involve world-wide blessing, though centring especially in Judah and Israel, cleansed, pardoned and restored under the Son of David their king, with Jerusalem for their metropolis. It shall be to the Lord for "a name of joy, a praise and an honour *before all the nations of the earth*" (33. 9)!

## JERUSALEM AND THE NATIONS OF THE EARTH.

CHAPTER 25. opens formally by fixing the date of this far-reaching

word. This date in itself is of the greatest value to chronologers, for the fourth year of Israel's king, Jehoiakim, is seen to coincide with the first year of the Gentiles' king, Nebuchadnezzar. The Holy Spirit seems to emphasize its importance, for it is used in this book no less than four times (25. 1; 36. 1; 45. 1; 46. 2). This synchronism, so important for chronological use, has doubtless a definite and Divine use also in measuring the times of the Gentiles. Up to this date the prophet shows that he had diligently declared the word of the Lord to them for 23 years though they hearkened not. He began in the thirteenth year of Josiah (3); and now, he tells them, "The Lord hath sent unto you all His servants the prophets, rising early and sending them; but ye have not hearkened, nor inclined your ear to hear" (4). They had provoked the Lord to anger and gone their own way to their own hurt (5-7); therefore Israel and the surrounding nations should serve the King of Babylon 70 years (8-11). They should be punished and brought under his yoke, for Nebuchadnezzar was the Lord's servant (9) to this end. This 70 years must not be confounded with that of Chapter 29. 10, from which Daniel afterwards learned that God would restore the people. What is said here is that "these nations" (not only Israel) should serve the King of Babylon 70 years, and at the end of that period they themselves should be punished for their own iniquity, and other nations and kings should serve themselves of Babylon (12-14).

To grasp the great import of the following verses (15-38) an important Scripture in Deuteronomy should be weighed (32. 8)—"*When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. For the Lord's portion is His people.*" This planting of the nations around Israel is called the national "Garden of Eden" in Ezekiel. Here we find it is to be levelled to the ground and deso-

lated. Jeremiah has to make "all the nations" drink of the cup of fury (17); yea, "all the kingdoms of the world" (26); but it should be noticed that this is the result of the metropolitan breakdown: "For, lo, *I begin to bring evil on the city which is called by My Name, . . . I will call for a sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth, saith the Lord of hosts*" (29). World-wide effects followed: beginning at His own habitation, the cry reached "to the ends of the earth" (31). Although God has mercifully maintained authority among the Gentile nations since that time, the world has never yet been governed according to His law, nor will it be until the national order with Israel as the head and central nation be restored, and they themselves are governed by our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of David, who will also then be owned as the nations' Emperor—"the Prince of the kings of the earth." It is as this order is understood, the solemn and awful import of the word in this chapter 25. will be duly appreciated. At the close, the shepherds of Israel are called upon to howl and wallow in the dust for the fierce anger of the Lord. All is to be laid waste, and the place of His Name—the place which He loved—"His Covert" in the earth—He hath forsaken as a young lion (38). Nor will the world be at rest until in Christ He returns again to that Covert in a more glorious way than ever before.

The assembly which is now builded by Christ the Son of the Living God, upon the revelation of Himself as such by the Father, must also first be completed and be set in her place of administration as the heavenly Jerusalem, for the nations are to walk in that coming day by her light (Rev. 21. 24), Israel having a special relationship therewith (Rev. 21. 12): the glory of God in connection with administration being the light of the heavenly city, and this she *mediately* passes on to those upon the earth, our blessed Lord Jesus Christ as the Lamb being the *immediate* bearer of it, for He is the Lamp thereof

(Rev. 21. 23, N.T.). The shining of that day will be like a lustrous gem, beauteous and blessed, rich and radiant, for the throne of God and the Lamb shall be in the city, and therefrom shall also flow forth the river of the water of life, bright and bountiful with everlasting vitality. *The throne* tells us of

the eternal stability of its source : and *the Lamb* of the fact that its full-flowing waters bear their *life-giving* blessedness as the result of Christ's *atoning death*.

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

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

### The Meat-offering of First-fruits. Lev. 2. 12.

Why is it that the meat-offering of firstfruits, though found in the section of sweet savour offerings, is distinctly said not to be burnt on the altar for a sweet savour?—J. R.

THE "oblation of the firstfruits" mentioned in this verse refers to the "new meat-offering unto the Lord," details of which are given to us in chapter 23. 15-17. It was to be offered on the day of Pentecost, and was to consist of "two wave loaves of two tenth deals: they shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven, they are the firstfruits unto the Lord." Here, then, we have a type not of Christ, but of the saints. The church, composed of an election out of both Jews and Gentiles, is not in its present condition absolutely without the presence of the leaven of sin; yet it may be presented before God on the ground of sin having been judged and disallowed, typified in the loaves having been baked by fire, and therefore the action of the leaven in them stopped.

refers to Christ Himself in the perfection of His spotless humanity. Here indeed, all was a sweet savour, and leaven was rigidly excluded, as verse 11 shows. Verse 12 then reminds us that though this oblation of firstfruits might be offered to God, it could not be burnt as a sweet savour on the altar. That was forbidden by the presence of leaven in it.

This distinction is of great importance as preserving the pre-eminent place of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul appears to allude to these Scriptures when in Romans 16. 16 he writes of his service in the Gospel, "that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost." Acceptable they were, yet there was no sweet savour about them. All sweet savour is found in the Lord Jesus.

The meat-offering of Leviticus 2.

### Future Punishment.

Can the truth be that everybody is saved from hell and everybody is held responsible for the life he leads, and will be rewarded or punished accordingly, and that we gradually progress spiritually in this world and the world to come?—"ONE ANXIOUS TO KNOW THE TRUTH."

IT cannot possibly be the truth that everybody is saved from hell. That lie of the devil is sufficiently refuted by the very Scripture you quote in your letter—John 3. 16. Those who are not going to perish are not all men, but "whosoever believeth in Him."

All men are responsible for their deeds, and some will merit and receive "greater damnation" (Luke 20. 47); but the Bible never speaks of spiritual progress in the world or life to come. It does not even speak of progress in the present life, save in the case of believers. The idea you voice seems

to be an attempt to modify the Romish fable of Purgatory so that it may embrace everybody, and to attach to it an emasculated belief in the Blood of Christ.

It is terribly true that there are, as you say, "hundreds of millions of people who believe in other religions, and these people have been taught to believe in them since childhood." But when you add, "These people cannot be blamed for believing the religion they have been taught to believe since childhood," we can only reply that these people *are* blamed, and blamed by God Himself, as you may see if you will read Romans i. 18-32. They sin against the light of creation, and on that ground they are pronounced to be "without excuse." Further down in these verses we find it charged against them that what they do is "against nature," and also against conscience, for "knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not

only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them."

You also ask as to what will happen "if an unbeliever is more noble and has more good works to his credit than the believer?" Here you are supposing a case which does not exist. God never credits good works to an unbeliever. At best the works of such are "dead works" and usually they are characterized as "wicked works." We may undertake to pronounce upon the characters of our fellow-mortals and call one noble and another base, but God judges by different standards to ours. True nobility begins when a man faces the truth about himself, and bows before God in true repentance. Apart from that no one is noble in the Divine estimation.

If you desire to know the truth, why not stop exercising your mind upon these matters which are too high for all of us, and just simply believe what the Word of God says?

## Relieving Christ in His members.

THE willow that droops by the side of the river,  
And drinks all its life from the stream that flows by,  
In return spends that life in the cause of the giver,  
And shadows the stream from the heat of the sky.

My Saviour, my God, it is Thou—I adore Thee!  
Yes, Thou art a life-giving Fountain to me;  
But I am all weakness—a suppliant before Thee;  
I cannot return this protection to Thee.

But ah! Thou hast many a loved one, in sorrow,  
Who wanders along this bleak world all alone;  
For such, from the good Thou hast sent, would I borrow,  
And this my Redeemer will graciously own.

(Extracted.)



# "THE JUDGMENT WHICH THE KING HAD JUDGED."

(J. T. MAWSON.)

*"And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged, and they feared the king; for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him, to do judgment"* (1 Kings 3. 28).

THE story was a sordid one in its beginning, but it gave to King Solomon the opportunity of displaying the wisdom of God in a judgment that the Holy Ghost has preserved in the Holy Scriptures for our learning. It is the more striking and interesting because it is the only definite instance of Solomon's wisdom from the throne of judgment that has been preserved for us.

Two women claimed a living child; which of them had the right to it was the question to be decided. It was clear that it did not belong to both of them. One of them loved it with a mother's true love, the other had no love for it at all, but coveted it because she could not bear to see true love in possession of its object. "Bring a sword and divide the living child," said the king, and for the moment that child was under the sentence of death; the sword ready to smite hung over it. How could it be saved from the execution of the sentence? True love found the way of salvation for it, but it was the way of sacrifice; that was the only way. "Then spake the woman whose the living child was unto the king, for her bowels yearned upon her son, and she said, O my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it." She was prepared to sacrifice herself for the life and the good of her child. "Then the king answered and said, Give her the living child, and in no wise slay it; she is the mother thereof."

The king's judgment was this—**SELF-SACRIFICING LOVE HAS THE UNALIENABLE RIGHT TO THE POSSESSION AND ENJOYMENT OF ITS LOVED OBJECT.**

And all the power of his throne lay behind his judgment to give effect to it. It was the law of God's universe that was declared in Solomon's judgment, and there is none greater than it.

Our minds at once revert to Calvary, and we think of the self-sacrificing love that there expressed itself. The sentence of death had been passed upon us and the enemy of God claimed us as his; not that he cared for us at all. "Let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it," said the woman whose the child was not—let it perish. Satan would have greatly exulted if we had been buried for ever in the depth of hell, for then God and Christ would have for ever lost us; but the Good Shepherd gave His life for the sheep. "The Son of God loved me and gave Himself for me." "Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it."

The love of Christ could not be restrained when we, the objects of that love, were in danger; it went to the utmost limit; it would and did sacrifice itself that we might live. And what is the result of this? There can be only one. All the power of the throne of the Omnipotent God is exercised in order to secure for that self-sacrificing love the eternal possession of the loved object. So we read, "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, ALLELUIA; FOR THE LORD GOD OMNIPOTENT REIGNETH. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him; FOR THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB IS COME AND HIS WIFE HATH MADE HERSELF READY" (Rev. 19. 6, 7). And "as

a bride adorned for her husband " she shall be for ever. The great enemy who has so long withstood this greatest of all Divine laws, that love must possess the loved object, and who has sought continually to rob God and Christ of the right to the men that love gives them, will be cast into the lake of fire and the whole universe will acquiesce in the eternal justice that gives to Christ His Church, His bride, the object of His love, and to God His sons, whom He loves with a Father's love.

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor? or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen." (Rom. 11. 33-36.)

The whole universe is to be brought into harmony with this great law, and then shall God be all and in all; but it should be a question of great moment to us who know the love of

Christ as to how far our lives have been brought into the recognition of it now. Do we admit the absolute rights of the love of Christ? A divided child is a dead child; a divided heart is a dead heart; and is so far obnoxious to the Lord. Is it not this that He refers to when He says, "I would thou wert cold or hot"? True love can brook no rival; it must possess its object; nothing can compensate it. We may give our time, money, talents, it shall all be utterly contemned. Love cries for response, for the whole-hearted and undivided response of the heart of the loved one.

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

We all admit the justice of it; nothing could be clearer. May we be so continually under the constraining power of this self-sacrificing love of Jesus as to yield ourselves to Him and keep our hearts wholly for Him.

"Thine, Jesus, Thine,  
For ever to recline,  
On love eternal fixed and sure.  
Yes, I am Thine for evermore.  
Lord Jesus, Thine."

## THE CHURCH OF GOD.

### 2.—In Actual Existence. Acts 1-9.

(HAMILTON SMITH.)

IN tracing God's thoughts of the Church, as unfolded in His Word, we shall find the early chapters of the Acts carry us a stage in advance of Matthew 16. There the Church is prophetically announced. Here it is formed and seen in actual existence. But it is not yet the subject of the Spirit's teaching; for this the moment had not yet come, nor was the man yet called who was to be the chosen vessel to unfold the mystery of Christ and the Church.

The death of Christ is the basis of all blessing for men; whether for the

saints of Old Testament days, for those who compose the Church, or for restored Israel in the age to come. But the formation of the Church awaited two other events of immense import. The risen Christ must ascend as a Man into the glory, and the Holy Spirit—a Divine Person—must come to earth. The Man in the glory and the Holy Spirit abiding on earth, are the two great distinguishing facts of the Christian period. They had no existence in the ages that are past, and they will not mark the ages that are to come; they give the entire character to the present moment.

In the first chapter of the Acts we see the fulfilment of the first great event. Here the disciples receive the last directions from the risen Lord, and "while they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight." Christ as a Man was received up into the glory. Of course, in so speaking we must never forget that He is a Divine Person "over all God blessed for ever." But still it is as Man He ascends to heaven, and as the Son of Man He is seen in heaven by the martyr Stephen.

In the second chapter of the Acts we get the fulfilment of the second great event. The Holy Ghost is received on earth according to that word in John 7. which connects His coming with the glory of Christ. The disciples were "all together in one place" waiting, according to the Lord's word, for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. While waiting, the Holy Spirit suddenly comes "from heaven" and filled all the house where they were sitting; and not only so, but each individual was filled with the Holy Spirit. Thus by one Spirit they were "all baptized into one body" (1 Cor. 12. 13). Here then the "one body" became an actual fact: that body of which Christ is the Head in heaven, and believers the members on earth. The fact was not yet revealed, and could hardly be, as the body is composed of Jewish and Gentile believers, and hence the revelation of the truth was not given until the Gentile believers had been baptized into the body by the Holy Spirit (see Acts 10.; 11. 16).

Following upon the baptism of the Spirit, a great number of Jews and proselytes were convicted, believed in Christ, were baptized, received the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Further, we read, "the same day there were added about three thousand souls" (41). Then the last verse of the chapter tells us who added them, and to what they were added. It was the Lord Himself who added them, and it was to the Church

they were added. For the first time we are permitted to see the Lord forming His Church according to His own prophetic announcement in Matthew 16., "I will build My Church." The closing words of the verse, "such as should be saved," do not imply that they were unbelievers, or that they were added in order to be saved. The nation having rejected Christ was going on to judgment, but those who believed and were baptized would be saved from that judgment, and such the Lord added to the Church. They were added to the Lord before they were added to the Church. To insist upon this is of the greatest importance, because Rome, and those who follow Rome, "attach salvation to being of the Church, instead of making the Church the assembly of those who are saved." Only believers in the beginning of the chapter were formed into the Church by the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and only believers at the end of the chapter were added to the Church by the Lord.

Here then the Church is seen in actual existence. "All that believed were together" (44). We thus see the fulfilment of that word spoken by Caiaphas concerning Christ when he said, "He should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad." It has been truly said, "There were indeed children of God before this moment, but they were scattered abroad, they were isolated. Christ by His death was to *gather them together*, not merely to save them, so that they might be together in heaven (since they were children of God that was already done), but He was to gather them together in one." This was something entirely new upon the earth. It was no new thing for children of God to exist on the earth. It was no new thing that such were journeying on to heaven. That was true in Enoch's day, and Job's day, and throughout the days of old, however dimly it was known. But that the children of God should be

gathered together in one was an entirely new thing. And this is the truth that the people of God are still so slow to apprehend. We think of ourselves as isolated saints, as if we lived before the cross. Being saved we are apt to think that it is left to us, according to the best of our ability, to choose what "church" we shall join, or whether we shall join any at all. But in this thought we fail to see that already, if we have come to the Lord, He has added us to the Church, and hence there can be no question of remaining in isolation on the one hand, or joining a church on the other. The very thought of joining a church betrays ignorance of the truth of the Church.

Moreover not only were the saints gathered together in one, but being gathered together God makes ample provision that they might continue together in a visible unity.

First, we have "*the apostles' teaching*," by which the saints were led into all the truth of God and instructed in the mind of God as to their pathway on earth. This instruction, given orally at first, was, later on, secured to the saints for all time in the inspired Epistles.

Second, flowing from the apostles' teaching we have "*the apostles' fellowship*." This, as we know, is the fellowship into which all Christians are called—the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. The Son of God is the centre and object of this fellowship.

Thirdly, the apostles' fellowship leads to *the breaking of bread*, the formal and highest expression of fellowship; that which calls to remembrance the death of Christ by which the children of God have been entirely separated from the world and gathered together in one.

Lastly, "*prayer*," by which the saints are kept in the attitude of dependence upon God, recognizing that His grace is available for us, and that we constantly need to come boldly

to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Alas! God's provision has been almost wholly neglected, and hence the divided and scattered condition of God's people. Christendom has largely set aside the apostles' doctrine by its own tradition; has formed "fellowships" around gifted men, or particular views, instead of the Son of God; has perverted the breaking of bread from a supper of remembrance to a ceremonial means of grace, and turned prayer into mere formality. However, in the early days of the Acts the believers "continued stedfastly" in the apostles' doctrine, and fellowship, and breaking of bread, and prayer; and as long as they so continued they remained together in a visible unity.

We have thus seen in the second chapter of the Acts how the Lord Himself builds His Church with living stones upon the Rock. But all this takes place on earth; there is as yet no hint of the heavenly character of the Assembly, or of its glorious destiny in the counsels of God. There is not a word so far of the union of the Body on earth with the Head in heaven. "Union" is still a secret to be unfolded in due time, but what is manifested in these early chapters of the Acts is "unity." Not necessarily a *material unity*, but a *moral unity*, marked by gladness and singleness of heart. There remained one event to be fulfilled before the full heavenly character and calling of the Church could be revealed. Israel's cup of guilt must be filled to the brim. Already the nation had rejected and crucified their Messiah; but now the Holy Spirit had come, with the last offer to the guilty nation. Will they resist the Spirit as they had already rejected the Messiah?

When the Lord ascended, as recorded in Acts 1., the disciples "looked stedfastly toward heaven as He went up." Immediately two angels stood

by them, which said, "Why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner." The angels turn their gaze from heaven, whence Christ had gone, towards the earth to which He will come. At first we might wonder at this. Surely it was a right thing to look up to heaven where Christ is? Yes, in due season it will be right, but the moment had not yet come to look up. And as we listen to Peter preaching to the nation we can understand why the disciples' thoughts were to linger for a while on earth. For says Peter to the guilty nation, "Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord, and *He shall send Jesus Christ* which before was preached unto you" (Acts 3. 19, 20). This was the final message in grace to the guilty nation proclaimed by the Holy Spirit come down from the ascended Christ. If they will repent, Jesus will come back to earth. In result they utterly refuse this testimony of the Holy Spirit. They had been the betrayers and murderers of their own Messiah. The Holy Spirit (not having taken a body) they could not murder, but they can murder the man that is filled with the Holy Spirit, and this they do by stoning the witness Stephen.

The rejection of this final offer of grace by the nation brings about an entire change in the dispensation. Henceforth it is all over with them, and the centre of all God's dealings passes from earth to heaven. In harmony with this change Stephen, being filled with the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and no angel stands by to inquire why he looks up. God's time has come for His people to look away from earth to heaven. And not only he looks up but his happy spirit is received up. The first of the long line of martyrs is received into heaven. Now God's people no longer belong to earth from

which Christ has been rejected, but to heaven where Christ has been received. Heaven is their home, and Christ is there to receive them into that home. If the world will not have Christ it is no place for His people, and if heaven has received Christ then a new place is opened for His people, and into that new place He receives them.

The seventh chapter of the Acts is a great turning-point in the ways of God. From the moment the testimony of Stephen is rejected the great characteristics of the dispensation come prominently to the fore. In the closing scene of this chapter everyone, and everything, stands revealed according to the true character of the Christian dispensation. *The guilty nation of Israel* is seen in its absolute rejection of Christ and its inveterate resistance to the Holy Spirit. *The world* is seen in its true character as the rejector of Christ and the persecutor of His saints. *Heaven* is seen flung open to disclose Christ in the glory, for the reception of the saints. *Christ* is seen as the Man in the glory supporting His tried saints on earth and receiving them to heaven as they fall asleep. *The Holy Spirit* is seen as a Divine Person on earth, filling a man on earth and leading him to look up steadfastly to Christ in heaven. And lastly, this Spirit-filled saint is presented as a man on earth drawing all his resources from the Man in the glory, and so doing becoming changed into His likeness from glory to glory, in such fashion that, like his Master, he prays for his murderers and commits his spirit to the Lord. So that *as a man on earth is supported by the Man in the glory, the Man in the glory is represented by a man on earth*. Having fought the fight and finished his course, Stephen's happy spirit departs to be with Christ, while his poor battered body falls asleep to await a glorious resurrection.

Ever since the stoning of Stephen the world has been true to its character. It rejected Christ then, it persecuted

the saints then, it has done so ever since in different measures and degrees. It may be religious—it was so then, and it is so now—but religion does not change its character. Indeed, the greater the world's profession of religion, the more intense its hatred and the more relentless its persecution of the saints. Let history bear witness to its unchanging hostility to Christ and His people. Heaven, too, has not changed its attitude to God's people. It was open then, it is open still; and through that open door we can still look into the glory where Jesus is, and the love of Christ still streams down upon His saints. Then truly with Christ there is no change. We can look up and say, "Thou remainest" and "Thou art the same." All the grace and power and wisdom of the Man in the glory are still as available for the support of His people as when Stephen was so blessedly sustained in his martyrdom. With the Holy Spirit, too, there is no change. He came from Christ in the glory to lead us to Christ in the glory. And this is still the way He takes. But, alas, how believers have changed. How little we have remained true to our character as saints. How much we have grieved the Spirit, and thus, instead of looking stedfastly to heaven, we have looked to earth. We have become earthly, if not worldly. Consequently the support of the Lord has been little received and the power of the Spirit but little manifested, so that we have been but poor representatives of the Man in the glory.

But in spite of all failure, the picture in Acts 7. remains in all its excellent beauty to recall our hearts to the true character of the dispensation. But it does more; it prepares the way for the ministry of Paul, with its rich unfolding of the Church as the one Body united to Christ in the glory.

In the history of Stephen we surely learn that the disciples of the risen Christ belong to heaven. But in the story of Paul's conversion in Acts 9.

we learn, not only that the saints belong to heaven, but that the saints on earth are united to Christ in heaven. As Saul journeys on his way to Damascus "breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord," he is struck to the ground by a light from heaven and hears the voice of Christ from the glory saying unto him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" The voice does not say "Mine," nor even "us," but "Me." Mine would imply a company of people that belong to Christ; true indeed, but not all the truth. "Us" would imply a company of people associated with Christ; also true, but not the full truth. "Me" involves a company of people *in union with Christ*, and in such intimate fashion that to touch them is to touch Christ.

The martyrdom of Stephen and the persecution that follows presents the world in its true character as a persecutor of the saints; but at the conversion of Saul we learn the further truth that in persecuting the saints the world is persecuting Christ. The Church is one with Christ in heaven and He is persecuted in His members. This, as it has been said, is "the strongest expression of our union with Him—that He considers the feeblest member of His body as part of Himself." In Acts 2. and 4. the saints were gathered together with "one heart" and "one soul" presenting a beautiful expression of *unity*; but here is disclosed the deeper truth of their intimate *union* with Christ, their exalted Head in heaven, and with one another as members of His body on earth.

Israel, having crucified their Messiah, rejected Christ in the glory, and resisted the Holy Spirit on earth, are entirely set aside for the time being, while the Church, formed on earth but destined for glory, becomes the witness for God in the world. Paul was the chosen vessel to unfold by Divine teaching the great truths concerning Christ and the Church in his Epistles.

# ECHOES OF BETHANY.

(G. F. EDINGTON.)

A FAVOURITE spot for our Lord and Saviour, in the days of His flesh, was Bethany, the home of Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. It has been interpreted, "House of Song," and also "House of Affliction." Both were evidently true of it, as the sequel shows. Luke 10. 38-42 gives us our first look into that hallowed family circle. It was the abode where the homeless One, "the Man of Sorrows," could always find a loving welcome; where, away for the moment from the malice and hatred of His foes, He could find comfort and refreshment for His heart.

The peculiar circumstances of this little household seem to us to find a certain analogy in the Song of Solomon, verse 12 of chapter 4. to verse 1 of chapter 5. In these verses we hear the Bridegroom's glowing descriptions of what His spouse is to Him. He compares her to "a garden enclosed": "a spring shut up": "a fountain sealed":—that which was for His own *peculiar* delight and satisfaction. How significant and fragrant the language of verses 13, 14, and 15. After expatiating upon the beauty and charms of His beloved, in the most tender and endearing way He calls upon the "north wind to awake, and the south wind to come, and blow upon His garden; that the spices thereof may flow out." The north and south winds having done their work at the Master's bidding, the Bride is free to invite Him into His garden, "to eat His pleasant fruits." The Bridegroom's gracious and touching response is given to us in verse 1 of chapter 5.

May we not safely call that little Bethany household "His garden"? But a wintry stormcloud burst upon that peaceful home. In infinite wisdom the Master saw it needful to call upon the "north wind to awake," and cloud upon cloud rolled in upon them. Lazarus was sick; the Master was sent

for, but He did not come. The sufferer grew worse, yet Jesus still remained where He was. At last it was plainly seen that the life of the loved brother was ebbing away. Oh, the deep sorrow as Martha and Mary beheld him breathing his last; and, *still* no signs of the Master. Truly it was the time of the north wind blast. With bowed hearts, they prepared their brother's body for the burying. He was laid in the tomb, and with sorrow-laden hearts the bereaved ones retraced their steps to their little home; rendered, oh, so dark and drear without their brother. Could Jesus have deserted them? Nay, they could not harbour such a thought for a moment. But *why* had He not come?

Courage, beloved; let patience have her perfect work. The fierce northern gale has spent its force, and glints of sunshine are piercing through the clouds. He is coming, and His presence will bring the balmy southern wind. Oh, the thrill of His welcome voice, when once more the Saviour drew near to the well-loved spot. He accompanied the mourners to the graveside, mingling His tears of sympathy with theirs, and filling their hearts with the joy and comfort of His precious words. The mighty Son of God, Himself the resurrection and the life, put forth His power omnipotent, and Lazarus was raised from the dead. And now, the soft south wind having breathed upon the scene, the invitation can be given: "Let My beloved come into His garden and eat His pleasant fruits."

In John 12. 1-8, we see the spices flowing out. North and south winds have each accomplished their Master's bidding, and here we see the happy result. A beautiful picture this! Let us feast our eyes and heart upon it. The Lord Jesus Christ, in the midst of "His garden"; Martha engaged in happy fruitful service; Lazarus, raised

from the dead, seated in liberty and communion, at the table with His Lord; Mary, the worshipper, at His feet with the costly spikenard, anointing the body of Jesus for His burying. The presence of the traitor only serves as a dark background to bring out into more striking prominence the Bethany household and their Guest.

Is there not a voice for us in all this? Do *we* allow the Lord to have His gracious way, in His dealings with us? Is there not the tendency with us to *rebel against*, or *sink under* the ministry of the north wind with its stormy blast? And so the Lord's object is not gained, and the fragrant spices, so acceptable to Him, do *not flow out*. The tender sapling would teach us a lesson. The fierce wintry wind sweeps along as if it would break the slender trunk, but it bends to the gale, and the fact of it being blown to and fro by the force of the storm only has the effect of enabling the roots to fasten themselves more deeply and firmly into the soil. Presently there

comes the gentle southern breeze with its sunshine and its genial showers; the leaves appear, then the buds, and blossoms, and finally the rich and luscious fruit. Perhaps the sturdy oak would rather allow itself to be torn up by the roots than yield to the stormy blast. Are you and I like the oak, or the sapling?

Is it not comforting for us to know that the glorious Person, to whom we owe everything, our Lord Jesus Christ, has full command over the winds. If we quietly accept His will, in regard to all that He sends or permits, we may be assured that everything will be measured out to us, according to infinite wisdom and perfect love. If the rude north wind blows fiercely at times, it is what He knows to be the very best thing for us; and when *He* brings His winds out of His treasures, and calls upon them to awake and blow upon His garden, it is that "the spices thereof may flow out"; and that He may be invited to "come into His garden to eat His pleasant fruits."

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## The Divine Teacher.

THE prophets always appealed to a higher sanction; the prophetic argument addressed to the conscience of Israel was ever "Thus saith the Lord." How significant, how full of import as to His consciousness respecting Himself is our Lord's customary phrase, "Verily I say unto you." . . . What prophet ever undertook to ratify the Pentateuch as a whole, to contrast his own higher morality with some of its precepts in detail, to imply even remotely that he was competent to revise that which every Israelite knew to be the handiwork of God?

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"There are things which we enjoy by experience which are not acquired by experience; every sealed believer is in Christ before God, and His place is to know it (John xiv), but there are those who do not through imperfect teaching. . . . We take the place by faith (beyond Jordan), but when taken we realize being in it by the Holy Ghost; and this is experience. It is not based on experience or progress in it. We are in it if in Christ." J. N. D.

"Christianity depends in its work on what it brings, not on what it finds; our side and relationship to God by it, wholly on what we find, not on what we bring. In a word it is grace, not man, though He be formed and led by it. Thank God it is." J. N. D.



## THE DIVINE BOOK.

**THIS** book carries within itself the evidences of its supernatural origin, as will be seen in—

1. The views it gives of the Supreme Being as compared with the conception of the Deity put forth in all other religions. It presents to us a Person eternal, self-existent, omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, infinite in holiness, justice, goodness and truth. Man, unaided and unguided, never had such a thought of God.

2. In that it reveals to us a personal Christ, both divine and human, filled with power and love, who meets the demands of a righteous and unchanging law by dying in the place of sinners, and then ascending to the right hand of God as the Representative and great High Priest of all who accept His grace. Man never could have invented such a Saviour.

3. In its setting forth a divine Spirit, who regenerates, and abides with the believer to comfort, help and teach him, and to quicken his mortal body at the second coming of Christ. Man never dreamed of such a Paraclete.

4. Its portrayal of the repulsive picture of man, his sin, ingratitude, unbelief, rebellion, idolatry, the falsehood of Abraham, the treachery of Jacob, the adultery and murder of David, the cowardice of Elijah, the revolt of the people from the benign authority of Jehovah, their rejection and crucifixion of the Redeemer, their defiance of the Holy Spirit in His manifested presence, excusing and extenuating nothing. Man never wrote this history of himself and his nation.

5. In that no allowance is made for sin, it does not lower its standard to suit our inclinations, but thunders out its stern commands, "Thou shalt not kill," "Thou shalt not steal," "Love your enemies," "Resist not evil," "Do good to all men"; just the opposite of the natural disposition of the human

heart. Man never framed such a code of morals, nor could he.

6. That although more than fifteen hundred years passed in its composition, and with forty writers of every grade of intellect, rank and learning, the most perfect unity is maintained in its teaching from beginning to end. The same condemnation of man for sin, the same redemption by blood, the same reward of the righteous, the same punishment of the wicked, without a single jarring note. Man could never have been so harmonious, as shown by the whole history of literature, philosophy and science.

7. The fierce light of unfriendly criticism that has beat upon it, while it has stood the test triumphantly. The widest learning, and the most acute ingenuity of criticism has never discovered in it one single demonstrable error of fact or doctrine. It is absolutely impossible that such a book could be the work of man, uncontrolled by a superior power.

8. In its being believed and loved for nineteen centuries by the best men and women who have ever lived. Millions have testified, a great multitude of them in the flames of martyrdom, that this book changed them from sinners to saints, that it brought them to God, filled them with joy and peace, eased their toil, brightened their pathway with its promises, sweetened their cup of affliction, and gave them the victory over death. Man never wrote a book that could do this for the sinful and suffering.

9 The prophecies that have been fulfilled before the world concerning the mightiest empires and cities of antiquity. Whatever else man can do he cannot prophesy, and therefore the Bible is not from him, but from a higher Source.

10. In the witnesses by thousands in the present day from the dark

regions of heathendom. Within the memory of men now living, large numbers of brutal, cruel, degraded cannibal savages in New Zealand, the Fiji Islands, New Hebrides—where more than 14,000 witnesses can be

seen—and New Guinea are to be found sitting at the feet of Jesus, singing His praise, converted through the Bible. No book of man could accomplish such a mighty work or effect such a marvellous change as this.

## WHO ARE THE ANGELS?

(II. P. BARKER.)

WE trust that our readers are far from subscribing to the Sadducean creed that denies the existence of angels. For ourselves, we firmly believe not only in their existence, but in their continued ministry to the "heirs of salvation."

The Bible, from its first book to its last page, affirms the intervention of angels in human affairs, and no one who receives it as the inspired Word of God can have any hesitation in believing therein.

But what the Bible does not affirm is that the angels are the spirits of those who were once men and women in the world. This notion, long fostered by such hymns as

"I'd like to be an angel  
And with the angels stand,"

has gained fresh prominence of late by the teachings of spiritualists. The theory they advocate is that our uncles and aunts, parents and children, brothers and sisters, when they "pass over" become angels, and return to minister to us for our comfort and help. We hope to show from Scripture that this idea is totally false; that angels were never men and women; but that they are an entirely distinct race of beings.

For instruction in these matters we are especially advised by "Christian Spiritualists" to study the book of Genesis. It is said to be "full of psychic facts." We accept the suggestion, and invite our readers to join us in a new study of this venerable book with special reference to the part

played by angels in the affairs of men. We shall, in the present article, confine our studies to this one book—Genesis.

### THE STORY OF HAGAR.

Genesis 16. 7-14; 21. 17.

There is a well-known principle, sometimes called "The Law of First Mention," which teaches us to examine the passage where any given subject is first mentioned in Scripture in order to find a clue to the meaning attached thereto. Let us bear this in mind as we turn to the narrative in which we first find angels referred to.

Roughly speaking, one-third of the history of the human race was past before angels were introduced into the great drama of earthly life, as ministers from God, bringing guidance and comfort to men. And it is not without significance that the first record thereof presents us with an angel appearing not to a Hebrew but to an Egyptian, not to a freeman but to a slave, not indeed to a man at all, but to a woman. To Hagar, the Egyptian bondwoman, was sent the first angel-messenger, as far as the Bible record instructs us.

She was not seeking God, if we may read verse 13 with the R.V.: "Thou art a God that seeth: for she said, Have I even here looked after Him that seeth me?" Unexpected by Hagar, the angel found her in the desert. Observe that it does not say "*an* angel" but "*the* angel." The indefinite article *might* leave room for the supposition that the heavenly visitor was a deceased relative of

Hagar's; but the definite "the" entirely forbids such a thought.

In chapter 21. 17 he is called the angel of God. But on his first appearance he is spoken of as the angel of *Jehovah*. This is remarkable, since Hagar was a Gentile, and Jehovah was the name of covenant relationship that God took with regard to Israel. It speaks of love and power faithfully fulfilling promise. God has love in His heart, however, even for the poor Gentile, and thus the angel that came to guide and comfort Hagar was the angel of Jehovah.

The angel accosted Hagar with words that show the Divine recognition of Sarai's proprietorship. True servants of God, whether angelic or human, do not foster a spirit of lawlessness, or encourage the persons to whom they are sent to ignore those in authority over them. It is needful to say this, as a Hornsey clergyman is reported to have claimed that angel visitors advised him not to pay his rates, rates which he deemed oppressive!

Hagar answered the angel quite naturally. She showed no fear, nor even surprise.

Then the angel made a three-fold communication,

1. Commanding her to return and submit herself to her mistress.
2. Promising her a numerous posterity.
3. Giving certain details as to her son's name, character, and dwelling place.

It is with (2) that we are most concerned. The angel in verse 10 uses most extraordinary language: "*I will greatly multiply thy seed.*" Imagine a deceased uncle or brother, appearing in spirit form, talking like this! Only one speaking as the mouthpiece of God could undertake to do such a thing.

This leads us to remark that angels are often viewed as so directly representing God that they speak as only He can do, and it is difficult at times to

distinguish between the messenger and the One who sends him. Indeed, one is driven to the conclusion that in some cases the angel is but the manifestation of the Divine presence. In the narrative we are considering we find a case in point, for we read of Hagar that "*She called the name of Jehovah that spake unto her. . . .*"

How preposterous to think that this was some discarnate human being!

### ABRAHAM AND SARAH.

Genesis 18. 1-22.

In this narrative we read of the appearance of three "men." As the story proceeds, we learn that one of the three was Jehovah Himself, and the other two were angels. In chapter 19, they are called both "angels" and "men."

Abraham saw the three "men," and seems immediately to have recognized One as superior to the other two, and as he bowed to the earth, he addressed Him as "my lord." The "men" replied, accepting the patriarch's hospitality. They ate his food.

Angels, appearing in human form, are thus capable of performing the ordinary functions of human life. We shall see that they may be easily mistaken for ordinary men.

The three "men" were accompanied by Abraham on their way to Sodom. Then two of them went on, leaving Abraham standing before Jehovah.

### LOT.

Genesis 19. 1-22.

Those spoken of as "men" in the preceding chapter are now called "angels." In person they were angels who were temporarily appearing in human form.

On their arrival at Sodom Lot saw them, did obeisance, and offered them hospitality. They refused, but as he urged them they consented. They ate in Lot's house, and were *about to lie down* when a crowd surrounded the house.

The men of Sodom were aware of the angels' presence. They regarded them as ordinary human beings.

The visitors rescued Lot from the violence of the crowd, just as any men might have done. But immediately after this they displayed their supernatural power by striking the assailants blind.

It is noteworthy that in verse 13 the "men" say that *they* will destroy the place (they cannot, surely, have been Lot's deceased relatives, for such could not possess this power!). They state that Jehovah had sent them to do this, but in the next verse they affirm that Jehovah Himself would destroy the city. Here again we note the very close connection between God and His messengers. We may almost speak of them as His plenipotentiaries. Their acts are His own.

The angels bid Lot gather his relatives and flee; in the morning they hasten him, and finally lay hold of his hand and bring him out of Sodom. They then disappear from the narrative, and Jehovah speaks and acts.

We learn from this history how very human angelic visitors *may* be in their appearance and actions, yet mighty in their beneficence, equipped with supernatural power to use when occasion arises, and always acting on behalf of Him whose servants they are.

#### ABRAHAM AND ISAAC.

Genesis. 22. 11-18.

In this story angelic intervention takes a different form. No angel visits the earth, but "the angel of Jehovah" calls to Abraham *from heaven*. "Thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from ME," says the angel, thus identifying his voice with that of Jehovah Himself. In verse 16 and onward, the angel speaks as Jehovah. No discarnate human spirit could use such language.

#### ABRAHAM AND HIS SERVANT.

Genesis 24. 7, 40.

Abraham, knowing how God uses His

angels to guide and encourage His people, declares that He will send His angel before the servant whom he charges to fetch a wife for Isaac. The servant, finding himself so wonderfully guided, recalls these words, but says "with thee" instead of "before thee." Conscious thus of angelic help and guidance, he nevertheless says that *Jehovah* led him (verse 27). He does not thank the angel, but Jehovah, his master's God. There is no record of his seeing, hearing or speaking with the angel that went before him and with him. From this we learn the very important lesson that angelic help and leading may be very real and yet quite unperceived by the one who benefits thereby. *He* looks up to God for all he needs, and God answers and provides. If He be pleased to answer by means of an angel, the help sent is none the less the help of God, and is to be gratefully received as such. The angel may remain invisible and unheard; his presence, perhaps, is quite unsuspected. And this is the form that angelic ministry seems mostly to take to-day.

#### JACOB.

Genesis 28. 12; 31. 11-13; 32. 1, 24-30; 48. 16.

With Jacob, angelic ministry takes yet another form. He sees angels *in a dream*. They are "angels of God," and form a wonderful link between himself and heaven as they ascend and descend. Does anyone suppose that Jacob imagined them to be a troop of his deceased relatives? Even the "Christian Spiritualist" would find this rather too difficult a presumption, we should judge!

In Padan-aram the angel of God speaks to Jacob, again in a dream, and directs him to return to the land of his birth. He adds: "I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst a pillar." The speaker was certainly not a deceased human being. It was God Himself, taking a form (not human as in chapter 18., but superhuman) in order to suitably communicate with Jacob.

On his homeward way the angels of God (in whose presence there is joy over one repenting wanderer) meet the returning pilgrim. They were quite visible, for we read that Jacob saw them. This was followed by the mysterious night of wrestling with "a man" who was none other than God, appearing now not in superhuman but human form. "Thou hast striven with God," were His words to Jacob; and the patriarch declared that he had seen God face to face.

In later years Jacob spoke of the angel who had redeemed him from all evil. We learn from this that angels not only guide and encourage us, and help in times of stress, but that they deliver us from harm, and from evil powers and influences. They can also bless us, for Jacob prays that the angel may bless his two grandsons. We say "they"; but Jacob spoke of one angel only, and seems to identify him with the God who had cared for him all his life.

Angels are evidently beings who have a personality of their own, and who can be *sent*. But the manifestation of God's own presence is also spoken of as an angel; Isaiah, 63. 9, confirms this, where we read of "the angel of His presence." That angels are the spirit forms of those who were once men and women on earth is a theory that the narratives in Genesis utterly confute. Spiritualists have invited us to study this ancient book in order to convince ourselves that angelic visitations, such as they affirm to take place to-day, have happened for ages past. We have accepted their invitation, and we rise from our study with a deepened conviction that real angelic visitations were things immeasurably different from anything with which spiritualists are familiar, and that their theory as to their nature and origin is utterly untenable. Angels were never men (save temporarily, in appearance), and no man or woman has ever become an angel.

[All quotations in this paper are from the Revised Version of the Bible.]

## NOTES ON JEREMIAH. No. 10.

### Gentile Supremacy.

(H. J. VINCE)

CHAPTERS 26. 27. and 28. continue to speak of the solemn fact that the removal from Jerusalem to Babylon of the Divinely appointed authority must take place and must be submitted to. This latter is signified by *the sign of the yokes*. The actual accomplishment took place fully in Zedekiah's day, but the word and sign of it were given "in the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim" (25. 1; 26. 1; and 27. 1 [?]). These three chapters show, first, that the house of the Lord and the city are to be desolated; second, that the yoke of the king of Babylon must be received; and, lastly, the punishment of the prophet who speaks contrary to this, for he is guilty of "rebellion against the Lord"

(28. 16), who in His wisdom and power had raised up Nebuchadnezzar to be His servant for this very purpose. This shows the immense importance, for any who serve the Lord at any time, of being assured of His way as well as His will.

The prophet took his stand in the court of the Lord's house to speak the word concerning it. This house, which gave its character to the city, was to have been a centre of blessing to all nations and a house of prayer for all people, but because of the wickedness of the people the Lord declares, "I will make this house like Shiloh, and will make this city a curse to all the nations

of the earth" (26. 6). What a contrast between His will and His way is seen here! The priests, prophets and people seized the prophet because of his word, and sought to compass his death, bringing him before the princes. The prophet declared that the Lord had sent him to speak thus, and he exhorted them to amend their ways and obey His voice, then the Lord would repent Him of the threatened evil. As for himself, in the calm consciousness of fulfilling the mind of God, Jeremiah told them to do to him as seemed good and right in their eyes, but that if they slew him they would bring innocent blood upon their heads. The princes favoured the prophet, and certain elders quoted precedents—those of Micah (18) and Urijah (20)—the former case argued for Jeremiah and the latter rather against him. We are told, however, "The hand of Ahikam the son of Shaphan was with Jeremiah, that they should not give him into the hand of the people to put him to death" (24). We learn here that when the priests and those who were professedly nearest to God (who should therefore best know His mind) became the greatest enemies of the truth, others were used by the Lord for His servant's deliverance. Sometimes the most unlikely are so used, as the princes in this case, and even the name of one, *Ahikam*, signifies "*of the enemy.*" This teaches those who serve Him to trust in the Lord at all times. We also see in the cases quoted by the elders that the blessed Lord was using others to diligently warn the people of the same thing that Jeremiah spoke of, so solemn and stupendous was this giving up of the world's right centre of earthly government. In the next chapter we have the new centre referred to.

The dominion in the fullest sense, as well as the kingdom, belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of Man; but here we are told that God (27. 5-7), who made all things—the earth and all upon it—had now given to His servant the King of Babylon all the beasts of the

field as well as all nations to serve him. In Daniel 2. 38 we read that the fowls of the heavens were likewise given into his hand. In Genesis 1. 28 we learn that the fish of the sea were also to come under man, but these are not named in connection with Nebuchadnezzar's dominion. When, however, the dominion of the Son of man is spoken of in Psalm 8. all these are included, and indeed much more is involved in the language there used.

The word concerning this supremacy of the King of Babylon and the sign of submission seem to have been first made known to the prophet "in the beginning of the reign of *Jehoiakim*" (27. 1). He was told to make bonds and yokes to be sent to the kings of the nations around Israel, and the prophet himself was to wear this sign, for it illustrated the great burden of his whole prophetic word; and then as opportunity occurred he was to give the representatives of the various nations these signs to carry to their kings with the word of the Lord as to the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar. This was carried out in Zedekiah's day as verses 3, 12, and 28. 1, show; but that gives no reason for altering the name *Jehoiakim* in 27. 1, to *Zedekiah*, as some would do, for it simply tells us when the word came to Jeremiah. This sign of the bonds and yokes was characteristic rather than special. It signified that God had decreed that all must submit to the yoke of the King of Babylon. In Chapter 28. Hananiah speaks against this, and he does so with "*thus saith the Lord*" (11) upon his lips. To do such a solemn thing, however pious and optimistic it might sound, was to speak "revolt against the Lord" (16) who had made Nebuchadnezzar His servant, and given him power and dominion. Hananiah's doom was therefore sealed and executed that same year (28. 17)! He had spoken a lie like the diviners and soothsayers—the spiritualists of the nations (27. 9, 10)—and like other false prophets who sought to turn men from submission

to the yoke of the King of Babylon (27. 15, 16). This lying spirit is often in evidence among those who profess to speak the mind of God for the time. Yokes of iron were to take the place of the yokes of wood (28. 13) which Hananiah had broken, and even the remaining vessels of the house of the Lord and of the house of the king were to be taken to Babylon till the time of the foretold restoration under Cyrus (27. 21-28). Hananiah falsely fixed two years for the breaking of Babylon's yoke; God fixed 70.

### THE YOKE OF A GREATER THAN NEBUCHADNEZZAR.

Power from God, although corrupted, is still with the Gentile nations to-day, and when the Lord came in lowly grace to His people they were under the Roman yoke. When He was brought before Pilate He meekly acknowledged this authority, and even said he (Pilate) could have had no power against Him except it were given from above. Pilate was perturbed and, marvelling at the Divine Stranger, asked if He were a king. Yes, truly, a greater than Rome ever saw! The yoke of kings had usually been oppressive, but the yoke of this gracious King would be found easy and beneficial.

In every way He is pre-eminent. In the nation of Israel, with its many advantages, even the Sabbath was made oppressive; but when clearing His disciples from a false charge as to it, He reminded His hearers that even the Sabbath and its rules were subject to Him, saying, "*The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath*" (Matt. 12. 8)! The temple, too, and its rich ritual became a burden when used wrongly, and at the time we have referred to the Lord Jesus reminded them of His pre-eminence also in this respect when He said, "*There is here a Greater than the temple*" (Matt. 12. 6)! In the same chapter the striking sign of the prophet Jonah and the rare result of his preaching is spoken of, but only to show that all this is surpassed in Christ—"Behold, a Greater than Jonas is here"

(12. 38-41)! After Solomon's royal reign of regal splendour his subjects complained of its burdensomeness and of the oppression of its yoke, though the Queen of the South travelled far to hear His wisdom. When standing amidst His own nation, in grace and lowliness doing works of power and mercy and speaking words of Divine instruction, the Lord Jesus said, "*Behold, a Greater than Solomon is here*" (verse 42)! All this surpassing greatness and pre-eminence was plentifully proved for those who truly saw and heard by the works which He did, and by the words which He spake, as well as by His heavenly ways amongst men. There stood the Son of God before their eyes as

1. The Son of Man, Lord of the Sabbath (8);
2. The One who was Greater than the temple (6);
3. The Prophet and Preacher Greater than Jonah (41);
4. In wisdom the Greater than Solomon (42).

This is *the* Son of Man whose dominion is greater than Nebuchadnezzar's! This is the Great King whose kingdom shall have no end! This is the One whose yoke the believer loves.

In the last verse of the previous chapter of Matthew He Himself says, "My yoke is easy, and My burden is light" (11. 30). God has given all things into His hands, and though this is hidden from the wise and prudent of the world, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has revealed it to true believers, yea, even to babes in the faith. The Son receives all things from the Father, and reveals Him now to His own in all that the precious Name *Father* means; whilst the Son Himself, in the impenetrable depths of His peerless Person, is only fully known by the Father. So great and glorious is our gracious Saviour, our beloved Lord, that He is beyond our finite comprehension, although so well known to us

in His grace and love. Nevertheless, the Father knows and loves the Son perfectly, and has given all things into His hands, and ourselves also. We are His through redemption—through His blood! We are His, too, as the Father's love-gift to the Son! The weakest believer can wear His yoke with facility and felicity, with comfort and cheerfulness! Indeed, the least in the kingdom now is greater in privilege and position than the greatest who went before. The law and the prophets prophesied up to John the Baptist, and no one greater was born of woman; but He who is greater than all had then come to open up the new way; and the least now, who has come to our Lord Jesus Christ, is greater than John, as this chapter tells us (Matt. 11. 11). It is an honour given to such to take His yoke upon them. Many benefits accrued to those who willingly accepted Nebuchadnezzar's yoke; but the Son of God is greater than Nebuchadnezzar; yea, *greater than all!* and those now in the kingdom where He is supreme are also *greater than the greatest* of men who went before in the way we have said, in privilege and position. It may not be understood fully at first, but this yoke is intended to prove pleasant to those who accept it, giving ease and quietness to the soul in tranquil restfulness; and that we might rightly understand it, this Pre-eminent One graciously says, "*Learn of Me.*" The soul rest we speak of has never been found in connection with the yoke of the best of kings. Oppression, and burden, and toil, and trouble, and bloodshed, and sorrow have charac-

terized the continued story of the nations—sometimes worse than at other times—but tens of thousands have responded to and proved the preciousness of these wealthy words of our great and gracious Saviour:—

"Come unto Me, all ye that labour  
And are burdened, and I will give  
you rest.  
Take My yoke upon you, and learn  
from Me;  
For I am meek and lowly in heart:  
And ye shall find rest unto your  
souls.  
**FOR MY YOKE IS EASY,  
AND MY BURDEN IS LIGHT."**  
—(Matt. 11. 29, 30.)

What grace and glory shine here! One who is meek and in heart lowly, yet the Supreme One in might, and in majesty, and in dominion, and in power, inviting the weary to come to Him, and to learn from Him, and gratefully to prove the gentleness and blessedness of His Divine yoke. Nothing to compare with this has been known before or since.

We are also told afterwards that He will show forth judgment, not to Israel only, but to the nations (Matt. 12. 18). Nebuchadnezzar failed, but after the assembly is taken to heaven, our Lord Jesus Christ will take up the government of the nations, ordering everything aright, "and in His Name shall the nations trust" (21). His yoke will then be accepted publicly and generally, not as now in faith by the few who are privileged and honoured to own Him during the time of His rejection before He returns in royal splendour and majesty.

## Perfection.

THE difficulty which we chiefly feel in dealing with the character of Christ, as it unfolded itself before men, arises from its absolute perfection. . . . A single excellence unusually developed, though in the neighbourhood of great faults, is instantly and universally attractive. Perfect symmetry, on the other hand, does not startle, and is hidden from common and casual observers. But it is this which belongs emphatically to the Christ of the Gospels.



# "WE GLORY IN TRIBULATIONS."

(F. B. HOLE.)

THE Apostle Paul wrote these words, which we have selected as a title, when engaged in the calm and reasoned setting forth of the Gospel of God. He did not declaim them in the midst of glowing oratory, when the best of men may be guilty of exaggeration. They were literally true. He did not look upon tribulation as an evil, necessary perhaps, but always to be avoided if possible. He rather regarded it as good and a subject for rejoicing, because, as he tells us in the succeeding verses (Rom. 5. 3-5), he knew the wholesome and desirable effects that it produced within.

Do we regard it in this light? Or have we fallen into the common snare of thinking that nothing is so desirable as that quiet and eminently respectable form of Christianity which, while diligently cultivating Bible knowledge and the gatherings of God's people, and avoiding worldly excesses, yet also carefully avoids everything that would offend worldly and carnal susceptibilities, or involve one in the conflicts which centre round the aggressive work of the Lord?

If, under this mistaken idea, we do make it our aim to avoid tribulation, we shall be great losers, and that probably in a twofold way.

First, we are not likely to escape tribulation. If we do not get it as a result of faithfulness to Christ we shall get it because of unfaithfulness in the way of chastisement. Secondly, we shall miss the very choicest of its beneficent results. We may indeed profit by the chastening of the Father's hand in a retributive way, but not so richly as we may and do when the tribulation comes because of our identification with Christ, and His interests.

Tribulation is to the soul what exercise is to the body. Spiritual muscle and stamina are developed by

it. Indeed, we commonly use the word *exercise* with that spiritual meaning; and nothing is more important for a Christian than to be maintained in this condition of healthy spiritual exercise. Moments of tribulation and pressure and difficulty when the path seems most hedged up, and decisions are most complicated and burdensome, and the situation seems most impossible, are invariably found to be ultimately—when gone through in communion with God—most upbuilding and enlarging after a spiritual sort.

In the second letter which the Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians we get a very instructive sidelight on the working, in his own case, of this tribulation in which he gloried. The story falls naturally into three chapters.

I. ASIA: or, "*We despaired even of life.*"

Verses 8-11 of chapter 1. give us Paul's own allusion to this tremendous episode in his history. He brings it in, as he does also the other episodes to which we shall refer, in a quite incidental way.

At Ephesus, the capital of Asia, the gospel won some of its greatest triumphs through Paul's preaching. There "mightily grew the Word of God, and prevailed" (Acts 19. 20), and there also, and in consequence, the devil made one of his fiercest attacks as a roaring lion. He harnessed his chariot, as so often, to the cupidity and avarice of men. Demetrius, the silversmith, and his friends were his ready tools. The fierce riot, murderous in its spirit, in the Ephesian theatre was the result.

Paul's account of it in 1 Cor. 1. is that "we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life." He evidently found himself, as we should commonly say, in the jaws of death. A great experience this! It was, however,

wholly pressure from without. We might at first sight be inclined to pronounce it the severest test to which a servant of the Lord could be subjected. We believe, however, that more careful reflection would lead us to consider it the least of the three cases that are coming before us.

Immense pressure lay on the apostle from without, but his own spirit was calm and sustained. He tells us that "we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead." He met the great crisis with the death sentence lying upon self, and God as the Object of his faith. Hence he was not only delivered, as verse 10 states, but spiritually enriched—so much so that he was filled with comfort and consolation to the point of being enabled "to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God" (verse 4).

2. TROAS: or, "*I had no rest in my spirit.*"

The Ephesian riot over, Paul departed "for to go into Macedonia," as Acts 20. 1 tells us; and he was minded to travel by way of Corinth (see 2 Cor. 1. 16). It appears, however, that he went first to Troas, where an unexpected door of gospel service opened, but that in spite of this great opening his time there was short. He changed his plans and hurriedly departed straight into Macedonia. That which induced this sudden change has been recorded for our instruction.

Not long previously, the apostle had written his first letter to the Corinthians and sent it by the hand of Titus. He wrote it "out of much affliction and anguish of heart . . . with many tears" (ch. 2. 4), and having dispatched it waited with the utmost eagerness for tidings of its effect upon the Corinthians. At Troas he evidently expected to meet Titus on his return journey, and he did not come!

This plunged the ardent and loving

heart of Paul into exercises of a different and even a deeper kind. At Ephesus there had been a fierce but brief moment of external tribulation. At Troas all was prosperous and encouraging without, and yet there was nothing but anxiety within. "I had no rest in my spirit," he tells us (ch. 2. 13). The very warmth of his love, and his care for Christ's glory in the assemblies, only made his anxieties the more acute. At last he could bear the suspense no longer. In spite of the open gospel door he took leave of them, and "went from thence into Macedonia."

Was he right in so doing? Did he miss a great opportunity that never recurred? These are questions it hardly becomes us to answer, seeing we know so little of the burning love and zeal that marked him, and are also ignorant of all the factors of the case. This we do know, that Paul himself could look back and trace that God was over-ruling in all, and leading him in triumph in Christ, and in that he could rejoice. This is shown by verses 14 to 17.

Many of us have known seasons of disquietude when we too have had no rest in our spirit, but it has been perhaps over matters of personal and worldly import. How many of us have been moved in this way solely out of solicitude for the interests of Christ?

3. MACEDONIA: or, "*Troubled on every side.*"

The apostle's story is arrested at verse 13 of chapter 2.; but the dropped thread is picked up again at chapter 7. 5. It appears that his hurried departure to Macedonia from Troas only heightened his troubles and exercises, for there his "flesh even had no rest." He was "troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears."

We do not know what these "fightings" were; but remembering the happy spiritual condition of the

Macedonian saints, as recorded in chapter 8., we are safe in assuming they were endured in connection with the persecutions of the world. They were evidently of a particularly pertinacious kind and gave Paul no rest. In contrast to the Ephesian trouble, which was short and sharp like an acute attack, this was prolonged in a more chronic fashion. To make matters worse, instead of the calm trust in the God who raises the dead, there were all these fears within. He was still filled with anxieties as to the spiritual state of the Corinthians and the effect of his letter, and, we venture to think, also filled with fears as to whether he had failed the Lord in thus hurriedly departing from Troas.

Here was indeed a climax of trouble!—trouble which he had never known at all had he not been so wholeheartedly identified with Christ's cause and interests. Do you think he regretted it? Or should we regret it if we tasted such exercises even in much smaller measure?

The Lord watched over His faithful servant, and at length relief was granted. Titus arrived. He brought good news. The first epistle had been signally owned of God. The situation had been saved! The apostle was comforted, and his heart burst forth in the succeeding chapters into touching expressions of joy. Indeed, his joyful words in chapter 2. 14-17 are penned in view of this. Christ had triumphed and he felt himself to be like a captive—a joyful willing captive—in Christ's triumphant procession.

Does some Christian reader say, "Well, I have never had such a transporting experience as that"? The reason is not far to seek. You have never known the tribulation and exercise which precedes it. It is as we are "partakers of the sufferings" that we shall "be also of the consolation" (ch. 1. 7).

How much does the easy-going and worldly Christian miss! Oh! for more wholehearted devotion to Christ.

## THE DIGNITY OF THE BELIEVER'S BODY.

(I. FLEMING.)

A CHRISTIAN may be viewed from different standpoints and in various relationships. But however regarded, we see him as a remarkable individual, for he is the outcome of the gracious counsel of God the Father, of the atoning work of God the Son, and of the mighty operation of God the Holy Spirit.

If regarded in the light of the epistle to the Romans we see a guilty sinner justified from all his sins, freed from the dominion of sin, cleared from all possibility of condemnation, made a child and heir of God and a joint-heir with Christ, and only waiting the glad day when in a body like Christ's body of glory, radiant with His beauty, he shall shine in entire conformity to the image of God's Son, that He may be

Firstborn of many brethren. We are compelled to say, "It is a wonderful thing to be a Christian."

Or regarded in the height of his calling in Christ Jesus, as presented in the epistle to the Ephesians, he is seen as quickened out of death in trespasses and sins, and raised up together with and seated in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus, according to God's pleasure and according to the riches of His grace and glory. He is "accepted in the Beloved" and in all His nearness and dearness before God His Father. He is part of His body, the church, the fulness of Him who filleth all in all, and soon to be presented to Himself. Seeing him in this association, identified with Christ, and blessed with all spiritual blessings, again we say,

"It is a wonderful thing to be a Christian."

But if we look at him on what is, in some respects, a lower platform—but remembering that all is "of God" even there—in his actual condition and in his mortal body for which he still has to wait redemption, we may still be filled with wonder and with praise. He is in the midst of a world where Christ has been rejected, but is being maintained of God in all his trials and difficulties. He is being carried "on eagle's wings" and brought on his way to glory. He has to tread a pilgrim path and to face dangers innumerable, but he lives in the joyous prospect of the Father's house on high as his home; and already the earnest of coming glory—the Holy Spirit—dwells in him. Must we not say yet again, "It is a wonderful thing to be a Christian"?

In connection with this view of the Christian, the importance of a right estimate of his body may profitably occupy our thoughts for a few moments, and if we turn to 1 Corinthians we shall see with what dignity the believer's body is clothed.

Corinth was a corrupt city. A man who was pursuing an utterly immoral, licentious course was said to be Corinthianizing. But the Gospel and the grace of God had visited that centre, and out of the cesspool of its evil "the sanctified in Christ Jesus" addressed by the apostle (chap. 1. 2) had been delivered. The depths of evil from which they had been raised are indicated in verses 9 and 10 of the sixth chapter. "Such *were* some of you." This was their past. But it *was* past. He can happily add—

"*But ye are washed.*" They were cleansed from their pollution, for they were born of the Spirit and the Word and thus renewed.

"*But ye are sanctified.*" They were set apart from all they had been, now to be for the holy service of God.

"*But ye are justified.*" They were

cleared from every charge and made the righteousness of God in Christ.

*Purified, sanctified, justified*—this was their present. They were on a new footing altogether, and all was in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. They owed everything to the Lord Jesus and that which He had wrought for them at Calvary; and to the mighty operation within them of the Holy Spirit of God. Henceforth they were to recognize this, and not to allow their bodies to be used save for the glory of Him who had wrought so graciously for their blessing.

The apostle shows them therefore how the body is to be regarded and to be used by the Christian.

It is

"FOR THE LORD"

(verse 13). It is to be held as under His authority. It is to be employed according to His direction as a vessel which He has a right to, for He has secured a title to its exclusive use. Instead of being engaged in the service of divers lusts and pleasures, it is to be engaged only as His good pleasure may determine. Correspondingly "the Lord is for the body." Being for Him we may rely upon His caring for its well-being, and upon His maintenance of it for His own service. So, to use an illustration, my watch is *for me*. It is for my service as a timekeeper and is wholly mine and at my disposal how I will. And I am *for my watch*. I take care of it and preserve it from harm to the best of my ability in order that it may continue useful to me.

Again, the body is

A MEMBER OF CHRIST.

Here the figure of the human body is used to show how intimate is our association with Him. The members of our bodies are used by us to express our thoughts and wishes, they make us known and fulfil our pleasure. So the Christian's body is viewed as part of

Christ by the Holy Spirit, "joined to the Lord," and is to be engaged in expressing Him in the world where He has been refused. It is one of His many triumphs that He is still here in His members and that His life is still reproduced, in part, at least, in our bodies.

Then in verse 19 we learn that the Christian's body is

### THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY GHOST.

"What, know ye not?"—this inquiry has been made again and again in the chapter. Were they not acquainted with the foundation truths? or had they forgotten them? For the sixth time he uses the formula, as he asks, "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?"

That which had been the abode of unclean passions was now the dwelling place of the Spirit of God.

Just as of old the tabernacle when set up by Moses, and the temple when completed by Solomon, each became the shrine on which the Shekinah cloud abode, so to-day the believer's body is a dwelling place of God on earth. What dignity is here! If the truth of it were abidingly present with us, how should we conduct ourselves in the midst of a Christless and condemned world?

"Which ye have of God." The Holy Ghost takes possession of our

bodies on God's behalf. He has come to claim us for God's pleasure, and to empower us to be here for God's praise.

Then completing the question, "Do ye not know that . . . ye are not your own?" We have now no right to use our bodies according to our own will and inclination, for sinful lusts and pleasures. God claims for Himself. He takes possession by the Holy Spirit of that which is His own.

"Ye are bought with a price." The cost who shall declare? The words bring before us "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ." Calvary with its expression of love and with its inexpressible sorrows comes before us. His precious blood, shed there that He might cleanse us and claim us, is presented to our mind's gaze.

God has thus secured our bodies for Himself. We are His alone, the fruit of His power and purchase and presence.

Do we know this? We do. Then the only reasonable outcome of our knowledge is that we should hear and answer to the exhortation:—

"Therefore glorify God in your body" (verse 20).

It is His, but it is committed to us as His stewards to hold it henceforth for Him, and "whether we eat or drink or whatsoever we do we are to do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10. 31).

Truly, it is a wonderful thing to be a Christian.

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## OBJECTIVE AND SUBJECTIVE.

(W. BRAMWELL DICK.)

THE words at the head of this paper are used, but not always understood. An idea of their meaning may be had by a careful perusal of 2 Corinthians 3. 18. We quote from the new translation. "But we all, looking on the glory of the Lord with unveiled face, are transformed according to the

same image from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit." Here we have set before us, as the *Object* of our contemplation, our blessed Lord where He now is in the glory of God. There is nothing between; no shade of distance, no veil, nothing to obscure our vision of Himself. There He is, very

God, we know, yet a real Man, in the glory of God. In His face the glory of God shines (chapter 4. 6).

We gaze upon Him, and, well indeed we may! He is the most glorious Person in the Universe of God! The glory of God is the only place that is suited for Him, and He is the only Person who is worthy to fill that place. We look upon Him until our souls are lost in the adoring contemplation of Himself. We forget ourselves; for the time being we get away even from the thought of our own blessing. He, Himself, His glory and His beauty entrance our souls, and as we continue to look we fall at His feet in worship. That is objective.

Now see the result. As we look we are "transformed according to the same image." Without any effort on our part, without ourselves being conscious of it, we become like the One with whom we are occupied as an Object outside ourselves. Just as Moses knew not when his face shone, it will be left to others to note the transforming effect of occupation with Christ where He is. Therefore we read in chapter 4. 6: "... God ... has shone in our hearts for the shining forth of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Thus we become the *subjects* of God's work, and there is of necessity produced a very remarkable effect in us. This is subjective. Now observe, it is the objective that produces the subjective, and let us be careful not to reverse that order. Stephen, in the closing moments of his life, "looked up steadfastly into Heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold I see the Heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God" (Acts 7. 55-56).

Things that, through grace, we know to-day, such as union with Christ and the truth of the Assembly, were unknown to Stephen, because they were not then revealed. It was not, however, a question of his knowledge or apprehension of various truths.

He got his eye upon Christ, his face shone, and with the grace of His Master breathing in his prayer, and with the dignity of a servant of Christ in his deportment, he could kneel down, pray for his enemies, and fall asleep.

The very nature of Paul's conversion at once put him into living touch with Christ in glory, detached him from the whole course of things down here, and rendered him superior to everything in and of this world. Thus, as we read 2 Corinthians 4. we find that all that he passed through was, in his reckoning, with a view to the breaking of the "earthen vessel" in order that the light might shine out; and what was that but "the radiancy of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" reflected in him. Hence for him things seen and temporal were valueless, and things unseen and eternal were of priceless value.

We understand the word translated "transformed" occurs only three times in the New Testament. First in connection with the transfiguration of Christ. In that glory "His face did shine as the sun" (Matthew 17. 2), and as He came down from "the holy Mount," "all the people, when they beheld Him, were greatly amazed" (Mark 9. 15).

The second reference is Romans 12. 2, where we learn that the secret of being "non-conformed to this world" is to be "transformed by the renewing of the mind." How that process may be effected we learn from our text in 2 Corinthians 3. 18.

Let us urge particularly our dear young Christian friends; do not, *in the first instance*, examine yourselves to ascertain whether you have got a certain amount of spiritual intelligence; or as to whether you are in what you may consider a right moral condition; but *look up*, that you may see by faith the Lord Jesus Christ in the glory of God. Feast your eyes upon Him, let His beauty and His glory fill your

soul ; and forget everything else. The result will be :—

1. You will become like Him and others will know it.

2. You will be better able to apprehend Divine truth as contained in the Sacred Writings, and we should covet this.

3. Your heart will go out to all saints because you will view them in relation to Himself.

4. You will desire that His fame should be spread abroad the wide world over.

5. You will be superior to everything that you may be called upon to encounter in this world.

6. You will increasingly long for the moment when actually seeing Him you shall be literally like Him.

7. First and last and always you will desire to present Him before the Father's face according to the Father's appreciation of His matchless worth, and thus worship in His holy presence.

"O fix our earnest gaze  
So wholly, Lord, on Thee,  
That, with Thy beauty occupied,  
We elsewhere none may see."

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

### The Death of Christ ; its Bearing and Effect.

If Christ tasted death for "everything" or "everyone," how is it everything cannot be brought into blessing ultimately ? How is it that His work has not availed for everyone ? —WALMER.<sup>1</sup>

YOUR question hinges upon the important distinction between the two aspects of Christ's work which we speak of as propitiation and substitution. The former is the Godward aspect ; Christ's atoning death as meeting the Divine claims, and entirely satisfying the demands of God's holiness and righteousness in regard to every outrage and dishonour ever caused by sin. The latter is the manward aspect, though the word "manward" is hardly just in this connection ; to be more accurate we ought to coin a word and say "believer-ward." It is His death as meeting the need and guilt of those who believe.

The former, therefore, deals with the bearing and intention of Christ's death. None are excluded. God's claims having been perfectly met, grace opens its arms wide to all.

The latter, on the other hand, deals with the actual and realized effect of His death. Though in its intention it was for *everyone*, in effect it only redeems and blesses *those who believe*, as many Scriptures make abundantly clear.

Hence Hebrews 2. 9, which speaks of Christ tasting death for "everyone," or "everything," is followed in the next verse by the statement of the fact that He is bringing to glory not "everyone," but "many sons." That is the actual effect of His work at the present moment.

Bearing this distinction in mind, such apparently conflicting statements as "Christ . . . gave Himself a ransom for *all*" (1 Tim. i. 6), and "The Son of man came . . . to give His life a ransom for *many*" (Mark 10. 45) are seen to be in complete harmony.

## The Ten Virgins.

The thought is gaining some ground that the parable of the virgins (Matt. 25.) has not a present application on account of verse 13, where the Lord speaks of Himself as Son of Man. Does that mean that "the Son of Man" should not be connected with the Church or Christianity?

IT would be true to say that the title "Son of Man" has no special connection with the Church, yet at the same time it is not a title in any way disconnected from it. As a matter of fact the words in Matt. 25. 13, "wherein the Son of Man cometh," have very little authority behind them, and probably should be omitted. But even so it is as Son of Man that His voice will wake the dead according to John 5. 27-29, and He will wake the sleeping saints to the resurrection of life *when He comes for His Church.*

The parable of the virgins was spoken by the Lord before His death

and resurrection were accomplished and the Spirit had been given to instruct the disciples more fully, according to His promise in John 16. 12, 13. Hence we do not find in it the clearer light of the epistles. Still the parable is one of the similitudes of the kingdom of the heavens, and these, beginning with those of chapter 13., have a very definite application to the present moment. The ten virgins are not exactly the Church, but disciples viewed in their responsibility, and as finally and irrevocably tested as to their reality at the coming of the Bridegroom.

## The Omission of Matthew 18. 11 from the Revised Version.

It has been a shock to some to find Matthew 18. 11 omitted from the R.V. Alford brackets it; and in a note refers to it as "not contained in our most ancient MSS." Can you say anything about it? The doctrine it implies is certainly comforting to parents.

THE question as to the omission or retention of this verse is evidently a difficult one, as the evidence for and against it appears to be fairly evenly divided. But even if we feel compelled to omit it, we do not think that the comfort of the passage is lost to parents or to any of us. It still remains true that "it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish," and that their angels "always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." The little child, so often overlooked or slighted in this world, where unreality and mere "bounce" so often carry the day, is the object of the Father's regard and

tender solicitude. This much is unquestioned and unclouded in Matt. 18.

Further, the Scripture on which your first question turned, Hebrews 2. 9, comes in appropriately in connection with this. Jesus, by the grace of God, tasted death for "everyone," therefore He *did* come to save the *lost*, whether we read Matthew 18. 11 as part of Scripture or not. And it is at least true of the little child, who dies before years of responsibility are reached, that it did not deliberately turn aside to its own way as it would have done had it lived to be older, nor did it thus reject that one perfect offering made for *all*.



# THE CAUSE OF THE TROUBLE.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

I AM writing on board ship, *en voyage* to Australia, and find, as I have found before at sea, that in no other circumstances are people more ready to open up their thoughts as to important questions. The troubled state of the world seems to have made them more ready for this than ever before. Here are people who are leaving the older lands in the hope of escaping trouble and finding better conditions abroad, and here are people returning to their homes abroad who make haste to assure them that they are doomed to disappointment. The unrest is universal, and many minds are sorely troubled as to the cause of it all.

Some, with a surprising bitterness, cast the blame upon God. The way they talk simply means that if the Almighty does not exist for their own personal comfort or pleasure He ought not to exist at all. But lowlier and more reverent minds than these inquire why the world is as it is, and if the state of things is not after all a proof of the failure of the Gospel. It is our business to answer such, who are to be found everywhere. Here are some of the questions that we have discussed.

We state at once that things are as they are because men have not been obedient to the voice of God, which would have led their feet in the paths of righteousness, and they have neglected or rejected His great salvation, which would have delivered them from every evil. We have only to quote from the Holy Scripture to prove this. Take first the widespread REVOLT AGAINST GOVERNMENT, whether open or covert, could this have been if all were subject to the Word of God? What does that Word say? "*Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the*

*power, resisteth the ordinance of God"* (Romans 13. 1, 2). "*Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well"* (1 Peter 2. 13, 14).

It should be clear that if every person in every land obeyed the voice of God in this respect there would be no internal strife: Sinn Feiners, Communists, Bolsheviks, would be unknown. The political unrest in every land, where it exists, is due to the fact that men either do not know, or will not obey, the will of God.

And what of INDUSTRIAL UNREST. The workers blame the master class. They say that these have grown rich at their expense and to their hurt. Well, if this is so, it is because the masters have paid no heed to the Word of God, for in it we read, "*Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal"* (Col. 4. 1) . . . "*forbearing threatening; knowing that your Master also is in heaven, neither is there respect of persons with Him"* (Eph. 6. 9). And the same Word that gives so gracious an exhortation to masters also solemnly warns them of the consequences of acting in injustice towards those who serve them. How powerful is the condemnation of such given in James 5. 1-4: "*Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth; and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth."*

If every master had paid earnest heed to these exhortations there would have been no reasonable cause for discontent, and if any still existed it would not have lain at their door. And the warning proves that God is not indifferent to the poor and oppressed. They are wise who commend their cause to Him, for He has said "*Vengeance is Mine, I will repay.*"

As to servants, there are many exhortations in the Bible to such ; it would almost seem as though God's deeper interest lay in this class. One of these exhortations will suffice : "*Servants obey in all things your masters according to the flesh ; not with eyeservice as men-pleasers ; but in singleness of heart, fearing God : And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men ; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance : for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done : and there is no respect of persons*" (Col. 3. 22-25).

If every workman were subject to such a word as this, there might remain bad and froward masters who would still tyrannize and oppress, but the workmen would be free from blame in the matter, and such masters would have to answer to God alone.

The MARRIAGE STATE is an institution of God, and some are greatly perplexed and troubled at the lightness with which it is entered and the ease with which it is dissolved. No right-minded person could view this modern condition of things without sorrow and alarm, but it is as well to trace it to its source, and when we do this we find that it *all* arises from defiance of God's own Word. There we read "*But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife ; and they twain shall be one flesh : so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder*" (Mark 10. 6-9).

And again : "*Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them*" (Col. 3. 18, 19). A few words these, but if obeyed by all, the divorce courts would be closed, and every home would become a paradise.

DISOBEDIENCE TO PARENTS, we are told, is increasing greatly, and at a very early age now children get out of hand. This is not surprising in those homes where God is not acknowledged. How can those parents who refuse God's authority expect their children to acknowledge theirs ? But the Word of God addresses itself to this relationship also, for we read : "*Children, obey your parents in all things : for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged*" (Col. 3. 20-21).

The state of the world, then, results from the fact that men will not be subject to the will of God. They prefer their own way, a way that seems right unto them, but destruction and misery are in it, and the end of it is death. Nevertheless they are not deterred, and the only remedy for all or any is the regenerating power of the Gospel. If the Gospel were universally believed there would be an end of all trouble and strife of every sort.

We do not expect this, for the Bible tells us that "*Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived,*" and that the present age will be closed by the wrath of God at the coming again of the Lord Jesus Christ ; but while the world will not have the Gospel, and so the conditions will remain unchanged, or become worse, any man may receive it and be by it changed himself in the midst of the unchanged conditions. It is open to any to have rest in the midst of strife, to be contented and satisfied, though surrounded by discontent. Godliness with contentment is great gain, but there never was a godly man

yet apart from the Gospel. The secret of all true godliness lies in the fact that God was manifested in flesh, that Jesus laid down His life in sacrifice that sinners might be saved, and that He has been raised up again to the glory of God to be a Saviour and Leader to all who call upon Him.

The boundless love of God which has come to light in Christ and is told forth in the Gospel story, wins the heart for

God and makes us willing to be subject to His will, and it follows that every true Christian walking in obedience is a loyal subject of the state; a just and generous master, or a faithful servant; a loving husband, or a subject wife; a considerate parent, or an obedient child; and, consequently, as far as they are concerned, they will not contribute in any way to these grave evils that are so ominous in their trend.

## “FOR THE SAKE OF” or “BECAUSE OF.”

(H. P. BARKER.)

THERE exists at the present time, among evangelical Christians, a sharply marked diversity of view as to the relation between the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from among the dead and the believer's justification. Some take the view that He was raised *for the sake of* our justification; that is, that He was raised that we might be justified. Others hold that He was raised *because of* our justification, that is, that He was raised because our justification had been already completed by the shedding of His blood.

The latter view is not a new one, but it has gained fresh currency of late, and presents itself for consideration with increasing frequency. The controversy largely centres around Romans 4. 25, which reads in the the A.V.: “Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.”

To the ordinary English reader this appears simple enough. Wherein lies the difficulty? We will let Dr. Weymouth tell us in his own words. In his *New Testament in Modern Speech* he translates the verse thus:—

“Who was surrendered to death because of the offences we had committed, and was raised to life because of the acquittal secured for us.”

In a note at the foot of the page he remarks:—

The majority of translators into English, including the A.V. and the R.V., render “for . . . for.” Yet it is obvious that in that case the “for” is used in two widely different senses,—“delivered up because of our transgressions, raised again with a view to our justification.” But it appears highly improbable that Paul would have employed the same preposition with the same construction in two parallel and closely connected clauses to convey entirely different meanings, and it is also doubtful whether this form of expression is capable of conveying the latter of the two senses. With a verbal infinitive it seems both in classical and Hellenistic Greek to signify “because of” a present or past fact. . . . And so when it occurs with a verbal noun that indicates action. There are four, and only four other passages in the N.T. precisely analogous in form, Matt. 15. 3, 6; Rom. 3. 25; Eph. 4. 18; and in these “to secure a handing down,” “to effect the passing over,” “to cause their hearts to grow callous” are impossible renderings. In all these cases the preposition is retrospective.

Here we have the argument fairly stated. Let the reader observe that there is no question as to the wording of the Greek. In most cases where the translators find difficulty in their work, it arises not from doubt as to *how* to translate, but from doubt as to *what* to translate. People talk loosely about “the original.” But we do not possess any “originals” either of the Old or the New Testament. All we have are

copies. These, like everything else committed to the responsibility of man, have been marred here and there. They consequently vary among themselves, and sometimes it is impossible to decide with absolute certainty what the original must have been. But in this case there is no uncertainty. It is wholly a question of how to translate certain Greek words that were unquestionably written by Paul in Rom. 4. 25.

The A.V. and R.V. do not help us in the matter. Nor do Alford, Conybeare, Darby, Kelly, or Young. They all translate as does the A.V., leaving the question untouched.

Newberry gives in his margin as the equivalent of the second "for" ("for our justification"), "for the sake of or because of." This merely directs attention to the difficulty without helping to a solution.

Young in his *Concise Critical Comments* gives as the literal rendering of the verse: "given over because of our fallings (from duty), and was raised up because of our being declared just," showing that his judgment as to the point at issue coincides with Dr. Weymouth's.

Certainly the construction (known to Greek scholars as "*dia* with the accusative") may be accurately translated thus.\* The whole question is, may it not with equal correctness be translated otherwise? And in doing this, is it necessary to give the second "for" a different force to that possessed by the first?

Dr. Lloyd translates: "delivered up for the sake of our offences, and raised

for the sake of our justification"—thus giving the Greek phrase the same English equivalent in each case, yet manifestly favouring the view that Dr. Weymouth opposes.\*

Moffatt translates the second "for" differently, but adheres to the commonly received doctrine: "delivered up for our trespasses, and raised that we might be justified." The *Twentieth Century N.T.*, taking the same view, gives: "given up to death to atone for our offences, and was raised to life that we might be pronounced righteous."

In rendering the words thus, the same force is given to each "for," the very thing that Dr. Weymouth considers it obvious that the A.V. does not do. Each "for" is regarded as meaning not *because of* something already done, but *in view of* something yet to be accomplished. The LORD JESUS was delivered up FOR our offences; that is, *in order that* He might atone for them. He was raised again FOR our justification; that is, *in order that* we might be justified.

F. W. Grant, in his *Numerical Bible*, follows the translation of the A.V., but in the accompanying notes says:—

It is Christ seen as our Substitute who was delivered for our offences, and whose resurrection therefore testifies the acceptance of that which has removed them from the sight of God. It is therefore for our justification; that is, it is, in a true and simple sense our justification itself. The meritorious cause is, of course, His blood, and so it is stated a little later that we are justified by His blood. But the resurrection is the justifying SENTENCE,—the act of God on our behalf, as the Lord's work on the cross was what was presented to Him.

Conybeare, too, in a note *in loco*, makes it clear that in his judgment the second "for" has the force of "that we might be justified."

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\* For a reply to Dr. Weymouth's argument founded on the other passages in which *dia* with the accusative is employed, the reader may consult a letter by J. N. Darby, in vol. 3. of his "Letters"; page 206. As to the doctrinal point at issue, and the real force of the Greek words used, see another letter, on pages 204, 205 of the same volume.

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\* The Swedish Version in common use translates it in the same way.

W. Kelly in *Notes on Romans*, which he prefaces with his translation of the Epistle, observes that the Lord Jesus "was delivered on account of our offences, and was raised to secure our justification" (page 55). This was manifestly his mature judgment as to the meaning of the verse. An accomplished Greek scholar, and one with great critical acumen, he thus passes by in silence, as entirely unconvincing, the arguments advanced by Dr. Weymouth and others in favour of the view that Christ was raised because our justification was already complete.

J. N. Darby (whose spiritual judgment I personally am disposed to trust in preference to that of any other commentator) has a very emphatic note on the subject of our discussion in his *Synopsis of the Books of the Bible*, Volume iv, page 129 (Third Edition). He says :—

I reject entirely the interpretation "because we have been justified." It is not the force of the Greek, and, by excluding faith from our being justified, contradicts the beginning of chapter 5.

This remark brings us to another aspect of the matter, its *doctrinal* bearing. To regard the resurrection of Christ as the *result* of our justification would be to make justification simply a part of God's purpose concerning those yet unborn. But (as the foregoing note of J. N. Darby points out) Scripture connects it with our faith, and thus places it within our lifetime. Our justification, then, did not take place at the cross, though the basis of it was laid there ; it did not take place before we believed, nor before we were born. We are justified *by faith*.

Another Scripture that bears on the point is 1 Cor. 15. 17 : "If Christ be not raised . . . ye are yet in your sins." Does not this show, beyond all controversy, that the resurrection of Christ was necessary for our justification? If He was raised because we were already justified, the consequence would be that you have a justified man

still in his sins until Christ rose ! But this interpretation lands us in a scheme of doctrine that leads to a veritable maze of confused thought.

What IS justification? We like a definition that we came across recently : "Justification is an authoritative declaration that an accused person is conformable to righteousness." The Lord Jesus took the place of those justly accused of sin. The condemnation due to us was laid upon Him. He being raised from the dead was the declaration on the part of God that our Substitute was free of this awful load. It was the pronouncement that Divine justice was satisfied. When a sinner believes in Christ, he is brought to share in all the benefits of this pronouncement *as applying to him*. He thus becomes a justified man.

What a relief it is to be able to look up to a risen Christ and say, "I see in His resurrection the God-given proof that He is clear of all the indebtedness with which He was charged on my account ! God has, in raising Him from the dead, declared Him free, and this means that I, who have believed in Him, am free also."

How strange, with such a Scripture as Romans 4. 25, that anyone could think of justification without bringing in the resurrection of Christ as its basis, yet this is what the mind of man does. B. W. Newton, a writer of the last century, in a small book *Gospel Truths*, devotes 28 pages to the subject of "Justification" without once mentioning the resurrection ! For him justification is God imputing "the value of the meritorious obedience of Christ," and then proceeding to "pronounce that person righteous to whom the value of Christ's substitutional service is imputed." Many of the older evangelicals held this, and taught that Christ kept the law for us, our justification consisting in the imputation to us of His perfect obedience. Not so the Word of God. The Gospel brings us

the amazing tidings of Christ bearing the penal consequences of our guilt, and satisfying the claims of Divine righteousness so completely that God could witness thereto by raising Him

from the dead. *This* was necessary for our justification. Our Substitute must be declared free first. Then, on believing, we too are justified by faith and have peace with God.

## "A LITTLE WHILE—AND AGAIN A LITTLE WHILE." John 16. 16-22.

(BERNARD.)

"WHAT is this that He saith, a little while? We know not what He saith." We cannot wonder at their questions. The two little intervals of time—the being not seen and seen again—and this in view of what had been said before, "because I go to the Father,"—these are such words as events only can explain. . . . The discrimination in the verbs employed affords sufficient guidance, and leads us to interpret as follows. A little while (it was but a few hours) and then "ye behold Me no longer" (*οὐκέτι θεωρεῖτέ με*): I shall have passed from the visible scene and from the observation of spectators (that is the kind of seeing which the verb intends). "Again a little while" (of but little longer duration), and "ye shall see Me" (*ὄψεσθε με*), with another kind of seeing, one in which the natural sight becomes spiritual vision; and My presence will be no part of the visible scene, yet assured by occasional discoveries to the end that it may be recognized for ever. The risen and living Lord showed Himself to the eye of sense that He might remain before the eye of faith, not as a memory, but as a presence, once impressed in a few hours of partial disclosure, then perpetuated through all ages by the revelation of the Spirit.

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"Ye now therefore have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice and your joy no one taketh from you." . . . Well did He under-

stand that sorrow of theirs which would be an attendant shadow of His own. He saw them in the desolation of bereavement, confounded by the horror and mystery of an inexplicable event, and feeling as if all faith and hope were gone from their souls, because He who had inspired them was dead. Yet shall it be but "a little while" before their sorrow "shall be turned into joy"—shall pass into it in the way of natural consequence, the very cause of the sorrow proving to be the cause of the joy. . . . The sorrow is spoken of in the present tense—"ye have it now"; for its first sad amazement was already upon them. The joy is expressed in the future as lying beyond it. "I will see you—your hearts shall rejoice." There can be no reasonable doubt as to the moment of the change. As the sorrow was felt under the shadow of death, so the joy was found in the light of resurrection. It broke upon them, when "Jesus stood in the midst, and said unto them, Peace be unto you; and when He had so said, He showed them His hands and His side. Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord" (John 20. 19, 20). . . . All turns on the Resurrection; and without the experiences of that time, there would have been no beholding Christ in the Spirit. Then was the morning hour. The morning is part of the day, and if with a less perfect light, has a freshness that is all its own; but its joy consists in being the commencement of the day. So was it with the first fulfilment of the promises. "Ye shall see Me—I will see

you again." Its gladness was its own in freshness and surprise, but really as the earnest of permanent joy. It was a seeing that could never be lost or dimmed, but on the contrary grew clearer as it became more spiritual. Therefore is it not only said, "Your hearts shall rejoice," but also "Your joy no one taketh away from you." How could it be taken away? "Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more domain over Him. For the death that He

died, He died unto sin once; but the life that He liveth, He liveth unto God" (Rom. 6. 9, 10). The living Lord is the joy of His people; and because His life is eternal, their joy is permanent and secure. . . . These are the confidences of faith, belonging to the day that now is. Beyond it there is another day to break, with another kind of seeing, and another kind of joy; but that final prospect is only implicitly included in the language of the present promises.

## THE CHURCH OF GOD.

(HAMILTON SMITH.)

### 3.—In the Counsels of God. Ephesians 1., 2. 1-10.

**I**N Matthew 16. we have the prophetic announcement of the Church by the Lord Himself; in the Acts we have the historical account of the formation of the Church through the ministry of the apostles; and in the Epistles the Divine teaching as to the Church by the Holy Spirit. The Epistle to the Ephesians presents this teaching in its greatest fulness.

Chapter 1. presents God's counsels in regard to Christ and the Church. We are carried back before the foundation of the world to trace the source of all our blessings in God's eternal purpose: we are transported to the fulness of times, there to see the inheritance of glory when all God's counsels will be fulfilled.

In chapter 2. 1-10 we have God's work in us, in view of His counsels for us, whereby He quickens dead souls, raises them up together with Christ, and seats them in Christ in the heavenlies.

In chapter 2. 11-22 we have God's ways with us in time to bring about His counsels for us in eternity. There is what God has purposed *for us*, what

God works *in us*, and what God does *with us*. He works in us that we might be quickened together with Christ; He works with us that we might be brought together in one body, fitly framed together into an holy temple in the Lord, and builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

We can, however, readily understand that the epistle must of necessity commence with unfolding the purpose of God; for unless we know His purposes for eternity we shall not understand His ways in time. We might well be puzzled by the way a parent trains his child until we learn the parent's ultimate purpose for the child. Confining then our thoughts to the early part of the epistle (1., 2. 1-10) we see the Church presented in connection with the counsels and work of God. *Man's work and man's responsibilities* have no place in this passage. All is counselled by God, and all is carried out by God: and, all being of God, all is perfect.

Verses 3-7 unfold the counsels of God for His saints individually—those who compose the Church. In this great passage we see *the character* of our

blessings, *the source* of our blessings, *the end* God has in view, and *the means* by which that end is reached.

As to the character of our blessings, it is important to remember they are spiritual, and heavenly, and in Christ, for we are so prone to look for blessings that are material, and earthly, and in connection with Adam. The realization of the true character of our blessings would have an immense effect upon our testimony. What is the aim of the great mass of so-called ministry to-day? Is it not, in the main, to make believers moral rather than spiritual, to improve their earthly position rather than call them out of the world for heaven, and to improve the first man rather than lead into the new position in Christ. God forms our character and testimony by instructing us in the true character of our blessings and leading us into the enjoyment of them.

As to the source of all our blessings we read "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world." All our blessings have their source in the counsels of the Father's heart. We discover that His heart was set upon us before the foundation of the world. And He delights that we should know it; and loving the Father, we count it one of our choicest privileges that He should have revealed to us the secrets of His heart. Chosen in Him before the foundation of the world involves a choice that is independent of the scene of creation. Hence God's purpose for us cannot depend upon anything that we have done or can do. We find ourselves in a world of sorrow and trial, of opposition and persecution, but God's purpose cannot be altered by anything we are called to pass through in time. The devil would fain use the difficulties of the way to raise in our hearts distrust of God, and to call in question the reality of His love. But here we are permitted to see that the love of the Father is

behind all, and that, before the foundation of the world, He set His love upon us in view of our eternal blessing when the world shall be no more. How this steadies the soul in its journey through the world, for nothing that takes place in the ways of God in time can touch the counsels of love that were settled in eternity and for eternity.

Moreover, we are not only carried back before the foundation of the world to find the source of all our blessing in the heart of God, but we are carried on in spirit to view the end of all God's counsels in glory. Thus we learn that God has purposed to have the saints before Him in a condition that is suited to Him. "Holy and without blame before Him in love." Holy in character, without blame in conduct, and in love as to nature. Nothing less would suit the heart of God; for if God is to have a people before Him in a condition suited to Him it must be in a condition in which they are *like Him*. Only that which is like God is suited to God. God is holy in character, blameless in all His ways, and love in His nature. And in this condition He has purposed to have us so that He can delight in us and we can delight in Him. Nothing less would suit His heart, and nothing less would make us happy in His presence. No question as to character, or conduct, or nature, will ever be raised in that scene to mar our joy in God, or His satisfaction in us. And what will be accomplished in its fulness then is wrought in our souls by the Spirit now. If in the power of the Spirit, we shall seek to be down here what we shall be in perfection up there.

Furthermore, not only are we chosen to be in a condition suited to God, but we are predestined to enjoy the relationship of sons before the Father. Angels, doubtless, will be before God in a condition suited to God, but they are there in the position of servants. We are brought into the relationship of sons. This is the special privilege to



which we are predestined according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace.

Moreover, in view of the accomplishment of God's purpose, we must be redeemed and have the forgiveness of sins through the blood of Christ, according to the riches of His grace. The Apostle has connected predestination with "the glory of His grace," now he connects redemption with "the riches of His grace." Our great need is met by the riches of His grace, but the glory of His grace does more, it takes us into favour, and gives us the place of sons. Meeting the prodigal's need showed how rich the resources of grace in the Father's home; but giving him the place of son, displayed the glory of the grace in the Father's heart. In the epistle to the Romans the death of Christ is fully developed in meeting all our responsibilities, and hence there the apostle exclaims "O the depth of the *riches* both of the wisdom and knowledge of God." In Ephesians the apostle passes beyond our responsibilities to unfold our privileges, hence we have, not only the riches of His grace, but the *glory* of His grace.

Having then, in the first seven verses, unfolded the counsels of the Father's heart concerning His people, the apostle passes on to fresh wonders. He discloses to us the Father's secret will concerning Christ. He has satisfied our hearts by unfolding the purposes of love, he has given the conscience rest by the work of redemption, and thus set free we are able to enter into God's thoughts concerning Christ and the Church.

God would have us to know the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself for the administration of the fulness of times. What does this word "mystery" mean? Is it something that we cannot understand, or that is mysterious or puzzling? Far from it. In Scripture a mystery is a

secret that cannot possibly be known until revealed by God, and when revealed can only be known by the initiated. This mystery is according to His good pleasure; it is a secret that delights His heart, for it concerns Christ. Do we say that we are not interested in mysteries, that we leave these deep things to others? Surely not, for this would mean that we are content to know what God has in His heart for us, without any concern as to what God has in His heart for Christ.

Here the mystery has reference to the "fulness of times" when God will have everything administered according to His mind: when everything that God has instituted at other times, and which has so utterly failed in the hands of men, will be administered in all its fulness under Christ. Government and priesthood and royalty were instituted by God in other days, only to break down because committed to man's responsibility. But the time is coming when they will all be seen in perfection and fulness. This will be brought about by heading up all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth. At present Christ is hidden; but when He comes forth in glory all the confusion, the sorrow and disorder of this world will be past. Satan's reign will be ended, the time of Israel's blindness will be over, the godless rule of the Gentile nations will be closed, the groan of creation will be hushed, and the curse will be removed. All will be brought about, not by the spread of the Gospel, as some vainly imagine, or by anything that man can accomplish, but by Christ alone. When He sets up His throne—when He reigns—all will be administered to the good pleasure of God.

The Old Testament abundantly foretells "the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow," which glories, though they reach to the uttermost bounds of earth, are still earthly and not heavenly. This is no secret or mystery, on the contrary the

prophets are full of glowing descriptions of the earthly kingdom. When, however, we come to the New Testament, God unfolds to us the great secret, that Christ's dominion will stretch immeasurably beyond the limits of earth; that as a Man, Christ will have dominion not only "from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth," but over the whole vast universe of God to the utmost bounds of creation; that He should be set 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; yea more, that all things in heaven and earth will be united under Christ as Head.

God has abounded to us in all wisdom and intelligence in thus making known to us not only His purpose for His people, but the secrets of His heart for Christ; not only His purpose for earth but His secrets concerning the whole universe. The heavens are now severed from the earth, but it will not always be so. God has purposed to unite heaven and earth under Christ as Man. This is the mystery of His will, but even so it is not the whole mystery. For the mystery concerns "Christ and the Church" (Eph. 5. 32). Not Christ alone, nor the Church alone, but Christ and the Church. This leads us on to the most amazing part of the mystery; that in the day of His universal dominion, Christ will have a vast company of people—saved from the wreck and ruin of this fallen world—made like to Himself as the result of His own work, united to Him by the Holy Spirit, to share with Him in all the glory of His universal sway as His body and His bride.

The remaining portion of this chapter brings before us this further truth. The apostle continues "in whom also we have obtained an inheritance." In verses 11 and 12 he speaks of the Jewish believers, in verse 13 of the Gentile believers, and in verse 14, in speaking of "our inheritance" he

refers to both Jewish and Gentile believers together.

Thus, to use the words of another, this great mystery is "Christ and the Church united in heavenly blessedness and dominion over everything that God has made."

Christ will reign over Israel, over the Gentiles, over the whole Universe, but never is it said that He will reign over the Church. Christ, indeed, will ever be supreme, but to the praise of His glory the Church will reign *with Him*.

This is made more abundantly plain by the apostle's prayer with which the chapter closes. Having unfolded the hope of the calling in verses 3 to 7, and the inheritance in verses 8 to 14, the apostle now prays that we may know these things, and moreover that we may know the greatness of the power to usward that will bring these glorious truths to fruition. This power has been set forth in raising Christ from the dead and setting Him "above all" and putting "all things under His feet." But while it is given to Christ as Man to be Head over all, He is Head *to* the Church which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all things. Here the Church is viewed as the body of Christ, not in the ways of God on earth, but according to the counsels of God in glory.

In the beginning of the chapter we have the unfolding of the counsels of God for the individuals who compose the Church, in the end of the chapter the counsels of God for the Church, as a whole, under the figure of a body. We are taken on to a time when the body, complete in glory, will be united to the Head in His dominion over all things.

Adam and Eve furnish a type of Christ and the Church. Eve was not directly set in dominion over this lower world, but Adam was. It is true God said unto them "Be fruitful . . . and have dominion," but actually Adam was set in dominion before Eve was

formed. The animal creation was brought to Adam to name; he was in relation with all as head over all, and by association with Adam, Eve shared in his dominion.

So the Church, by association with Christ, will share in His universal dominion over all creation. And just as Eve was said to be an helpmeet for Adam—his counterpart—so the Church

is said to be the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. Apart from the Church, Christ would lack His fulness. As one has said, "As Son of God He, of course, requires nothing to complete His glory; but as Man He does. He would no more be complete in His resurrection glory without the Church, than Adam would have been without Eve."

## THE ALL-SUFFICIENCY OF THE SACRED WRITINGS.

(J. BOYD.)

IN the state in which Christendom is found to-day, the treading of a path pleasing to the Lord calls for continual self-judgment and earnest prayer to God. It also calls for great patience and tenderness toward those who, though as desirous to walk in a way worthy of the Lord, are nevertheless weak in the faith, and feeble in their apprehension of the will of God. It is a day of great weakness, fleshly activity, indifference regarding the spiritual welfare of the saints, self-esteem, and lack of that love that should always characterize the disciples of our Lord Jesus.

After beholding the violence that often displays itself in our dealings with one another it is not surprising to find saints in disputation over the scriptural way of excluding the erring, without any very evident amount of exercise as to how best to convert the sinner from the error of his way according to the pleasure of God. There are doctors who seem to be more ready to use the knife than to spare the limb, and it has to be admitted that this class can be as easily found amongst doctors of divinity as amongst doctors of medicine. If the limb can be saved, we may be assured that this is most pleasing to the Lord, for by this means we save a soul from death, and hide a

multitude of sins; but if we cannot spare the limb, let the work of dismemberment be done only as the last resource, and let us part with it as feeling the agony with which we would part with one of the members of our natural body.

Whatever the character of the day in which God has been pleased to cast our lot, we have, for the way to behave ourselves, the most implicit instruction. The Corinthians were told to put away from among themselves a wicked person. Yes, but this is direction for the "*Church of God*," I may be told, and where are we to find it to-day? True, it is to the "*Church of God*" in its collective and concrete character, and this may be impossible to find to-day; but the epistle is just as individual in its directions as it is in its collective character, for it includes "All that in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord." And assuredly it commands me to put a wicked person out of my company. Should those with whom I am associated refuse to obey the plain commandment of the Lord, I cannot be excused if I continue with them and the wicked person. They prove themselves to be as indifferent to the expressed will of the Lord as to the gravity of the sin in their midst. I can do nothing but

withdraw from all, or confess myself as disobedient as the others.

If one refuse to separate from evil when it is pointed out to him, I fail to see how he could be said to be clear of it himself. One of the charges God brings against Israel is: "When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him, and hast been partaker with adulterers" (Psa. 50. 18). Evil must be refused; first, in ourselves, and second, in others. Neither wicked doctrine nor wicked conduct can be tolerated.

Those with whom we walk must be such as call on the Lord out of a pure heart; and with these we are to follow righteousness, faith, love, peace (2 Tim. 2. 22). Should evil creep in amongst these the Word is plain enough: "Purge out the old leaven." "Put away from among yourselves that wicked person." If reproof and the discipline of the house of God has no effect upon the sinner, excommunication is the only course that can be taken.

In reply to this the objection may be raised that we are not the Church of God, and that we cannot take the ground of being authorized to "*bind*" or "*loose*," that we can only "*withdraw*" from such a person. But what is withdrawing from the wicked person but putting him away? As I have said, the whole company may take part with the evildoer, and I have no other resource but to leave them. I cannot purge the evil out of the company, but I can purge out myself. But as far as I am concerned the result is the same.

But it is wrong to say that we cannot carry out the commandment in 1 Cor. 5, unless we can rightly claim to be the Church of God in the place. What then does Paul mean when he puts this obligation upon all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord? Do we not call upon that Name? Are we not addressed in that epistle? Who can deny it? Are we

now under another dispensation? Are the commandments of the Lord through His apostle no longer obligatory? But whether you put away the wicked person or withdraw from him, the result is the same, as far as you are concerned.

I should not associate with people who refused to judge evil. The truth is that it is sometimes seen that where saints are occupied with the right way in which they should judge evil, they have no great difficulty in finding a way in which they can judge the good. At this work some have proved themselves adepts.

If people will not judge evil when they know it, I dare not associate with them, even though individuals among them declared they abominated it. The way to show that the evil is really abominated by me is by my leaving all who refuse to judge it. Where saints meet on principles opposed to holiness and truth, I should neither go with them nor receive a letter of commendation from them. How could I tell that the person they commend is not the wicked person himself?

But it may be said that we receive from the various systems of religion those who are godly. Yes, but I should receive no letter commending such from anyone in such associations. Such a person would be received as a godly believer who knew not the evil of the system to which he belonged. If, when it was clearly pointed out to him, he still adhered to it, he should be refused.

I think it is not too much to demand, from any professing to be gathered to the name of the Lord, that they refuse, not only the evil teacher, but all who associate with him. Nothing but this can show that such are clear of the evil.

As long as this dispensation lasts it must be incumbent upon all saints to put out of their midst evildoers. If the

gathering where I am refused to do this I must purge myself from it. Let us not waste precious time discussing foolish questions. 2 Tim. 2. describes

a state of things which existed in Paul's day, and to say that in that early hour 1 Cor. 5. was obsolete is the height of absurdity.

## THE CALL AND THE RESPONSE.

(S. SCOTT.)

*"Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for He is thy Lord; and worship thou Him" (Psalm 45. 10-11).*

IT must never be forgotten that all the privileges conferred by Divine grace are accompanied by corresponding responsibilities and obligations.

Jesus is not only our Saviour, He is our LORD; and whilst as such He dispenses many blessings, yet He asks for, and has every right to expect the practical recognition of His authority and pre-eminence, as set forth prophetically in the above verses from Psalm 45.

Such a demand can only proceed from claims that are supreme and exclusive of all others, and we may well inquire how has this high authority been established? How has He become Lord to us? The answer is found in His death and resurrection. "To this end Christ both died and rose and revived that He might be Lord both of the dead and living" (Rom. 14. 9). His death and His Lordship are indissolubly connected. Here is His claim, and who shall dispute it? That death has associated the believer for ever in a new life with new relationships, new interests, a new outlook, and given him a new Lord. "He is thy Lord!"

In order that there may be a perfect expression of this submission He has in His own life illustrated every phase of yieldingness, and devotion to Another. Absolute surrender to the will of God is shown alone in Him who came to do that will. He delighted to do it.

Are we told, "Present your bodies a living sacrifice" (Rom. 12. 1). Look at the daily conduct of Him who said, "All things are delivered to Me of my Father," yet who had nothing, and was homeless, penniless! Every day was He a living sacrifice!

Are we enjoined, "In everything give thanks" (1 Thess. 5. 18). Turn to Matthew 11. and behold Him reviewing the base ingratitude, the cold insensibility of the favoured cities that had benefited by His ministrations of mercy. In tones of perfect repose He exclaims, "I thank Thee, O Father."

Does the call of our Psalm reach us to "Forget also thine own people"? We see that our perfect Exemplar left all that was congenial in His home of joys unfailing, and came into contact with sin, sorrow, and death.

All these things He did because of the perfection of what was in Himself. There have been others who, hearing the call, have responded to it, placing their own interests aside in ready compliance with the expressed wishes of the Lord, but it is well to notice that in their cases a strong incentive to obedience is presented at the same time as the demand is made.

One example of this we may give. Stephen tells us in Acts 7. that it was the "God of Glory" that appeared to Abram saying to him, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred."

It was at a time when men were making an earthly centre and a name for themselves, that God presented His glory to Abram as that which was worth sacrificing everything to obtain, and even though he never actually realized it, the joy of it kept with him all through his pilgrim way.

In the Psalm before us the writer is transported with delight in contemplating the Object of his heart. He can hardly find time to pen his thoughts; they crowd upon each other and overflow; but having recounted the grace of His lips and the triumphs of His arm, the blend of truth and meekness, the glories of the king and the majesty of his reign, the *demands of love* are presented. He says, as it were, "Is any sacrifice too great to make for such an One as He. Is He not more to thee than thy father or any other in his house?"

\* \* \* \* \*

Illustrations of the varying exercises of heart that precede this surrender are furnished by four prominent women of Old Testament history.

First the QUEEN OF SHEBA, who heard from afar the glories of King Solomon, and the report drew her from her distant home. What she saw exceeded in every respect all that she had heard. Her high expectations were more than realized, her difficulties were fully met, and her curiosity more than satisfied.

She bowed in the presence of Israel's king, she made him suitable offerings, she showed due appreciation of all that she saw, but "She turned and went to her own country, she and her servants" (1 Kings 10. 13).

The attraction of the king in his palaces was not sufficient to keep her there, and she passes out of further record.

Is not the counterpart of this found in those who derive pleasure from the externals of religion, or perhaps from

an intellectual appreciation of the truth?

Their emotions are stirred, their so-called religious feelings are satisfied, they feel a duty has been discharged, and they return to their own homes satisfied with themselves! There is no bond of affection established between themselves and the Lord.

Then RACHEL (with her sister Leah). When Jacob was bidden by the Lord to return from Padan-Aram to Bethel (*see* Gen. 31. 3-16), he narrated to his wives the story of his sufferings with Laban their father; and it seems that the faithfulness of Jehovah to him in his sojourn in a strange land, and the call to the place where he first learnt to know God, took a secondary place in his thoughts.

The dissatisfaction thus bred in the minds of his wives gave rise to a like response from them, for they say, "Is there yet any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house? Are we not counted of him strangers?" Thus they urge their own dissatisfaction with their circumstances, rather than obedience to the call of the Lord as an incentive to their leaving home. How sad to note that they were rather driven from Padan-Aram than attracted to Bethel, and consequently treasured relics of the place they were leaving were carried along with them; strange gods that led to sorrow and lying, and which after all had to be put away before they could reach the spot to which they had been called (Gen. 35. 2). How easy, alas! to find counterparts to this case in the present day.

RUTH received no message to leave her father's house. She had no direct knowledge of God, nor were His claims recognized in the land from which she came. But there was in her an absolute devotion to Naomi, to whom He had spoken, and she was content to ally herself to one who was returning to the house of bread, for the report of bread enough and to spare had reached

that far-off land. This led her to forsake her kindred for the land of plenty, little knowing what awaited her there.

Drawn by a sense of need, Ruth lives to learn the goodness and the bounty of Boaz, the mighty man of wealth, the Kinsman Redeemer, and her rapid rise into favour is most instructive.

Her pressing need was the occasion for an introduction to the servants in the harvest field, then come the handfuls let fall on purpose, after which comes companionship with the maidens, then acquaintance with the lord of the harvest, who in purest grace pours bounty into her lap.

Up to this point, his gifts and goodness are the chief thoughts in her heart, but when she learns who he is, and his kinship to her, her point of view changes. It is the attractiveness of the kinsman who can free her from all her old and dead associations that engages her attention. His claims on her now supersede all others, he takes her to himself as wife, as sharer of all his wealth and of his place in the royal line. She does not intrude her ideas, and he is unhindered in the execution of his own thoughts. What bonds of incomparable strength are forged, and how unexpected and how splendid the outcome of leaving her father's house ! *"Love . . . has broken every barrier down."*

The climax of the career of Ruth is reached when Boaz purchases her, and all she has, and takes her to be his wife. Thus she becomes of his family and enters upon his lineage. But in the case of the wife of Isaac, Abraham insists on kinship being the first, not the last, essential. *"Go to my kindred,"* for no alien may be united to him who is a type of the Lord in the possession of His inheritance. This being so we should expect to find in REBECCA the ideal exemplification of devotion to the call of the Lord : nor are our expectations disappointed.

We see in her as complete a resignation to the leading of the Spirit, as in the case of the apostle Paul, when he said, *"What things were gain to me those I counted loss for Christ."*

Throughout the whole narrative there is no embarrassment, no misunderstanding, there are no footsteps to retrace, no spoken word to recall ; there are no regrets, no slackening of purpose, no deviation from the path, but everything is marked by surrender to the will of God.

In an atmosphere such as this, Abraham's servant is unhindered in his unfolding of the excellence of the son born out of due time, into whose hands the father had committed all that he had. Then he goes still further, and brings from his store, earnest of the inheritance, jewels of silver, jewels of gold, and raiment, which goodly tokens substantiate to the eager listeners the report from the far-off and hitherto unknown land.

But once again the challenge rings out, *"Wilt thou go with this man ?"* What other answer could be rendered but the one that is given ? An unequivocal and unfaltering *"I will go"* is the true heart's reply ! Though every link has to be severed, and father, mother, kindred and friends left, there are no tears or pangs at parting. It is no hardship to go.

Others may raise objections or hindrances, for there were those who would have detained her ; there was the wearisome desert in front too ; but the former had no influence, and in the latter she was sustained by the resources of the one to whom she was going. There was not a step trodden in her own strength, and everyone was towards the goal of her heart's desires.

In the final scene it is he that comes to meditate in the fields at even, whilst she on seeing him, is happy to sink her own individuality in the greater glories of her husband,—*"she took a veil and covered herself" !*

Here, then, is seen a complete answer to the claims of love as expressed in Psalm 45.

Now what shall we say to these things?

Shall not the far greater glories of Him who has loved us unto death, who gave Himself that He might deliver us from this present evil world, and will ere long actually bring us into the immediate presence of the Father for

ever, so stimulate our desires after Him that, knowing more of His love, we may be led in a way of true devotion to Him. We rejoice in the store of blessing that has been opened to us, but let us respond to the claims that love makes on us, whether it be our time, our energies, our possessions, or ourselves.

"For this, O may we freely count  
Whate'er we have but loss;  
The dearest object of our love,  
Compared with Thee, but dross."

## A LAST MESSAGE.

(W. BRAMWELL DICK.)

PERHAPS the name of no contributor to the pages of *Scripture Truth* is more familiar to its many readers than that of J. Wilson Smith. With what delight have we read the many papers, characterized by brevity and sweetness, that have come from his pen; and we are thankful that some of these have been presented to us by the issue of the little volume entitled "*Thou Remainest*," and published at the office of this Magazine.

The Lord called His honoured servant, our beloved brother, home to be with Himself on the morning of the Lord's day, January 22nd, 1922; and on the following Wednesday some of the Lord's people carried him to his burial.

J. W. S., as he was fondly spoken of by those who knew him, was in his eightieth year; and had spent most of his days in the service of the Lord. His life, at home and abroad, was fragrant of Christ; and many are they who will ever give thanks for his godly example, and for his constant encouragement. Unable to be present, as was his wont, at annual gatherings of the Lord's people in Edinburgh last New Year, he dictated a letter, written by his devoted daughter, who was unremitting in her attendance upon him

during his illness, which was read at these meetings. As this was probably his last message to the saints of God, we venture, by the Editor's permission, to reproduce it here for the benefit of our dear fellow-believers.

"Cumledge, Duns.

"December 31st, 1921.

"Dear Brother,

"I regret that I shall not have the privilege of being with you on Monday. Enforced absence from such a privilege makes one feel the loss of it. 'Absence makes the heart grow fonder.' It becomes us to be more appreciative of all these earthly streams. May you realize the power and presence of the Lord at each of the meetings. You have much to pray for, at the close of the dispensation when the coming of the Lord must be so near. The prayer of Epaphras carries its significance till to-day; and may the ministry be not haphazard, but the fruit of communion with Christ. May you cherish a spirit that is as large as it is truly guarded—one of divine love. I write from bed. I shall value your prayers. My love to all.

"Yours in Christ,

"J. W. S."



The allusion to the prayer of Epaphras (Col. 4. 12) is peculiarly appropriate. Some have had the privilege of spending hours with him in his study at Cumledge, and to hear him pour out his heart before the Lord. Saints all over the world were mentioned by name; and the one burden of his petitions was that they might stand "perfect and complete in all the will of God." Now the prayers of John

Wilson Smith are ended. We are still here in the place of need and dependence. Shall we seek (1) That his prayers on our behalf may be answered; and (2) That we may be enabled to carry on his precious service of intercession for all the people of God. We append choice lines written by our much loved brother, and, by his request, sent to several friends after his departure.

## Love's Retreat.

"Here would I ever be  
Close to His side,  
Who, in His love for me,  
Willingly died.

"Here would I ever lie  
Down on His breast,  
Proving so tenderly  
Heaven's own rest.

"Here would I ever fall  
Down at His feet,  
Gladly to share with all  
Love's fond retreat.

"Thus shall my spirit have  
Calmer repose,  
When on life's stormy wave  
Or amid foes;

"Till my glad lip shall wake  
Heavenly song,  
And the bright morn shall break  
Cloudless and long—

"Then, Lord, my theme shall be  
Only Thy love,  
When in the Father's house,  
Heaven above—

"I shall Thy beauty trace,  
Vision sublime,  
There see Thy wealth of grace,  
Glory divine.

"J. W. S."

## "Christ, All."

MORE and more I am made to feel that Christ does not have His proper place among the children of God. *He is not the object. It is either a doctrine, a dogma, a party, or our experience*—something besides Christ. We seem possessed with very much the same spirit that actuated Peter on the mount when he said: "Let us make here three tabernacles." The Father solemnly rebukes this. "While he yet spake behold a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud which said: This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him. . . . And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no man save *Jesus only*" (Matt. 17. 1-8).

Have you ever been in the cloud? Have you ever heard the voice? Do your eyes see no man save *Jesus only*? Many perhaps have reached the top of the mount, but few, very few, have been in the "cloud," have heard the "voice," have been on their faces, have risen to see "*Jesus only*."

Why is it that we are not more changed from "glory to glory"? The veil *has* been rent; the blood *has* been sprinkled; the Spirit *has* been given. *The reason is we are occupied with ourselves and the work of the Spirit in us rather than with CHRIST ALONE.*

## NOTES ON JEREMIAH. No. 11.

(H. J. VINE.)

## God's Present Mind.

AND now the remarkable letter which Jeremiah wrote to the captives in Babylon concerning Nebuchadnezzar's yoke, is given in CHAPTER 29., a chapter which stands alone. The letter was sent to encourage them to peacefully rest under the yoke, for this was God's mind concerning them, and those who spoke otherwise in the Name of the Lord would be punished, for it was rebellion against Him. Ahab and Zedekiah are specially singled out (20-23), also Shemaiah (24-32). The two former were not only active as lying prophets, but they also committed villany in Israel. Shemaiah attempted to silence Jeremiah, who, he said, had made himself a prophet. Severe judgment was to come upon them, and upon all such, and likewise upon those who heeded them (15-19).

In the former part of the letter, it is instructive to notice the way God orders matters for the good of His people, even when they are captives in Babylon, in the place which is to become most obnoxious to Him, and from which He afterwards calls upon them to flee. This is an important principle for believers to-day, in the midst of Christendom (which will eventually develop into the corrupt system of Babylon), whose awful judgment is described in Revelation 18. We are to pursue that which is good, whilst avoiding what is evil. The Lord through Jeremiah tells them to build houses, plant gardens, eat the fruit, take wives, and beget sons and daughters, that they may be increased; also to "Seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the Lord for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace" (5-7); and they were to be careful not to allow anyone to deceive them as to this; even though it be a prophet who came and spake to them in the Lord's Name (8-9).

To be happy, and to be peacefully pursuing what was good, was God's mind for them then: it is no less His mind for us now. This does not mean that either they or ourselves are to become Babylonish. We see in Daniel, who was one of those who were at Babylon, the sort of behaviour which was pleasing to God. He said "*No*" to the king's meat, yet he sought the good of those about him, according to the Word of the Lord. We do well to grasp this principle and have grace to put it into practice.

Verses 10 to 14, however, show the limitations of this abnormal state of things. After seventy years it would be God's mind that they should return to Jerusalem. This shows the importance of making sure of the mind of God for us at this moment. It was evidently from these very verses that Daniel gathered God's mind concerning this return, and it set him praying with his whole heart (see Daniel 9. 1-4). The wonderful fulfilment of this restoration, "*after seventy years,*" is so well known that we need not dwell upon it here (see 2 Chron. 36. 21-23 and Ezra 1. 1). It should, however, be remarked that Daniel himself did not return though his face was constantly turned towards Jerusalem. He was used in regard to it *in prayer*, as Cyrus was *in providence*, and as our prophet Jeremiah was *in prophecy*, whilst God Himself was behind all working *in purpose* and *in power*. We are to know what it is to stay ourselves upon God at all times, having grace and peace multiplied to us in the knowledge of Himself, for He keeps *in perfect peace* the one whose mind is stayed upon Him, because he trusteth in Him. He can raise up servants, kings and prophets as He wills: we are to know Himself, His love, His grace, His purpose, and His power. He works all things after the counsel of

His own will. Cyrus did not know Him though He raised him up and even surnamed him before he was born (Isa. 44. 28 ; 45. 1-4). Those who are called in grace to-day are called to "*know Him*," and to know Him too as Father, and to know His present mind and will. This leads the heart to confide implicitly in Himself.

"Deep in unfathomable mines  
Of never-failing skill,  
He treasures up His bright designs,  
And works His sovereign will."

## JACOB'S TROUBLE AND SALVATION.

CHAPTERS 30., 31., 32. and 33. are linked together and contain truths of transcendent excellence, truths involving new things of such unparalleled importance that they not only affect the nation of Israel, whose glorious restoration and revival in Christ is immediately in view, but they also affect those who belong to the assembly to-day. It is in *chapter* 31. that the "New Thing" is spoken of, and likewise the "New Covenant." In *chapter* 32. we learn that the fields of the land shall be possessed and prosper according to an everlasting covenant, and *chapter* 33. shows us that the glory and gladness and greatness of that day of blessing will be enduring, because of the Branch of righteousness, the Man of the house of David, our Lord Jesus Christ.

The story begins in *chapter* 30., and Jacob's name becomes prominent at once, for, like his, the nation's way to the glory is through trial and trouble, and this too is further indicated by the reference to Rachel's anguish (31. 15) ; but "Benoni"—the son of her sorrow—becomes "Benjamin"—the son of the right hand. The story of the nation is enigmatically contained in the stories of Jacob, Rachel and her children, and in the last, the sorrow and suffering connected with the birth of their great and glorious King is foreshadowed, as we see in the use made of it by the Holy Spirit of God in Matthew 2. 18, where we are told of Herod slaying

all the boys from two years old and under in Bethlehem and its borders, and of the Royal Child being Divinely preserved.

These four chapters begin then with the declaration of the full deliverance both of Israel and Judah (30. 1-3). God had given the land to their fathers, and it shall yet be possessed by them according to God's Word ; but immediately we are reminded of a moment of great anguish which must come just before this is fully accomplished. It will be like the travail of a woman before the joy of a man-child's birth (4-6). "Alas!" cries the prophet, "for that day is great, so that none is like it : it is even THE TIME OF JACOB'S TROUBLE ; but he shall be saved out of it" (7). It was so with Jacob personally : it shall be so with his descendants. There was a certain night which stands out in Jacob's history : there will be a certain time of tribulation, of *great* tribulation, which shall distinguish Israel's history. It will indeed come upon all the world after our Lord Jesus Christ has taken from the world the assembly, His bride, to be with Him. It will truly be "*the great tribulation*" (Rev. 7. 14), not simply "*tribulation*" as now, or a time of tribulation as sometimes happens, but it will be unparalleled ; yet, though the whole world will be affected by it, the heaviest weight will fall upon the Jews ; and even they, who have suffered so much, will never have known before such "*a time of trouble*" (Dan. 12. 1) ; nevertheless, as Jacob was freed from serving another, so we are told in verse 8, Israel also shall be freed from the future yoke of Babylon, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him. The Jews, however, shall not only be freed from bondage, but as being thus liberated, they shall have their long-looked-for Messiah as their glorious King ; the true David, the beloved One shall return to them, and "they shall serve the Lord their God and David ['The Beloved'] their king" (9). They shall

then know that our Lord Jesus Christ whom they rejected is truly the preserved Seed of David, raised as He was from among the dead by God, who had hidden Him in the heavens until this time, when His appearing shall show Him again to the troubled and repentant of Israel, when in deep distress and anguish they will gladly receive Him, owning Him like Thomas to be their Lord and their God.

"Therefore," it is said, "Fear thou not, O my servant Jacob" (10). Even if others were brought to an end, it should not be so with him. Chastening and correction he needed, and should receive, but the Lord was with him, though his false lovers had failed and forgotten him. Zion, like Jacob, had been called "*Outcast*," but the Lord who had smitten him would restore health and healing to him (10-17). Carrying on the thought of Jacob's typical history, it is said, "*Jacob's tents*" shall appear again (18). The city and the palace shall resound with gladness and thanksgiving, with the voice of them that make merry. The people shall be multiplied and glorified. Their Illustrious One (as "*nobles*" should read in verse 21) and their Governor shall not be any more of another nation, He shall be truly of Israel, He shall be the One who is also entirely devoted to God, not only their King and Ruler, but with full qualification, such as no king ever had before, to approach as Priest to God, as He says, "I will cause Him to draw near and He shall approach unto Me" (21). This illustrious King and Priest, the Governor of Israel, can only be found in the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ. Then, when He governs them, it shall be abidingly true of Israel,—they shall be His people, and He shall be their God (22). Through the distressful storms and bitter trials of the time of Jacob's trouble they shall be brought to this desired haven, to be blessed under the royal rule of their glorious Governor, and to rest and rejoice in Him they had once rejected. "In

the latter days ye shall consider it" (24).

"Crown the Saviour ! Israel own Him !  
Rich the blessing Jesus brings !  
In the seat of power enthrone Him !  
While the vault of heaven rings."

## THE NEW THING AND THE NEW COVENANT.

The Holy Spirit continues to encourage the heart with bright expectations of the coming glory in *chapter 31*, and makes known that the underlying secret of it all is the unchanging and eternal love of God, as He says, "Yea, I have loved thee with *an everlasting love* : therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee. Again I will build thee, and thou shalt be built, O virgin of Israel : thou shalt again be adorned with thy timbrels, and shalt go forth in the dances of them that make merry" (3-4).

If, however, the Holy Spirit used Jacob's name in the previous chapter, here He brings in Rachel, and gives prominence to one of her grandchildren, the chief representative of the ten tribes — *Ephraim*. We see Divine wisdom guiding the prophet here very strikingly, for Israel and Judah are to become one under the New Covenant, under our Lord Jesus Christ. A new thing is to come to pass. The woman Israel (including both Judah and Israel) centering at Jerusalem shall no more compass the ark of the covenant—that is to be forgotten (3. 16)—but she shall compass a Man (*Gebor—a mighty Man*), our Lord Jesus Christ. He supersedes all that went before. In an entirely new way, such as has never been known in any nation, this strong Man, in resurrection power, shall become their centre and their strength, though in themselves they are like a feeble woman. Speaking naturally, in the multitude of people is the glory of a king, and his destruction is through the lack of them (Prov. 14. 28) ; but they are not His strength here ; He is

theirs. This alone can be the explanation of the "*New thing in the Earth*" (22); for it is something which has never been before. A temple, a throne, or an ark may have been owned, or a dynasty supported by nations—one man after another passing away—but here is a Man of strength who continueth ever. This is new altogether.

Doubtless the virgin birth is involved in this "*New Thing*," just as the *suffering* connected with Christ's birth is enigmatically contained in Rachel's anguish. This is specially referred to in verses 15 to 17. and cited by the Spirit in Matthew 2. 18, but even this anguish points on also to the future travail of the nation just before their labour is rewarded (verse 16) by the presence of Christ with them, their Messiah in resurrection life, the Man Child who has been brought forth before their travail (*see* Isa. 66. 7). The comforting truth, that joy cometh in the morning, though weeping may endure for a night, is exemplified in all this as to Rachel and her children.

As to the birth of the Mighty Man, our Lord Jesus Christ, being involved in what is said as to the "*New Thing*," we should note the language of the Spirit in Luke as to it. There we read, "*the power of the Highest*" should overshadow the Virgin Mary (Luke 1. 35) and that the holy thing which should be born of her should be called the Son of God. This is indeed a "*New Thing in the Earth*," and this One is to possess the throne of His father David (verse 32). In this we read, "*He hath wrought strength with His arm*" (51) and "*raised up an Horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David*" (59), as He spake by the mouth of His holy prophets, Jeremiah among them. Again we read of this Child—"The glory of Thy people Israel" (Luke 2. 32). The multitude of the heavenly host also praised God concerning Him and said, "*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good pleasure in men*" (N.T.). The promised Man was at last

found amongst men, and God could now find pleasure where He had found none before. This also was a new thing.

God had moreover said in Isaiah 42. 6, and 49. 8, in regard to Him—"I will give Thee for a Covenant of the people." This promise involves both the New Thing and the New Covenant. The truth as to our Lord Jesus Christ solves these Old Testament enigmas. With Christ, the "*Gebor*" of God (Jer. 31. 22) as their Centre, their metropolis, the city of the great King, Jerusalem, shall become the habitation of justice, and the mountain of holiness (23). Such a city has never yet been seen. Men have longed for it; Abraham by faith saw it was to come in with Christ's day and he rejoiced; Jeremiah in verse 26 having previously spoken of it, says, "*Upon this I awaked, and beheld*; and my sleep was sweet to me." Whilst this would surely be the prophet's personal experience, yet it must signify the long prophetic sleep, the cessation of prophetic activity, till the New Thing is "*beheld*," and Jerusalem is permanently built according to the last three verses of the chapter. Sweet indeed will their rest seem to them when they awake to behold the good things they foretold now accomplished in and through our Lord Jesus Christ, *their* promised Messiah.

The New Covenant shall then be established with both Israel and Judah (31-34). No longer standing on the ground of responsibility merely before God, but blessed sovereignly by the Lord, all shall know Him from the least to the greatest. He will be their God and they shall be His people in very truth. His law shall be engraved within them—in their inward parts—it will be in their *hearts* and in their *minds*,—not simply in the Pentateuch. With *love* and with *intelligence* they shall then serve Him and know Him. Having pardoned all their iniquity He will remember no more their sin, for the atoning work of our blessed Saviour,

their Messiah, has put all away according to Isaiah 53. Their sin, *once remembered* at the Cross in atonement, will now be remembered *no more*. It is not simply forgotten.

This New Covenant is as sure as the ordinances of day and night, of sun, moon and stars, of heaven and earth. God made them; man cannot alter them; so is it with the New Covenant. The "I WILL" of the Unchanging One has fixed it. It must be. Israel and Judah shall be blessed together in Christ, the Surety and Mediator of this New Covenant. All is established in Him. He sums it all up. Therefore believers now are also blessed *according to it*, for they have believed on Him during the time of His rejection. The

Gospel, and the cup at the Lord's Supper both remind us of this. His blood is the blood of the New Covenant, and all the promises of God are Yea and Amen in Him. The New Thing and the New Covenant are both explained in Christ, the Messiah of Israel, the Son of Man and the Son of God.

"God's record doth for ever stand  
Of life and blessing, from His hand,  
To all in Him the Son."

The Lord alone is exalted in the blessing of Israel and of ourselves now, that according as it is written, we may glory not in the flesh, but in the Lord Himself, who is worthy to be exalted and extolled by all. Praise, endless praise, to His holy Name.

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

### Being "Born Again."

Is it correct to say that no person was born again till after Pentecost?—*Pontefract*.

THE teachings of our Lord on this subject in His conversation with Nicodemus, as recorded in John 3., furnish us with a pretty clear answer to your question.

Notice in the first place that if men have to do with God at all in the way of blessing, new birth is an absolute necessity. Without it they can neither see nor enter the kingdom of God (verses 3 and 5). This is true, whether we think of the kingdom in its present form, viz., God's authority established in the hearts and minds of His saints, or whether in its ultimate form, established visibly on a world-wide scale. In the second place, notice that this great fact is given a personal application to Nicodemus himself in verse 7. "I say unto THEE, ye must be born again."

Further, it is quite clear from verse 10 that Nicodemus as a student of Old Testament Scripture ought to have already known these things. The Lord

was but bringing into clearer light that which had already been revealed. He referred evidently to Ezekiel 36. 25-28. In that great prophetic passage the word "birth" is not found, though the word "new" is. Yet plainly enough it intimated that before the thorough restoration of Israel can be accomplished a great inward work of God must take place—an entire inward renewal of a cleansing nature—and that in this work both "water" (verse 25) and the Spirit spoken of as "My Spirit" (verse 27) would be employed, and as the result there would be "a new spirit" (verse 26). This our Lord alluded to in saying, "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3. 6)

Give these facts due weight in your mind, and you will at once see that "new birth" is not distinctively Christian or post-Pentecostal at all. Did the Lord Jesus tell Nicodemus he MUST be born again, while all the time He knew that

it also **MUST** remain an impossible favour until the Pentecost of Acts 2 was historically reached? Would God have revealed through Ezekiel the new birth to be known as the ultimate way of blessing for *the nation* as such, if it had not been that the door was then open for *individuals* to have to do with Him through new birth, and thus anticipate God's blessing?

The fact surely is that from the moment sin came into the world, new birth was needful if men were to be blessed of God. It is a necessity of universal bearing apart from all dispensational distinctions. Since "that which is born of the flesh is flesh"—no matter

how cultivated or how refined, new birth is a fundamental *sine qua non*.

If any teach otherwise, as your question suggests, it must be, we imagine, because they confuse new birth *by* the Spirit of God with the indwelling *of* the Spirit of God. But these are two very different things. The one is His work by which we possess a nature and a capacity to enter into relations of blessing with God, whatever the conditions of those relations may be, which conditions do vary with dispensations. The other is His abiding presence in the believer, which is consequent upon Christ's death, resurrection, and glory, and therefore special to the present dispensation.

## For Ever and Ever.

Because the Greek for "for ever and ever" is "unto the ages of the ages," is it correct to believe that there may be a limit to the punishment of the lake of fire (Rev. 20. 10)? also what definite proof have we that the souls of the lost are immortal?—R. McC.

THE phrase to which you refer gives no support whatever to the idea that the punishment of the lake of fire is not eternal, but the very opposite.

Very few Greek New Testament words, we suppose, have been subjected to more juggling than the common word for eternal (*αἰώνιος*), which is an adjective built up from *αἰών* = an age. Advantage has been taken from this to insist that it can only mean *age-long*, i.e., of considerable duration but finite. If you have access to the valuable *Collected Writings* of the late J. N. Darby, get volume 10, and turn to pages 540 and 541, where is an illuminating note on this point. He points out that the famous Greek, Aristotle, has left it on record that the very word *αἰών* is derived from *αἰέν ὤν* = always existing. This shows that the argument in favour of the word not meaning *eternal* based upon its derivation falls to the ground.

Of far greater importance than the derivation of any word is its use. As to this, 2 Corinthians 4. 18 is conclusive, for in this verse eternal is used in contrast to temporal, and therefore it means endless duration not bounded by time; and here, where true eternity is meant, *αἰώνιος* is the word used.

What then shall we say to the expression to which you call our attention? It is clearly not a weaker expression than the one we have been considering. If a comparison has to be made we must call it a *stronger* expression, and therefore we cannot assign to it a *weaker* meaning! "To the ages of ages" *does* mean "for ever and ever."

The second part of your question opens up a large subject, but for a brief answer we think Matthew 10. 28 is sufficient. The Lord Jesus says, "Fear not them which *kill* the body, but are not able to *kill* the soul." Here in both cases He used a strong word for "kill," a word which might have been regarded as having some claim to represent the idea of annihilation had the annihilation of anything been anywhere taught in Scripture. Men may kill the body, but they *cannot* kill the soul, for it is not mortal like the body. Note carefully that the Lord does not say "*your body* . . . *your soul*." In that case, since He was addressing His disciples, the claim that soul immortality was only for believers might have some show of Scriptural warrant. It is "*the body* . . . *the soul*," i.e., it is a general and comprehensive statement. He added "but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."

Now though in English destroy may sound stronger than kill, our Lord here used quite a different word, much weaker than before. It is the word translated "perish" in John 3. 16. It is used in Matthew 9. 17, "The bottles perish." It is used of the blessed Lord Himself in Matthew 27. 20, "Destroy Jesus." Were the bottles annihilated? No, but being

burst they were *utterly ruined* as regards the original purpose of their construction.

The fact is that man cannot annihilate the soul if he would—he cannot even kill it: and God will not, whatever He may be able to do. If men persist in unbelief, He will, however, bring them down, both body and soul, into a state of ruin in hell.

## Tongues and Prophesying in the Assembly.

If tongues are for a sign to unbelievers, and prophesying serves for believers, how is it the hearing of tongues in 1 Corinthians 14. 23 by unbelievers leads them to say that believers are mad, whilst in the next verse the unbeliever hearing prophesying is searched and blessed by it? One would have expected the unbelievers to have been convinced by tongues, and to have been unaffected by prophesying. Scripture seems to reverse the order.—E. B.

VERSE 22 of the chapter you mention states the normal purpose and use of the two gifts. Tongues are for a sign to unbelievers. Prophesying for the edification of believers.

Verse 23 contemplates the abuse of the gift of tongues, such as had evidently occurred amongst the Corinthians. If instead of using their "tongues" in a proper way they retired to their usual place of meeting and merely showed off their supernatural linguistic abilities, where there was no one to profit by it, and therefore no call for it, it would have upon any unbeliever that might enter their assembly the exactly opposite effect to that intended. The whole procedure would be so manifestly absurd that he would only say they were mad.

Verse 24 shows that prophesying rightly employed would, though not intended for the unbeliever, have upon

him a far more beneficial effect than tongues wrongly employed. He doubtless would not really understand what was said, but he would be made powerfully conscious of the presence of God.

The solution of your question therefore lies in this: that if men abuse God's gifts by attempting to make them serve the purpose of self-advertisement, the practical effect is the very opposite of that normally intended.

You also ask as to the expressions "two, or at the most three" (verse 27), and "two or three" (verse 29). We judge that there is no difference between them save that if men are speaking in an unknown tongue and interpretation is needed, more time is consumed, and hence it is less likely that there will be room for a third speaker. "At the most by three" would indicate that under such circumstances three would be an *extreme* limit.

A. B.—We have received your inquiry as to where in Scripture is "the second account of Creation." We assume that in thus asking, you are referring to some statement which you have heard or read where this phrase was used; but as you give no details, we are in the dark as to the context, and hence our reply may be beside the mark.

We should imagine, however, that what is referred to is Genesis 2. 4-25. Genesis 1. to 2. 3 gives us the general account of Creation. Then comes this further section giving further details, and this especially about man; setting forth the manner of his creation and the moral relationships with God in which he was set.



## UNITY AND DIVISION.

(A. J. POLLOCK.)

[N reference to good, God's principle of action is unity; in reference to evil, it is division.

Satan, copyist as he is, works after the same fashion. In reference to evil, his principle of action is unity; in reference to good, division. He copies God's method, but reverses the application. Reference to Scripture will amply confirm these statements.

The first division in Scripture is light from darkness as narrated in Gen. 1. 4.

"And God saw the light, that it was good: and God *divided* the light from the darkness."

It is remarkable in this passage that God saw *the light*, and recognizing its goodness, brought in division between light and darkness.

No doubt whilst this stands as a great physical fact in nature marked by the beneficence of an all-wise Creator, it is intended to symbolize the great division between *moral* light and *moral* darkness. This principle runs all through Scripture. It is exemplified to the full in Him, who was the Light of the world.

"And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not" (JOHN 1. 5).

In nature the light disperses the darkness, and rules the day, only that it is in turn withdrawn, and then darkness supervenes and rules the night; but in the spiritual realm the darkness is so dense that the appearance of the light brings no change to the darkness—so impenetrable, and completely without apprehension, is it.

Deeply interesting it is to note the exactitude of Scripture:—

"The evening and the morning were the first day" (Gen. 1. 5).

The darkness first, the light following, prophetic of the final victory of light. The formula is repeated till the sixth day is reached, the sixth day merging into the seventh, of which no evening is recorded—the seventh day symbolizing the rest of God. Thus the end of the Bible answers to the beginning, the antitype fitting into the type.

We read of the New Jerusalem—the Church in millennial display—which receives the blessing and glory of the eternal state before that state is fully inaugurated;

"And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. 22. 5).

Light finally triumphs and darkness passes away. The process is going on which shall have this blissful consummation,

"The darkness is passing, and the true light already shines" (1 JOHN 2. 8, N.T.).

Yet we must ever remember that evil will receive its doom in the lake of fire, and there be confined for eternity. However, it remains true that light will triumph, because darkness will be confined and no more intrude in realms of light, and only in those realms of light will the creature be blessed.

The next Scripture we refer to is Gen. 11. There we get the whole earth of one language and speech.

Man in his independence of God, designs one vast imperialism and sets to work to build a city, and a tower whose top should reach to heaven. God sees the danger of this unity for evil and brings in *division*, thus weakening man in his evil designs and keeping him within bounds.

In this way nationalities came into existence as God's design for preventing that solidarity in man's aim for independence of God, which has ever marked him.

The contrast to this is found on the day of Pentecost. In Gen. 11. God divides men into nations and confounds their speech so as to keep evil within bounds. God brings in division upon evil; in Acts 2. men of different nations are met by the miraculous gift of tongues, so that every man heard and understood the Pentecostal message. God gave unity of understanding. Then when by the Holy Ghost believers were formed into one body with Christ as their Head in heaven, though belonging to different nationalities they composed the members upon the earth; and the one Spirit pervaded all, as intelligence and power.

Finally we find a scene where there shall be neither Jew nor Gentile, barbarian nor Scythian, bond nor free, male nor female, where the division of nationalities shall be ended, for we read—

"The tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them and be their God" (Rev. 21. 3).

The next Scripture we refer to is 1 Kings 12. 24,

"This thing [i.e., the *division* between Judah and Israel] is from Me."

After much fighting David had consolidated his kingdom and handed it to Solomon. Solomon was greatly blessed by God. He gave him wisdom beyond any; he was the favoured instrument for the erection of the temple; his

kingdom was at peace, and prosperous. But he allowed his heart to run after strange wives and their gods.

In that hour of his idolatry the doom of his kingdom was decreed. For David's sake judgment was deferred during his day, but in the days of Rehoboam, his haughty and foolish son, Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, rebelled, and snatched ten of the twelve tribes from under his sway. Rehoboam, about to make war for the recovery of his lost dominions, was checked by the prophetic utterance of Shemaiah, the man of God, that this *division* was from God. Division was the judgment for idolatry. But was this division to exist for ever? Nay! where, then, was the promise to David? But it is true that unity can only fully prosper under Christ.

This was foretold by Ezekiel when he took two sticks, one for Judah, the other for Israel, and joined them into one stick in his hand, and prophesied:—

"Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land . . . and David My servant [i.e., Christ] shall be King over them; and they all shall have one Shepherd" (Ezekiel 37. 21 and 24).

*Division*, alas! was brought in because of man's sin; *unity* will come on Israel's side through "the time of Jacob's trouble, the great tribulation, by bitter repentance, and acceptance at last, of Him whom they have pierced; on God's side, because of Christ and His own faithfulness to His word of covenant to Abraham and David.

When we come to the Gospels we find divisions most marked.

"There was a division among the people because of Him" (John 7. 43);

and the Lord Himself says:—

"Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay, but rather *division*" (Luke 12. 51).

Surely this is the carrying on of the

first division between light and darkness. Christ was the light of the world, and when the light shone in the moral darkness of this world the darkness comprehended it not.

And when we come to the Christian profession alas! division soon came in, the work of Satan, seeking to destroy the wonderful testimony of Pentecost. Division in this sphere is sternly reprobated in God's word :

"There is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal and walk as men : " (1 Cor. 3. 3)

wrote the apostle Paul in vehement reproof. And yet amid all Satan's wreckage of God's work in an outward way, God's real work shall stand. Deplorable as such division is, God can yet make it serve His purpose. Hence the apostle added to the same carnal believers :—

"For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you " (1 Cor. 11. 19).

How refreshing to turn from man's carnality in the things of God and view God's unity :—

"There is ONE body and ONE spirit, even as ye are called in ONE hope of your calling ; ONE Lord, ONE faith, ONE baptism, ONE God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all and in you all " (Eph. 4. 4-6) ;

and to realize that the Lord's prayer,

"That they all may be one ; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us : that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me " (John 17. 21),

will be abundantly and gloriously answered. How happy to see the ultimate and full triumph of God's bright designs.

As to Satan, his aims ever are to unite evil so as to make it powerful in his hands for his own ends. Hence the attempt to amalgamate the labour movements of every country, to unite the workers of every land in one vast union—hence the League of Nations,

the precursor, surely, of the revived Roman Empire, to be the instrument for evil in the rapidly approaching last days.

Yet even in this God gives division as seen in the mingled iron and clay of the ten toes of the Colossus.

Witness, too, the movement towards the amalgamation of great religious bodies, all paving the way for the great apostasy and the appearance of Babylon, the mother of harlots, on the scene.

And yet, amid all this, God is exercising the hearts of many believers, and is drawing them together. Satan, who has produced the divisions of God's true people, would perpetuate them, but God would draw saint to saint in true brokenness of spirit and humiliation of soul before Him, and awaken in their breasts the bridal cry of "Come Lord Jesus."

Surely, in view of the near coming of the Lord it would be in accordance with His mind, if there were true exercise of soul and recovery, not in any pretentious way, not with any flourish of trumpets, but quietly, simply and earnestly as endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

The drawing together of the large bodies of Christendom on worldly and political grounds is the unity Satan would forward.

The drawing together of God's true, but, alas! divided people, in brokenness of spirit and in subjection to His word, is the unity God would forward.

The two movements are diametrically opposed. One is of the world, worldly, of the devil, devilish ; the other is of God and the Spirit ; the one is a movement the world can understand and approve of ; the other is only understood by those who sigh and mourn over the present state of things.

God help us in these broken days. They are illumined by the bright light of the near advent of our blessed Lord and Master.

# A STUDY IN THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SCRIPTURE NAMES.

(H. P. BAKER.)

WHAT a wealth of spiritual instruction lies wrapped up in the meanings of many of the names of persons and places that we find in our Bibles!

A servant of Christ in America has devoted some of the best years of his life to research in this fruitful field. The result of his labours is "A Dictionary of Scripture Proper Names," by J. B. Jackson. Not that it claims perfection. If a revised edition were called for, its author would make many changes. Other sources of information are, of course, open to the unlearned reader; and one is generally safe in accepting the meaning of a Hebrew name agreed upon by the leading Biblical scholars.

As an illustration of the value of such study, let us have a little Bible reading on Genesis 2. 10-14—just these five verses.

"And a river went out of EDEN to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads. The name of the first is PISON: that is it which compasseth the whole land of HAVILAH, where there is gold; and the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone. And the name of the second river is GIHON: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of ETHIOPIA. And the name of the third river is HIDDEKEL: that is it which goeth toward the east of ASSYRIA. And the fourth river is EUPHRATES."

The river may well stand as an emblem of God's grace. It is now "flowing o'er this barren place, where Jesus died." But it began its flow before the barrenness that resulted from sin set in. Before Adam fell, before sin entered into the world, God had this wonderful river flowing out. Grace was no after-thought with Him.

Sin was the occasion of its full display, but ere sin had corrupted God's fair creation, God had formed gracious designs for man.

EDEN means "delight." It was because of God's delight in man (viewing him, as He did, in the light of His wonderful purpose) that grace flowed out on his behalf.

The river was parted into FOUR heads. Numbers, as well as names, have a significance in Scripture, and *four* is the number of universality; there are the four quarters of the earth, the four winds of heaven, etc. So we learn that God's intention from the beginning was that His grace should flow out to men everywhere, universally, and not run in any narrow, national, Jewish stream. The grace that brings salvation was to appear to all men and be preached in all creation under heaven (Titus 2. 11; Col. 1. 23). It was to roll out north, south, east and west, wherever men were found.

PISON means "great effusion" and serves to remind us of the *abounding* of the grace of God. Who can read without a thrill of soul the wonderful words that tell us that "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound"? Who among us cannot testify to the "abundance of grace" that he has received? (Rom. 5. 17). Truly God's river is a Pison!

The land that was compassed, and compassed in its entirety, by the river Pison, was the land of Havilah. HAVILAH means "suffering," and this exists in the world as the consequence of sin. Are not our own hearts stirred with deep compassion as we look out upon the great world of suffering, this Havilah with which we are surrounded? But are not our hearts stirred again as we think of the river that compasses it, the grace of God in its infinite abundance, that

flows round it in every part? What can truly meet suffering but grace? What can bring to sinful men a remedy for all the woes that they have brought upon themselves by their folly, but the abounding grace of God?

In the land of Havilah there was gold, gold declared to be *good*. And in the land of suffering, grace finds, as the result of its own work, that which is precious indeed, gold that shall shine in the house of the Lord for ever. Thank God for suffering that results in this! Thank God for the grace that compasses this land of sorrow and anguish and finds precious gold here!

Two other things were found in the land of Havilah: bdellium and the onyx stone. As to the significance of the BDELLIUM there is some difficulty. Mr. Jackson in his *Dictionary* gives the meaning of the word as "in turbidity." This may set forth another consequence of sin: the disturbance of the relationship that existed between God and man. Man's communion with his Creator is clouded over, he acquires a guilty conscience. But side by side with this there is something which is again the fruit of grace. The meaning of ONYX is given to us as "setting them equal; justifying them." Here we get a forcible reminder indeed of what the grace of God accomplishes for guilty man, setting him again in restored relationship and communion with God, on the basis of redemption, and justifying him from all guilt. Oh, let us thank God again and again for the overflowing abundance of His grace, the Pison that compasses this poor land of Havilah.

We can but touch lightly on these profound themes, for our Bible study is intended to be suggestive rather than exhaustive. We pass on to the second head of the river.

GIHON means "valley of grace." Rivers always flow in valleys, bringing freshness and life, and producing verdure and beauty in the lands through

which they pass. Lofty eminences are left high and dry. Towering summits are often bare and barren, while the lowlands beneath are full of flowers and foliage, made fertile by the river that winds its way through them. And it is to the lowly that the grace of God comes. Not those who dwell upon the lofty peaks of satisfied self-sufficiency, but those who find their place in the valley of contrition and true repentance, does grace bless. He who brought the knowledge of God's grace into the world, came not to call the righteous, but sinners. And He came, not to set them climbing heights of self-culture, but to call them to descend into the valley where the grace of God could meet them—the valley of repentance.

ETHIOPIA, or CUSH, the land compassed by the river Gihon, means "blackness" or "darkness." It is a picture of this world and of what men would be were it not for the illuminating grace of God. That grace has compassed us about, and, shining in our hearts, has brought us out of darkness into God's most marvellous light.

Thirdly comes HIDDEKEL. Most Bible dictionaries give the meaning "swift." This would set forth another lovely trait of Divine grace, the swiftness with which it hastens to bless and to save. God was in no haste when He created the heavens and the earth. He proceeded in a measured and orderly way. He certainly is in no haste to *judge*. He is slow to anger and has lingered all these centuries in long-suffering mercy over the world that is so deaf to His calls. But His grace is swift to bless. Grace sees the returning prodigal afar and *runs* to welcome him. Grace goes out *quickly* to bring the needy to the feast (Luke 14. 21). Yes; the river of God's grace is a swift-flowing Hiddekel!

This branch of the river flowed toward the east of ASSYRIA. The meaning of Assyria is given as "a step," and coupled with *the east* it

would point to a step away from God. It was on the eastward side of the garden that Adam and Eve were driven from God's presence, for here were set the Cherubim to prevent their return. Cain going out from Jehovah's presence went a step further in the same direction, and "dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden." And again those fatal eastward steps were taken by the human family in Gen. 11. 2 (see marginal and R.V. readings) and by Lot in Gen. 13. 11. But though men have, as it were, become Assyrians, in taking step after step away from God, yet He in His grace has ever pursued them, and will do so as long as the day of grace endures.

"The fourth river is EUPHRATES," a name which signifies "making fruitful." And this is the result of the working of God's grace. Under law there was no fruit for God. The striking parables in Luke 13. 6-9 and 20. 9-16 make this very plain. But when grace works, fruit begins to appear in the form of God-fearing lives, devotion to Christ, faithfulness in testimony, zeal in His service, and in many other lovely traits which the Spirit of God works to produce in the children of grace.

Have we not gleaned something from our Bible study, something that we should have missed, had we passed over the names as having no special significance?

## NOTES ON JEREMIAH. No. 12.

(H. J. VINE.

### Jerusalem's New Name—Jehovah Tsidkenu.

VERY vividly do CHAPTERS 32. and 33. picture the public metropolitan and national pre-eminence of Jerusalem and Israel in the time of the coming glory, when King David's greater Son shall reign in regal right according to the divine decree. The city shall then dwell safely beneath His royal rule; taking her character too so entirely from Him, her once rejected Lord, that she shall even be called by His own Name—Jehovah Tsidkenu, the Lord our righteousness (33. 16). As the happy bride receives the name of the rejoicing bridegroom, so here Jerusalem is given the Name which is exclusively her Lord's in chapter 23. 6.

The precious promises in these two chapters were given at a moment specially signalized by the imprisonment of the prophet of God (see 32. 2 and 33. 1). Jerusalem was then besieged by the king of Babylon's army; Zedekiah sought to stop prophetic utterance, God was shut out, and everything

looked very black—despair and desolation faced them. At such a moment God illustrates His redemption and grace by instructing the prophet to purchase the field of Hanameel, for "the right of redemption" belonged to Jeremiah (7. 12). Just so it is with God—the right of redemption is His. Here is a fine subject for gospel preachers. "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land" (15), and that in the right of redemption and according to "an everlasting covenant" (40). "Man's extremity is God's opportunity!" Those who have proved His redeeming love know this.

Jeremiah turns to God at this moment and speaks of His former ways with Israel, of His bringing them out of Egypt with great power and giving them the land, but they had not obeyed His voice, and now the city was about to fall into the hands of the

Chaldeans. Yet Jeremiah had obeyed and bought the field for money when all looked hopeless, for God was his confidence—He had made the heavens and the earth: the Great, the Mighty God, Jehovah of hosts is His Name. Says the prophet to Him, "*There is nothing too hard for thee!*" God then assuringly enquires, "*Is there anything too hard for Me?*" "Behold, I am Jehovah, the God of all flesh." The city is to be given into the hand of the king of Babylon, for the people, princes, priests and prophets had sinned and done evil from their youth to provoke Him to anger. Yet are they to be regathered. "Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with My whole heart and with My whole soul." The fields and lands and cities are again to be possessed and prosper plenteously (26-44). What a God is Israel's! What a God is ours!

"This is our redeeming God!  
Ransomed hosts will shout aloud:  
Praise, eternal praise be given  
To the Lord of earth and heaven!"

Continuing in CHAPTER 33. the Lord encourages the heart to call unto Him, for He will show great and unfathomable things previously unknown. He will grant cleansing and pardon to those who had sinned against Him, and bring health and abundance of peace and truth to the one wicked city (1-8). "*And 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*" (9). They shall say, "Praise the Lord of hosts: for the Lord is good; for His mercy endureth for ever" (11). Many voices shall harmoniously blend in blessing the Lord, whilst peace and prosperity shall be on every hand. Both houses shall be blessed together—Israel and Judah: God will give them one heart and one way. They are "the two families which the Lord hath chosen" (24). To this end we see divine wisdom in the terms and names used in these

chapters which lead up to the exalted hour when our Lord Jesus Christ, raised from among the dead, of the Seed of David, shall bless the people, the land, and the city, and she shall be called *Jehovah Tsidkenu*—"The Lord our righteousness."

Verses 17 and 18 tell us that David should never want a man for the throne, nor the Levites a man for approach and sacrifice to God. Why? Verses 15 and 16 answer this and other questions also which may arise in connection with what we have said. The Man spoken of in these verses is altogether righteous. In resurrection, after having died to secure an eternal redemption, He establishes kingship and priesthood in Himself according to God. In the day of the coming glory "He shall be a priest upon His Throne" (Zech. 6. 13), uniting in Himself both kingship and priesthood. The present cry of the nations—"Wanted a man!" will be heard no more,—*the Man has been found!* True believers know Him already in a more intimate way as the Bridegroom of the assembly to which they belong. Notice how the Holy Spirit distinguishes this Man of David's royal line in two expressive scriptures in Jeremiah, viz., 23. 5, 6, and 33. 15, 16. They help to solve many problems, so read these verses carefully.

The first scripture speaks of our blessed Lord in a way that involves His resurrection, though not specifying it—He is "*a*" righteous Branch raised up unto David. The second Scripture views His birth and life more—He is "*the*" righteous Branch caused to grow up unto David. In both He is designated righteous and of David's line. This could only be said of Christ, for there is none righteous in an absolute way save Him. His resurrection after He had suffered and made atonement for sin declared it. So both scriptures looking on to His coming reign of glory, tell us that He shall execute "righteousness." The first Scripture specifies the salvation of Judah and Israel at that time: *the*

*second* that of Judah and Jerusalem, for the metropolis of Israel is specially in view—the city of this great King. So in this *second* Scripture we read, “SHE shall be called Jehovah Tsidkenu,” whilst in the *first* we are told “HE shall be called Jehovah Tsidkenu.” This divine designation means, as we know, “The Lord our Righteousness.” Here we have the climax of terrestrial governance.

Christ, in resurrection of David's seed, will come again to take guilty Jerusalem for Himself. The city that stoned the prophets, that gave Jeremiah a dungeon, that refused the Lord, shall yet be His administrative centre on earth, and bear His Name and His character. We are told this is as sure as the ordinances of the heavens and the earth. God's covenant with David His servant (21) must be fulfilled, for it is impossible for the ever blessed God to lie. Then will flow forth world-wide blessing, and the glory of the Lord shall fill the rejoicing earth. Amen. Hallelujah!

### DIVINE FAITHFULNESS AND HUMAN FAILURE.

The illustrative incidents so interestingly brought together in CHAPTERS 34. to 39. give a special character to this second main division of our section, and as we have said these 6 chapters divide again into 3 and 3. The stories of the broken covenant, the Rechabite faithfulness, and the burning of the roll of Scripture are given to us in the first 3, whilst the raising of the siege, the imprisonment of Jeremiah in the dungeon and the capture of Jerusalem are given in the second 3. The peculiar order of the book is strikingly seen in these 6 chapters. Zedekiah the last king is first spoken of, then in the next chapter we are taken back to the time of Jehoiakim, and again to his fourth year in the next chapter. After that we have various incidents in Zedekiah's days, but in an ordered way all is ranged in regard to the destruction of Jerusalem.

Desolation and darkness were to cover the scene of destruction, as God had long foretold. This is illustrated in the case of the last king. His “eyes” are often in the prophetic mind (see 34. 3, also 32. 4 ; 52. 10, etc.) The light was to become darkness, so this section, which begins with speaking of Zedekiah's eyes (34. 1-3) tells us at the end that they were put out (39. 7), and this is significantly repeated in the final chapter of the book (52. 11). Israel is blind, darkness covers the people, and they must await the coming again of the One who opens the eyes of the blind, and opens the prison doors for those who like Zedekiah are bound in chains. They must now learn to hope in the Lord, who shall yet be exalted in their coming salvation.

CHAPTER 34 illustrates the unfaithfulness of the people. They made a covenant to liberate their servants who were Hebrews. This they did, but afterwards they turned from their covenant and brought back their servants. Upon this the Lord reminds them of His covenant which they had transgressed to that very day; therefore He proclaims “liberty” for them—to destruction, desolation, famine and dispersion!

CHAPTER 35. contrasts the obedience of the house of the Rechabites with the disobedience of the house of Israel. This illustrative incident is introduced here from the time of Jehoiakim. It most suitably follows the subject of the previous chapter. The Rechabites obeyed the commandment of Jonadab their father. They kept all his precepts, but Israel hearkened not to the Lord. “Therefore thus saith the Lord God of hosts, the God of Israel, Behold I will bring upon Judah and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem all the evil that I have pronounced against them” (17). On the other hand we have an instructive word concerning the Rechabites, showing how the blessed God approves the obedience of children to parents, or of descendants to the good word of



their forefathers. "Therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before Me for ever." What a high honour! To be represented at court before the king would be a mark of dignity, but to be represented before God Himself, and that for ever, is an exalted and surpassing honour. This strikingly shows what value God sets upon obedience. May we be marked by it at all times.

But what a contrast we see in Christ Jesus who represents us now, before God our Father, in a far greater position of exaltation. We, however, were not marked by obedience like the Rechabites: we were sinners, disobedient, enemies; but we have been reconciled to God by the death of His Son, and now we are taken into everlasting favour in Him, the Beloved: His place is ours. Blessed be God for the exceeding riches of His grace!

"Saviour and Lord! we own  
The riches of Thy grace,  
For we can call Thy God our God—  
Can bow before His face.

Thy Father, too, above,  
We worship as our own,  
Who gave with Thee the Spirit's cry  
To us His sons foreknown."

CHAPTER 36 records the profane way in which the writings of God were treated. It is a solemn lesson. This mutilation and destruction of the prophetic roll happened before the destruction of Jerusalem. The same sort of thing will take place before the judgment of Christendom. Not that man can get rid of the Word of God: He knows how to preserve it just as He did in this case, but man by his treatment of it manifests his guilt and profanity, and secures for himself the judgments of which God's word speaks, even as we read of the *Scripture-mutilating king* in our chapter. "Thus saith the Lord, *Thou hast burned this roll*, saying, Why hast thou written therein, saying, The king of Babylon shall certainly come and destroy this

land, and shall cause to cease from thence man and beast? Therefore thus saith the Lord of Jehoiakim king of Judah, He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David; and his dead body shall be cast out in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost. And I will punish him and his seed and his servants for *their iniquity*" (29 31).

God is not mocked! He knows the way men are treating His own God-breathed records, profaning and humanizing them, and He will treat them accordingly. Here Baruch wrote the words of God from the mouth of Jeremiah, and read them in the hearing of the people, and of the princes, afterwards. They showed a certain respect to them, but feared to withstand the king. "Then took Jeremiah another roll, and gave it to Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah; who wrote therein from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the book which Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire: and there were added besides unto them many like words" (32). This is God's answer: none of His words shall perish: they increase and prosper in that for which they are sent.

#### THE METROPOLIS: ITS FALL: ITS RISING AGAIN.

Stirring scenes now come before us. The armies of the Chaldeans are before the gates of Jerusalem! They demand admission (CHAPTERS 37., 38., and 39.). They are God's messengers of judgment, for the city had refused to hear His prophetic messenger. Neither King Zedekiah, nor his servants, nor the people of the land, did hearken unto the words of the Lord which He spake by the prophet Jeremiah (37. 2): contrariwise, they put him in prison, and it was only when the city fell that he got liberty, being treated better by the king of Babylon than by the king of his own people whom he served so faithfully. This is often the case with true servants of the Lord.

For a time it looked as if the judgment of God upon the city would be frustrated. Pharaoh's army came forth out of Egypt, and Jerusalem was relieved. The Chaldeans retired. The prophet warned them not to deceive themselves, for the Chaldeans would return, and supported his prophecy by his action, in departing from the city to be amongst God's people in Benjamin. However, they took Jeremiah, and falsely accusing him of falling away to the Chaldeans, they put him in a dungeon, though the vacillating king sent for him later, and granted him a measure of relief, after listening to his words (17-21).

The army of the Chaldeans, as the prophet said, returned with determination, to accomplish without further delay the destruction of the city. A touching personal incident is recorded as having taken place within the walls at that time. Jeremiah having been let down into a miry dungeon (38. 6) after further false accusation by certain who sought to compass his death (1-4), Zedekiah being too weak to withstand them, one named Ebed-melech, an Ethiopian, having some sense of right and wrong, when it seemed to have departed from Israel altogether, engaged himself to effect the prophet's deliverance from the miry pit. He reasoned with the king as to the evil done to Jeremiah, and having secured the monarch's consent, he tenderly with the help of thirty men drew Jeremiah out (6-13). Thus the Lord cared for His servant even amidst the fiery trials of a siege: nor did He forget Jeremiah's kind helper, for at the end of chapter 39. we find a special word from the Lord to Ebed-melech, the Ethiopian, saying, "I will surely deliver thee, and thou shalt not fall by the sword, but thy life shall be for a prey to thee, **BECAUSE THOU HAST PUT THY TRUST IN ME, SAITH THE LORD.**" Blessed indeed are all they that trust in Him!

The prophet earnestly and compassionately counselled the weak king to

recognize God's hand and yield to Nebuchadnezzar (38. 14-23), for He had sent again for Jeremiah. He listened, but sad to say, being afraid of the princes he did not obey (24-26). He does not seem to have seen the king again, as he remained in the court of the prison till the city fell before the besieging army. "In the eleventh year of Zedekiah in the fourth month the ninth day of the month, the city was broken up" (39. 2). Zedekiah fled when he saw the princes of Babylon sitting in the middle gate, but he was overtaken; his sons were slain "*before his eyes*"; then those "*eyes*" were put out. Laden with chains he was carried to Babylon, Jerusalem was burned, and Jeremiah was left free to dwell with the remnant of his people (11-14). Thus was fulfilled the word of the Lord.

Destruction and desolation fell upon the true metropolis of Israel and of the whole earth. Its light was withdrawn, its rightful ascendancy was taken away, and given over by God to the Gentiles, with whom it has been ever since, whilst a veil darkens the thoughts of the Jew still (see 2 Cor. 3. 14); but Jerusalem shall rise from her ruin, shaking off her shame, and yet shining with resplendent radiance as never before. Truly she failed under the old covenant, but she shall be established and blessed under the new. Christ, raised from the dead, shall return to her with the sure mercies of David. Then shall she arise and shine, for her light will be come and the glory of the Lord will be risen upon her.

If in that day the glory of *the earthly metropolis* will be so great, what words can express the supernal splendour of *the heavenly metropolis*, Jerusalem above, the Lamb's wife, the assembly which is being built *now* while He is rejected? It will *then* shine forth with the glory of God, of which our Lord Jesus Christ is the Lamp, for none other could bear that glory *immediately*, though, wonderful to say, the assembly will transmit its beauty

and thus benefit *mediately* the nations of the earth. WELL MAY WE REJOICE IN HOPE OF THE GLORY OF GOD!

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

## THE END GOD HAS IN VIEW.

(J. WILSON SMITH.)

"Thus saith the Lord, that after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon, I will visit you and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place. For I know the thoughts that I think towards you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end" (Jeremiah 29. 10, 11).

THIS Scripture is a fine pillow of down for a weary head, and every one of us may lay our heads on that divine pillow, in the midst of conflict and distress. There is no treasure-store for God's people like the thoughts of God. God always has an end in view in His dealings with His children: He wants to give us an "expected end."

Turn to Rom. 8. 28, "*We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.*" The Epistle to the Romans presents salvation as a future thing, and we are looked at as being disciplined—but we know that *all things will work together for good.* He is shaping all, with an end in view.

In Jeremiah, although at that time Israel was in captivity through their failure, yet the Lord could say, "I know the thoughts that I think towards you, thoughts of peace." My eye is upon you, even in Babylon! It is as a Refiner of silver, who stirs the molten metal up to a certain point. What point is that? The point at which he can see the clear reflection of himself in the molten metal. Then he says, that is enough! This is only an illustration, but in like manner, when the child of God is brought to the point in which he can say, "*Thy will be done,*" that is the reflection of His image.

Turn to 2 Cor. 4. 7-11, "*We have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. We are troubled on every*

*side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.*" We are very slow to learn that *all the power is of God* (verse 7). You must allow yourself to go, and let *all the power be of God.* Verses 8 and 9 are a collection of paradoxes, and yet they are the experience of the children of God; the statements appear contradictory, but they are not really so. Verses 10 and 11 have to do with the *present time*: the reproduction of the life of Jesus, in the lives of Christians. Oh! set your heart on *that*—that the life of Jesus may be reproduced in your daily walk down here.

Now turn to Heb. 12. 3-12. "*Consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds: ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.*"—We have not been called to lay down our lives as martyrs—"*And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him: for whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth; if ye endure chastening God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the*

*father chasteneth not? . . . Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous but grievous : nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby : Wherefore lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees."* It is so easy to faint ! but we

do this, when we fail to see His intention in the chastening : that it is "for our profit that we might be partakers of His holiness" (verse 10). He always has "an expected end" in view, and "we shall reap, if we faint not." The Lord *never* fails His people, so we *ought* not to faint.

*Editor's Note.*—The above brief notes of an address given eleven years ago have been sent to us from Southampton by an aged brother, who in bereavement and personal affliction had profited by the Scriptures thus so fittingly linked together and the short comments upon them. We gladly give the notes a place in our columns.

We append also some extracts from the communication that accompanied them :—

If I add a few words it is only to show how heartily I add my Amen to them, having, in a time of deep affliction, experienced the truth of what dear J. W. S. urges upon us as to the true light in which to regard God's dealings with His children ; that is to take God's own account of what His thoughts are toward them, and what His end in view is, in accordance with His thoughts, whether in seasons of affliction as in Romans 8. 28, or in trials under the hand of God in discipline, as in Hebrews 12., or in sufferings in connection with the testimony of God, as in 2 Corinthians 4. 7-11.

There were peculiar circumstances in the way my beloved wife was suddenly stricken down at my side that were enough to try the strongest faith. Could I trust the Lord ? was the question. . . . Not long after I was laid aside. A more serious attack followed—far more serious—and I was quite unable for a time to hold any communication with my loved ones who waited upon me.

I thus got time for much reflection and quiet prayer and much inquiry of the One who had called me to His kingdom and glory, as to the reason He had for calling me to pass through

these afflictions. During all that time of patient inquiry the Lord gradually showed me that His object was more conformity to Himself personally, and that He desired to let the light of His own glory more into the depths of my heart and so to have more of my heart's affections for Himself ; in other words, to restore me individually to nothing less than to "first love."

What He says about power in connection with 2 Cor. 4. 7-11—that we are very slow to learn that *all* the power is of God, and that we must let ourselves go, that it may be so—is very true. I have been marvelling that though an old sojourner in the wilderness, having known this fact a good many years, yet in practice I have to confess to weakness. There is a difference between the knowledge of Scripture and its application in our practical walk. Hence the lack of that real power which the apostle referred to when he said, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (2 Cor. 12. 9).

Hence in writing to his beloved Philippians the apostle exhorts them "as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (2. 12, 13). But if the human will is not broken, it must be ; and God takes His own way of doing this in His own time, though His one end in view is to help those He loves to learn the blessed liberty resulting from His working in His saints to will and to do of His good pleasure. [J. S. O.]

## "A VERY SMALL THING."

(F. B. HOLE.)

THE life of the Apostle Paul contained many remarkable happenings. Again and again moments of crisis and exercise had to be faced by him, so much so that, considering his life as revealed in his own Epistles, and in the Acts of the Apostles one might be tempted to think that from start to finish it was one succession of great things.

Such an impression, however, would be hardly correct. In 1 Corinthians 4., we have him face to face with a peculiarly trying difficulty that seems to have dogged his footsteps through the whole period of his apostolic service: yet he dismisses it as "a very small thing."

The difficulty itself was one that many of the Lord's servants have to face to-day, and almost invariably we are tempted to treat it as a very great thing; for naturally there is hardly anything that touches us to the quick more easily than criticism, and hardly anything that we cling to more tenaciously than our reputations.

The position at Corinth was a grave one when the first Epistle was written. Amongst other evils partisanship ran high, and criticism of the Apostle himself and other servants of Christ was rampant. The leaders of the parties in the assembly there were apparently local men, or Judaising teachers from outside, since chapter 4. verse 6 would indicate that in using his own name, and that of Apollos, Paul was transferring to themselves what really belonged to others. With true Christian delicacy he thus avoided actually naming the men who were becoming the leaders of the different schools in that assembly, and he desired the Corinthians, as he says, to "learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another." And then just as they flattered the local gifts and held

inflated or "puffed up" views as to their relative importance, so they looked down upon a gift from elsewhere with the disposition to criticize it, and even to flout apostolic authority.

These things were indeed grave enough as regards their effect upon the Corinthian assembly; yet when the Apostle considered their criticism and judgment of himself he dismissed it as "a very small thing" (verse 3).

Let us briefly examine the passage, with the prayerful desire that thereby we, too, may be helped to more largely share the holy elevation of the Apostle's spirit.

Verse 1 sets forth the true character of the apostles and their fellow-workers. They were not "men of renown" in an intellectual sphere, who would surround themselves with admiring auditors and followers. Their word was rather "Let no man glory in men" (3. 21), and as to themselves they were but "ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God." The word here translated "ministers" is the one which means an official servant, one with authority derived from a master.

Verse 2 emphasizes the great qualification necessary in a steward. He *must* be faithful to the one from whom his place and authority are derived. His supreme achievement is to please his master and serve his interests, regardless of whether or not he pleases others in so doing.

In verse 3 the Apostle, who was indeed a faithful steward of God's mysteries, boldly faces his critics. "With me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you or of man's judgment"—or as it literally is, "of man's day," as noted in the margin. In chapter 3. 13 he had told us that "every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it." Here we have THE DAY when God's

opinion shall be heard. This is MAN'S DAY when men insist upon making their opinion heard, and it is wholly unfavourable to the Apostle and all likeminded with him. The opinion of "man's day" was a very small thing with Paul. He uses emphatic terms. The New Translation renders it, "*It is the very smallest matter.*"

But was it not more serious that the Apostle should be judged of the Corinthians also? The New Translation renders the word "judged" by "examined," with a footnote to the effect that the Greek word "does not signify 'judgment' but the preliminary examination, at which the accused has to answer and give an account of himself." Then, should not a saint, even an Apostle, be deeply concerned if thus examined by his fellow-believers?

"But for me it is the very smallest matter that I be examined of you" (N.T.)—"of YOU": who were these? Well, sad to say, they were saints to whom it had to be said. "I . . . could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal" (3. 1). They were *carnal* believers, and the judgment and criticism of a carnal believer approximates far too closely to that of "man's day" to be of any real worth. It all left the Apostle quite unmoved in his own judgment. As the succeeding verses show, he was not even ruffled in his spirit by it. Not a trace of annoyance marks his words.

Before going on to the succeeding verses, we digress for a moment to refer to a counterbalancing consideration.

Let no one deduce from what we have just referred to that any servant of Christ, however instructed or devoted, is to consider himself above all criticism, and refuse in any way to listen to remonstrance. The very opposite. The opinion of a carnal, worldly-minded believer is evidently of little or no value, but that of a godly and matured believer may well be highly esteemed. In Galatians 2. 2, the Apostle Paul

himself furnishes us with an example of this. He was the Apostle to the Gentiles, and received his Gospel and instructions how to preach it by direct revelation from the Lord: yet he was not above conferring privately with those who were reputed spiritual men in Jerusalem, lest, as he says, "by any means I should run, or had run in vain."

Evidently, therefore, the servant of Christ does well when in humility of mind he considers others as better than himself, takes counsel of them, carefully considers their spiritual judgment, or even listens to and weighs their criticisms. Yet even so he must not in the last resort be guided by their opinions but by the Word of God. The passage, Acts 21. 18-30, furnishes us with a warning as to this.

Resuming our chapter we find in verse 4 the secret of the Apostle's superiority to mere human judgment. He tells us at the end of verse 3 that he was not even occupied in judging or examining himself. He did not mean us to understand by this that he was not concerned to walk in self-judgment, but rather that he made no attempt even in his own mind to examine and appraise his own life and conduct. The fact was that he could say, "I am conscious of nothing in myself"—as the opening of verse 4 more correctly reads—"yet am I not hereby justified; but He that judgeth me is the Lord." Here we find the great fact that lifted Paul far above the fear of human opinion. He walked so habitually in the light of the judgment seat of Christ that no other judgment seat had any terrors for him.

This passage, then, speaks of judgment in a fourfold way.

1. The judgment of "man's day," i.e., of the popular opinion of the world.
2. The judgment of saints who are in a carnal condition, which is of not much more weight than that of man's day.

3. The judgment which a servant of God may form of himself. This is by no means infallible, though he who forms it may most earnestly endeavour to assume a detached and impartial frame of mind when conducting the investigation, and be conscious of nothing in himself contrary to the Master whom he serves. The fact that he is not conscious of anything *wrong* does not prove that he is *right*.

4. The judgment of the Lord Himself. Here we reach perfection and finality.

Verse 5 of our chapter opens with a word of instruction in view of these things: "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come." When tempted to express strong opinions in regard to each other, or to lay down the law with emphasis in regard to things concerning other people's lives and service which are not a matter of revelation but rather of spiritual judgment, let us remember that in doing so we are "before the time." "The time" will be when the Lord comes, for when He comes He "both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart."

How searching are these words! There are *hidden* things of *darkness* on the one hand; and if we now undertake to sit on the judgment seat we pronounce our opinion without knowing all the facts of the case and with no power to enforce their production. There are, on the other hand, the counsels of *heart*—the counsels of the inmost heart of him whom we are inclined to criticize, those secret springs and motives which we cannot see, AND—never let it be forgotten—the secret springs and motives of our own hearts: *of him who is the criticizer in the case*.

When the time comes, a proper investigation into the life and service of every saint will be conducted. The Lord will conduct it, and in His

presence every hidden thing and counsel will come to light. Judgment when it is pronounced will be arrived at in the light of every factor which bears upon the case, "and then," says the closing line of verse 5, "shall every man have praise of God"; or as the New Translation renders it, "and then shall each have [his] praise from God": the thought being, not that every man shall somehow or other be praised in that day; but that each who is awarded praise at all will get his praise *from* GOD.

The Corinthians undertook to criticize Paul and censure him. Conversely they approved other leaders, and lavished praise upon those that they favoured as the centres of their schools of opinion. Such party circles would soon become small mutual admiration societies as they still do to-day. How pitifully small the whole thing was, *and is!* Carnal believers belauding to the skies other believers, possibly more carnal than themselves!

The Apostle sets before us "the day." He speaks of "the time" coming, with the Lord on the judgment seat; of His presence before whom nothing is hid; and of "praise from God" as being the only praise that is worth while. And do not our hearts say "Amen" to this?

Two very important principles that are most wholesome in their practical workings stand out clearly in all this:—

1. They who are tempted to criticize and censure must remember that they do not know *all* the factors of the case, nor the motives of hearts—certainly not in the heart of him whom they criticize, and but imperfectly in their own hearts—hence it is wiser to offer counsel than to pronounce judgment.

2. He who is criticized may be conscious of no wrong thing in himself or in his ways; yet he must remember that this is no infallible criterion of the justness of his course. The Lord

will judge him in that day; and meanwhile let him cultivate a spirit of humility in the presence of others.

Lastly, let it be again emphasized that what we have been saying above does not apply to matters in regard to

which we have God's will revealed in the Scriptures, but only to matters which are left to the exercise and spiritual judgment of the individual saint or servant of God. In regard to all that Scripture says we have nothing to do but to OBEY.

## THE CHURCH OF GOD.

### 4. In the Ways of God. Ephesians 2. 11-22. (HAMILTON SMITH.)

IN the first part of the Epistle to the Ephesians, chapters 1. and 2. 1-10, the Church is presented in relation to Christ in glory, according to the counsels of God. This prepares the way for a very different view of the Church—its formation and testimony on earth according to the ways of God.

There is a vast difference between the counsels of God for glory and the ways of God on earth. Seizing this distinction, we shall see that not only has the Church a glorious destiny as united to Christ in heaven, according to the eternal purpose of God, but that it also has an existence on earth, and a great place in the ways of God here below. It is this aspect of the Church that comes before us in Ephesians 2. verses 11 to 22.

In order that we may understand this very important aspect of the Church, the Apostle reminds us of the distinct position held by Israel in the times before the Cross. At that time there existed a very sharp distinction between Jew and Gentile. In the ways of God on earth the Jew enjoyed a place of privilege to which the Gentile was an entire stranger. Israel formed an earthly commonwealth, with earthly promises and earthly hopes. They were in outward relationship with God. Their religious worship, their political organization, their daily pursuits, their domestic affairs, all, from the highest act of worship to the smallest detail of

life, were regulated by the ordinances of God. This was an immense privilege in which the Gentiles, as such, had no part. It was not that the Jews were any better than the Gentiles, for, in the sight of God, the great mass of the Jews were as bad as the Gentiles, and some were even worse; and, on the other hand, there were individual Gentiles who were truly converted men, such for instance, as Job. But in the ways of God upon earth He separated Israel from the Gentile nations, and gave them a place of special outward privileges; for even if unconverted (as indeed was the case with the mass) it was an immense privilege to have all their affairs regulated according to the perfect wisdom of God. The Gentiles had no such position in the world. They enjoyed no public recognition of God. Their affairs were not regulated by the ordinances of God. And the very ordinances that regulated the life of the Jew sternly kept Jew and Gentile apart.

Thus the Jew had a place on earth of outward nearness to God, while the Gentile was outwardly afar off, with no recognized connection with God in the world.

But Israel entirely failed to answer to their privileges. They turned from Jehovah to idols. The commandments and ordinances of God, which gave them their unique position, they



wholly disregarded. Finally, they crucified their Messiah, and resisted the Holy Spirit. As a result they have, for the time being, lost their special place of privilege on the earth, have been dispossessed of their land and scattered among the nations.

This setting aside of Israel prepares the way for the marvellous change that has taken place in the ways of God on earth. The vivid glimpse into the past given by the Spirit of God in verses 11 and 12 only makes the contrast more striking, for, following upon the rejection of Israel, God, in the pursuit of His ways, has brought to light the Church and thus set up an entirely new circle of blessing, wholly outside the Jewish and Gentile circles.

This new departure becomes the occasion of the grace of God flowing out in a very special way to the Gentile. The call goes out to the Gentile; not, indeed, that the Jew is excluded from the new circle of blessing, for, as we shall see, the Church is composed of believers from among both Jews and Gentiles.

But if the Gentile is to be brought into the inestimable privileges and blessings of the new circle—if the Gentile is to have part in the Church—it must be on a righteous ground. Hence the Cross is at once brought in (verse 13). The Cross has already been alluded to in chapter 1. in connection with the fulfilment of the counsels of God. Here in chapter 2. the Cross is referred to in connection with the ways of God on earth. By the blood of Christ sinners of the Gentiles are made nigh to God, being brought from the place of distance in which sin had put them, into a place of nearness. Not a mere outward nearness, by means of ordinances and ceremonies, but a vital nearness that is only fully expressed in Christ Himself risen from the dead and appearing before the face of God for us. Hence it is said, "*in Christ Jesus ye . . . are made nigh by the blood of Christ.*" Our sins put us afar

off, but not only does the precious blood wash away our sins, it does more, infinitely more, it makes us nigh. The blood of Christ declares the enormity of the sin which demanded such a price, proclaims the holiness of God that could be satisfied with no less a price, and reveals the infinite love that could pay the price.

But this, however necessary for the formation of the Church, does not in itself constitute the Church. The Church is not simply a number of individuals "*made nigh,*" for this will be true of every blood-bought saint of every age. There is more needed; not only must individuals be "*made nigh,*" but Jewish and Gentile believers must be "*made both one*" (verse 14). This, too, the cross of Christ has accomplished. There Christ broke down the barrier between Jew and Gentile. The enmity between Jew and Gentile was caused by the ordinances which excluded the Gentile from having part in them. By these ordinances the Jew could approach God in an outward way while the Gentile could not. But in the cross Christ has entirely abolished the law of ordinances as a means of approach to God, and made a new way of approach by His blood. The Jew who approaches God on the ground of the blood has done with the Jewish ordinances. The Gentile comes out of his distance from God; the Jew out of his dispensational nearness, and both are made one in the enjoyment of a common blessing before God never before possessed by either. The Gentile believers are not raised to the level of Jewish privileges. The Jews are not degraded to the Gentile level. Both are brought on to an entirely new ground on an immeasurably higher plane.

But even this does not express the full truth of the Church. Had the Apostle stopped here we should indeed have seen that believers are made nigh by the blood and made one as having all enmity removed, but we might

have been left with the thought that we are made one company in happy unity. And that indeed is blessedly true, but, even so, far short of the full truth as to the Church. So the Apostle proceeds further and tells us that we are not only "*made nigh*," and not only "*made both one*," but that we are made "*one new man*" (15), "*one body*" (16), indwelt by "*one Spirit*," by whom we have access to the Father (18). This, indeed, presents the full truth of the Church—the body of Christ—that in the ways of God is being formed on earth.

God is not only saving souls from Jews and Gentiles on the ground of the blood. Not only is He gathering such together in *unity*, but He is forming them into one New Man of which Christ is the glorious Head, believers are the members of the body, and the Holy Spirit the uniting power. This is far more than unity, it is *union*. The Church is not simply a company of believers in happy unity, but a company of people who are members of Christ and of one another in intimate union. And the New Man is not merely new in point of time, but is of an entirely new order. Before the Cross, as we have seen, there were two men, Jew and Gentile, hating one another and at enmity with God. Now in the marvellous ways of God "*One New Man*" has come into being. A *New Man* which embraces every saint on earth united by One Spirit to Christ the risen and exalted Head.

Connected with the formation of the Church of God on earth the Apostle refers to three great truths, reconciliation to God, the preaching of peace to sinners, and access to the Father on the part of saints.

First, both Jew and Gentile are reconciled to God in one body (verse 16). God was not content that the Gentile should remain at a distance from Him, or that the Jew should be in a place of mere outward nearness, but in actual distance as great as the

Gentile. Nor was God content that Jew and Gentile should remain at a distance from one another. Therefore in the Cross He has so wondrously wrought that both have been brought nigh to Him, and both have been brought nigh to one another, formed into one body upon which God can look with complacency. The Cross has slain the enmity between Jew and Gentile believers, as also that which once stood between both and God. Nothing could more perfectly express the entire removal of the enmity than the fact of Jewish and Gentile believers being formed into "*one body*." It is not said in this verse "*One New Man*," because that includes Christ the Head, and no thought of reconciliation can be connected with Christ. It is those who compose the body who need reconciliation, not the One who is the Head.

The second great truth is that the gospel of peace is preached to the Gentiles who were far off, and to the Jews who were dispensationally near. We can well understand the introduction of the preaching into a passage that shows how the Church is formed on earth. Without the Cross there could be no preaching, and without the preaching there would be no Church. Christ is looked at as the Preacher, though the gospel He preaches is proclaimed instrumentally through others. We read of the disciples that "*they went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them*" (Mark 16. 20).

There is a third truth of great blessedness. By one Spirit we both (Jew and Gentile) have access to the Father. The distance is not only removed on God's side, but it is also removed on our side. By the work of Christ on the Cross God can draw nigh to us, preaching peace, and by the work of the Spirit in us we can draw nigh to the Father. The Cross gives us our title to draw nigh, the Spirit enables us to use our title and practically draw

nigh to the Father. But if access is by the Spirit, then clearly there is no room for the flesh. The Spirit excludes the flesh in every form. It is not by buildings, or ritual, or organs, or choirs, or a special class of men, that we gain access to the Father. Nay, all these fleshly means that so impress the natural man will most effectually bar all access to the Father. It is by the Spirit, but more, it is by "one Spirit," and therefore in the Father's presence all is of one accord. As we rightly sing,

"No jarring note shall there discordant sound."

Do not flat and low assembly meetings arise from the solemn fact that we have dared to bring into the presence of the Lord unjudged flesh? Or again, meetings otherwise happy, are suddenly jarred by an unsuitable hymn, or unseasonable ministry, because we are not all led by "*one Spirit*." Do we speak thus to fill any with a morbid dread of introducing that which would quench the Spirit, and thus silence them? On the contrary, let such remember that their silence may be as much an intrusion of the flesh as the forwardness of another. Let all judge themselves and so come into the presence of the Lord. Then, indeed, the Spirit will be free to give access to the Father.

Thus far we have viewed the Church as the body of Christ; but in the ways of God on earth the Church is viewed in other aspects, two of which are brought before us in the closing verses of the chapter (19-22). First, the Church is viewed as growing unto "an holy temple in the Lord"; secondly, as "an habitation of God."

In the first aspect the Church is likened to a progressive building growing unto a holy temple in the Lord. The Apostles and prophets form the foundation, Christ Himself being the chief corner stone. Throughout the Christian dispensation believers are

being added stone by stone until the last believer is built in and the completed building displayed in glory. This is the building of which the Lord says in Matthew 16., "I will build My Church, and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it." Christ is the builder, not man, hence all is perfect, and none but living stones form part of this holy structure. Peter gives us the spiritual significance of this building when he tells us that the living stones are built up a spiritual house "to offer up spiritual sacrifices to God," on the one hand, and to "show forth the excellencies" of God, on the other (1 Peter 2. 5, 9). In Revelation 21. John gives a vision of the completed building descending out of heaven from God, and radiant with the glory of God. Then, indeed, from that glorious building unceasing sacrifices of praise will rise up to God, and a perfect testimony to the excellencies of God will flow forth to man.

Then the Apostle, still using the figure of a building, presents another aspect of the Church (verse 22). He views the saints as no longer being built into a growing temple, but as forming a house already complete for an habitation of God through the Spirit. All believers on earth at any given moment are looked at as forming the habitation of God. But the Apostle does not merely say "ye are an habitation," but "ye are *builded together* for an habitation." That is, this habitation is formed of Jewish and Gentile believers "*builded together*." The dwelling place of God is marked by light and love; therefore, when the Apostle comes to the practical part of the Epistle he exhorts us as dear children to "walk in love," and to "walk as children of light" (Eph. 5. 2 and 8). The house of God is thus a place of blessing and testimony: a place where the saints are blessed with the favour and love of God; and, thus blessed, they become a testimony to the world around. In Ephesians the habitation of God is presented according to the

mind of God, and therefore only what is real is contemplated. Other Scriptures will show, alas, how in our hands the habitation has become corrupted until at last we read that judgment must begin at the house of God.

Thus in this chapter we have a threefold presentation of the Church.

1st. The Church is viewed as the body of Christ, composed of Jewish and Gentile believers united to Christ in glory, thus forming one New Man for the display of all that Christ is as the risen Man, Head over all things. For let us remember that the Church is not only "one body," but it is "His body," as we read "the Church which is His body." And as His body it is

"the fulness of Him." It is filled with all that He is in order to express all that He is. The Church—His body—is to be the expression of His mind, just as our bodies give expression to what is in our minds.

2nd. Then the Church is a growing temple composed of all the saints of the whole Christian period, wherein sacrifices of praise ascend to God and the excellencies of God are displayed to men.

3rd. Lastly, the Church is viewed as a complete building on earth, composed of all the saints at any given moment, forming the habitation of God for blessing to His people and testimony to the world.

## "I AM THE WAY."

(F. L. HARRIS.)

*"In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto Him, Lord, we know not whither Thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto Him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me" (John 14. 2-6).*

OUR blessed Lord addressed His disciples on that memorable night from the standpoint of His own perfect knowledge of all things, and from the joy of His heart, as He measured anticipatively the new place and relationships into which they were so soon to enter through His death.

We are introduced by the opening words of chapter 13. into those wonderful scenes wherein heavenly love unfolded itself to its chosen objects, "When Jesus knew that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end. . . . Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God and went to God: He riseth from supper."

All He did and all He said amongst His own in the "Upper Room" took character and fulness from this stand-

point: and so He brings before them at once the Father's house, the blessed goal which lay before His own heart, and whither He would bring them, speaking of it then as *My Father's house*, but speaking in the joy of the further announcement which He was to make to Mary on the resurrection morning, "I ascend unto My Father and *your Father*; and to My God and *your God*."

In our text He gave His disciples the credit of knowing both whither He went and the way, for He had told them as to His going, and Him they indeed knew; but spiritual intelligence as to the meaning of His words, and of His own mission in the world, waited for the coming of the Holy Ghost, for seldom, if ever, did they apprehend Him aright, though truly devoted to His person.

It was this lack of apprehension which occasioned Thomas' exclamation,

which in turn elicited the announcement of Jesus as to Himself being "The Way, the Truth, and the Life."

We may here remark that the believer's eternity is thus briefly and blessedly sketched out. His place, his portion, his relationships and enjoyments being measured and summed up in the association with Himself which the Lord implied in this threefold statement as to what He is, and that in relation to His own.

Love rejoices in the full accomplishment of its purposes, and here, in full keeping with the Gospel which presents Him as the Son of God, Jesus solaces His heart on the eve of His departure from His beloved disciples by announcing to them the goal to which He was leading them.

He tells them, "I go to prepare a place for *you*." Where was He going? He tells them "I leave the world and go to the Father" (chap. 16. 28). For this He was the Way, for, as He said, "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me."

Yes, He is the Way, but not at Bethlehem did He become so, not in the desert, with His victory over the devil, not during His public ministry, with all His perfect devotedness to Him that sent Him, not even in Gethsemane with its awful conflict, and perfect submission to the Father's will. No, not His life on earth, perfect and God-glorifying as it was, could constitute Jesus the Way to God for us—the Way to the Father, but :—

If sinners ever were to know  
The depths of love divine,  
All Calvary's weakness and its woe,  
Blest Saviour, must be Thine.

God now is glorified in Thee,  
In Thee, His only Son,  
His hand, His house, His heart is free,  
Because Thy work is done.

The cup of wrath, righteously due to us, must be drained by Him who had undertaken to bring home to glory those whom the Father had given Him. And so we hear Him in chapter 18. rebuke Peter with the words, "The cup which

My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?"

That cup involved the cross, the forsaking of God, and death itself.

He must cry with the voice of the Conqueror, "It is finished": the blood and water must flow from His pierced side in death: He must rise from the dead: only thus could He be the Way to the Father. Then, indeed, He quickly sends the message to those whom it concerned, "I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God."

In the announcement of Himself as "The Way" the Lord touches the affections deeply. His work is recalled to the heart—His love. As "The Truth" He is the perfect manifestation of God. As "The Life" we see Him in His own eternal being, and in that wondrous stoop, wherein, as Man, the life was manifested here on earth, and whereby as Man, alive from the dead, He can associate His own with Himself in His new and risen life above.

But as "The Way" all His sorrow and His sufferings are involved, His love that brought Him down that He might take us up. Also that which the burnt offering typified is here recalled: and this is specially the character of our blessed Lord's death as brought before us in John's Gospel.

In the burnt offering (Lev. 1.) the perfect devotedness of the holy Victim in accomplishing the will of God is typified, and therefore all ascended to God from the altar, setting forth that aspect of the death of Christ which was all for God. There was that in the death of Jesus which none but God could enter into. Yet, just as the offerer was accepted in all the value of the burnt offering, so is all the God-estimated value of the work of Christ reckoned to the believer, and he is accepted according to the infinite acceptance of the peerless Person, who gave Himself up even to death for the will and glory of God.

It is as the beloved of the Father that

He leads us home to the Father, and in His acceptance we are accepted—wondrous love, indeed.

Moreover, in thus bringing His own to the Father, Jesus was carrying out the desires of the Father's heart. He was the expression to us of the "great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins."

"Thou gav'st us, in eternal love,  
To Him to bring us home to Thee,  
Suited to Thine own thought above,  
As sons like Him, with Him to be."

And so in leading us home to the Father, in becoming "The Way," Jesus was meeting the heart and fulfilling the counsels of the Father, and even giving the Father an added motive for loving Him, as He says, "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again" (John 10. 17). Laying it down for the "sheep" by the Father's authority, He has taken it again in a new way in which He can associate His own in eternal life with Himself before the Father to the Father's joy and satisfaction, and glory.

All this was present to the mind and heart of Jesus as He spoke of Himself as "The Way, the Truth, and the Life." He had previously washed the disciples' feet, setting forth the action of the Word by which, through its cleansing and separating power, they might have "part with Him," and He continues this blessed ministry of love still, through the word (Ephes. 5. 26).

He was going to the Father, and He would have all His own have part with Him in spirit now, as in actuality soon, in what He was to enter into in resurrection life and glory—in what He was the Way into for them.

The actual entering into the Father's house awaits the coming of the Lord, when, the sleeping saints raised, and the living changed, He will conduct all there with exceeding joy; but the Holy Ghost has come thence, and is here on earth to conduct us in spirit now into those heavenly scenes and heavenly joys, to gather there our "baskets of

first fruits" (see Deut. 26. 1-11) so that we may bring them to God in the happy confession that we even now possess in faith the good land His grace has brought us into, and lay all at His feet in adoring worship.

We may further consider Jesus as "The Way," as signified in the three entrances or doors of the Tabernacle.

In one aspect of the truth set forth in the Tabernacle, it represented the universe—the threefold sphere in which the glory of God is displayed. The court figured the airy heavens, the Holy Place the starry heavens, and the Holiest the heaven of heavens.

Into each part the door was of the same materials and dimensions, each setting forth the Lord Jesus as Man, and as the Way into the fields of glory in which God makes Himself known.

Throughout His universe, and in all the various displays of His glory, whether on earth, or amongst the angelic hosts and heavenly bodies, or in that sphere "where all His brightness God displays," Jesus is the glorious Revealer, the One through whom by the power of the Holy Ghost we apprehend those glories through whom we enjoy them, and by whom we render the worship which the apprehension of them calls forth.

What marvellous grace that God should choose so to reveal Himself in Christ! So to reveal Himself that we, once His enemies and fearing His judgment, might be so brought into the knowledge of Himself, so fitted in righteousness for His presence, that what God is will constitute the fulness of our joy and our worship for ever, and that where He is will be our home of eternal delight, in the blessed relationship of children—of sons before His face.

Oh! the blessedness then of knowing Jesus as "The Way."

Surely the revelation of our blessed Lord in this character must needs bow our hearts before Him, now and ever.

# "THAT DAY."

(H. J. VINE.)

## I.

ONWARD our steps we urge to gain  
 That day ! That day  
 When justice, peace and joy shall reign,  
 When no unwelcome blot shall stain  
 The radiant day.

The upward road we tread to reach  
 The goal : it may  
 Be rugged, but its toils shall teach  
 Divinest lessons to us each  
 For that glad day.

To honour, thanks and glory found  
 When ends the way ;  
 The trials borne in faith resound  
 To God's own praise where songs abound  
 Throughout that day.

Our feet still forward then would speed  
 Without delay,  
 Nor Babel's painted semblance heed,  
 For did not Christ our Saviour bleed  
 To bring that day ?

And when its dawning greets the eye  
 With gorgeous ray,  
 The fiends of night and darkness fly  
 Before the Lord who draweth nigh  
 On that great day.

## II.

In that sweet time when anger's passed  
 Shall Israel say,  
 Praise ye the Lord ! His doings vast  
 Have wrought deliverance at last !—  
 Welcome the day !

'Tis Jesse's Offspring, David's Son—  
 Once cast away—  
 Who overwhelmed the wicked one,  
 Edom profane and Babylon,  
 Bringing the day.

At Armageddon armies great  
 In proud array  
 Appeared ! He smote them, sealed their fate,  
 Just retribution of their hate  
 On that great day.

The people in the far-off shores  
 Praise God as they  
 Embrace His rule, which round them pours  
 Rich mercies filling all their stores !  
 They hail that day.

With equity He'll rule o'er all  
 And fear allay.  
 The pure in heart and gentle shall  
 Upon His Name with blessings call,  
 In that bright day.

### III.

Not yet has dawned that glorious reign  
 God's Words portray :  
 Their truth, however, is not vain ;  
 Christ for His saints will come again  
 And bring that day.  
 Before He comes in power to bring  
 His royal sway,  
 Swift, like a bird of rapid wing,  
 They'll rise to Him on high, and sing  
 Still of that day.  
 His love shall then be satisfied :  
 In white array  
 His bride—the Church for which He died—  
 Rejoiceth ever at His side  
 In endless day.  
 Those who desired Him to appear,  
 And loved His day,  
 Bright crowns of righteousness shall wear,  
 And with Him in His glory share  
 Throughout that day.  
 Angels above in praise unite,  
 And hail that day !  
 Hosts of the heavens ! Orbs of light !  
 Glow in your glory ! Hail the sight  
 Of Christ's bright day !  
 Forward and upward let us press  
 Until that day.  
 God's grace, which called us, let us bless,  
 And hasten onward to possess  
 That glorious day.

## THE SPIRIT'S WORK.

**THE** Spirit never occupies me with His work in me. The word is : "He shall not speak from Himself. . . . He shall glorify Me" (John 16. 13-15). To go further : the work of Christ, wonderfully blessed as it is, can never be the object of my heart. It gives my conscience peace, sweet peace, but *only His Person can satisfy my heart*. And oh, how His Person does ! *The Father directs our attention to Him* (Matt. 17. 5). *The Holy Ghost would occupy us with Him* (Acts 7. 55, 56). *The Word of God testifies of Him* (John 5. 39). *He is the object of faith : He is the object of love : He is the object of hope : and the faith or love or hope that does not make Him THE object is spurious and unreal. He is ALL for my path. He is ALL for my service ; He is ALL for my worship ; blessed, blessed be His name. He is not on the cross : He is not in the grave : He is on the throne.*



## THE FRIENDS.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

**U**NDERLINE in your Bibles each occasion in the Gospel of John on which the Lord Jesus uses the first personal possessive pronoun. You will find pleasure and soul edification as you hear Him saying "My Father," "My Father's house," "My word," "My name," "My joy," "My peace," "My glory." It will move your heart as you keep in company with Him and listen to Him as He speaks of these, His priceless treasures. You will be glad to realize that even in His poverty in this world, and in the midst of sorrow and rejection, He was still infinitely rich in these things that were His outside the world.

But what a revelation of His love it is when He shows us that He does but disclose these things that we may enjoy them with Him, that He opens the doors of His treasure house and invites us to enter in, saying, All that is Mine is yours, all that My Father has given to Me, I share with you. And with this purpose of love in view He enfolds us in that same blessed possessive pronoun, for He says of us, "My sheep," "My brethren."

Lay the emphasis upon this word that the Lord uses; do not let us trouble for the moment as to what sheep or brethren mean, but let us rejoice in the fact that He has said we are His, and that being His means that no power can separate us from the love that possesses us, and that love will keep back nothing from us that it enjoys.

No effort of ours could put us into these relationships in which we stand with the Lord, and out of them we can never be cast. Once His sheep, always His sheep; for He has said, "They

shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand." Once His brethren, always His brethren; for this is a heavenly relationship in which we stand by the grace of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and no power on earth or in hell can overturn that which is established by the grace of the triune God. It would give pleasure to God if we enjoyed these relationships more, but our enjoyment of them or our indifference to them neither strengthens them nor weakens them; they abide eternally.

But in this same gospel He speaks of His friends, "Ye are My friends" (15. 14). And what shall we say of this? Is this true of all who are His sheep and His brethren? Is it true of you and me? It may be true of us, but if it is to be so we must fulfil the conditions of friendship. What is a friend? Is he not one to whom you can confide your secrets, one whom you can trust? One who knowing your innermost thoughts and most cherished hopes will not play you false, but labour in his love for you? Such a friend to us has our Lord Jesus been. We have ever been able to trust in Him; and the darkest moments of our lives when we were the most distressed and forlorn were the very occasions when His true friendship declared itself most fully. He is the friend that "loveth at all times," the "friend that sticketh," yes, "that sticketh closer than a brother." But can He say this of us? What He does say is, "Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."

It is love to Him that will make us cherish and carry out His commands, as He had already said to His disciples

in this same intimate talk with them, "He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me" (14. 21). And we must learn that our love to Him can only be constant and true as we rest in His love to us and enjoy it.

There are two men, often mentioned together, who may illustrate how we may fail and how be true in our friendship to our Lord. PETER wished to be the friend of Jesus. He felt that no one loved the Master as he did, for he was fearless and bold and would go to prison and death on His behalf. Thus he boasted, but when the testing hour came he denied that he ever knew Him, with oaths and curses. It was self-confidence that brought about his disgrace. Peter did not question the love of the Lord to him, but what was chiefly in his thoughts was his love to the Lord, and he could not be a true friend of Jesus on such a basis as that.

JOHN leaned his head on the Lord's bosom. He did not say, Lord, Thou mayest trust in me, and lean upon my love to Thee, but, I will trust in Thee, and lean upon Thy love to me; so he calls himself "the disciple whom Jesus loved." See the result—"Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother . . . . When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple standing by, whom He loved, He saith unto His mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith He to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home" (19. 25-27). Here was a man, whom the Lord could entrust with a precious legacy. He was His friend in that hour.

"Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you" (15. 15). So the Lord said to His disciples, and at the coming of the Holy Spirit they proved true to the

trust. And so may we, but what a wonderful intimacy with Him is this unto which He calls us! We may be His confidants, admitted to the knowledge of all that His Father has told Him! Can He trust us thus?

It is certain that in this day there is an almost universal betrayal of His truth in Christendom; then this is the day for His friends to stand forth and stand together in love to one another and in faithfulness to Him.

It is of very deep interest that in one of the very last of the inspired Epistles, probably the last of all, in which John has to speak of the assembly as the scene of tyranny and strife, he speaks of those who were true as THE FRIENDS. "*Our friends salute thee. Greet the friends by name.*" They were evidently not numerous, but they were all known by name. They were keeping the Lord's commands, and upon them was put this signal honour, they were designated "friends."

How richly will all those things, of which we have spoken at the beginning of this paper, be enjoyed by us if we are our Lord's friends. They are our inside portion, and the knowledge of them will give strength to us for the outside place where our friendship to Him is sure to be tested.

The call to-day is for friends, such as the Lord described in His last talk with His disciples before He proved the greatness of His love to them, and such as John refers to in his last Epistle—those who in these days of treachery and indifference to Christ will keep His commands, cherish His word, and not deny His Name. That He might have us for His friends He has shown Himself to be friendly; for "greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down His life for His friends." This He has done that we might be His friends as long as He has need of friends to maintain His cause, and be true to His Name in this world.

# THE CHURCH OF GOD.

## 5.—Administered by Paul. Ephesians 3.

(HAMILTON SMITH.)

WE have viewed the Church according to the counsels of God in the first portion of the Epistle to the Ephesians (1-2. 10). We have also seen the Church in the ways of God on earth in chapter 2. 11-22. Coming now to the third chapter, we have the Church presented in connection with the administration of Paul. The whole chapter is a parenthesis. Chapter 2. presents the doctrine of the Church; chapter 4. the practical exhortations based upon the doctrine. Between the doctrine and the exhortations we have this important digression in which the Holy Spirit presents the special administration, or service, committed to Paul in connection with the truth of the Church.

In connection with this service we learn that it was the insistence upon the truth of the Church that brought the Apostle within the walls of a prison. This great truth aroused the special hatred and hostility of the Jew inasmuch as it not only viewed Jew and Gentile in the same position before God—dead in trespasses and sins—but it entirely refused to exalt the Jew to a place of blessing above the Gentile.

We are then informed by what means the Apostle acquired his knowledge of the truth of the mystery. It was not through communications from men, but by a direct revelation from God, "By revelation He made known unto *me* the mystery." This meets a great difficulty that arises in connection with the truth of the mystery. When Paul preached the Gospel in the Jewish synagogues he invariably appealed to the Scriptures (see Acts 13. 27, 29, 32-35, 47; 17. 2, etc.), and the Jews of Berea are expressly commended inasmuch as they searched the Scriptures to see if the word preached by Paul was in accord with it. But directly the

Apostle ministered the truth of the Church he could no longer appeal to the Old Testament for confirmation. It would be useless for his hearers to search the Scriptures to see if these things were so. The unbelief of the Jew made it difficult for him to accept many truths that were in their Scriptures, even as Nicodemus failed to grasp the truth of new birth, but to accept something that was not there, something, too, which set aside the whole Jewish system that was there, and which had existed with the sanction of God for centuries, was, to the Jew as such, an insuperable difficulty.

Many Christians can hardly appreciate this difficulty, inasmuch as the truth of the Church is largely obscured in their minds, or even totally lost. Viewing the Church as the aggregate of all believers through all time, they have no difficulty in finding what they believe to be the Church in the Old Testament. That this has been the thought of godly men is amply proved by the headings they have given to many Old Testament chapters in the Authorized Version. Accept, however, the truth of the Church, as unfolded in the Epistle to the Ephesians, and at once we are faced with this difficulty which can only be met by the fact that the truth of the Church is an entirely fresh revelation.

This great truth which Paul had received by revelation he speaks of as "the mystery" and again in verse four as "the mystery of the Christ." In using the term mystery, Paul does not wish to convey the thought of anything mysterious—a purely human use of the word. In Scripture a mystery is something which has hitherto been kept secret, that could not be otherwise known than by revelation, and, when revealed, can only be apprehended by

faith. The Apostle proceeds to explain that this mystery was not made known to the sons of men in the Old Testament days but *now* is made known by revelation unto the "holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit." The prophets spoken of are clearly not Old Testament prophets, any more than in chapter 2. 20. In both cases the order is "apostles and prophets," not "prophets and apostles," as might be expected had the reference been to the prophets of the Old Testament. Moreover, the Apostle is speaking of what is "now" revealed, in contrast to what was formerly revealed.

What then is this mystery? It is clearly not the Gospel, which was not hidden in other ages. The Old Testament is full of allusions to the grace of God, and the coming Saviour, though these revelations were but little understood. We are plainly told in verse 6 that this new revelation is that the Gentiles "should be joint heirs, and a joint body and joint partakers of [His] promise in Christ Jesus by the glad tidings" (N.T.). The Gentiles are made joint heirs with the Jews, not in Christ's earthly kingdom, but in that far greater inheritance described in chapter 1. which includes both things in heaven and things on earth. And more, the Gentile believers are formed with Jewish believers into a joint body of which Christ is the Head in heaven. Moreover they jointly partake of God's promise in Christ Jesus. The Gentile is not raised to the Jewish level on earth, nor is the Jew brought down to the Gentile level. Both are taken off their old standing and raised to an immeasurably higher plane, united to one another on entirely new and heavenly ground *in Christ*. And all this is brought to pass by the Gospel which addresses both on one common level of guilt and utter ruin. The three great facts referred to in this verse are unfolded in chapter 1. The promise in Christ includes all the blessings unfolded in the first seven verses of that chapter; the inheritance

is opened out before us in verses 8-21, and the "one body" in verses 22 and 23

The mystery can be thus briefly stated within the compass of a single verse, but to lay hold of the greatness of the truth and all that is involved therein, demands the deepest spiritual exercise. One has said, "It is wonderful how slow Christians are to understand the largeness of the counsels of God. . . . In general we are obliged to be much more occupied with the details of the Christian life than with the great principles of this life." In the contemplation of the mystery we are carried back before the foundation of the world to find its source in the heart of the Father. There all was counselled according to His good pleasure. There too, in God, this great mystery remained hidden throughout the ages of time, until, in the ways of God, the moment was ripe for its revelation. Before that moment is reached great events must transpire: the world must be tested and proved to be an utterly ruined world: Christ must be manifested in the flesh, and His redemption work accomplished: He must be raised from the dead and seated in the glory: lastly, the Holy Spirit must come to earth.

The presence of Christ on earth was the final and greatest test for man. Dwelling amongst men full of grace and truth, He "went about doing good." On every hand He manifested a power that could relieve man of every possible ill—whether from sin, disease, death or the devil. Moreover, with a heart filled with compassion, He manifested a grace that used His power on behalf of sinful men. In result, all this manifestation of divine goodness only brought to light the absolute hatred of man for the perfect goodness of God. It was the final demonstration of the complete ruin of man whether Jew or Gentile. The Jews utterly rejecting the long promised Messiah, sealed their doom in saying, "We have no King

but Cæsar." This was apostasy. The Gentiles proved their utter ruin by using the government, that God had put into their hands, to condemn the Son of God after having judicially pronounced Him innocent. The Cross was man's answer to God's love—the final proof that not only is man a sinner, but a ruined sinner, beyond all hope of recovery in himself. What happens? The Christ, that the world has rejected, ascends to glory, and the world comes under judgment. The light of the world is put out, and the world is left in darkness. The Prince of life is slain and the world is left in death. Death and darkness cover the whole scene, Jew and Gentile both alike, dead to God in trespasses and sins.

Is there, then, no more hope for a ruined world? Must the world roll on to judgment with its vast freight of ruined souls? Has man been vanquished by sin and death? Has the Devil thwarted the purposes of God, encompassed the hopeless ruin of man and triumphed over all? As far as man is concerned there is but one answer. All is ruined—irretrievably ruined. The Cross proves that it is not a *dying* world, but a *dead* world, "Because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead." But in this supreme crisis, when the end of the world is reached and its awful history of sin is closed in death, then God falls back upon His eternal counsels, acts according to His own good pleasure, and in due time discloses the secrets of His heart. If the world is dead God lives, and the living God acts according to His counsels. The world had put the Christ of God upon a Cross of shame: God raises Christ from among the dead and seats Him upon a throne of glory; in due time, on the great day of Pentecost, the Spirit of God comes into the world from the glorified Christ. Wonderful indeed was that moment when the earth was waste and empty and darkness was upon the face of the deep and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the

waters; but far more wonderful the day when the Spirit of God came into a world that had ruined itself by putting out the light of the world and putting to death the Prince of life. May we not say that once again "darkness was upon the face of the deep," and once again "the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters"? God commences a new creation work based, not upon a dying man, but upon "Christ the Son of the living God"—the beginning of the Creation of God.

From the midst of a world of apostate Jews and godless Gentiles God calls out a great company of quickened souls, redeemed by blood, and forgiven according to the riches of His grace; and not only calls them out of a ruined world but unites them in one body with Christ their Head in heaven. They are not of the world from which Christ has been rejected, even as He is not of the world (John 17. 16), but they belong to heaven where Christ is seated, their risen and exalted Head. Moreover they will be associated with Christ in His glorious inheritance when He will have dominion over the whole created universe of God, whether they be things in heaven or things on earth.

Such then is this great mystery, in other ages not made known unto the sons of men, but now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit, and ministered to us through the Apostle Paul. For of this great truth, as the Apostle tells us, he was made a minister (verse 7). It is not that it was not revealed to the other Apostles—Paul tells us that it was—but to him was committed the special service of ministering this truth to the saints. Hence only in the Epistles of Paul do we find any unfolding of the mystery. The *grace of God* had given this ministry to the Apostle, and the *power of God* enabled him to exercise the gift of grace. God's gifts can only be used in God's power.

Moreover the Apostle tells us the

effect this great truth had upon himself (verse 8). In the presence of the greatness of God's grace he sees that he is the chief of sinners (1 Tim. 1. 15); in the presence of the immense vista of blessing unfolded by the mystery he feels that he is less than the least of all saints. The greater the glories that are opened to our vision the smaller we become in our own eyes. *The man who had the largest apprehension of this great mystery, in all its vast extent, was the man who owns he is less than the least of all saints.*

In order to fulfil his ministry the Apostle preached among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ (verse 8). Paul not only proclaimed the irretrievable ruin of man, but the unsearchable riches of Christ, riches beyond all human computation carrying blessings that have no limit. Could we search to the end of His riches we should reach the limit of the blessings that these riches bestow.

The preaching of the Gospel, however, was in view of the second part of Paul's service, to enlighten all with the knowledge of "the administration of the mystery" (verse 9, N.T.). Not simply to enlighten all with the truth of the mystery but with the knowledge of how it is administered, to show all men how the counsel of God from eternity to eternity is brought about in time by the formation of the Assembly on earth, and thus bring to light in public that which has hitherto been hidden in God from the beginning of the world.

But more, not only would God have all men enlightened as to the formation of the Assembly on earth, but it is His intent that now all the heavenly beings should learn in the Church the manifold wisdom of God. These heavenly beings had seen the creation come fresh from the hands of God, and, as they beheld His wisdom in creation, they sang for joy. Now in the formation of the Church they see "the *all-various wisdom* of God" (verse 10, N.T.). Creation

was the most perfect expression of creatorial wisdom; but in the formation of the Church God's wisdom is displayed in every form. Ere the Church could be formed God's glory had to be vindicated, man's need must be met, sin must be put away, death abolished, and the power of Satan annulled. The barrier must be removed between Jew and Gentile, heaven opened, Christ seated as a Man in the glory, the Holy Spirit come to earth and the Gospel preached. All this and more is involved in the formation of the Church, and these varied ends could only be attained by the all-various wisdom of God. Wisdom displayed, not only in one direction but in every direction. Thus the Church on earth becomes the lesson book of heavenly and angelic beings. Nor has the failure of the Church in its responsibilities, altered the fact that in the Church the angels learn this lesson. On the contrary it only makes more manifest the marvellous wisdom that, rising above all man's failure, overcoming every obstacle, at last brings the Church to glory "according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."

In the following verses (12 and 13) the Apostle turns aside from the unfolding of the mystery to give a brief word as to its practical effect. These wonders are not unrolled before our vision simply to be admired, admirable indeed as they are, for as David said of the House of God, it is "exceeding magnificent." But it is equally true that the mystery is exceeding practical, and in these two verses we see the effect of the mystery when rightly apprehended and acted upon. It is a truth that will make us at home in God's world, but put us outside man's world. As the blind man of John 9., when cast out by the religious world, finds himself in the presence of the Son of God, so Paul has access to the palace in heaven (12), but finds himself in a prison on earth (13). Christ Jesus, the One through whom all these eternal pur-

poses will be fulfilled, is the One by whom we have access by faith to the Father. If in Christ we are going to be set before God holy, without blame, in love, then in Christ we have holy boldness even now, and access to the Father with confidence. This great truth makes us at home in the presence of the Father. But in the world it will lead to tribulation. This Paul found, but he says "Faint not at my tribulations." To accept the truth of the mystery—to walk in the light of it, will at once put us outside the course of this world, and, above all, outside the religious world. Act upon this truth and at once we shall meet the opposition of the religious world. It will be with us as it was with Paul a continual struggle, and especially with all that judaises.

And it must be so, for these great truths entirely undermine the worldly constitution of every man-made religious system. Is the truth of the mystery, with the knowledge of which Paul sought to enlighten all men, proclaimed from the pulpits of Christendom, holiness conventions, or even from evangelical platforms? Is the truth of the mystery involving the total ruin of man, the utter rejection of Christ by the world, the session of Christ in glory, and the presence of the Holy Spirit on earth, the separation of the believer from the world and the calling of the saints to heaven—is this great truth proclaimed or acted upon in the national Churches and religious denominations of Christendom? Alas! it has no place in their creeds, their prayers or their teaching. Nay, more and worse, it is denied by their very constitution, their teaching and their practice.

But if this is so, we have a resource. We can pray, and hence these two verses (12 and 13) lead quite naturally to the prayer of the Apostle with which the chapter closes. If we have boldness and access with confidence then *we can pray*. If we are faced with tribula-

tions, then *we must pray*. So that in the presence of the special service given to Paul to minister the truth, and the tribulation in which this service involved him, he has only one resource, to bow his knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The prayer of the first of Ephesians was addressed to the "God of our Lord Jesus Christ." There Christ is viewed as a Man in relation to God, and from Christ set over all we look down upon the inheritance spread out in all its vast extent of glory. Here the prayer is addressed to the "Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," and Christ is viewed as the Son in relation to the Father, and instead of looking down upon the inheritance we look up to divine Persons.

The request in the first prayer is that we might know the hope of His calling, the glory of His inheritance, and the exceeding greatness of His power. But this prayer rises beyond the calling, extends beyond the inheritance, and leads to that which is greater than power. For here the Apostle prays, not only that we may know the hope of the calling, but that Christ—the One in whom we are called—may dwell in our hearts; not only that we may know the riches of His inheritance, but that we may know the fulness of God; not only that we may know His exceeding power, but that we may know the love of Christ that passeth knowing.

In order that these requests may be granted, the Apostle prays that there might be a special work by the Holy Spirit in the inner man. In the first prayer the power is toward us, here the power worketh in us. There it was the enlightenment of the eyes to see the inheritance, here it is a work in the heart to comprehend the love. To enter into the deep things of God we must be rooted and grounded in love. To be rooted and grounded in the knowledge of the schools will be of no

avail in learning the mysteries of God. Here we touch a region beyond the wit of man. We are in contact with things that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man. Things which God alone can teach by our affections. Thus when Christ dwells in the heart by faith, and we are rooted and grounded in love, then we shall be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length, and depth and height. The Apostle does not exactly say to what these terms refer, but has he not in view the infinite counsels of God, long hidden, but now at last disclosed in the mystery? This it is possible to comprehend, but there is that which passeth knowing—the love of Christ. It can be perfectly enjoyed, but we shall never reach its end or fathom its depths.

Here we are launched upon a shoreless sea whose depths no line has ever fathomed. In the knowledge of this love we shall be filled with all the fulness of God. The “fulness of God” is that with which God is filled. Christ is the fulness of God, as we read, “in Him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (Col. 2. 9, N.T.). The Church is the fulness of Christ—“the fulness of Him that filleth all in all” (Eph. 1. 23). God alone can lead our hearts into the knowledge of Christ’s

love and thus fill us with His fulness. For He is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us. It is not doing things for us, however true that may be, but here it is doing a work *in us*. The Apostle is not speaking of our circumstances and daily needs, and all that His mercy can do for us; he is speaking of that vast universe of blessing into which He can lead our souls by a work in us. Nor does the Apostle say, “Above all that we *can* ask or think,” as the verse is sometimes wrongly quoted. One has said, “There is a great difference between what we do ask and think, and what we *can* ask and think. There is no limit to what we may ask.” Nor can we limit what God can do in the saints for their blessing and His glory.

This leads the Apostle to close with a burst of praise: “Unto Him be glory in the Church in Christ Jesus unto all generations of the age of ages. Amen.” It was Paul’s high privilege to administer the mystery in time, but, says Paul, let it be to the glory of God throughout eternity. Counselling in eternity before the foundation of the world it will exist for the glory of God throughout eternity, when the world shall be no more.

## THREE APOSTOLIC PRINCIPLES.

(F. B. HOLE.)

THE existence of small divergences of thought and judgment amongst Christians is a frequent source of much weakness and discouragement. No acute observation is needed to perceive these differences of judgment, and their mischievous effects to-day; nor have we to read far in the New Testament Epistles before we find full and frequent allusions to the existence of these very troubles in the early church, together with divine instruc-

tions, which, if followed out, effectually counteract them.

We make no apology for referring our readers to these instructions. The need is all too urgent on every hand. The matter may seem small upon the surface, but it is very easy to “fail of the grace of God,” and consequently there is found through some small divergence a “root of bitterness” which, springing up, troubles us all “and



thereby many be defiled" (Heb. 12. 15). A great conflagration may proceed from a little fire, as the apostle James reminds us.

The epistle which stands first in order has a whole chapter devoted to meeting disturbances, and the underlying tendencies which produced them, springing out of such matters, and in it we find the Apostle Paul laying down three very definite principles which directly bear upon such questions. In each case the dogmatic statement of the principle is followed by an exhortation which shows the practical bearing of the principle thus laid down. We refer to Romans 14.

The subject of this chapter is the importance of receiving one who is "weak in the faith" (verse 1). Such an one will have defective thoughts of many things and he is not to be received in order to start arguing with him over points of difference. Such argumentations would indeed be "doubtful disputations," or the "determining of questions of reasoning," and those who are strong have to remember that the weak brother is weak not in his reasoning faculties but *in his faith*. What he needs therefore is some larger apprehension in faith of the whole truth of God. If this be patiently ministered to him many of these questions of reasoning will settle themselves.

The chapter gives us some indication of the nature of those questions which agitated the primitive church. There were: (1) *Questions as to meats* (verse 2). One man was assured that he might eat all things. Others had scruples; some going so far that they would only eat herbs. (2) *Questions as to days* (verse 5). One man specially regarded certain days. Another esteemed every day alike. Both these sets of questions would be most acute where Jews and Gentiles freely intermingled in the same assembly. There were also (3) *Questions as to "things offered to idols"* as brought before us in 1 Corinthians 8., and 10. 19-33.

This matter would continually be raised. Some with knowledge might go as far as sitting at meat in the idol's temple (8. 10). Others, bidden by an unbeliever to a meal might be disposed to go (10. 27), or even in buying their meat in the markets (10. 25), this question might be raised, for much of the meat offered for sale was the flesh of animals killed in connection with heathen sacrifices.

In each of these cases no definite instructions are given from the Lord. He evidently intends that each disciple shall act according to his own faith, and thus profit by the individual exercise that is needful.

First and foremost in Romans 14. stands the great principle of

### LIBERTY,

which is stated in verses 3 and 4 in connection with the questions as to the eating of meats. When divergences of judgment arise our first natural impulse is to start interfering with one another. He who eats will despise him who eats not, for his scruples appear to him narrow minded in the extreme. He who eats not will judge and condemn the eater, unable to see his freedom in any other light than unwarrantable licence.

"Who art thou that judgest another man's servant?" asks the Apostle. A pertinent question indeed! The thing that is really unwarrantable is neither the apparent narrowness of vision of the one nor the apparent breadth of licence of the other, but the assumption of judicial functions that belong alone to the great Master of all of us. To that Master we stand or fall, and indeed we may count upon His support as the latter part of the verse encouragingly states.

Do we all realize this? Fully assured though we may be that we have the Lord's mind on some particular point it is not ours to legislate for others. The Lord insists upon His

rights in dealing direct with His own servants, and we are to keep our hands off them. The business of each one of us in these matters is to have to do with our Master, and to consult His Word, and thus to reach assurance in our own minds as to what is His will as to our own course.

This principle of Christian liberty is summed up in the words, "*To his own master he standeth or falleth*" (verse 4). The exhortation based upon this is "*Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind*" (verse 5).

This brings us to the second principle laid down which is that of

### RESPONSIBILITY

of a direct and stringent sort to the Lord Himself. It is evidently of more importance that a saint should act with loyalty in regard to the will of the Lord as they know it—even supposing their knowledge of it to be defective—than that they should have a more perfect knowledge of that will. We say this with verses 6 and 14 before us.

The former verse shows that he who regards the day or eats as the case may be does so *unto the Lord*; and he who does not regard the day or does not eat refrains equally *unto the Lord*. The mind of the Lord is one, and cannot therefore lie in two opposite directions; but in acting or not acting both alike were governed by loyalty to the Lord as far as they understood His wishes, and *this* was pleasing to Him, and counted for more than correctness of understanding.

The latter verse shows the importance of thus acting in accordance with one's light, not in regard to the will of the Lord objectively as verse 6, but in regard to its subjective effect upon one's own conscience. If, believing a certain thing to be unclean or wrong, I yet indulge in it, my conscience is defiled. It is unclean to me, whatever it may be in the Lord's estimation.

These things Scripture brings before us, not to put a premium upon ignorance, nor to discourage our diligent inquiry as to what the will of the Lord is as to such matters, but the very reverse. We are to inquire, and being fully persuaded as to what the Lord would have us do, we must act in reference to Him. Thus He will be thanked and honoured whether we eat or regard the day, or whether we do not. We are the Lord's, and to Him we live (verse 8). He, by death and resurrection, has established His Lordship over both dead and living (verse 9), and before His judgment-seat we all shall stand (verse 10). In that solemn hour "*every one of us shall give account of himself to God*" (verse 12). In these words we get a dogmatic statement of our second principle. Each shall give account of *himself*, and not another. Our responsibility is direct and personal, solitary, and alone.

Upon this is based the exhortation, "*Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block or any occasion to fall in his brother's way*" (verse 13).

The liberty which is ours in Christ is, then, to be held in connection with the responsibility which is ours toward Christ. Each believer is so directly accountable to the Lord that he must not be interfered with by other believers, nor must he interfere with them.

Is, then, the attitude of each saint and servant of Christ towards his fellow saints and servants to be one of lofty detachment or superiority? By no means. The Apostle now introduces a third principle to complete the balance of truth—that of

### FRATERNITY.

The chapter opens with "*Him that is weak in the faith.*" We soon discover that he is "*another man's servant*": he is "*the Lord's.*" In verse 10, we discover that he is our

"brother," and this is alluded to again in verse 13. Verse 15 dwells upon the fact in more detail. There he is said to be "*thy brother, . . . him . . . for whom Christ died.*" This is a very clear dogmatic statement of the third principle.

Here we have not only the fact that this brotherhood exists, but we discover that it rests upon the death of Christ as its basis. Looking upon our brother in this light we cannot be indifferent to his welfare. He is an object of the love of Christ which carried Him even to death. If Christ loved him even to death, what shall our attitude towards him be? Shall we grieve him, or cause him to stumble? Shall we flaunt our liberty—that liberty which is ours, as an unchallenged right, according to the early part of the chapter—before him in such a way as to destroy his good conscience? No, indeed! We shall walk towards him "charitably" or "according to love."

We shall recognize, moreover, that these questions of eating, or regarding days, of meats sacrificed to idols, and feasts, and shambles, and the like, are, after all, of minor importance. The kingdom of God does not consist of such things, but of "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (verse 17), and hence these are the things to be diligently pursued as of prime importance. It is therefore well to maintain a spirit of yieldingness in regard to the minor matters, rather than imperil righteousness, or peace, or the spiritual joy of saints, by standing on one's rights. *Liberty* may be mine but it is well to waive it for the sake of *fraternity* so long as *responsibility* towards the Lord is not impaired

thereby. This is emphasized not only in verse 21 of our chapter but also in 1 Corinthians 8. 9-13, and 10. 23-31.

In Corinthians the Apostle sums it up by saying "all things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient." In the light of this we must ask ourselves not only "Have I liberty to do this thing?" but also "Is it expedient that I should claim and use my liberty in this case?"

Connected, therefore, with this third principle we have the exhortation, "*Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things where-with one may edify another*" (verse 19). Our attitude is therefore not to be the negative one of merely avoiding friction and discord and damage to weak souls by the yielding up of one's liberties on certain occasions, but the positive one of earnestly pursuing all that makes for peace and edification. In this a certain amount of self-denial is certainly called for, and there will be times, especially for the strong believer, when he will have to hold his faith in private before God and keep in check its manifestation in acts before men as verse 22 infers. The latter part of that verse would indicate that such a check upon the strong believer is wholesome, since in the exuberance of faith it is easy to rather overshoot the mark in embracing one's liberties, and consequently in calmer moments be uneasy and condemned in conscience over things one has permitted oneself to do.

Romans 14. may be a chapter that some of us are very inclined to skip. Yet it is full of most important instruction which, if assimilated and practised by us, would be of great benefit to the church at large. We beg our readers to very definitely lay it to heart.

## SELF-CONFIDENCE.

(J. BAYNE.)

IT will scarcely be questioned by any thoughtful person, that the vast majority of professing Christians, and, I think I might say many true believers in Christ, take for granted that the human mind is quite competent to investigate and determine all questions that have to do with the revelation of God and our responsibility to Him. But there exists, I venture to say, no greater delusion; nor could a more presumptuous or dangerous attitude be assumed by the creature. The audacity of assuming such a position is only equalled by the utter folly that it manifests, for this would make the creature judge of his Creator. Because a man is capable of inquiring into the actions of his fellows, and of passing judgment upon those actions according to his own ideas of right and wrong, it is no evidence of his ability to examine into the ways or words of God, and to form his own judgment regarding them. God is Judge of all, but the tendency of all is to constitute themselves judges of God.

"Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself" (Ps. 50. 21) is the natural confidence of the unrenewed mind of fallen man; and with this thought dominating him, how could he have any true understanding of the mind of God? Being all wrong in his conceptions of his Maker, he cannot be right regarding any spiritual question. And this is just that which made the rejection of Christ a dead-certainty from the outset: "When we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; . . . He was despised, and we esteemed Him not" (Isa. 53. 2-3). Right from the commencement of man's sinful history he constituted himself the judge of his Creator, finding fault with His providence,

criticizing His ways, breaking His laws, worshipping idols, killing His prophets, wallowing in pollutions, and when face to face with God manifested in flesh condemning Him, as a malefactor, to the death of the cross.

We are told that man requires a certain amount of education, if he is to take up these difficult and abstruse questions. Just fancy a man getting the knowledge of God in the universities of the world! "The world by wisdom knew not God" (1 Cor. 1. 21) is the verdict of God's Holy Spirit, recorded against it after it had four thousand years in its fruitless quest; and then when He manifested Himself to them, not only did they not know Him, but so utterly did they disapprove of Him, that they spat in His face, and nailed Him to a gibbet; and all this was done by the leaders of the world, for "the common people heard Him gladly" (Mark 12. 37). Who would be mad enough to put confidence in the human mind after such an exhibition of its inability to examine evidence, and give a verdict according to righteousness and truth?

But to this it may be replied, that the ear tries words, as the mouth tastes meat; and I admit that in Job 12. 11 the analogy is not only admissible but intended. But supposing the health of the judge is in a bad condition, and thus his taste is perverted; he may desire food that is unwholesome, he may call bitter sweet, and sweet bitter; he may call evil good, and good evil. What then? Where is his ability to judge? He may turn to his neighbour to decide on his behalf. But supposing everyone he knew was suffering from the same malady, no one could render him the slightest assistance.

Again, one of the symptoms of this sickness, and the leading one, is that the afflicted person is always absolutely

certain that his taste is excellent, and that he is quite competent to decide for himself between truth and error, and no one could convince him to the contrary. He will ask you what you imagine has been the object in giving him a rational mind if he is not to use it. Besides, he will tell you that even the Bible exhorts us to "prove all things" (1 Thess. 5. 21). But where is the standard of truth, by which we may be able to judge that which is advanced in this world of many voices? If we have no standard of truth, to which the opinions of men may be brought, we must fall back upon our taste, and if our taste is perverted, our case is indeed hopeless as far as our natural resources are concerned.

But have we been left in the midst of this prevailing darkness without any revelation from God? Is it so that He who made us, and who put into our hearts the strong conviction of a future life, has left us to grope about in our blind night for some clue that would solve the mystery of that shadowy land that is so fearsome to the children of men? The worlds that He has made speak of His power and wisdom, and His providences reveal both care and kindness unto all; and that we are accountable to Him for our behaviour while on earth seems deeply graven on our inmost souls. But none of these things is capable of casting one ray of light across the gloom that hides the secret from the gaze of men. None of these things has power to rend the veil, and bring the future into evidence.

In this favoured island of Great Britain it used to be believed that we had a perfect revelation of the mind of God, and this revelation was affirmed to be in the Bible. But at this present time men have become too wise for the Bible. As learning has increased, reverence for the Gospel of the grace of God has decreased; and it is not only corruption of the text, and true meaning of the Word, that prevails—this was so from the beginning—but the Book is

altogether cast aside, and fables dominate the minds of men. Popery, Mormonism, Spiritism, Christian Science, Christadelphianism, Evolution, Modernism, and a host of other fables have taken the place of God's revelation, and though few of those so led astray would affirm that they have got the whole truth, most are ready to affirm that there is a certain amount of truth in every religion, for all have the good of mankind in view, and if all were united in one they would be able with more perfect liberty to march together to the glorious goal, that they suppose lies before the human race.

You may assert that man is a fallen creature, and that his conceptions of God are erroneous. But he knows better! He smiles at your crass ignorance! He has tasted the Word of God, and has had enough of it! He has got something better! A fallen sinner, indeed! No, he has thrown that bit of barbarism overboard, along with a lot of other relics of antiquity. Instead of being fallen, he has risen, risen from the lowest form of life, and he is on his upward way to heights indescribable! He has talked with the spirits across the border! They have told him wonderful things! As for God, the spirits know no more about Him than they knew upon earth! But that is of no consequence, their joys do not spring from their knowledge of Him, or of what He may be in His nature! He is not necessary to their happiness; they can do very well without Him!

And this is where dependence upon their reasoning faculties has led them. They neither want God in this life nor in the next. They could not understand the longing of the heart after God, which is expressed in the words of the prophet: "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God" (Ps. 42. 1, 2). For of this soul-hunger after the living God they know

nothing, nor do they wish to know anything.

And the hierarchy, the professed ministers of the Gospel of God, think there may be something in this spiritism. They are not sure that the Gospel is the power of God to salvation to everyone that believes. They only desire to investigate this "New Religion," to prove all things, not by the standard of God's revelation, for they are well aware that in the most solemn manner necromancy is by the Scriptures condemned; but by the natural ability possessed by themselves to grapple with the phenomena, sift the evidence, separate the precious from the vile, get hold of the facts, and let the world have the result of their investigations! This effort on their part seems very praiseworthy, but I think I could not rightly be condemned if I doubt the faith of such men in the Holy Scriptures. Sir A. C. Doyle has said that spiritism is "either the greatest delusion that had ever been put before the human race, or else it was the very greatest advance that the human race had ever made," and I also say that the same thing is true of the Bible, only in an infinitely greater degree; for spiritism professes to be simply a discovery of the present enlightened age, while the Bible professes to be the perfect revelation of God, given to men by His Holy Spirit, the title of which might be truly written on the cover of the Book: "THUS SAITH THE LORD." If the Bible be not this it is the greatest lie that God was ever charged with. It is bad enough to slander men, but what must the end be of the man that has slandered the living God? And if spiritism is the truth the apostles of Christ, who taught the purest morals that were ever heard of, were the greatest liars the sun ever shone upon. Whoever can, let him reconcile this contradiction.

But I say to those men who want to investigate spiritism, suppose you attend one of these seances, and you are brought into contact with, as you

think, a dearly loved departed relative—suppose he makes himself visible to you by means of this ectoplasmic covering of his spirit-body—suppose you recognize him—suppose he speaks to you, so that you recognize the voice of your friend—suppose he reminds you of something that transpired in his life, known only to himself and you—what then? You would say, you would be compelled to say, the witness is overwhelming. I am bound to make a complete surrender to spiritism.

But were you really in contact with your departed relative?

"Who could doubt it?"

Are there no spirits but those of the dead?

"I cannot tell."

But you are not sure that none others exist?

"Of course, I am not: I know not what beings may be in the universe."

After all, this may not have been the spirit of your friend?

"But I saw his face and heard his voice."

But that was all faked.

"What do you mean?"

How do you know that was not all masquerade?

"I recognized my friend."

You saw nothing but ectoplasm.

"I could not be deceived regarding the features."

But why could not a wicked spirit, that wanted to deceive you, have appeared to you in an ectoplasmic body?

"That would not have been my friend."

No, but it might have been a perfect representation of your friend.

"But I knew his voice."

But the voice from the spirit-body would not be the same as that from the mortal body?

"Possibly not, but that could be

arranged by means of the ectoplasm. At least, I suppose it could."

You see, if the spirit of your friend could make an appearance of himself out of the ectoplasm, I fail to see why a spirit that was determined to deceive you could not have done the same. I know it was not the spirit of your friend at all. You will gather from what I have said that while I admit people are subjected to a good many bogus seances, I am strongly of the opinion that there is also actual contact with spirits. The only question is, Who are these spirits? You do not know who they are. A serpent spoke to Eve; that was the devil (Rev. 20. 2). The legion of demons identified themselves with the man that was possessed by them, and used him as their mouthpiece (Mark 5.). You are no match for them.

"But Satan, if there be such a being, cannot know everything."

Not everything; but he knows a very great deal more than you think. Who told him that our first parents were forbidden to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 3. 1)? Who told the demons that Jesus was the Son of God? (Mark 3. 11). How did the devil know that Psalm 91. 11, 12, referred to Jesus? (Matt. 4. 6). Your traffic with spiritism simply means that you have thrown down the gauntlet before the face of the powers of darkness, and have challenged them to combat, your cleverness matched with theirs. The issue of that trial should not be difficult to predict.

"But if one is not to trust to the sight of the eyes and the hearing of the ears, to what is he to trust?"

To God, I should say. Is He not accessible? Why should you put confidence in your own wisdom? You are not a beast. God has set man in intelligent relationship with Himself, and in the place of absolute dependence upon Him for everything, and though fallen this is still his privilege and responsibility; but you wish, and

seem determined, to despise His guardianship, mark out a path for yourself, and by your own sapience set every power of evil at defiance. He has spoken to you in the Gospel of His grace, and you have refused to believe it.

"I am not aware that He has spoken."

I am not so sure of that: it is both true and untrue. The Gospel is His voice to you, and as His voice it has appealed to your conscience, but your inborn enmity against having to do with Him prevents the Word taking deep root in your heart; and like a man heavy with sleep, and who refuses to be awakened, hearing a voice sent to arouse him, turns a deaf ear to that to which he is determined not to hearken. If men do not know that the Bible is the Word of God, why is the world up in arms against it? Who troubles himself about the truth or falsehood of the Koran? or of the various faiths of the nations not Christian? But the whole infidel world must be tilting at the Bible. Why is this? It is simply that there is a subconscious conviction in every soul that hears the Gospel that it is the voice of God to men, but the natural rebellion of the heart against Him whose voice it is rises up against it, and men do not know that it is His Word, *because they will not know it*. Therefore does He tell them: "He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12. 48). This will be no sin of ignorance, but sin against light. The light was there shining before their eyes, and they knew it was the light of God, but they hated it, because their deeds were evil. Therefore that Word which was light in this dark world would judge them in the last day. Then, again, our Lord says to the Jews in the temple: "Ye both know Me, and ye know whence I am"; and then, again, "Ye neither know Me, nor My Father" (John 7. 28; 8. 19). The

meaning of these apparent contradictions (found all through the Scriptures) is this. If God speaks to His creature, the creature hears, must hear, must know that it is his Creator's voice; but his rank rebellion against God will not allow him to own the fact. It is the same substratum of hatred against God that makes the atheist say in his heart: "There is no God," when his own existence and the whole universe around him proclaim with no uncertain voice His eternal power and divinity. If God has spoken by the things that He has made, and men will not hearken to His voice, it is not likely they will listen to the Gospel of His grace.

I have referred to spiritism as illustrating the depths to which men can go in dependence upon their natural abilities to grapple with things relating to a future life, and of which no man knows anything without a revelation from God. But when men will not have that revelation, but are determined to listen to voices that would lure them from eternal salvation to eternal destruction, what can be said on their behalf, or on behalf of their spiritual guides, who talk about these devilish deceptions as though they might have their origin in the Father of lights?

Men who have heard the Gospel are very well aware that it is the voice of God to them; and great infidels, who have remained infidels, have had to confess, like the officers that were sent to make Jesus prisoner, and who returned without Him, "Never man spake like this Man," for the Gospel is but the continuation of the voice of Jesus as heard upon earth. But the mind of fallen man carefully excludes God, and therefore is the Gospel in rejection, as is He who is the subject of it. Therefore the man that puts trust in his own powers to grapple with these things is ever certain to decide against the ways of God; and the more clever and learned he is, the more determined he is to oppose the testimony rendered to a Divine Saviour.

To the greatest philosopher upon

earth the offence of our first parents was trivial when compared with the judgment that fell upon the offenders. In the estimation of such the offering of Cain should have been more acceptable than that of Abel, for it was the witness of more abundant toil on the part of the offerer, and it is barbarous to suppose that God could prefer the death of an innocent victim. With such the profane Esau would have more acceptance than his artful brother Jacob; the wild ass Ishmael would be preferable to Isaac, and on the whole Saul be considered a better man than David. God's choice never would be man's, and certainly man's never would be God's, for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God (Luke 16. 15).

Cursed is man that trusts in man, says the prophet (Jer. 17. 5), and he that trusts his own heart is a fool (Prov. 28. 26). "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding" (Prov. 3. 5). God has set man in dependence upon Himself, and therefore no one needs think himself quite competent to take up eternal problems, and to solve them by his own natural intelligence; for should he make any such attempt he is as certain to go astray as though to go astray was the one desire of his heart.

Even the saint of God who desires to learn the truth in its purity, if not careful, is most likely to suppose he cannot be led astray; but enamoured with that which he supposes is fresh truth may, before he is aware, have far wandered on the paths of error. No one is safe who for one moment takes up spiritual questions in his own fancied power. If I am in perplexity regarding the will of God, He is my resource, and He never fails. "It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto Me" (John 6. 45). Let us therefore see to it that it is of the Father that we hear and learn.



## "ALL SEEK THEIR OWN." Phil. 2. 21. (I. H. ANDERSON.)

AS we casually glance at these words, we feel how aptly they describe the character of mankind generally, in a world where so many are doing that which is right in their own eyes. But turning to the Word of God for ourselves, and reading Phil. 2. 19-23, so as to get the context, we find that the Apostle Paul, when he says, "For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's," is not speaking of the world, but of the saints.

Solemn words they were indeed, but the state of the children of God was such even in those early days, that when the Apostle looked around his immediate circle, he could only find one, his own son in the faith, Timothy, who would fully care for those saints at Philippi, who were no doubt the fruit of his labours.

In this very epistle, we see the Apostle on the one hand, with Christ as his object, ever seeking to know Him better, and to become more like Him, until that moment when he would enter into His glorious presence, whilst on the other hand, he is consumed with zeal for the interests of the Lord, in this world where He was rejected, desiring always to encourage and strengthen the people of God.

Must it not have been the cause of much grief and disappointment to him, to have had so soon to utter such words, "*All seek their own*," and has it not a voice to us to-day?

As the Lord looks upon us, is He able to say, "Ye seek the things of Jesus Christ." Is the love of Christ so constraining us, that we who live, do not live unto ourselves, but *unto Him*, who died for us, and rose again (see 2 Cor. 5. 14, 15), and are we seeking to help and encourage His own, who are so precious in His sight?

How many are the opportunities we have missed in the past, but if still we

are left here waiting for Him, we shall yet have opportunities, and we do well to pray that we may not let them slip by unheeded. For instance, the summer comes round, and no doubt many of us spend a week or two in the country or at the seaside. Shall we turn to Him about it, and seek His interests, for it is so very easy for us to put self first in these things. Sometimes we feel we must choose a bracing coast-town, or a quiet village, as necessary for our health, and truly we need to care for our bodies, for they are the Lord's, but let us beware lest we are ensnared by making that the supreme consideration. Or perhaps we would so like to visit this or that district, because of its glorious scenery, but listen again to those words, "*All seek their own*."

Last summer there were some who spent their holiday in France and in Switzerland, with the desire to seek the things of Jesus Christ, by ministering to scattered saints, and preaching the Gospel to those that were yet in darkness. Have we ever had any such desires as these?

We may not be called of God to go abroad, but do we ever stop to think of the many of His children, even in this country, to whom we could prove a cheer and a blessing, by just spending our holiday where we could visit and have fellowship together with them, and maybe they are languishing owing to our failure in the past?

Some may say that they need a *real rest*, but can we not find rest amongst His own? Then there are others, without doubt, that feel that they could not be of any help to anyone, but let such remember that even a cup of cold water given in His Name will not lose its reward. Some, perhaps, are hardly ever away from home, and the bright meetings which they are privileged to enjoy in their own town, but what a cheer it is to many who are

not so happily circumstanced to have fellowship with some from other parts. It is the fellowship that is so sweet. Have we not all been baptized into one Body by one Spirit; and are we not all one in Christ Jesus?—and what joy it gives to many to meet with other members of His body, even if at times it is only for a grip of the hand.

We who live in the great cities know little of the spiritual exercises of some of our brethren and sisters in country parts, and how they yearn to see us, and as we think over it, may it increase our desire to spend our holiday this summer, not seeking our own, but "*the things that are Jesus Christ's.*"

If we have failed, we thank Him that He never fails, and if we have neglected His own, we know that He watches

over each one with His tender Shepherd care, not forgetful of the least of them. Praise His Name!

But let us remember that His faithfulness does by no means relieve us of our responsibility, and may we have more of the spirit of the Apostle Paul, when he could say, "I will very gladly spend and be spent for you."

And what of the result? Our hearts surely will be filled with His peace and joy, and in the day that is coming we shall hear that "Well done" from His own blessed lips.

"As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6. 10).

## NOTES ON JEREMIAH. No. 13.

(H. J. VINCE.)

### In Babylon or in Egypt?

THE short section which we now come to consists of six chapters only. We have called it *the historical section*.

CHAPTERS 40 to 45 are embraced in this third section of the book, and they give the history of the remnant which was left after the destruction of Jerusalem, also Jeremiah's words to them in the land and in Egypt, where we last hear of them and the prophet. A special word is given to Baruch in chapter 45. These six chapters naturally subdivide into three twos. *The first two* giving us the story of the remnant and Gedaliah in the land; *the second two* that of the remnant with Johanan and their going down to Egypt; *the third two* give the words of Jeremiah concerning the Jews and Baruch.

There is a peculiar interest attaching to this short history, for the story of

this remnant stands out as a complete contrast to that of the remnant which was at Babylon. These go down into Egypt, contrary to the word of the Lord, to be consumed by sword and famine and pestilence: those at Babylon have peace and prosperity and plenty provisionally promised to them. These carry Jeremiah with them into Egypt though he pronounces their doom: the others have Ezekiel and Daniel with them at Babylon, where the latter prevails in prayer with God for their deliverance and restoration. God at the beginning redeemed the people out of Egypt, but Babylon became the place of their captivity when they had backslidden from the Lord. To return to Egypt therefore was fatal, but from Babylon there was deliverance.

Babylon represents the worldly-religious confusion which abounds, where many real believers weep, and

where they long for Zion in the true spiritual sense. From this both the Old and New Testaments speak of deliverance. Egypt on the other hand represents the place which was ours by nature, under Satan's power, and for those who once professed to accept deliverance from this through our Lord Jesus Christ to return thither again, means that they secure for themselves the displeasure and wrath of God ; and we read, " Their last state is worse than the first. For it were better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them." By so doing they show that they were never true believers at all, never the "*sheep*" of Christ, who are clean every whit, but as the Holy Spirit so carefully continues to explain, they are really like the unclean animals named in the Old Testament, as He saith, " That word of the true proverb has happened to them : The *dog* has turned back to his own vomit ; and the washed *sow* to her rolling in mud " (2 Peter 2. 20-22).

Both the *dog* and the *sow* find their pleasure in this : the *sheep* on the other hand would be miserable in the mud. It is just so with the true believer, he has been spoiled for the world since he heard and believed the Gospel, and having a new nature he cannot as before find pleasure in the old life. We need, however, to be constantly drinking in the word, which ministers God's gracious truth to us, so that the new nature may be well nourished, and thus our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the word speaks, will become better known to us, and we shall outdistance the ways of the world, and be known as those who find their true delight in the will of God. Thus pursuing the good we shall refuse the evil, and reflecting the virtues of our blessed Saviour we shall be well pleasing to God. It is thus, without thinking of self or of the pursuits of the world we grow in grace and are transformed to Christlikeness.

" Like Him in faith, in meekness, love,  
In every beauteous grace ;  
From glory into glory changed,  
Till we behold His face."

### FAILING LEADERS : THE UNFAILING LEADER.

With more detail than in the last section we are told how Jeremiah was treated when Jerusalem was broken up by the Chaldean army. We are also told that he went to Gedaliah (40. 6) who was appointed governor by the King of Babylon and had the remnant committed to his care (7).

CHAPTERS 40 and 41 expose for us the fallacy that a remnant in the land—in the right place—has necessarily some superior qualifications. To be in the right place without being right with the right Person will only expose us to bad behaviour and to impious hypocrisy such as is illustrated here. Even with the prophet of God amongst them, whose word they feigned to value, they acted deceitfully. To call upon the Lord Himself out of a pure heart is our safety, and to this end the Holy Spirit of God is here to exalt Him before the eyes of our faith.

Gedaliah seems to have been a sincere unsuspecting man. Jeremiah dwelt with him among the remnant (6), and all looked well for a short space. Gedaliah encouraged their hearts, and they gathered of the fruit of the land in abundance. Wine and oil and summer fruits were plentiful (7-12). The presence of Ishmael, however, meant the overthrow of Gedaliah. Johanan warned the latter of this, but he treated it as a false suspicion (13-16). It was nevertheless true, and Ishmael slew Gedaliah and those who were with him, and fled with the rest, after having added to his guilt by killing a company of worshippers who were on their way to the house of the Lord. Johanan, hearing what Ishmael had done, pursued him, and recovered the glad and grateful remnant.

They did not, however, quietly and

confidently settle under the power and protectorate of Babylon, which God had established, but they moved *toward* Egypt, though remaining still in the land. Fear filled their hearts and not quiet confidence in God and in His will (41. 1-18). The conflicts which they had seen increased this with them. There was no waiting upon God. They had no sense of the present mind of God for them even though His prophet was there. Where there is much restlessness, though a measure of deliverance is experienced, as in the case of this remnant, yet, unless time is taken to learn and act upon the present mind of God, worse calamity will follow than was known before. These things are recorded for our learning. The active leaders caused all the mischief with this remnant of God's people and it is the same to-day. How important, therefore that our eyes and hearts should be directed to the one unfailing Leader—to the *Lord Himself!* The conflicts and failures would be turned to good purpose then, if we allowed them (as we did with our sins when we first discovered our need) to drive us to Him, for He not only meets our need, but does for us far beyond that which we ask or even think. May the Lord be exalted before us more and more, and thus may we cleave to Him though leaders and others fail, as they have done ever since the days of the apostles. (See Acts 20. 29-32.)

“Keep us, Lord, O keep us cleaving  
To Thyself and still believing,  
Till the hour of our receiving  
Promised joys with Thee!”

### ABIDING OR DEPARTING?

What a picture is portrayed by the Holy Spirit in CHAPTERS 42 and 43! The very leader who had been used to deliver the thankful remnant from Ishmael now leads them into Egypt after feigning a desire to know and obey the word of the Lord concerning them!

They ought to have understood it was God's present mind that His

people should rest under the shadow of Nebuchadnezzar His servant, but all the captains and Johanan asked Jeremiah to inquire for them “the way wherein we may walk, and the thing we may do” (42. 1-3). The prophet having undertaken to tell them all that God made known, they, on their part, undertook to obey the voice of the Lord, whether it be good or whether it be evil (4-6). After ten days they were told to abide in the land and the Lord would abundantly bless them (7-12), but if they went down into Egypt, the sword, the famine and the pestilence should overtake them there (13-18). The Lord knew their deceitful hearts, and the prophet plainly said to them, “Ye dissembled in your hearts when ye sent me unto the Lord” (19-22). He knew they were already determined not to abide in the land, but to depart into Egypt.

The whole state of their hearts and minds is exposed in the next chapter. Azariah, Johanan, and all the proud men accuse the prophet of speaking falsely, saying that Baruch was setting him on against them. There is something contemptible about these leaders of the remnant. The Holy Spirit calls attention to the “*proud men*”! After what had happened one would hardly have expected pride; they had been so humiliated, and their position at that moment was enough to deeply humble them! There were nevertheless those amongst them who evidently prided themselves that they were still *the* people. Disobedience to the word of God therefore followed although they had undertaken to obey it. Taking Jeremiah, Baruch and the remnant “they came into the land of Egypt; for they obeyed not the voice of the Lord: thus came they even to *Tahpanhes*” (43. 1-7). It is the work of the Holy Spirit of God to-day to build up the saints of God in Christ, and to set their minds on things above where Christ is: it is very sad and serious work to turn the remnant in the downward direction, as we have illustrated so vividly in our chapter.

At the very spot they then reached, at *Tahpanhes*, the prophet is told to hide some great stones before their eyes, in the brickkiln which was at the entry of Pharaoh's house. How eloquent was this sign! Did not the brickkiln remind them of Israel's former slavery in Egypt? They had reached this spot again in their effort to escape the dominion of the king of Babylon, the servant of the Lord! Had they escaped? Had they found the liberty they expected by thus disobeying the word of the prophet? To that very spot where these stones were placed God would send His servant Nebuchadnezzar and place his throne upon them! His royal pavilion should be spread over them! Egypt and its wealth and its goods should be given into his hands: and it was so.

This is an important lesson for believers who go hither and thither in their restless endeavours to find an easy path, and who do not abide in Christ where God has set them. We are not left to choose our own way, but we are to abide in the path of God's will, and not depart from it. There are difficulties doubtless. There were difficulties with this remnant. We are nevertheless to abide in Christ. To do otherwise is to increase the difficulties for ourselves and others. To abide in Him is to assure blessing and increase for ourselves and others also. May this be so with us for God's glory.

## GREAT THINGS, OR THE LORD HIMSELF?

CHAPTERS 44 and 45 conclude this section. They give us the prophet's final words to the Jews as well as their wilful reply, also an important word for the servant of the Lord to Baruch. In Egypt the word came to Jeremiah concerning them all (44. 1-14). They had seen with their own eyes the destruction and desolation which God had brought upon Judah and Jerusalem because of their wicked-

ness. He had pleaded earnestly with them, saying, "*Oh, do not this abominable thing that I hate,*" but they hearkened not, so the judgment which lingered long came with fury and anger at last. They are told to let that lesson teach them not to provoke the Lord to wrath any more by their abominable idolatry, for if they heeded not they should be consumed utterly.

The people, however, had become so hardened in their evil ways that they tell the prophet without hesitation, "We will not hearken unto thee"! They boldly inform him they will continue their idolatry and burn incense to the queen of heaven, for, say they, when we did these things in Judah and Jerusalem we had plenty of bread and were well, and saw no evil (15-19). Jeremiah points out to them it was the very thing which brought God's judgment upon Judah and Jerusalem (20-23). Moreover the prophet made known to them, since they were determined to continue their abominable practices, the Lord had said, "Behold, I have sworn by My great Name, saith the Lord, that My Name shall no more be named in the mouth of any man of Judah in all the land of Egypt, saying, The Lord God liveth," but they should be consumed, and as the king of Jerusalem had been given into the hand of the king of Babylon, so also should the king of Egypt be (24-30).

In the midst of wrath—righteous wrath—He remembers mercy, however. How comforting it is to hear Him say even at such a time, "*Yet a small number that escape the sword shall return out of the land of Egypt into the land of Judah*" (28). The blessed Lord knows the godly, and knows, too, how to deliver them. Some, doubtless, like the prophet and Baruch had been carried into Egypt by the proud and wilful. They were few and feeble. They were not there with a happy mind. They had been carried away by force of circumstances. It is always cheering to remind our hearts of that

word, "*The Lord knoweth them that are His*" (2 Tim. 2. 19). In His own time He opens the way for them to walk where He would have them. This is always so. It is so now. The road is clear to follow righteousness, faith, love, peace, with those who call on the Lord Himself out of a pure heart (2 Tim. 2. 22). What a privilege! What an honour! An open door for a feeble, tried remnant to have the Lord Himself to call upon!

It is just at this point the final word of this section is given—the word to Baruch (chap. 45.). Why should it be put here when it was spoken as far back as the fourth year of Jehoiakim, as the Spirit significantly tells us in verse 1? It is surely to teach us the lesson that our true wisdom is to act without question upon the Word of God. At the time this was recorded there was no opportunity for Baruch to secure any greatness for himself. When the word was given to him things were very different—princes and nobles were in Jerusalem; now it was devastated, and he was with the wretched remnant in Egypt. It is at this time the Spirit of God records the word given to the servant of the Lord. Ruin had been foretold, complete and irremediable; and when this is the case the faithful servant is to cleave to the Lord alone, acting upon the word, and not looking for great things here.

Baruch had said, "Woe is me now!" The Lord who had built and planted would break down and pluck up both the city and the people! It is said of the last of the assemblies mentioned in Revelation 2. and 3., "*I will spue thee out of My mouth.*" Therefore the path for us is the same in principle now. We can count upon the Lord's personal interest and care like Baruch, but it would have been pride on his part to attempt the reconstruction of the city and the nation. Let those who know somewhat of the importance of the truth of Christ and the assembly beware of this snare of reconstruction

to-day. Let not proud ecclesiastical thoughts turn the heart from the Lord Himself. *What governs us? great things, or the Lord?* As we cleave to Him alone, calling upon Him out of a pure heart, we may enjoy the privileges of the assembly and know the order of the house of God without setting up to be anything in ourselves, but just to be making our boast in the Lord. He never fails! The true assembly—*His assembly*—is built upon the revelation of Himself as the Christ, the Son of the living God, by His Father. The gates of hell therefore cannot prevail against it.

Some seem to think that it is only being built as some *outward order* is maintained. Order according to the truth will always be valued by real souls, but this building does not rest upon outward order. It rests upon *revelation*—the Father's revelation of the Christ, the Son of the living God. This is specially unfolded in John's gospel, though the word assembly is not mentioned. He speaks of the one Shepherd and the one flock. Upon the rock foundation of the Father's revelation, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of man, is building His assembly. The work of others may fail: His will never fail. It is our wisdom, therefore, to rejoice in the Lord. We are told that this is safe (Phil. 3. 1).

It is an important question to settle alone with God, *Am I after great things here, or am I after the Lord?* Baruch was not to seek great things for himself! Many have brought sorrow on themselves and others also by seeking to be great as rebuilders of the assembly. Let us learn to trust the blessed Lord, and thus be at liberty to grow in grace and in the most excellent knowledge of Himself. All else that is pleasing to Him will follow.

O Lord, we cast each care on Thee,  
And triumph and adore;  
O that our great concern may be  
To love and praise Thee more.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

We have received the following letter as to a point of interest in our March issue. We annex also a brief reply from the author of the article criticized.

I HAVE read with interest Mr. Barker's article on Romans 4. 25, but have found myself at issue with his conclusions. It seems to me that Mr. Barker does not discriminate between a fact and what is necessary for the proof of the fact, nor does he adequately distinguish between the truth of justification and its application to the individual.

Mr. Barker seems to have overlooked Romans 5. 9, which states that the blood of Christ is the ground or basis of our justification; the blood being the witness of the death of Christ (John 19. 33-34). W. Kelly's observation that Christ was raised to secure our justification would really imply that the work of Christ upon the cross was not sufficient, although testified to by His own words "It is finished" (John 19. 30). No true scholarship could possibly translate the same Greek preposition in the same sentence by such differing phrases as "on account of" and "to secure." It is, I believe, the ambiguous meaning of our English word "for" which has misled Darby, from his long-continued habit of using the common English translation in his ministry without always carefully considering the underlying Greek.

The interpretation of the two statements of the verse must run on parallel lines, and the meaning be that as our sins were the determining cause of Christ's death, so our justification must have the same relation to His resurrection; so that the verse might be paraphrased as follows: "That as His death was the result of our sins, so His resurrection is the result of our clearance from those sins." This alone gives the same meaning in both parts of the sentence to the Greek preposition translated "for."

Christ's resurrection therefore becomes the proof of our justification, and therefore we read "If Christ be not raised . . ye are yet in your sins" (1 Corinthians 15. 17); for the holiness of his Person was such that, if He had not been raised, it would show that our sins were still unatoned for and therefore we were not free of them. All this is wholly apart from the application of justification to any particular individual which only takes place when that individual has

faith in God as the Raiser of Christ (Romans 4. 24). T. ROBERTS.

\* \* \* \* \*

In reply to Mr. Roberts' letter, may I say that one of the principal points that I endeavoured to make clear, is that it is *not* necessary to give a different force to the two "fors" in Rom. 4. 25? Read the first "for" as having the significance of "in view of." The Lord Jesus was delivered *in view of* our sins, that is, in order to bear them. Read also the second "for" as having the same significance. The Lord Jesus was raised again *in view of* our justification, that is, in order that we might be justified.

Mr. R. suggests that I do not discriminate between a fact and what is necessary for the proof of the fact. May I make a counter-suggestion, however, to the intent that possibly Mr. R. does not sufficiently discriminate between *the basis* of our justification, and the declaration on the part of God which *is* our justification. Does Mr. R. agree with the definition which I quote: "Justification is an authoritative *declaration* that an accused person is conformable to righteousness"? A payment of money, or some other act, may be the *basis* of a man's justification before an earthly tribunal, but surely it is the *declaration* of the court that *is* the man's justification. The declaration on God's part is, of course, His raising up the Lord Jesus from the dead.

That I have not overlooked the fact that the blood of Christ is the *basis* of our justification (as Mr. R. hints) is shown by my quotation from F. W. Grant: "The meritorious cause is, of course, His blood, and so it is stated a little later that we are justified by His blood."

To suggest that J. N. Darby did not carefully consider the underlying Greek is a strange remark to make concerning one whose labours in connection with the Greek text are so well known. His note on Romans 5. 16 (in his *New Translation*) should be read. It is too long to quote here in full, but it shows that his well-considered view of the Greek word for justification in Romans 4. 25 was very different from Mr. Roberts'. H. P. BARKER.

# ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

## The Day of Atonement.

Are we justified in gathering from Lev. 16. 12, 14 and 15, that these were three separate acts—that the priest went into the most holy place three separate times? First, with the burning censer and his hands full of sweet incense. (Note both hands are mentioned.) Second, the blood of the bullock for himself and for his house. Third, the blood of the goat.

What do these three (i.e., if there are three) separate functions indicate? Did the first act involve going in without blood? and in what way did the going in with incense typify Christ?—AUCKLAND.

**I**T seems pretty plain from the account given in Leviticus 16.—and this is the only detailed account we have of the proceedings on the great day of atonement—that the bringing into the most holy place by the High Priest of (1) the censer and the incense, (2) the blood of the bullock to be sprinkled upon and before the mercy seat, (3) the blood of the goat to be similarly applied, must have involved his passing actually through the vail three times. Human limitations are such that to have performed all three acts simultaneously with one pair of hands would have been impossible.

Each of the three acts had its own significance. The first set forth the fact that man can only stand in the presence of God as in the fragrance and acceptance of Christ. The delightful odour of what He is must cover the mercy seat. The second typifies the propitiation effected by the sacrifice of Christ on behalf of the Church viewed as the priestly family, the "spiritual house" of 1 Peter 2. 5. The third indicates that same propitiation as

regards Israel and the whole scene that had been defiled by sin.

The order, too, is significant. First, that which meets God's good pleasure and is of positive delight to Him. Second, that which meets the demands of His righteousness and holiness, and this first in regard to the Church and then after as regards Israel and the world. This accords with the application of reconciliation as given us in Colossians 1. 20 and 21. We are reconciled *now*. Presently reconciliation will be extended to all things in heaven and on earth.

It is, however, important to observe that in Hebrews 9. 7 it is distinctly stated that "Into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people." This proves that even if his entrance involved his passing through the vail three times it is viewed by God as ONE entrance, and that the one entrance in every stage of it was in virtue of the blood that had been shed.

## Repetitions in Scripture.

Can you explain why 2 Kings 19. and Isa. 37. are identical, word for word?—G. H. H.

**I**F any passage of Scripture is repeated we may be sure it is because some special importance is attached to it, though perhaps we may not be able to say wherein the importance consists.

The history of the deliverance of Hezekiah and Jerusalem from the hitherto all-conquering Assyrian power comes in naturally in 2 Kings as part of the history of God's ways. It appears to be repeated in Isaiah's prophecy since that particular item of history so strikingly illustrates and enforces the great pro-

phetic principles that Isaiah had been establishing.

God's intervention in the overthrow of the Assyrian was itself prophetic of His coming intervention on behalf of the remnant of Israel in their extremity in the last days, as further unfolded in Zechariah 14. 1-3. The overthrow of the foe in the past is the pledge and promise of what God will yet do. How important that the faith of His people should be established as to this. Hence probably its repetition.



## “HOLY BRETHREN.”

(J. T. MAWSON.)

Notes of an Address given in Melbourne on March 12th, 1922.

*“Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus” (Hebrews 3. 1).*

THE grace with which God has blessed us is full of surprises. Who would have thought, for instance, that we should ever have been addressed as “holy brethren”? We should scarcely have given such an epithet to each other and should never have dreamed of applying it to ourselves, for we know a little of the corruption and sin of our own hearts. Yet it is given to us here by the Holy Spirit of God, who will never have to take back a single word that He has spoken. He is the Spirit of Truth, and if He calls those who belong to Christ by this exalted designation it must be true of them, hence it is only right that we should earnestly and reverently inquire what it means and how it has come to be ours.

In reading the preceding chapter our thoughts are carried back to Psalm 22. and in that Psalm we get these two words that are here brought together to describe us. The first word belongs to the early part of the Psalm, which opens with that unparalleled cry, “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” We know that it was our Lord Himself who asked this question when He hung upon the cross of shame and sacrifice, and we are filled with wonder thereat; but that our wonder might be changed into intelligent adoration and worship, the forsaken Sufferer supplies the answer Himself. “*But Thou art holy.*”

But was not Jesus holy? Yes, He was just as holy when He went forth bearing His cross to Golgotha, as He was when the Seraphim hid their faces in the presence of His glory, and cried, “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts.” Then why was He, the holy

One, forsaken of God? It was for our sakes. Upon that cross He was made sin for us. He became what we were, that He might in the immensity of His love endure all that we deserved, that we might become what He is and share all that He deserves in the favour of God. It was when He took our place and when our sins were laid upon Him that God in the intensity of His holiness hid His face from Him; but it was then and there that He made a full atonement for us. And now, as a consequence of what He did upon the cross, and in perfect righteousness, we are made partakers of the Divine nature, and by “one offering He has perfected in perpetuity the sanctified.” That very nature which in God demanded that sin should be judged, and which did judge it when Jesus suffered for us, has now become our nature, as born of God; hence we are addressed as “holy.” Such a designation could never have been ours if our sins and all the corruption of our sinful flesh had not come under God’s unsparing judgment; and it is thus that we are clear of it all, and in the sight of our God and Father, holy and blameless in love (see Eph. 1. 4).

We are holy *brethren*. Our place and title as brethren belongs to the second half of Psalm 22. where with resurrection exultation our Lord declares, “I will declare Thy name unto My brethren, in the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee.” Mark well that we are *His* brethren. Blessed it is to know that we are brethren of each other, but that is only because we are His brethren; this must come first. And this defines our relationship with our God and Father, and gives character

to our relationship to each other. We are brought to Him, loved with the same love that rests upon Christ, to share the same relationship and the joy of it for ever. So that in this title that is given to us we learn what our nature is, and what the relationship in which we stand to God and Christ. We learn that "He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren" (Hebrews 2. 11).

It was the purpose of God's love to bring to His glory such sons as these, and in His perfect wisdom He has found the way by which He can accomplish His purpose. What a day it will be when all the "holy brethren," with Christ pre-eminent among them, appear in that glory; and when He their infallible Leader, raises afresh His praise to God! Every heart of them will be in full concert with Him then, for every one of them will be conformed to His image. This is the heavenly calling of which we are made partakers. How glorious is the destiny that awaits the "holy brethren"!

But since grace has made us to be holy brethren, how shall we live like holy brethren now? How shall we be consistent with this noble calling? How shall we tramp as pilgrims through this "Vanity Fair," refusing its seductions and keeping our hearts in tune with our great Leader, as He sings to God, who dwells in the praise of His people? There is but one way in which we may thus live, and that is by considering "the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." He must be the subject of our thoughts.

We must consider Him as the Apostle, the One who came out from God and down to us, not bringing tables of stone whereon were written laws that could only curse us because

of our sinfulness, but bringing love, the love of God to us. "It is Christ that died," for the love that He brought could not stop short of death. "God commendeth His love towards us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." There is no love like that; it baffles all description, we cannot illustrate it, it is incomparable, invincible and eternal. But as the Apostle, Christ Jesus has brought this love to us, and God has spoken in tender words to us in Him, to win our hearts for Himself, that we might be His for ever. To consider the Apostle of our confession should be no hard task for us, it ought to be our constant and unfailing delight.

But He is also our High Priest, that is, He has gone in to God for us. As Apostle He came out to represent God to us, and to bring God to us; as High Priest He has gone in to represent us to God, and bring us to God. He is our High Priest, He has gone in, and He has opened up the way for us, a new and living way which He has dedicated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh. The holiest is the place for the holy brethren. The blood is there, the precious blood, and where the blood is sins cannot be, but the holy brethren can be there, cleansed and consecrated, because the High Priest is there.

Let us consider His greatness, who came from the highest height of God's glory to make God known in the deepest depths of our need, and who has risen up from those depths and entered the glory again, and who is able to succour us in our weaknesses, and bear us up in the power of His risen life to the very presence of God where He lives. As we consider Him we are invincible, more than conquerors, a triumphant band of God's sons, holy brethren in spirit and practice, treading the upward way to the glory of God.

May we have Himself, not His truth merely! For there is a *difference*, and there *may be* a distance between these, as experience tells us. May we reach *Himself*, through reading, or ministry, or prayer, or communion! We need more *affection* and *attention*, that we may have Him *personally*.

# THE CHURCH OF GOD.

(HAMILTON SMITH.)

## 6.—The House of God according to the mind of God.

THERE are two main aspects in which the Church is viewed in the New Testament; one as the body of Christ, the other as the house of God.

Viewing the Church in the former aspect, it is composed of all believers on earth formed into one body and united to one Head in heaven by the baptism of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12. 12, 13; Col. 1. 18). Viewing the Church as the house of God, according to the mind of God, it is composed of Jewish and Gentile believers builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit (Eph. 2. 22).

The one body presents the heavenly aspect of the Church. Believers are constituted a heavenly people by reason of their union with Christ in heaven as the Head of the body. The house of God, on the other hand, always presents the Church in connection with the earth.

The formation and maintenance of the one body is outside the responsibility of man, and hence nothing that is unreal has any part in the one body. It is true all believers are responsible to maintain the truth of the one body, and walk according to the light of it, and in this we have grievously failed; but the one body itself is formed only of true believers, and by the Holy Spirit. The house of God, on the other hand, has been placed in the responsibility of man and, as ever, man breaks down; hence worthless material has been brought into the house of God leading to the solemn statement of the Apostle Peter that "Judgment must begin at the house of God" (1 Peter 4. 17).

Before, however, we can form any just idea of our responsibilities in connection with the house of God, or estimate the extent of our failure in

carrying out these responsibilities, it is essential to have clearly before our minds the house of God according to the original purpose of God. For this we must turn to the Word of God. It is impossible to learn from a corrupted Christendom the original purpose of the Divine Architect in having a house on earth.

Turning to Scripture we are at once faced with the fact that the house of God has a very large place both in the Old Testament and the New. The first mention of it is in Genesis 28., the last in Revelation 21. From the first book to the last, from the present creation in time right on to the new heaven and new earth in eternity, the house of God is one of the great unchanging objects before the mind of God.

It is true the composition of the house is very different at different times. In the Old Testament days it was formed of boards and curtains and later of material stones. To-day, in the purpose of God, the house is composed of "living stones." But while its composition varies, the purpose of the house remains the same. Whatever form it takes, the purpose is ever to constitute a dwelling-place for God. Solomon expresses this thought when he says, "I have built an house of habitation for Thee and a place for Thy dwelling for ever" (2 Chron. 6. 2). The marvel is that God's house is on earth. We can easily understand God dwelling in heaven, but that God should desire to dwell with men is indeed an arresting thought. Well may Solomon ask, "Will God in very deed dwell with men on earth?" (2 Chron. 6. 18). God, for the gratification of His own heart, is determined to dwell with men.

It must, however, be evident that

God's house must have certain characteristics. Whatever form it may take it must of necessity be suited to God. The first Epistle to Timothy was specially written to instruct us in the behaviour suited to the house of God (1 Tim. 3. 15). But in order to right behaviour it is essential that we know the characteristic marks of God's house.

*Holiness* is the first great characteristic feature, as we read in Psalm 93. 5, "Holiness becometh Thine house, O Lord, for ever." Again we read, in Ezekiel 43. 12, "This is the law of the house; upon the top of the mountain the whole limit thereof round about shall be most holy. Behold, this is the law of the house." Holiness, then, is the first law of the house. In accord with this, Timothy is to charge those who form the house of God to maintain "love out of a pure heart, a good conscience and faith unfeigned," and moreover to refuse all conduct contrary to sound teaching (1 Tim. 1. 5-10). Furthermore, the house of God must be marked by *dependence upon God*, hence prayer has a large place in it, for prayer is the expression of dependence upon God. So we read, "I will that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands" (1 Tim. 2. 8). All that are in God's house must be dependent upon the God that dwells there. Moreover another great characteristic is *subjection to authority*. In the house of God the woman is to learn in subjection and not usurp authority over the man (1 Tim. 2. 11, 12). Finally it is marked by *oversight and care*. Oversight in regard to the spiritual welfare of souls (1 Tim. 3. 1-7), and care as to the temporal needs of the bodies of men (8-13).

The world is marked by unholiness, independence, the revolt against all authority, with no spiritual oversight, and no adequate care for the bodies of men; but in the house of God entirely opposite conditions are to prevail. There according to the mind of God holiness must be maintained; there

all must be in dependence upon God; there all must be in subjection to the authority that God has ordained; and there souls are fed, and bodies are cared for.

These, then, are some of the leading characteristics. Holiness, dependence, subjection, oversight and care. Moreover, these characteristics are necessary in view of the purpose of God in His house being duly carried out.

What, then, is the great purpose that God has at heart in dwelling amongst men? First, if God has a dwelling-place among men it is in order that God may be known in blessing to men. Second, if man is blessed it is in order that God may be praised. These are the two great ends purposed in connection with the house of God. God made known to man in blessing in order that man may turn to God in praise.

In view of the purpose of God it becomes quite plain that the privilege and responsibility of those who have part in the house of God are to express God and to praise God. These leading principles are very beautifully presented in the first passage in Scripture that speaks of the house of God—Genesis 28. 10-22. There Jacob, the houseless wanderer, has a vision of the house of God, and at once there passes before us the purpose of God and the responsibility of man in connection with God's house. God reveals Himself to Jacob as the One who is set upon blessing man in sovereign grace. "In thee," says God, "and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Moreover, what God has promised He will perform. He will be faithful to His own word. "I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." Then on our side we have the twofold responsibility of man. Jacob says "This is none other but the house of God and this is the gate of heaven." Thereupon he sets up "a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it." The gate presents the thought of access to heaven. Through

the gate we are enabled to get in touch with heaven for praise and prayer. And be it said this gate is not in some far-off place beyond the bounds of earth. The gate of heaven is always on earth, and here, while we are on earth, we are to use the gate. The pillar, as we know from the story of Jacob's parting with Laban, carries with it the thought of witness (Gen. 31. 52). Thus we have our twofold responsibility in connection with the house. On the one hand to approach God in prayer and praise, on the other to approach man as a witness for God—a witness that can only be carried out in the power of the Spirit, as set forth in the pillar with the oil poured out on the top.

Turning to 2 Chronicles 6. we shall see the purpose of God and the responsibility of man again presented at the dedication of the house built by king Solomon. First we see it is the place where God presents Himself in blessing to man. The king, representing the attitude of God to man, "turned his face, and blessed the whole congregation of Israel" (verse 3). Moreover, the king bears testimony to the faithfulness of God to His word, "The Lord, therefore, hath performed His word that He hath spoken" (verses 4, 10, 15). Then on the side of man's responsibility and privilege we see that Solomon's temple becomes the gate of heaven. Nine times the king requests that prayer towards this place may be heard in heaven. The house becomes the gate of access to heaven (21-40). Finally the house that Solomon built was, like Jacob's pillar, to be a witness to God among all the nations of the earth, as he says, "That all the people of the earth may *know* Thy Name, and fear Thee, as doth Thy people Israel, and may *know* that this house, which I have built, is called by Thy Name" (33).

Turning to the New Testament we shall see in the First Epistle of Peter that, though the form of the house of God has altered, the purpose of God

and the responsibilities of man in connection with the house remain the same. Here it is no longer a material house of dead stones, but a spiritual house of living stones. "Ye," says the apostle, "as living stones are built up a spiritual house" (1 Pet. 2. 5). In the first chapter of the Epistle we learn that those who form this house are the subjects of God's sovereign blessing, as we read "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in the heavens for you." Then we further learn that all this blessing is secured by "The Word of the Lord," which "endureth for ever."

Passing on to chapter 2. we find the presentation of our privileges and responsibilities in connection with the house. On the one hand we are built together "to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." On the other, before men, we are to "shew forth the excellencies of Him [N.T.] who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light." Here, then, we have once again "the gate of heaven" and "the pillar" with the anointing oil. We draw nigh to God to offer up praise and prayer, we draw nigh to men as a witness of His excellencies.

Finally we may ask when did the house of God, in its present form, come into existence? Very definitely Scripture answers—Not until redemption was accomplished. If God is to come into the midst of a praising people, then Christ must first go into the darkness and forsaking of the cross. There we hear that cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" And the One that uttered the cry alone can give the answer, "Thou art holy, O Thou that *inhabitest the praises of Israel*." If the holy God is to dwell in the midst of a praising people, Christ

must redeem a people by going into death.

Jacob, as we have seen, may speak of the house of God, but not until redemption is accomplished does God speak of dwelling among the children of Israel (*see* Exod. 29. 45). Neither with Adam innocent nor with Abraham the faithful could God dwell. He may indeed walk in the garden, and grant a passing visit to Abraham, but neither innocence nor faithfulness secured a dwelling-place for God. Mere innocence would not suit God's house; the faithfulness of man would not secure it when innocence was lost. God's dwelling amongst men is the

fruit of redemption, for therein is the believer made fit for God, and therein is a holy God made known to man. It is clear that "the house of God which is the Assembly of the living God" had no existence until redemption was accomplished. Then on the day of Pentecost, the disciples being together in one place at Jerusalem, the Holy Spirit descended and "filled all the house where they were sitting," and "they were all filled with the Holy Spirit." The people of God who had hitherto been scattered abroad were then formed into the habitation for God, and God took up His dwelling-place in the house.

## THE ASSETS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

(F. B. HOLLE.)

An address on Romans 5. 1-11 given in Edinburgh on Monday, April 3rd, 1922.

IN the business world at the present moment there is, I suppose, a very great deal of anxious drawing up of balance sheets. The slump in values has been so great that it is a very trying time for many business men. They have the assets side, and they have the liabilities which have to be faced, and many of them are pulling long faces over the amount of the liabilities. They are like not a few Christians who somehow seem to have the knack of always thinking of the responsibilities and obligations that rest upon them, and who unfortunately forget to bring into their account the great assets with which they have started.

Now I am sure that what we have before us in this 5th chapter of Romans is calculated to make us feel how immense are the assets that we possess. We observe, for instance, in the first two verses, three great items that we do well to carefully bring into our calculations. These two verses speak first of all of peace with God which is ours now.

What is said here is not exactly that

peace has been made at the Cross. That, thank God, is a fact, and if you want to find it stated in Scripture you turn to the first chapter of the epistle to the Colossians, verses 19-21, and there you will read of the way in which God intervened that He might secure for Himself that which He desired, for the gratification of His great heart of love. Eventually He is going to reconcile unto Himself all things in heaven and on earth, and already He has reconciled us; but both the reconciliation that has reached us, believers, to-day, and that grand reconciliation of all things which is to come, find their basis in the blood of His cross. Oh, thanks be to God! whatever we know or don't know, whatever we feel or don't feel, the blood of His cross is a great accomplished fact, and the basis upon which the reconciliation rests is as sure as that God Himself is in heaven. The cross is an accomplished fact; the blood has been shed; so peace has been made.

Now what is said here in the beginning of the 5th of Romans is that we

have it. Have you got it? This is a very pertinent question. My friend, have you got peace with God? Can you look up to God as one who has been brought, consciously brought, to Him, now through grace one of His children, and therefore turning to Him with filial reverence and joy, knowing there is not one outstanding question between your soul and Himself; not one cloud in your sky? Can you say, I know that since Christ has been delivered for my offences and raised again for my justification, there is absolutely not one disturbing element between my soul and God? A wonderful thing it is to see that this is proper Christian blessing, the first asset that we put down upon our balance sheet. Thus through our Lord Jesus Christ, the believer writes down "I have peace with God"—plenty of trouble in the world likely enough, but with God absolute peace.

Then it goes on to speak of the fact that it is by faith we have access, or entrance, into this grace, or favour, in which we stand. I wonder if this would be news to any young Christian here to-night—that you stand as fully and as securely in the favour of God as the apostles Paul or Peter. We can indeed go even further than that in the light of the truth set forth in the 6th verse of the 1st chapter of the epistle to the Ephesians: we are "accepted in the Beloved."

In the spring of the year they have, you know, certain functions at the palace in London. A "Drawing Room" is held for the ladies, and people are introduced to their Majesties, and the only way to be introduced into these Court circles is to have behind you powerful influence. You must be presented at Court by someone who already has a well-assured standing in those high circles. If Her Majesty Queen Alexandra, the Queen Mother, expressed a wish to present, perhaps without any evident cause, a very ordinary young lady with a very ordinary name, you may be perfectly

certain she would get in. Why? Because of the acceptance in those circles of the one who presents her; and as the ushers open the door, and she enters the Royal circle, and kisses the Royal hands, she enters in the acceptance of the one who puts her name down on the Court sheets, and who is responsible for her. The King could not favour her perhaps in her own personal rights—she has none—but he favours her in the light of the fact that she stands in the acceptance of that august lady who is his mother.

This illustrates the wonderful fact that if anybody gets acceptance it is "in the Beloved"; and there is no other acceptance in which you can stand. People talk sentimentally of getting in at heaven's back door. Let me say there is no such place for you. You will either get into heaven through Christ, and stand in His favour, accepted in His acceptance, or you will not get in at all. We stand in the favour of God, and the favour in which we stand is the very acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. We have access by faith then into this favour in which we stand. Let us write that down as a very big asset. We walk the streets of Edinburgh and perhaps the wind blows keenly from the East, and we shiver and feel very uncomfortable and sorry for ourselves as regards our circumstances, but we are in the favour of God, and faith gives us access into it. We look at Christ who is our great Representative seated in glory, and we say to ourselves by faith, "His place is my place; His favour is my favour; the smile that rests, and worthily rests, upon Him, rests upon me." Do you think that is no asset to a Christian? A wonderful asset is this.

Then it proceeds, moreover, to say, "We . . . rejoice in hope of the glory of God"—that is our destiny, that is our future. What an asset it is to have a prospect. I wouldn't give much for the prospect of this world. I was recently telling some Christian young

fellows in Scandinavia that they need not fret themselves because they belonged to the minor nations in Europe; the prospects as to future conflicts amongst the nations are far too dark, and the minor nations are less likely to be involved. Men are concerned about the development of chemical science. Alas! for human skill, human knowledge! They are digging the grave of this world by scientific inquiry. What are its prospects? Go and ask the politicians, and you will get some very grave looks. Ah, the Christian has prospects; glory is the prospect of the Christian: we are rejoicing "in hope of the glory of God."

Did you ever notice in this 5th chapter of Romans how the argument runs in connection with this word "rejoice"? Unfortunately the translators have used other words to represent the same Greek word. In this chapter the word "rejoice" in verse 2, the word "glory" in verse 3, and the word "joy" in verse 11 are all translations of the same word. The pity is they did not use one word and stick to it. Let us use throughout the first word, and we read that "we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, and not only so but we rejoice in tribulations also."

Now at this point many of us at first sight might be inclined to disagree. "Paul," we might say, "this will not do. You must not write down our trials and tribulations amongst our assets. Why, they are to be put down upon the liability side of the account. These are the things that trouble us; these are the things that make demands upon us." Yet here is the apostle Paul writing down our tribulations on the asset side of the account. He writes them down as being something for us and not against us, and, thank God, he knew what he was writing about; he was writing under the inspiration of the Spirit of God.

He does not only write down tribulations on the asset side of the account,

but he tells us why he does so. The reason why we rejoice in tribulations is that we know the healthful effect of tribulations upon our souls; we know what they work in our hearts. We rejoice in tribulations, knowing that tribulation works patience or endurance, and patience works experience. As we endure, so we gain true experience, doubtless of our own folly and frailty and foolishness and insufficiency, but coupled therewith true experience of the blessedness and sufficiency and all-satisfyingness of the Lord Jesus Christ—and to learn that lesson well is something that is well worth while.

He tells us further that experience works hope—not in this world, but in God. Experience in this world frequently works cynicism; very frequently it works a lot of sarcasm; it works, according to the Psalmist, the idea that all men are liars; we trust nobody. But Christian experience works hope. Why? Oh, because we have God before us; we begin to learn how God can extricate us from the muddles into which we get; we begin to learn how He can make things work together for good to those who love Him, and our very tribulations thus teach us what God is for us. We learn lessons here that we will never learn above.

Troubled Christian, will you take with you to-night this thought—though troubles throng in upon you, bereavement, sorrow, perplexity with yourself, so that you are often cast down, you have by these very things an opportunity of learning practically what the Lord Jesus Christ can be to you in a way you will never have an opportunity of learning in heaven. When you get to heaven with the golden years before you, and never a sorrow, never a testing, never a trial, you will look back and say, "Oh thanks, ten thousand thanks to God for giving me the opportunity of learning His grace, His love, His sufficiency, His tenderness as I learned them when I was tried and troubled upon earth." Oh,



what wonders does tribulation often work in the soul of the believer—it does for him spiritually just what bodily exercise does for him physically.

There on an office stool sat a poor pasty-faced young gentleman who was hauled off it for the army. His poor mother felt like weeping when he was taken away. The drill sergeant took him in hand, and there he was racking his muscles and back, and jumping and twisting and turning and going through trials, sleeping in a very uncomfortable bed, and feeling himself often as if he could weep. But after three months of this tribulation he got off on three days' leave. He went home to see his mother. Why! the dear lady hardly knew him; he had put on inches round the chest, and had roses on his cheeks. He had fairly been transformed! The fact is, unpleasant though it was, the training did him a

great deal of good physically, and it is just the same spiritually with you and me. In the light of that fact tribulation is an asset.

And another asset we have indicated in verse 11, and this is the crowning thing. As in verse 3, so again verse 11 opens with the words "And not only so." The argument is, we "rejoice in hope of the glory of God," "and not only so, but we rejoice in tribulations," "and not only so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Why, the crowning thing is this, not merely that we are justified; not merely that we have glory before us, but that we are brought to God, that we may know God and walk with God, and rejoice in God. God Himself becomes known, in all His love and power and sufficiency, by our souls. Oh, what a wonderful thing it is to be a Christian with assets such as these.

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## THE WORK AND WORTHINESS OF THE LAMB OF GOD.

(H. J. VINE.)

An address given in Edinburgh on Tuesday, April 4th, 1922.

Scriptures read :—John 1. 29, 35-37; Revelation 5. 9-14.

THE first time, dear friends, we have the Lamb mentioned in the Scriptures is in the 22nd of Genesis, when Isaac asked the question "*Where is the lamb?*"; and the last time is in the closing chapter of the Bible, in the Book of Revelation. In the first *the altar* is in view, the sacrifice, but in the last the Lamb is *upon the throne*. The first has in view the offering up of Christ, but in the last we find the throne of God has become the throne of God and of the Lamb, and that throne is in the city, the metropolis of the universe, which is called the Bride, the Lamb's wife, from which radiates the glory of God that lights up the nations of the earth with order, and beauty, and blessing. First there is the sacri-

fice, and finally there is the throne; while the Book of Exodus gives us a type of what is taking place between the sacrifice of the cross and the glory which is yet to shine from the throne of God and of the Lamb.

In the 12th of Exodus, you remember, they were instructed to take a lamb; the blood was to be shed and to be sprinkled on the upper door posts and two side posts of the houses in which they were, for God was to execute judgment that night, but the blood of the passover lamb was to shelter them, and within those blood-sprinkled door posts they were to find their food—they were to feed upon the roasted lamb. The lamb, however, is not called *God's Lamb* there, for it is

spoken of as "*Your lamb.*" Our lamb, but that lamb in type is the same Lamb, the same Person who is God's Lamb, and it has, we are told, to be "*without blemish.*"

To-day, when God is calling men and women out from the world and bringing them to Himself, we need to see to it that we have a perfect Saviour who is inwardly without blemish—in whom was no sin! Peter adds another thing—Those who believe, he says, are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ as of a Lamb, not only "*without blemish*" inwardly, but also "*without spot*" outwardly. Notwithstanding that He himself has lived and passed through this sin-defiled world, our Lord Jesus Christ was unspotted. Inwardly and outwardly—in every way He was perfect! and at the present time all who believe on Him can be spoken of as "*redeemed.*" Not only redeemed from the hand of the enemy (as Israel was from the power of Pharaoh in Egypt) but, thank God, "*redeemed to God,*" set in His presence in all the value of the work and perfection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Scriptures before us first of all speak of *the work* of Christ for God Himself, and then of *the worthiness* of the One who does the work, and finally of *the worship* that flows to the One who is so worthy.

As far as I know, this is the only place in the Gospels where the Lord Jesus is spoken of as the Lamb of God! I was surprised when I first observed that; one might have expected to find this distinctive glory of Christ shining in almost every page of the Gospels; but here, and here only, have we Him so spoken of. The apostle *Paul*, who unfolds the truth of the church, never once speaks of Christ as the Lamb, although he presents Him in a way that indicates it, for instance, as "*Christ our Passover* who was slain for us," and yet when you pass on to the last book of the Bible, where the results of God's ways and Christ's work are shown in all their magnificence and

glory in universal perfection, you find the Lamb spoken of no less than twenty-eight times! *Peter*, notwithstanding Rome's great fallacy in founding the church upon him, was never sent as an apostle to the Gentiles; he was the apostle to the Jews, and he speaks of the Lamb. He was the apostle that above all others was allowed to show exceptional failure! Still Rome claims him as the first infallible pope. The whole position is absurd.

John the baptist came as His fore-runner, and bore witness to Him. When he saw Jesus coming to him his heart was full! His stupendous work rose before his mind, and he said, "*Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.*" The question in the 22nd of Genesis raised first by Isaac was, "*Where is the Lamb?*"; the answer given being "*God will provide Himself a Lamb.*" Here He is! the One who had come to take up the work for *God's satisfaction*, and for God's glory. You say, yes! and that is the One who came to do the work for *me!* to put *my* sins away! That is perfectly true, but mark, it does not say "*sins*" here, it speaks of something deeper, not simply the putting away of sins, *the fruit*, but of sin *the root*. He is not spoken of as the Lamb who takes away the sins (in the plural) but as the One who for *God's satisfaction and glory* deals with the root matter of "*SIN.*" He deals with lawlessness sacrificially, judicially and governmentally, and so removes it that *God*—the blessed God—might rest in Divine satisfaction and joy undisturbed for ever. That is why He is called *God's Lamb*, and as Jesus approached, John said, There He is! —"*Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world!*"

The translation in 1 John 3. 4 is a mistaken one. There we read, "*Sin is the transgression of the law.*" That would teach there was no sin in the world till there was a law to transgress. We may be thankful that mistake has

been corrected. The right reading is this, "*Sin is lawlessness*," that is, of course, lawlessness as to God. Christ the Lamb of God came to take that away so that the universe should be filled with beauty, and order, and blessing, and that God should rest in eternal blessedness. Don't think you will lose anything by coming to see that first and foremost the precious Saviour procured for God Himself infinite satisfaction and delight by the same work that set you free and brought you into everlasting blessing!

It is often pointed out, however, that the sin of the world is not taken away. We see it all around, lawlessness in social circles, in political circles, in commercial circles, and even in religious circles, as well as in ourselves personally. Ah, but dear friends, it is. Judicially and sacrificially it is removed. *Sin* has been dealt with in the death of Christ, where "our old man" was put away by the cross, by means of crucifixion: he was "*crucified with Christ*," and there in that death sin was put away judicially by the sacrifice of Christ before God. Christ came in the likeness of flesh of sin, and, as a sacrifice for sin, received its condemnation as He hung upon the cross. We are told He has "*put away sin*," not only borne our *sins* away, nor simply taken away sins—every sin in the minutest detail—but *sin itself*, the root principle has been judged at the cross where the work was done. It is done, and, mark you, what has been done sacrificially and judicially at the cross will presently be done by Christ governmentally from the throne!

In the Book of Revelation we see the One who sets all the judgments in motion by the opening of the seals is *the Lamb*. After the church has left the earth—when those who love our Lord Jesus Christ and have the Holy Spirit disappear—men will tremble, and they will say a most extraordinary thing, "Hide us from the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne and from

*the wrath of the Lamb*!" What a contradiction in terms! Personally I cannot conceive of any wrath connected with Christ as the Lamb—but that is what the princes and leaders of this world will say when they see everything going wrong and that great cataclysm coming upon the nations, and when they see that dread time of the great tribulation foretold in Scripture at hand, before its climax is reached—they will cry, "Hide us from the wrath of the Lamb"! Why, you can hardly imagine anything more simple and gentle than a little lamb! Yet the world-leaders dread His wrath, for they are ignorant of His atoning sacrifice.

In the 1st of John it is the ordinary word for lamb, *amnos*; but when He is seen upon the throne in Revelation it is *arnion*, a diminutive term—a "little Lamb"! He is seen in the midst of that throne with *seven horns*, for perfection of power is connected with Him; and *seven eyes*, for perfection in intelligence is His also, and He is the One who opens the *seven seals* when governmental judgments upon the lawless will begin to fall.

Someone prayed this evening that we might have grace not to hide anything that is good and necessary for men to know. Well, it is enough to make those who can discern the development of things around us, and who read the Bible in communion with God in regard to these things, to tremble as they see at this time men denying the atoning work of the Lamb and the glory of His Person—it is enough to make the strongest fear for the judgments that *must* come; but, thank God, before they come the assembly (which is not appointed to wrath) will be translated from earth to heaven; nevertheless, when we see what is coming on the earth it moves us to plead with any man or woman present, who has not yet fled from the wrath to come, to flee to Christ! If you are to be put right for time and for eternity, you must accept the Lord

Jesus Christ as your own personal Saviour!

One of the greatest scholars—probably the greatest Hebraist of his day, an expert in his profession, many of whose books were published in this city—used his remarkable abilities to undermine the Bible's inspiration, and to further modernism. His writings are still read far and wide, yet he came to die like every other sinner! There was the learned man dying, and I have in my pocket now a trustworthy account of that death-bed written by one of his admirers. His wife read to him some of the church's hymns. He stopped her, saying, "Don't read to me any more of these hymns, they are for the saints, read to me that hymn which says '*Just as I am, O Lamb of God, I come.*'" Over and over again she read as he bade her,

"Just as I am, without one plea,  
But that Thy blood was shed for me,  
And that Thou bidd'st me come to Thee,  
O, Lamb of God, I come."

Think of the mercy of God in allowing such peace-giving words to be read to that dying scholar who had attacked His Book, the Book of inspiration, as he had done! "Ask them to sing it," he said, "at my funeral."

I trust that it wasn't just all sentimentalism, but that through God's mercy the scholar really came to the atoning Lamb of God in faith. I am, however, far more concerned at this moment that you should come to Him! that you should trust Him here and now! and then you will be able to rejoice not only that He is *God's Lamb* who puts everything right for God sacrificially and governmentally, but that He is *yours* to-night—*your Lamb*! and that His precious blood cleanses you from all sin, removes every sin from before the eye of a holy God and shelters you from the judgment that your sins called for!

John not only beheld Him as the One who was going to do the work of putting away sin, he saw Him walking

again, and his heart was moved as he looked upon that meek and lowly Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ, the One whom he said came after him, but at the same time took the place of dignity above him. He owned, "He was *before me*," whereas he had just said He came "*after me*." You will see that John had some inkling as to who this Person was—of the Deity of Jesus! As he gazed upon Him he knew He was not only a Man that came after him, and rightly took a place of dignity and glory above him, but he said "*He was before me*"! He was not only David's Son, sprung from him, He was David's Root, from whom David sprang! It was not only His work but it was *Himself* who filled his heart with adoration; and so he said the second time, as he stood with two of his disciples, "*Behold the Lamb of God!*" He said nothing about *His work* this time, but just about *Himself*. Oh, when you are put at rest about His work you will be able to look quietly at Himself. He will fill your heart and mind. That expression from the heart of John lost for him two of his best followers! Do you think he was sorry? Not a bit! As he expressed his heart about that Person, off went Andrew and John to follow Jesus, and Jesus invited them to come with Him. He asked, "What seek ye?" and then they inquired of Him where He dwelt, and He said, "Come and see." My dear friends, you may depend upon it Jesus does not only want us to be saved; He does not only want us to know His work; but He wants us to know Himself, to dwell in His presence, to enjoy even now the company of the Father and the Son.

Later He told His disciples He was going away, but added, "*I will come again.*" He will come for His bride, the assembly, when He will raise the dead in Christ, and catch up the living to be with Himself for ever—"for ever with the Lord." We are told in Revelation 4. and 5. that we shall surround the throne, the throne of God and the

Lamb. The living creatures and the angels, too, will all be seen in relation to that same throne. All will rejoice in and celebrate *the worthiness of the Lamb*. The vast concourse in heaven, upon the earth, and under the earth, will ascribe glory to Him! The new song will laud the worthiness and redeeming work of our Lord Jesus and ascribe glory to Him! The angels take up the praise! It will echo and re-echo through the universe—Worthy is the Lamb that was slain! Blessing, honour, glory and might are ascribed to Him, and the living creatures say, Amen! while the glorified saints fall down and worship before Him!

The throne of God becomes "the throne of God and of the Lamb" for ever. We shall see there the One who once was slain; the One who has redeemed to God by His blood out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation, the One who has put everything into order for God's satisfaction and God's glory, the Lamb of God—God's Lamb!—the One who has brought to the immutable throne of Divine majesty a new distinction, a new

splendour, a new glory, as it is called now not only the throne of God, but also of the Lamb. How glorious! For ever the sacrifice of eternal love will be remembered and give its beauty to the throne above.

It is a serious matter to oppose the Lamb and His work. We read in Revelation 17. 14 of those who make war with the Lamb, but it is added, He overcame them, for He is none less than the *Lord of lords and King of kings* Himself. He must take away all sin, all lawlessness, governmentally as well as sacrificially, from *the throne* as well as on *the altar*.

It is a high privilege, a high honour, to be of the faith of Christ, the Son of God. That same verse tells us that those who are with Him are "*called and chosen and faithful!*" They shall see His face. They shall reign with Him and serve Him with rejoicing and worshipping hearts for ever and ever where no sin can ever come.

"All taint of sin shall be removed,  
All evil done away,  
And we shall dwell with God's Beloved  
Through God's eternal day."

## THE LID OF THE SOUL.

(H. P. BARKER.)

"And every open vessel, which hath no covering bound upon it, is unclean."  
(Numbers 19. 15).

WHAT can be the significance, in the present day, of a statement like this? Surely the circumstances to which it refers no longer exist? Is not the quotation taken from an order of ritual that has long ago been superseded by the clear light of the Gospel?

Let us see. It is well known to students of the Bible that the chapter from which the words are quoted is one which deals with a subject of great practical importance. Of course the teaching is clothed in typical language. It is none the less clear on that account.

The ritual of the red heifer concerns itself with the question of defilement contracted by any of the people of God, and of how such defilement may be removed. Will anyone deny that this is a matter of great practical moment for us Christians? For all around are corrupting influences, and by painful experience we have learned how easily they defile the soul.

The contents of an open vessel, unprotected from the pestilential atmosphere of the presence of death in an Eastern climate, easily become contaminated. In this way it serves as

an illustration of what we become, if our souls are left exposed to the contaminating influences of the world. Hence the importance of having what I have ventured to call a lid upon our souls.

What is it that constitutes this lid? The fear of God; walking with God; communion with God; the consciousness of the presence of God; the subjection of the soul to the revelation of God in grace. This forms our protection from the damaging environment that surrounds us.

Now to have this covering upon our souls it must be placed there. And the right time to place the protecting lid upon the soul is surely at the commencement of each day, before we mingle with persons, and come in contact with things, from which contamination might come. Not that the early morning is the *only* time for this. Whenever spiritual defence is needed it becomes us to see that the lid is adjusted for the soul's protection. Seeking the face of God in prayer and confession, diligent and devout reading of His Word: these are the means by which the soul obtains its covering. But neither prayer nor study will effect this unless they lead to what has been aptly termed *the practice of the presence of God*.

In connection with the teaching of this Old Testament type there are two things which must be distinguished:

1. Things that may loosen or remove the lid.
2. Things that contaminate the contents of the vessel.

The contaminating influences are wrong things: things of the world, things which in themselves are evil and sinful, things which are easily recognized as harmful to the soul.

Not so the things that loosen the lid. These may be things which in themselves are harmless and right. It is of such things as these that one frequently hears the question asked: "Why should I not do it? What harm is there in it?" The question, however, should be framed differently. It is not to the point to affirm that such and such a thing does not defile the contents of a vessel. The question is, does it loosen the lid, and thereby leave the contents exposed to influences that are undoubtedly corrupting?

The reading of a book, the spending of an hour with a companion, the act of self-indulgence, the neglect of prayer: such things as these may easily *loosen the lid*.

Does the reading of a book blunt the keen edge of your appetite for the Word of God? Then the reading of it has loosened the covering of your soul, and the influences that corrupt will find a more ready entrance. And the same may be said of many other things.

Notice in our text the word "bound." The vessel was only free from uncleanness that had its covering *bound* upon it. A lid that is bound upon the vessel with cords is not easily loosened. This is the kind of covering that we need.

Morning by morning, and whenever occasion arises, we need to get the fastenings of our souls' lid tightened. We need to draw near to God, and breathe the atmosphere of His holy presence. Thither we need continually to resort, that the protective grace of His presence may be the covering of our souls, preserving them from exposure to the corrupting influences of the age.

We may walk so as to have ourselves in the presence of, or in company with, the Lord.

We may act so as to bring our fellow-saints or fellow-sinners into His presence or into His company.

We may be living so as to be keeping ourselves before our fellows or companions. The first is the way of a worshipper. The second is the activity of a true servant. The third is the fruit of vanity and want of single-heartedness.

# THE WORK OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

(W. BRANWELL DICK.)

PERHAPS in no single chapter of the Holy Scriptures do we have a more clear, comprehensive, yet concise presentation—in figure—of the various aspects of the work of our Lord Jesus Christ than in Leviticus 16. We invite our readers' careful and prayerful consideration of this, and first of all we ask them to read the chapter.

Most important of all it is to notice that God Himself, His requirements and His claims, come first. It is natural for us to put ourselves and our need in the forefront; and to think of the death of Christ as that which has met our need, as if that were the beginning and the end of it. This is not the way, however, in which it is presented in the inspired record. By the intrusion of sin into the world, the throne of God had been challenged, His holiness had been outraged, and His righteousness had been violated.

It was necessary, therefore, that the intruder be banished, and that every trace of sin be completely eradicated from God's creation. This was the first great consideration. The throne of God must be established, His holiness must be maintained, and His righteousness must be vindicated apart altogether from the question of our blessing. How this was effected we learn from the type of "the goat upon which the Lord's lot fell" (verse 9). Its blood was to be sprinkled on and before the mercy seat, telling us that the demands of divine justice had been satisfied. Aaron had also to "make an atonement for the holy place" (verse 16), for the altar (verse 18), and for the tabernacle (verse 20), showing us, in picture, how from this sin-sodden world all taint of evil will yet be removed, and in an entirely new order of things God will be all in all; thus demonstrating His ultimate and absolute triumph over evil.

We find the New Testament answer to this in Hebrews 1. 3 and Colossians 1

19, 20. Both chapters bring before us in striking fashion the incomparable glories of our Lord Jesus Christ. In the first Scripture we see how He who is God came as Man into His own creation in order that He might expel the intruder, and blot out all evidence of sin's deadly work. So we read of Him, "having made [by Himself] the purification of sins" (N.T.). It is not so much here the question of His "having purged our sins," as it is something that He did by Himself, and for Himself. Not that He had any sins, we need not say—God forbid the thought!—but because His Throne was established in righteousness, and the sceptre of righteousness was the sceptre of His Kingdom (verse 8), therefore all that was contrary to divine righteousness must be removed.

This we learn also from the second portion cited. We quote verses 19–20 from the New Translation:—

*"In Him all the fulness of the Godhead was pleased to dwell, and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself having made peace by the blood of His cross—by Him, whether the things on the earth or the things in the heavens."*

So far there is no mention of our blessing; but there is the unmistakable assertion that sin must be removed from God's sight, and we see that God must be glorified in the removal of it. We linger over this initial truth of our chapter, because we are persuaded that not only do we lose a great deal, but we rob God of a great deal, by failing to apprehend that this is the first essential feature of the work of our Lord Jesus Christ. If "it was necessary that the figurative representations of the things in the heavens should be purified with blood" (cf. Lev. 16., Heb. 9. 23) we can see how He, who, when entering upon His public ministry, was announced as "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1. 29), and who, at the close of that

ministry, shed His blood upon the cross in order to effect it, shall yet exclaim in triumph, from the Throne, "It is done" (Rev. 21. 6); and "give up the Kingdom to Him [who is] God and Father; . . . that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. 15. 24, 28).

Then the great problem had to be faced, how could sin be removed from the world and yet sinners who inhabited that world be saved? As to this we must cleave closely to the Word of God. We are living in a superficial age when men's ideas as to sin and God are of the flimsiest kind. It may be that much of the evangelical preaching errs in proclaiming God's love, without setting forth fully God's righteousness. Yet in Rom. 1. 17 the inspired writer states with regard to the Gospel that "*the righteousness of God is revealed therein.*" Thank God a way has been found whereby His righteousness may be maintained, and yet His love may flow forth; so we read in verse 17 of our chapter that Aaron was to make an atonement "*for all the congregation of Israel.*" From this we learn the far-reaching results of Christ's death, and the perfect efficacy of that which He accomplished on the Cross—Himself made sin; forsaken by God; enduring the stroke of divine, unmitigated judgment; settling the great sin question to God's entire satisfaction, and glorifying Him in the settling of it. Thus He has made it possible for the divine proclamation to be issued that is found in the golden words of Acts 13. 38-39,

"*Be it known unto you . . . that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him all that believe are justified from all things.*"

This is as large as the heart of God could make it. The Holy Spirit is carrying the glad tidings to every corner of the earth, and to-day God finds His greatest joy in remitting the sins of "all that believe"; in clearing them of every possible charge that might be brought against them; and

in doing so in a way that is consistent with His own righteous character. Because "Christ died for all" (2 Cor. 5. 14, 15), forgiveness is offered to all. Hallelujah!

We have another lesson to learn, however, and that we find in verses 21 and 22 of our chapter. In the laying on by Aaron of "both his hands upon the head of the live goat," we learn as *individuals* how *our* sins were transferred to and borne by our Substitute. Observe it was not the Israelite who laid on his hands and confessed his sins, but the priest laid on *his* hands, and confessed over the head of the live goat the sins of the children of Israel. Do not we delight to sing,

"ALL thy sins were laid upon Him,  
Jesus bore them on the tree;  
God, who knew them, laid them on Him,  
And, believing, thou art free."

This is of the utmost importance, and we earnestly call our readers' attention to it. It was the sins that were transferred to the live goat that were borne away into the wilderness; and all whose sins were so transferred were as clear and as free as God Himself could make them. So it is when in simple faith we can individually say, "*My sins were borne by Jesus,*" that we have the happy consciousness that these sins are gone, and gone for ever. We are not aware of any Scripture that would warrant our saying to every person we meet, "Christ bore your sins on the tree." If we did so that person might reply, "If Christ bore my sins on the tree, I must ultimately be saved whether I believe it or not."

We know it is argued by some that it will be only for the sin of unbelief that those who stand before the great white Throne will be judged. Scripture does not support that theory, for we read:—

"*The books were opened: and another book was opened which is the book of life: AND THE DEAD WERE JUDGED OUT OF THOSE THINGS WHICH WERE WRITTEN IN THE BOOKS,*



## ACCORDING TO THEIR WORKS.

*... And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire "* (Rev. 20. 12, 15).

Unbelief will be the crowning sin that will seal the doom of Christ-rejectors; but clearly the sins of their life's history will be charged against them, and for these, as well as for their unbelief, they will be consigned to a lost eternity. There is efficacy in the finished work of Christ, there is virtue in His precious blood to meet the need and cleanse the sins of every person in the world; and in the consciousness of this His servants carry the glad tidings to the ends of the earth, and declare that—

*" To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His Name WHOSOEVER believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins "* (Acts 10. 43).

This is as wide as the heart of God and the work of Christ can make it. Those who believe are entitled to place themselves in the happy circle of 1 Peter 2. 24, and say of the Lord Jesus:—

*" Who His own self bare OUR sins in His own body on the tree."*

It was the same servant whom the Lord chose to proclaim the comprehensive message to those who were then unbelievers, that the Holy Spirit selected to divulge the grand secret to those that believe. If we return to Colossians 1., we seem to have this precious truth further developed as we read in verses 21, 22 (we quote again, as we do in nearly all our New Testament citations in this paper, from the excellent New Translation by the late J. N. Darby):—

*" And you, who once were alienated and enemies in mind by wicked works, yet now has It reconciled in the body of His flesh through death; to present you holy and unblamable and irreproachable before It."*

This carries us on to the close of the chapter that we are considering. In verse 24 we read of the offering of the

burnt offering. If in verse 21 we learn that all our sins have been transferred to, and borne by, Christ our spotless Substitute, we discover as we ponder verse 24 that all that He is in the excellency of His own blessed Person has been transferred to us, so that we are now before God in all the acceptance of His own beloved Son, and in all the value of His finished work. The result of this, as verse 31 shows us, is REST. How beautifully all this is in keeping with Colossians 1. To-day God the Father rests in Christ, and looks upon us with all the complacency and delight with which He looks upon " the Son of His love." We, happy in the knowledge that all that was obnoxious to God has been completely removed, that there is " not a cloud above, not a spot within "; that no trace of distance exists, rest in Christ, and knowing ourselves to be the objects of divine affections, we are set free as sons before the Father's face to worship Him. So in the day of eternity when there will be a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness shall find its home, there God shall for ever rest, and He will be surrounded by those from whose happy hearts there shall flow forth ceaseless praise to Himself.

Yet another verse we quote which seems to sum up and give the New Testament interpretation of our chapter. We refer to 1 John 2. 2:—

*" He is the propitiation for our sins; but not for ours alone, but also for the whole world."*

We who believe, delight to put ourselves in the first sentence, for it is to believers that these words are addressed. Because " He is the propitiation for our sins," all is well. Sins before conversion, sins that we may commit after conversion, the whole question has been once and for ever divinely settled. But we go on to read, " not for ours alone, but also for the whole world." It will be on the ground of that work that He will carry out and complete the task of sweeping the universe of sin; it will be because

of that work that, in the last act in the great drama of this world's history, He will banish from His presence all who refused to avail themselves of the benefit of it.

One fact of supreme importance remains to be noticed before we leave our chapter. There was only one man, the high priest, who could carry out the great work, and he had to do it alone. Verse 17 is pregnant with meaning:—

*"There shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the holy place."*

This, for us, has a twofold meaning. In the great work of the Cross our blessed Lord was absolutely alone. From the depths of that impenetrable darkness He cried, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Matthew 27. 46). O, my soul, pause here and wonder! None but He could undertake and settle the sin question. In the solitariness, the distance, the darkness of Calvary, with lover and friend put far from Him, and God having retired from the scene, there was no one with Him. Lord Jesus

Christ, thrice-blessed Saviour, adorable Lord, we worship Thee!

Is it not fitting then, that He who suffered alone should Himself carry to completion the great work? The Father has committed everything into His hands, and when all is finished, and when, from the Throne, in tones of triumph, He exclaims "IT IS DONE" (Rev. 21. 6), then He will place everything in the Father's hands; and God shall be all in all (1 Cor. 15. 28). What a Son God the Father has! What a Saviour we have found! We are not surprised that the Father finds all His delight in Christ; and we are deeply grateful that the Father has called us into holy, happy fellowship with Himself, that He may share with us, and we may share with Him, His own delight in His beloved Son.

"In Thee the Father rests,  
His own anointed One;  
In Thee alone He finds delight,  
His well-beloved Son.

"In Thee we find delight,  
Firstborn 'mongst brethren Thou;  
To Thy dear Name alone we cling,  
To Thy sure Word we bow."

## "PART WITH ME."

(J. A. TRENCH.)

*"He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit"*  
(John 13. 10).

THERE is first, being "born of water and of the Spirit"; this answers to the first washing mentioned in John 13. 10, and as it is the communication of a new life and nature, cannot be repeated: we are "clean every whit." Nor is this by any change in the character of the flesh in us: "that which is born of the flesh is flesh," and there can be no purification of it. The word applied by the Spirit to our souls, carries with it the sentence of death upon all that is of the flesh.

God could do nothing with it but end it in judgment (Gen. 6. 13)—a judgment He carried out for faith in the death of His Son (Rom. 8. 3). Thus the water was found where the blood was, in His death. It is, on the one hand, the end of the flesh in total condemnation, and on the other, the introduction of a life in which we can live to God and enjoy Him for ever.

But we have to pass with this life through a defiling world, where all that meets the senses tends to hinder

communion with Him who is our life. Hence the need of the second application of the word, symbolized by the Lord's touching service to His disciples (John 13.). He girded Himself with the towel, and pouring water into a basin, He began to wash their feet, and wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded. It was, as Jesus tells Peter, that we might have "part with Him" when He is gone, that is, as having departed out of the world to the Father (verse 1). We have to go through the world out of which He has had to depart, and therein lies all our need: liable to contract defilement at every step, or at least that which would bring moral distance between our souls and Him, He knows how to apply His word to bring back the soul to the enjoyment of His presence, in His ever faithful and unfailing love, that there may not be even a shade of reserve between us and Him. That first action of His word, by which we were clean every whit in the Divine nature, could never be repeated, *this* is needed continually. Nor does He leave us to apply it to ourselves—"if I wash thee not"—though He may use any of us who have learned in the school of His grace, in this privileged service to others (verse 14).

It is of interest, as helping to bring

out the distinction all the more clearly, that the Lord employs two different words in this 10th verse according to their clearly defined usage in the Greek version of the Old Testament. "He that is washed" (or "bathed"), as applicable to the whole person, is the word *louo*, used of the washing of the priests on the day of their consecration (Exod. 29. 4). "Needeth not save to wash (*nipto*) his feet" is that used for the washing of their hands and their feet in the laver at the tabernacle door, every time they went into the sanctuary (Exod. 30. 18-21). And the words are never interchanged. But, in noting this, we must remember the difference between preparation for priestly entering into the holy places, as in the Old Testament, and this wonderful service of the Lord for us, that we may have the constant enjoyment of His presence as having gone to the Father.

May our hearts be more deeply affected by the love that would not leave a spot on our feet; and may we yield ourselves up to the searching action of His word upon us, when it is needed that He should apply it, rather than be content to walk at a distance from Him, clinging to something that maintains that distance, to His dishonour and our own incalculable loss.

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*Editor's note.*—The short article printed above is a part of one which appeared in the very first number of our magazine. The beloved author finished his course and departed to be with Christ on March 28th last.

We have reprinted it here, firstly, because of its own importance, and secondly, because the author himself was an "example to the believers" in this very matter about which he instructed us. That "part with Christ" unfolded by the Lord's own lips in John 14-17, and to which the "feet-washing" of chapter 13. is introductory, was largely enjoyed by him, was a constant theme of his

ministry whilst in health and strength, and was very much before him at the end.

Having been privileged to read accounts of his closing days, furnished to us by those dear to him who waited upon him, we append a few details, which, we are sure, will be of interest and profit to our readers.

Converted when a young man of nineteen, he spent sixty-four years in the service of the Lord, remaining remarkably active until within eighteen months of the close. As the end drew near and physical weakness increased, his mind remained very clear and his memory very good. Being well stored with the very

words of Scripture he spent a large part of long wakeful nights in repeating and meditating upon portions of the Word of God.

The chapters in John (13.-17.) were frequently the subject of his meditations, and more than once when asked what sort of a night he had had, he replied, "Very little sleep, but a most wonderful time over the 17th of John," or "over the 14th and 15th of John." Thus during many trying hours he found spiritual refreshment in communion with God. On some nights he spent much time in repeating Scripture aloud—John 14. was thus repeated right through twice in one night. Psalm 103. was also a favourite with him, and he frequently dwelt with joy on that beautiful rendering of verses 4 and 5:—

"Who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies, who satisfieth thine old age with good, so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle."

Prayer and praise, too, were often upon his lips. He was heard to thank the Lord for the gentle way in which the earthly tent was being taken down, and for the fact that beyond he had something incomparably better "eternal in the heavens."

To one who came to see him he said, "I am just waiting for the call—Come up hither!" To another who remarked on something he had heard about "the gate of heaven," he said, "I am just waiting to step in." To one of his own

family who repeated to him the lines:—

"Weakness will change to magnificent strength;  
Failure will change to perfection at length;  
Sorrow will change to unending delight;  
Walking by faith change to walking by sight,"

he answered by remarking how often Christians dwell on the past being all settled, and the future so bright and secure, but as to the present, know so little of association with Christ in glory, with the result that the world comes in to fill the gap. On another occasion he remarked that he could truly say, as J. N. Darby had once said, that his joy in the Lord was ten thousand times greater than when he first knew Him.

A few nights before the end he looked up as though wanting something. When asked, his reply was, "I am only longing to know Him better, who so loved me."

No lines were more often repeated by him, especially during the last few days, than—

"In peace let me resign my breath,  
And Thy salvation see;  
My sins deserve eternal death,  
But Jesus died for me";

and he would exclaim; "The whole Gospel is in those lines."

His joy at the thought of going to be with the Lord did not seem to be for a moment clouded. There was no "sting," no dread. Thus it was till unconsciousness supervened, and he "fell asleep."

## NOTES ON JEREMIAH. No. 14.

(H. J. VINE.)

### God and the Nations.

THE seven chapters which we are now to consider conclude the book. CHAPTERS 46. to 51. form the *Gentile section*, or the section concerning the nations. Chapter 52. stands alone, being an added conclusion. The book begins thus—"The words of Jeremiah," and chapter 51. ends—"Thus far are the words of Jeremiah." Chapter 52. therefore is added for a special reason,

as we saw was the case with the short chapter 45. at the end of the last section. These cases, and others we have spoken of, show that the book of Jeremiah has a peculiar arrangement of its own.

This *Gentile section* gives us the prophet's words to the nations, with cheering words also concerning Israel interspersed; language being used

which shows that the future deliverance of Israel is still in view. Indeed, it ends by foretelling God's judgment *upon* Babylon and Israel's deliverance, whereas Jeremiah began by foretelling God's judgment *from* Babylon and Israel's captivity. At the end, we are told, not Babylon but Israel is the power God will use! "Thou art My battle axe and weapons of war: for with thee will I break in pieces the nations, and with thee will I destroy kingdoms" (51. 20). On the other hand we read, "As Babylon hath caused the slain of Israel to fall, so at Babylon shall fall the slain of all the earth" (49).

The section begins—"The word of the Lord which came to Jeremiah the prophet concerning the nations" (46. 1). 1. Egypt (46. 2); 2. The Philistines (47. 1); 3. Moab (48. 1); 4. The Ammonites (49. 1); 5. Edom (49. 7); 6. Damascus (49. 23); 7. Kedar (49. 28); 8. Hazor (49. 30); 9. Elam (49. 34); 10. Babylon (50. and 51.).

First as to EGYPT, a word was given to foretell the overthrow of Pharaoh-necho's army which had gone up to the river Euphrates (46. 2-12). Egypt would have liked the pre-eminence among the nations, but Israel having failed and lost it, God had decided that it should be given to Babylon. All the nations must therefore be judged, and we see the care and patience of God in giving His word to them concerning this.

But not only does the prophet foretell the overthrow of the Egyptian army at the Euphrates; he also shows the coming of the king of Babylon into Egypt to smite the land (13-26). In eloquent and energetic language he describes the breaking away of its defenders before the resistless tide "because the Lord did drive them" (15). Though Nebuchadnezzar is used yet it is the work of "the King whose name is the Lord of hosts" (18). At the end, when Israel is restored to national pre-eminence under our Lord

Jesus Christ, Egypt shall be inhabited as in the days of old. In the following verses (27, 28) comforting words are spoken to Israel: the Lord significantly calls the nation, "*My servant Jacob*" twice, because like him they were wanderers and in much fear and dread, yet He will save them and restore them after correcting them with judgment. It is interesting to find this cheering and consoling word added to that given to Egypt; for, in the coming age, under the reign of Christ, they are to be blessed along with Israel (*see* Isaiah 19. 24-25). Then it shall be said, "*Blessed be Egypt My people . . . and Israel Mine inheritance.*"

### SPIRITUAL AND FLESHLY ENEMIES.

THE PHILISTINES, the enemies of God's people in the land, are judged in CHAPTER 47. They represent the powers against whom those who are blessed in the heavenlies in Christ have to struggle to-day (Ephesians 6. 12). Verse 1 speaks of Pharaoh smiting their head-quarters. The rest of the chapter foretells the rising up of the waters out of the north and of their overflowing the land like a flood! The king of Babylon should conquer them. *This is the sword of the Lord* (verse 6). In the future, when the opposing powers in the heavens lose their standing there (Rev. 12. 9), Satan will set himself against Israel, of whom our Lord Jesus Christ came according to the flesh (verse 13), but as Egypt helped Israel and smote Gaza, the earth (some ordered government under God's providence) will help Israel (16). Finally Christ will appear. *The sword of the Lord* to smite the nations will not then be in the hand of any earthly king, for it is seen with the King of kings and Lord of lords when He comes in victorious power and great glory (*see* Rev. 19. 15, 16). Then shall Satan be bound in the abyss, and his work of deceiving the nations shall cease for a thousand years.

Then as to MOAB: "We have heard of the arrogance of Moab, he is very proud—his loftiness and his arrogance, and his pride, and the haughtiness of his heart" (48. 29). Unlike the Philistines, however, he had a certain relationship to Jacob. Moab and Ammon (of whom we hear in the next chapter) were both children of Lot. Truly Moab was proud and magnified himself against the Lord and derided Israel His people (26, 27), therefore he should be punished accordingly; nevertheless, though he be destroyed from being a people (42), yet in the latter days the Lord will turn again the captivity of Moab (47).

If we have *the spiritual* energies, which are against those who are now blessed in Christ, typified by the Philistines, it is rather *the fleshly* forces which are represented by Moab and Ammon. Of the former we are told, he trusted in his works and in his treasured up riches (7), also, ease had marked him from his youth: he settled on his lees and had not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither had he gone into captivity (11). It is just so with those who have not been awakened to the fact that there is "*no good*" in the flesh, but when that bitter awakening comes to the sincere soul his ease disappears and he finds a principle within him that brings him into captivity. This we are told in Romans 7. It is after he has been emptied from vessel to vessel, after he has found he has *no strength* to withstand the evil or to do the good which he would, that he learns the way of deliverance. Of Moab it is said, "His taste remained in him and his scent is not changed." This must be altered before he can be blessed according to the last verse; and so likewise is it with the soul now. The old tastes and pleasures of *the flesh* must go. "Joy and gladness is taken from the plentiful field" (33) and the "riches that he hath gotten are perished": this must be understood figuratively for us now. God sent His Son in the likeness of *flesh of sin*, and

He became a sacrifice for sin upon the cross: there God condemned it utterly, that we might have deliverance from it. Christ rose from among the dead, and the new principle of life in Him is that in which we are made free.

Concerning THE AMMONITES (49. 1-6), we have a short but very instructive word in this connection. Fear, a characteristic of the flesh, is to take them (5), even as it came upon Moab (48. 43). They are to be judged with consuming fire (2) even as the flesh was in type in the sin offering. They must learn like Moab not to trust in their treasures (4), and like him they shall eventually know deliverance (6). The flesh, as such, can have no standing in Christ, although those who were once in sin, but who now know Him as their Saviour, Lord, and Deliverer, are "in Christ" where there is a new creation. Such are no longer *in the flesh*, though the *flesh is in them* still; but they are in the Spirit. The flesh is to be allowed no place. In verse 1 we find the Ammonites were in the land, in that place which belonged to Israel. It is therefore asked, Hath Israel no sons? Hath he no heir? Believers to-day are sons and heirs of God, and this relationship and inheritance are enjoyed as we walk according to the Spirit and not according to the flesh. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God they are the sons of God" (Rom. 8. 14). We have not received a spirit of fear, but the Holy Spirit, by whom we cry, ABBA, FATHER.

### DELIVERANCE.

EDOM comes next (49. 7-23). The Lord says, "I will bring the calamity of Esau upon him." This is instructive. The use of the name of the nation's father, Esau, indicates what is in the mind of the Spirit. Truly we have described very graphically the judgment of God which fell upon Edom at the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, but there is always a deeper lesson to be learned in these records. They are written for our learning as we are told,

for the learning of those who have to meet the *Esau character* now. Even in the days of the apostles, warning was given as to this by the Spirit—"Lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as *Esau*, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it [*the blessing*] carefully with tears" (Heb. 12. 15-17).

Esau was more closely related to Jacob than Moab and Ammon. It is in him we have the profane character of the flesh typified. In no sense can those who are in the flesh please God. True believers now are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit. This we are told in Romans 8., where the contrast between the flesh and the Spirit is shown.

There was pride and ambition as well as profanity with Edom. Judgment must therefore fall upon this nation. We read, "Edom shall be a desolation"; also, "I have sworn by Myself, saith the Lord, that Bozrah shall become a desolation." All this came true in the government of God. In the latter days, too, when the Lord Himself returns for the salvation of Israel, He will execute judgment upon Edom in a more terrible way than took place under Nebuchadnezzar. In Isaiah 63. 1, it is asked, "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in His apparel, travelling in the greatness of His strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save." The day of vengeance was in His heart, and the year of Israel His redeemed had come. Esau must fall and Jacob be delivered and blessed. The Lord will come again from heaven to bring this to pass after He has taken the assembly, His heavenly bride, to be with Him for ever. The overthrow of Edom will then be final, as was the

overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah (verse 18).

For the believer now it is the judgment of sin in the flesh at the cross of Christ, so that being delivered and set free from the principle of sin and death, he may, in the life of Christ risen and in the power of the Spirit, have his mind on spiritual things and serve God happily in reverence and piety. As the judgment of Edom when Christ comes again will mean the deliverance of Israel, so the judgment of sin in the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ means the deliverance of the true believer now.

In the rest of the chapter (23 to 39) we have pictured for us the judgment of DAMASCUS which is seized with fear and waxes feeble, also the overthrow of KEDAR by the king of Babylon, likewise the deliberated destruction of HAZOR, finally the smiting and scattering of ELAM. A special word was given to the prophet concerning Elam early in the reign of Zedekiah (34). The first word to the nations is dated in the reign of Jehoiakim (46. 2). No reason is given for the smiting and scattering of Elam, but it is done in justice and judgment, for the Lord of hosts sets His throne there (38). In the last verse is added a similar word to that which was said of Egypt, Moab, and Ammon, but not of the others: "In the latter days, I will bring again the captivity of Elam, saith the Lord." When Israel turns to the Lord and is delivered and established in her proper pre-eminence among the nations with our Lord Jesus Christ as her glorious King, then shall these broken nations be delivered also; reappearing according to God's gracious promises they will form the national garden of Eden again, of which Ezekiel speaks, the paradise of administrative beauty and excellence of which Christ will be the honoured Centre. Babylon, the disputant of all this, must first be judged. Two whole chapters now follow regarding this very important competitor.

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

### The Lord's Table, and the Lord's Supper.

What is meant by "the Lord's Table"; and what by "the Lord's Supper"? Is there any difference between them?—ST. ALBANS.

**BOTH** expressions refer to the same ordinance, and yet there is a difference in the way they are used in Scripture.

The former occurs in 1 Corinthians 10, 21. In this passage the apostle is appealing to them to "flee from idolatry." Three circles of fellowship are in view, each with their centre and outward expression of communion; the Jewish, with its altar; the heathen, with its cup and table of demons; and the Christian with its cup and table of the Lord.

Israel ate of the sacrifices and thus partook of the altar. The heathen ate of things sacrificed to idols, thus expressing their partaking of the table of the demons behind the idols. The Christian breaks and eats of the one loaf expressing

his partaking of the Lord's Table. Thus the apostle impressed upon the rather worldly-minded and easy-going Corinthians the urgent necessity of consistency in their ways with what they professed by their action in partaking of the Lord's Supper.

The phrase "the Lord's supper" occurs in 1 Corinthians 11. The mere coming together of saints into one place and eating and drinking together is not enough. That may be but the taking of one's "own supper," and in a disgraceful way, too. The Lord's supper is when saints assemble as under the Lord's authority, and when they eat of the loaf and drink of the cup according to His word, and for a remembrance of Him, and as discerning in the loaf and the cup the body and blood of the Lord.

### The Judgment of the Nations. (Matthew 25.)

If at the beginning of Christ's millennial reign all the nations are divided, some to go to "everlasting punishment," and the "sheep" to "life eternal," who are to remain during the millennium? It has always been my belief that all the nations remain until the judgment of the Great White Throne, when they are judged after the thousand years are completed, and are then committed to everlasting punishment. How then can they all be sent to eternal punishment in the first judgment of the sheep and goats, if this takes place when Christ returns to set up His kingdom?—BRAMPTON JUNCTION.

**THE** judgment of the nations as described in Matthew 25. clearly takes place "when the Son of Man shall come in His glory" and take His seat on His millennial throne. He proceeds to clear out of His kingdom all things that offend; but of course the "life eternal" into which the sheep are ushered is enjoyed here upon earth, as the Old Testament had indicated it should be (See Psa. 133. 3).

Yet even so the millennium is not an age of absolute perfection. More than once in the Old Testament do we read of strangers submitting themselves to Christ in that age, or as the margin puts it, they "yield feigned obedience." (See Psa. 18. 44.) Moreover, multitudes will be born during that age of blessing, and

except they are "born again" they will fall victims to Satan's wiles, when, at its termination, he is released from the abyss. If men have not the *Divine nature* they will find the millennial age inexpressibly tedious—as boring as is a prayer meeting to-day to an unconverted person!

In this final rebellion Satan will apparently sweep into his ranks all the wicked, and death will fall upon all; leaving but the saints alive. Hence the judgment of the Great White Throne is wholly of the *dead*, both small and great, and takes place after the earth and the heaven surrounding it have fled away. Before that august Throne men will stand not as nations, but as individuals, to face their individual records.



# "HONOUR THE SON." John 5. 23.

(H. J. VINR.

IN gatherings where a deep sense of God's presence has been realized, one has often experienced the grace and power with which those present have sung,

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

It is a cause for thanksgiving and rejoicing that this true note of praise, together with the truth concerning the Son's glory according to Scripture, is still sustained by the Holy Spirit. All the more so because it is being questioned, undermined, attacked or openly abandoned on all hands. The verse quoted from at the head of this paper shows that those who honour the Son honour the Father also. How precious, therefore, it must be to the Father, who loves the Son, to see Him honoured, and what joy it gives to the loyal believer.

We are speaking of our Lord Jesus Christ as "*the Son*," and not of His distinctive glories as "the Son of David," "the Son of Man" and "the Son of God," nor even of Him as "the Son of the Father," but rather of His deity as God the Son. The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God; yet there are not three Gods, but one God: "God is one" (Gal. 3. 20; 1 Tim. 2. 5, N.T.). Baptism is to "the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit," we are told in Matthew 28. 19. This indicates for us the trinity of Persons in the Godhead, all of whom share in that supreme glory.

Only in one other place does *Matthew* speak of Christ as "*the Son*" (11. 27), and there we are told that One alone fully knows Him. In the impenetrable depths of His holy Person none but God could perfectly comprehend Him. In one passage only does *Luke* so name our Lord Jesus Christ (10. 22), and

there it is said also, "No one knows who the Son is but the Father." Nor does it say that the Father *thus* reveals Him, although *He* reveals the Father to whom *He* pleases. In all His counsels, in all His love, in all His glory, and in His own home the Son knows the Father, and it is His Divine pleasure to reveal Him to others. True freedom before the Father and the Son in the power of the Spirit may be enjoyed even now. To know "the truth" secures for us freedom *from* things that hold the soul in bondage, and that is a great matter; but it is the Son Himself who brings the soul into real freedom *in* the presence of the Father, therefore it is said, "If therefore the Son shall set you free ye shall be *really free*" (John 8. 32, 36). What light, liberty, life, love and exalted blessedness this involves; and what wealth of praise, song and worship would flow where this is known experimentally in spite of the ecclesiastical failure and apostasy in Christendom! But how can this be where the Son is not honoured?

In the second Psalm (the only place in the Old Testament where the Son is so spoken of) the dignitaries of the earth are exhorted to show fealty to Him—to do homage—to "kiss the Son"! The apostasy is described first in that Psalm, and then, at such a time, kings and judges are commanded to be wise and own the greatest Dignitary of all, lest they perish from the way when His wrath is kindled but a little! Hebrews 1. 8 shows us that Psalm 45. 6 also speaks of the Son without naming Him thus. To Him it is said, "*Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.*" The deity of Christ is thus plainly stated, just as it is in John 1. 1 and Romans 9. 5 and elsewhere. Christendom abounds with teachers who profess to uphold *the divinity* of Christ, speaking of Him as a Divine

Person, hiding at the same time the fact that they do not own *the deity* of our Lord and Saviour.

I had presented to me some time ago a copy of Dr. Moffatt's well-known translation of the New Testament, and, knowing the tendency of the scholarship of to-day, I at once turned to the three verses mentioned above, as well as to others, and found flagrant alterations made, dishonouring to Christ, without any justification in the original text whatever, showing the determination of the human mind to undermine the deity of the Son. The first Scripture is changed to "*God is Thy throne*"! the second is altered from "*The Word was God*" to "*The Logos was divine*"! and the third is made laudatory and parenthetical, detaching God there spoken of from Christ altogether! I only mention these three instances to show what deceptive labours against God the Son are common in the schools of to-day. To have a Saviour who is simply *divine* would not be sufficient, for even believers are said to partake of the "*divine nature*"; but to have a Saviour who is God as well as Man settles satisfactorily every question, and gives rest to the heart and mind also. It was the Son who said, "I WILL GIVE YOU REST." Who else could do so?

It is significant to observe what is said in the Scripture which last mentions Christ as the Son in the Bible, for it has the apostasy in view like the second Psalm which first mentions Him thus. THIRTY-THREE times is the Son so named in the inspired volume! The number itself is full of meaning. 2 John 9. is the last. A loud voice as of thunder warns the "*modernist*" by it, for thus it speaks of the "*advanced*" thinker, "Whosoever goes forward and abides not in the doctrine of the Christ has not God" (N.T.); but it continues with words of divine assurance to the true believer, breathing peace like the calm which follows the angry storm, "He that abides in the doctrine, he has both the Father and the Son." In

John 5. the Son is named more often than in any other chapter, and there, at the very centre of the thirty-three mentions, we are told that all judgment is given to the Son, "that all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him" (verse 23). This should speak eloquently to every heart.

It is to be observed that the Son is the Person in the Godhead who became Man, and knew the sorrows and grief of this world. The One, too, who was despised and rejected of man: reviled, defamed, outcast and treated by the creature as worthless! Spat upon, smitten, scorned and scarred by human beings, divine counsels determine that all must honour Him. How just! how becoming! how cheering to the believer! and what glory to God the Father! The Gospel of Mark—which shows the Son who had become *the Servant* of the divine pleasure—but once mentions Him as the Son, and that in perfect consistency with his wonderful Subject, for he tells us that the day or hour of the coming of the Son of Man with great power and glory is known only to the Father (13. 32). The angels of God, who are told to worship the Son of God, know not that time; neither the Son, who, in becoming Man, took the place of the Servant of God in divine perfection and marvellous grace. Well may the redeemed sing to Him with melody in their hearts, as they await His coming again—

"Though in the very form of God  
With heavenly glory crowned,  
Thou didst a Servant's form assume,  
Beset with sorrow round."

In having the Son they have the Father (1 John 2. 33), and in seeing the Son they see the Father (John 14. 9). It is never put the reverse way by the Spirit of God in Scripture. We are shut up to the Son of God for the full revelation of God, and the Father is made known and glorified in the Son; moreover, He said Himself, "I am the

Way, and the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father unless by Me." The redeemed, who know His grace and love, have found in Him not only the way to heaven, but *the way* to the Father. He is also *the truth* which has made the Father known to their glad hearts, and they have Him as *the life* in which His presence is realized and enjoyed. To those who believe on the Son, and consequently have eternal life, all this is plain enough, for the Spirit teaches them. They felt their need, they turned to God in faith and repentance, they received the Gospel of His grace, they trusted in Christ and were sealed by the Spirit, the Son of the living God was revealed to them by the Father, and they have believed on the Son in whom the Father is made known.

It is their joy, therefore, to see the Son honoured, and the Spirit is here to glorify Him. "The Father loves the Son" we are told by the Spirit, and "has given all things into His hand" (John 3. 35); yea, a stronger term of affection still is used in John 5. 20, where it is said, "The Father *dearly loves* the Son." How precious it is to read of the Son, who loved the Father with a perfect love, once saying, "I

*love the Father*," and that just as He was going to supply the Father with a fresh motive to love Him by laying down His life as He had received commandment (John 14. 31). He glorified the Father on the earth in the place of subjection which He willingly took, and now the Father has glorified Him with the glory which He had along with the Father before the world was. He has given to Him also authority over all flesh, and the Son gives eternal life to all those who are given to Him of the Father, and the Spirit is here to bring the Father and the Son before our hearts.

How beautiful it is to behold the glorious harmony of counsel, service and power blended in the wonderful operations of the Persons of the Godhead! What will it be when all is brought to eternal fruition according to eternal purpose, when God is all in all? when God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit shall rest and rejoice in eternal blessedness? Then, indeed, all shall honour the Son even as they honour the Father.

"By the Spirit all pervading,  
Hosts unnumbered round the Lamb,  
Crowned with light and joy unfading,  
Hail Him as the great 'I AM.'"

"BRING US NOT OVER JORDAN."

(S. SCOTT.)

"Who mind earthly things" (Phil. 3. 19).

THE land on the borders of which Israel stood, when we reach the point in their history recorded in Numbers 32., was that to which God had pledged His word to bring them, that to which Abraham had looked forward, and whose attractions had sustained their spirits both in Egypt and in the wilderness. Jehovah had put the waters of the Red Sea behind them, had nourished them on their way, and had typically imparted to them a new life in the power of which

they set their faces toward the sun-rising and the fulfilment of the promises (see Num. 21. 9-11).

The one remaining but essential condition to secure all that was promised was to follow the leading of the Ark of the Covenant and pass clean over Jordan, and thus to take the last step from the wilderness and its trials to the place where they were to be shut in with God. They would thus finish the course that He had had in view for

them, and take possession of the land that had been given to them: "From the wilderness and this Lebanon . . . all the land of the Hittites and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun" (Josh. 1. 4). With what astonishment, then, did Moses hear the request of the two and a half tribes: "Bring us not over Jordan."

On the plea that the land on the east of the river suited their business pursuits, and was agreeable to themselves, it seemed to them quite justifiable to come short of the purpose of God, and thus they set about using His mercies to frustrate His design to bring them to Himself. They, unhappily, had not learnt the lesson, that He, and not their belongings, was to be the centre of their interests.

The spiritual mind of the servant of the Lord at once discerned the significance of the request. It was to him precisely the same principle as was shown in the rebellion at Kadesh Barnea (Num. 32. 8) which led to the destruction of an entire generation; in one case it was the allurements of Egypt, in the other it was the attractions of Jazer, in both it was the despising of "the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon."

In discussing the matter with Moses, the first statement in their argument reveals the true condition of their souls. They had lost confidence in God, and hence they proposed to leave their wives and families behind stone walls and in the cities of their own construction, "because of the inhabitants of the land" (verse 17) while they fought the battles of the Lord:

\* \* \*

## "Enemies of the Cross of Christ" (Phil. 3. 18).

It is not long before three downward steps mark these erring people, as recorded in Joshua 22.

*First.* When they returned to their belongings on the other side of the

that is to say, they imagined that when they were serving the Lord's interests He would NOT take care of theirs.

Faith never acts in that way.

They were evidently conscious that they were not in the path of obedience and that they would be compelled to rely on their own resources.

Where was the confidence that formerly had been expressed in such words as, "Rise up, Lord, and let Thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate Thee flee before Thee"?

But why leave their dearest possessions exposed to the inhabitants of the land? Why not take them across Jordan? They did not leave a hoof behind them when they left Egypt, then why do so now? Was it not the power of the visible things that swayed them? They were content with much less than God in His love had provided for them.

After the remonstrance of Moses they acknowledge in terms the claims of the Lord, and render lip service to His cause (see Josh. 1. 17-18). They will wage a warfare, not for "the place . . . which Thou hast made for Thee to dwell in" (Exod. 15. 17), but merely to secure for themselves the grass lands of Jazer (see verse 32).

Is not the exact parallel to this sad departure seen to-day? Is it not but too plain, that many who professedly seek the things that are above where Christ sitteth, have their own things much more at heart? O Lord, set our minds on things above and not on things of the earth!

river they forsook God's appointed centre at Shiloh (see verse 9). Here the tabernacle of witness had been set up, with its priestly service that spoke of access to God, guidance, and worship. Here His name was declared; here

was His mind made known. This was all abandoned when they returned to Jazer.

The range of vision and sphere of interest are illimitable when viewed from God's centre (see Eph. 3. 18), but when that is abandoned for a centre of our own all becomes narrowed and contracted, and consequently the Pole Star of the heavenly voyager is lost sight of. Each is then left to pursue the course that seems right in his own eyes, and in matters of walk, association, service and worship no true guidance is known.

*Second.* They took of the wealth of Canaan, and used it for their own aggrandizement in the enemies' land (see verse 8). They fully recognized its value, but wrested it from its own sphere, degrading it to a purpose that it was never meant to serve.

*Third.* They made a centre of their own, the altar Ed, a copy of the one in the land, "a great altar to see to" (verse 10). They still wished to be considered God's people, and have a correct form of worship, though cherishing the very influences that were destructive of their peculiar calling, for it had been said of them, "The people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations" (Num. 23. 9).

\* In contrast with this, it is delightful to see the development of the spiritual instinct of those who had remained true to the Lord, in the place where He had set His name. And this is ever so! Though only nine and a half tribes they spake as the "whole congregation," and, further, they saw in the erection of the altar a combination of the sin of Peor (the corruption arising from association with evil) and of Achan (who acquired for his own glory that which belonged to God), and they were prepared to sacrifice everything that pertained to their natural affection,

ere the purity and sanctity of Shiloh should be sullied (verse 12).

The offending tribes were rightly alarmed when they heard the stern condemnation that their conduct had drawn forth, but they nevertheless continued in their own course and would not submit to the suggestions of their brethren who had remained faithful to their calling and who were in touch with God.

But as is often the case, not only their friends condemn them but also their own excuses. The altar they had built should not be for sacrifice or offering, it should be merely to look to. But the only use an altar could possibly have is for sacrifice and offering, and hence an altar to look to is but a sham, a perversion of the Divine idea, and a deception for those for whose special benefit it was supposed to be built.

What folly to think that an empty altar could maintain the link with Jehovah that their own position had really severed. They were anxious to be regarded as belonging to the people in the land whilst having all their interests outside it.

Is it permissible to ask here: How far can it be said to-day that there are those who would fight tenaciously for right doctrine connected with the heavenly calling of the Church, such as the unity of the body of Christ, the Headship of Christ, the saint's calling on high in Christ Jesus, and the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in the midst of His saints, who are yet in heart and in practice outside it all? Would that such a course were impossible!

May the Lord in His infinite grace preserve us from such a snare, for if such declension is not arrested, it will lead to still further departure, and deeper humiliation as is seen in the case of these people.

## “Whose End is Destruction” (Phil. 3. 19).

In 2 Kings 10. 32-33 the entire breakdown of Israel is seen. God began “to cut short” His people for their sins, and caused them to be carried away captive into Assyria.

What an ignominious end to that privileged nation, those amongst whom God had delighted to dwell, and whom He called His own peculiar treasure.

But in the midst of universal corruption, the first to feel the heavy hand of chastisement were those who had turned their backs on the place where His name was set, and who had said, “Bring us not over Jordan.”

The triumphant song of the Red Sea had died down; the fruits of the victories of their leaders seemed lost; the glories of the reigns of kings David and Solomon were dimmed. Thus in darkness and amidst “grievous affliction” (see Isa. 9. 1-2) the testimony that had been raised to the name of Jehovah in Israel died down.

But is the darkness that of extinction or that of eclipse? If it be the former, then the great desire of the heart of

God to be known has suffered defeat; but that cannot be!

Nor is it so, for “the people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined” (Isa. 9. 2).

In the very place of eclipse (compare 2 Kings 15. 29; 1 Chron. 5. 26; Isa. 9. 1-2, and Matt. 4. 15-16), Christ the great light, the Son given, Wonderful, Counsellor, the Father of Eternity, shines forth as the Light of His ancient people—the Light of the world, of the Church, and of the Eternal city. This Light will never suffer eclipse, but will shine on to the eternal ages, and in that effulgence His saints will shine.

But to-day in the darkness consequent on His rejection it is incumbent on all who love Him to walk as children of the light. This can only be done, as we are content to leave the pleasing land of Jazer, for the land of God’s purpose beyond Jordan; that is as we know our Lord Jesus Christ in the place of which He is the Sun and Centre, in the presence of the Father, outside the influences of earth.

## THE CHURCH OF GOD.

(HAMILTON SMITH.)

### 7.—The House of God committed to Man’s Responsibility.

IN a former paper we sought to learn from Scripture the truth of the house of God when viewed according to the mind of God. We have seen the purpose of God in dwelling amongst men, and the responsibilities of men in connection with God’s dwelling.

We have now to inquire, has man answered to his responsibilities? Alas! the history of the ages has proved that man in responsibility has invariably broken down; and the higher the privilege and the greater the responsibility, the greater the breakdown.

Hence in nothing has the failure of man been so complete as in connection with the Church viewed as the house of God on earth.

To form a true estimate of the extent of this failure it is essential to obtain a clear view of the house of God according to God’s original plan. In the days when the children of Israel were in captivity, because of their failure to maintain the holiness of God’s house, the prophet Ezekiel is told to “*shew the house to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of*

their iniquities ; and let them measure the pattern " (Ezek. 43. 10). Only thus would it be brought home to them how great had been their departure from the pattern.

As we have seen in the history of Jacob, man's responsibility in connection with the house was set forth by " the gate " and " the pillar." The gate of heaven being Godward and expressing our privilege and responsibility to draw nigh to God in prayer and praise ; the pillar, with the oil, being manward and setting forth our responsibility to maintain a true witness for God before men. We have failed in both directions, we have not adequately used the gate of Heaven, and consequently we have not reared our pillar. We have failed in prayer and dependence upon God, and therefore we have failed in testimony before men.

Moreover it must be admitted that, in order that the house of God may be a true expression of God, there must be the maintenance of the characteristic marks of the house. For all the characteristics of God's house have in view the true expression of God Himself. Hence in the house holiness must be maintained in order that there may be a true expression of God. Then, too, prayer is to be made for " all men," because this expresses God's desire that all men should be saved. Women are to be marked by modesty and " good works," for in good works there is the setting forth of the goodness of God to man. So, too, the house is to be marked by the care of souls and bodies, for thus it will be seen that God has at heart the welfare of men.

Finally the house of God is to be marked by " godliness " (1 Tim. 3. 14-16). It is obvious that none other than godly behaviour is suited to the house of God. Seeing that the great purpose of God's house is to express God, it will become plain that godliness consists in a life that makes God manifest. Hence it is not sanctimoniousness, nor is it merely an

amiable and benevolent life such as it is possible for the natural man to exhibit. The godly life is a life lived in the fear of God and hence *the life that expresses God*. The secret of this life lies in having before our souls the perfect pattern of godliness as set forth in Christ. Thus in the closing verses of the third chapter of 1st Timothy, the apostle gives a remarkable summary of the life of Christ, from the incarnation to the ascension, in which the Spirit of God has brought together certain great facts in that life which express God. God *manifest* in the flesh, *seen* of angels, *preached* unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory, are all facts that make the heart of God known to man. Thus we learn in Christ the secret of godliness or the life that expresses God.

What a marvellous expression of God there would have been in the sight of the world if the Church as the house of the living God had remained true to the principles of God's house. The world would have seen a company of people marked by holiness, dependence upon God, subjection to authority, good works, and care for bodies and souls. They would have seen the setting forth of principles entirely opposite to those which prevail in the fallen world, and above all they would have learnt the attitude of God towards man. Alas ! it is evident from every point of view that those who compose the house of God have utterly failed. We have failed to maintain the great principles of God's house and thus have failed to give a true expression of God before the world.

How has this failure been brought about ? The history of Israel, and their failure in connection with the house of God in their day, may disclose to us the secret of our own failure. The prophet Ezekiel is told to say to the " rebellious " house of Israel, " Ye have brought into My sanctuary strangers, uncircumcised in heart, and

uncircumcised in flesh, to be in My sanctuary, to pollute it, even My house, . . . and ye have not kept the charge of Mine holy things: but ye have set keepers of My charge in My sanctuary for yourselves" (Ezekiel 44. 6-8). Here we have three definite charges; they introduced into the house those who had no part nor lot in the house; they failed to maintain the holiness of the house; and they used the house of God for their own ends—"for themselves."

Has not this been the sad history of the house of God in the present dispensation? On the day of Pentecost those who formed the house of God by the descent of the Holy Spirit were no "strangers," all were true children of God. There were no "uncircumcised in heart" among the three thousand added to the Church by the Lord. Every one was a true believer. But alas! how soon the "stranger" was brought in. By the baptism of Simon Magus one was introduced into the company where the Spirit of God dwelt, who had no part nor lot in the matter; others soon followed, with the result that even in the apostles' day the house of God became likened to a great house in which "there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour" (2 Timothy 2. 20). Thus, as with Israel of old, the holiness of the house has not been maintained and men are using the house of God for their own ends, "teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of base gain" (Titus 1. 11, N.T.). The evils of the apostles' days have been increasing through the ages, until, in these last days, there is a vast mass of lifeless profession in the house of God marked by the form of godliness without the power (2 Tim. 3. 1-5).

What, then, is the result of the failure of man in responsibility? As in Israel's case, the evil that has been brought into the house of God calls aloud for judgment. "The time is

come that judgment must begin at the house of God" (1 Pet. 4. 17).

In Israel's day the time came when the Lord refused to recognize the temple as the house of God. He has to say, "*Behold, your house is left unto you desolate*" (Matt. 23. 38). All the true children of God in connection with the temple were added to the Church, and the desolate house passed on to judgment. Again the Church as the house of God has become corrupted, and very soon all that is of God will be caught away to meet the Lord in the air, and the vast mass of godless profession, no longer owned as the house of God, will pass on to judgment.

Has, then, God's purpose to dwell amongst men been thwarted by the failure of man in responsibility? Surely not. No lapse of time, no change of dispensation, no failure of God's people, no opposition of the enemy, no power of death, can for one moment move the heart of God from His determined purpose to have His house on earth and dwell among men.

The moment a redeemed people are secured, God discloses the desire of His heart to dwell in their midst (see Exod. 15. 13, 17; 29. 45). The tabernacle in the wilderness, and the temple in the land, bear their witness to God's cherished thought. And though the people fail and neglect the house, though their temple is destroyed, and they pass into captivity, yet not for one moment will God surrender His purpose to dwell in the midst of His people. He brings back a remnant to rebuild His house, and they too utterly fail and in their turn are scattered among the nations, and the house once again is left without one stone upon a stone. Nevertheless, God pursues His glorious way, rising above all the failure of men. He discloses fresh secrets of His heart and brings to light "the house of God which is the assembly of the living God, the pillar and base of the truth." But again man in responsibility breaks down, the



house of God becomes a ruin, and instead of being marked by holiness it is likened to the great house of a mere man in which there are vessels to honour and dishonour. A little remnant may indeed separate from the vessels to dishonour and seek to return to the moral features of the house of God and walk according to the principles which govern the house of God: but they, too, break down, and the responsibility of man closes in judgment that commences at the house of God. Nevertheless, though all breaks down in the hands of men, whether it be Israel of old or the Church in this present day, yet God remains true to His purpose, and there rises up before us the vision of another house, in a millennial day, and "the latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former."

Yet even so this house will pass away, for the glorious millennial age will end in gloom and judgment. But God will not give up His purpose, for beyond the judgment of the nations,

and beyond the judgment of the great white throne, there is unrolled before us "a new heaven and a new earth" and, in that fair scene, we see "the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband," and we hear "a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them and be their God." We have travelled beyond the bounds of time with all its changes and its broken responsibilities. We have reached eternity with its new heaven and new earth; we have passed into a scene where all tears are wiped away, where "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away." And there we see God's great purpose throughout the ages at last fulfilled, never more to be marred by the power of the enemy or the failure of the saints.

## THE SPIRIT'S PARENTHESES.

(J. A. TRENCH.)

John 1. 14; Rev. 1. 5, 6; and 22. 16, 17, 20.

THESE three passages connect, in that in each the Spirit breaks, as I may say, the communication of the truth to make room for the response of our hearts. And it is the expression of how the Lord looks for the answer of our affections to the truth presented to us. Thus even in the midst of that most wonderful unfolding of the glory of the Person of the Lord in John 1., when He comes to "the Word became flesh and tabernacled amongst us" there is a parenthesis: room is made for the testimony of those who by the opened eye of faith beheld His glory, "the glory as of an only-begotten with a Father"—seeing in Him, the one cherished object of the Father's delight, sonship now first fully revealed; and that before the Spirit resumes "full of

grace and truth." Oh, how infinite the grace that has opened our eyes thus to behold Him! What, then, is the answer of our hearts to such an One?

It might seem as if we were on lower ground in Rev. 1. But it is because of the different character of the book and the way God and Christ are revealed in it. It is Jehovah first, rather than the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ—the One *who is*, connected with all He was, and will be for ever; an added point of very great moment for our souls. Then it is the seven Spirits which are before His throne—not the one Spirit as we know Him in relation to the one body, the throne is preparing for the direct government of the earth, and the Spirit is seen in sevenfold perfection

connected with the administration of the throne. When we come to the Lord Jesus He is not seen in the deeper glory in which we know Him while hid from the eyes of men, but as the faithful witness looking back to His path on earth, the first-begotten from the dead in resurrection, and then passing over all the present epoch of grace to what He will be as Prince of the kings of the earth in coming millennial glory. But whatever the glory in which He is presented, what touches our hearts and strikes the chord of praise, for which again the Spirit makes room, is that He loveth us (for the verb is in the present—it is ever a present love), and this proved in what He has done for us as having washed us from our sins in His own blood, and in what He has made us as kings and priests unto God and His Father.

True this does not rise to the height of His Father and our Father, His God and our God, as John 20. has made known to us the full character of our association with Him; but it flows from it. For it is involved in that wonderful revelation from the mouth of the open sepulchre, that if He has brought us into all He has entered into as Man risen from the dead before His Father and His God, there never will be a position which He takes that He will not have us associated with Himself in it. Now the highest position that He takes in Revelation is as Priest upon His throne; hence we are made kings and priests to God and His Father. And note that if this is not as intimate as having His Father for our Father and sharing the very place He has in His Father's love, it is His richest place in the book as nearest to God in power looking downwards for the kingdom, and in approach to Him upwards. Anyhow, it is His place we take and share: no wonder our hearts are full, and He makes room for the expression of—"to Him be glory and dominion for ever." Our praise is sweet to Him.

Nor does He close the book without

giving one more opportunity for the expression of affection from hearts that He has won for Himself. Once more in chapter 22. He addresses the church personally from verse 16. He is the *root* as well as the offspring of David—so secure the accomplishment of promise to Israel in the earthly blessing of the kingdom which has been largely before us in the book: the Sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings for this. But it is not this that awakens the church's response: He adds, "And the bright and morning star." As such He has to do with those who belong to Him before the rising of the Sun. As the first rays of the rising sun appear the morning star is no more seen: the star belongs to the watchers through the night. And now the answer is immediate. It is thus we know Him through the night of His absence. The Spirit dwelling in us gives the consciousness of the relationship of the Bride before the day of our espousals in glory according to chapter 19., and forms the church's heart according to that relationship. So that her one desire is to see His face. "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come."

He is the Object of her heart when known as the Bridegroom in the power of the Spirit. And when He has thus His normal place His interests in His absence will be her interests, and the verse gives us the whole circle of the church's heart. First, those who have like us heard His voice but are not yet resting in accomplished redemption so as to possess the Spirit and be of the Bride—we want them to be at peace and be able to join us in the cry that bids Him Come. Then there are the many souls that have drunk deep at earth's springs but only to find thirst that even becomes more intense—let them "come" to Him and drink and be satisfied for ever. And, last—"Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." The Lord answers to the affections He has awakened with "Surely, I come quickly," that

once more He may hear from our hearts, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

May He give us exercise of heart before Him as to how far He has the response of affections from us He so prizes: as we have been once more

reminded by His wonderful words from the glory, "This do for a remembrance of Me" (1 Cor. 11. 24). Till He come may this be our attitude—in full out-going of heart to Him in answer to all that out-going of His love to us.

## ACCEPTED WITH GOD AND ACCEPTABLE TO GOD.

(A. J. POLLOCK.)

An Address given in Edinburgh on Tuesday, April 4th, 1922.

Scriptures read:—Ephesians 1. 6; 2 Corinthians 5. 5-9;

Hebrews 11. 4; 1 Corinthians 11. 27-32.

I WANT to speak of the distinction between being "Accepted by God" on the ground of the death of Christ, and being "Acceptable to God" in our lives as Christians. If we do not labour to be acceptable to God as Christians, it is because we have a very shallow apprehension of what it is to be accepted by God; and as we have a deep sense of what it is to be accepted by God, we shall certainly labour to be acceptable to God.

In the Gospel we go further than clearance; we go further than forgiveness, blessed as that is. We, believers, are accepted of God; it says "He hath made us accepted in the Beloved." Now if we can once get into our minds that God will have nothing short of absolute perfection, we should not mix it up with ourselves in any shape or form. A friend of mine was going through a certain town at a time of revival, and getting into conversation with a lady, he spoke to her of the blessedness of knowing her sins forgiven. She said, "Sir, I have never met a person who knew that his sins were forgiven," and he replied, "Take a good look at me, you have seen him at last," and she did take a good look at him as if she were staring at some strange specimen from another world, and when she recovered her breath she said, "Oh, you believe in perfection, do you?" and he replied, "Yes, Madam, if I didn't believe in perfection I couldn't say that my sins were

forgiven; but don't run away with a wrong idea; the perfection is not in me either before conversion or after conversion. I know myself better than any other man knows me, and God knows me far better than I know myself, and I am far from perfect, but if I didn't believe in perfection I couldn't say I was saved," and then he rang this out—and if you get this into your heart, young believer, you have got something—"I have a perfect Saviour who has done a perfect work and given me a perfect salvation." But that salvation is so wonderful, dear friends, that it goes further than clearance.

If you were to study the types a little, those types that were given by the hand of Moses in connection with the Tabernacle in the wilderness, you would find things that throw light on the matter of our acceptance with God. As to the Sin offering and the Trespass offering there was no option; these had to be brought or else judgment fell upon the offender; but when we come to the Burnt offering, it was brought of the offerer's voluntary will. That is a wonderful aspect of the death of Christ; He came of His own voluntary will, and He said before these worlds were made, "Lo I come, in the volume of the Book it is written of Me, to do Thy will, O God." Now I read that passage in Hebrews because of what it says about Abel. All these offerings before the Law was given were burnt offerings, and when the Law was given we find

this, that the offerer, who of his own voluntary will brought his burnt-offering, put his hands upon the sacrifice, and all the acceptance and the sweet savour of the sacrifice was transferred to the offerer, so that he stood in all the value of it. Do you want to know how you stand accepted before God? Listen, He has made us "accepted in the Beloved." Now the Beloved is Christ, and it would be perfectly correct to say here, "He hath made us accepted in Christ," but God desiring to give us a deep sense of what our acceptance is, speaks of Him as "the Beloved." He hath made us accepted in the Beloved, and not in ourselves.

Now when Abel offered his offering, what do we read? He brought of the firstlings of his flock, and it says that God bore witness that he was righteous, testifying of his gifts. Had He to testify of Abel? He could no more testify of Abel than He could testify of Cain—if He had testified of Abel it could have been nothing but judgment, but it says He testified of his gifts, and the gifts set forth in picture Christ in connection with the atoning work.

Let me give you a little illustration to show you the difference that there is between clearance and acceptance. A young man, let us suppose, is brought before the Court charged with some serious crime, and the punishment is either a lengthy term of imprisonment or a particularly heavy fine. He has wealthy friends and they get together this big fine, and they clear the young scamp. The fine is paid, and what happens? He is as free to leave that court as the judge himself. Suppose when he leaves the court, as he goes out of the main doorway, he comes out alongside of the judge himself, and, going up to the judge, he puts out his hand and offers to shake hands with him. What does the judge say? "Young man," he says, "your fine has been paid, and you have as much right to leave this Court as I have, but I don't shake your hand; I have nothing to do

with you." The young man is *cleared* but he is not *accepted*. Oh, how different is our case! Not only cleared, but accepted—"He hath made us accepted in the Beloved." Nothing can add to that acceptance; nothing can take from it; it depends upon Christ, and Christ is dependable; He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; His Person, His heart, His work, His power are all unchanged, and therefore the acceptance of the feeblest believer is unchanged too.

But now we labour to be acceptable, and that is a very different thing. Let me give you an illustration in connection with that. Suppose a grocer puts out a little notice that he wants an errand boy, a good trustworthy lad, and a likely lad comes along. The grocer agrees that he starts work on Monday. He is accepted as an errand boy. If he has to keep his job, he will have to be acceptable. He must be acceptable, and if he is not acceptable, he may be discharged. But here is another case. A child is born into a family, and consequently it is in a position of acceptance; it must be because of its birth and the love put upon it. It is accepted, and there is no question of that child being turned out of doors or discharged. May I ask you, will that child be more desirous to be acceptable than the grocer's hireling? The errand boy knows that if he does not behave himself, if he is not acceptable, he will be turned out of his situation; the child knows that nothing like that will take place, but see there is a bond of affection between the child and the parent, and that child for affection will have a more deep desire to be acceptable to the parents than the errand boy. God does not coerce us into an acceptable life by putting us in jeopardy; all those blessings that are ours in Christ are given to us by boundless grace and love in order to find a response in our hearts; and therefore we labour to be acceptable to Him.

Now we have a wonderful point of

illustration in that 11th chapter of 1 Corinthians. The apostle Paul had been to Corinth, and God had used him much, and out of its ranks there had come followers of the Lord Jesus Christ; but, alas, old habits were strong with them, and some of them were doing things that were disgraceful to the Christian profession. Consequently, as they came to the Lord's Supper, some were eating and drinking that Supper unworthily; that is to say, their manner of doing it was unworthy; they came with unjudged sin in their lives; they came with flippancy and superficiality and carelessness; they were taking the Lord's Supper unworthily. The apostle says, "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." Now the word "sleep" is a word that is used in connection with death only in connection with the believer, and the whole passage tells us that these who were put to sleep in Jesus were believers. The point was this: they were taken to heaven because they were *accepted*; they were taken from earth because they were *NOT acceptable*. The passage continues, "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged, but when we are judged we are chastened of the Lord that we should not be condemned with the world." Our acceptance in the Beloved is God's sovereign favour to us on the righteous ground of the work of Christ, and He seeks by His Spirit to put into our hearts the desire to labour to be acceptable to Him.

I was having tea one Saturday afternoon in the City of Aberdeen, and as I drew near the door of my host's house to ring the bell, who should come along but his eldest son, fresh from the football field. It was a damp, late, autumn day, and he came of course mud from head to foot. Very shortly after that we sat down to the tea table. This young fellow sat down with us without a trace of mud upon him. As he drew near to his father's house with mud upon him, he had a title to that

house; he was his father's son. He was accepted, but he knew that if he sat at the tea table in these muddy clothes he would not be acceptable, and hence he went to the bathroom and to his wardrobe, and had a good wash and a change of clothes, and soon sat down at his father's table in an acceptable condition.

Now God is determined that these two things shall be brought together. If we are not labouring to be acceptable, then God will have to set in action those measures that He takes in His deep love. He may pass us through tribulation. He may put us through exercises of various kinds and through discipline, in order that he may bring us to our senses in this matter.

I just make an appeal as I close. Here are some hundreds of people, I suppose nearly all Christians. If we Christians here to-night were all labouring to be acceptable to Him who has made us accepted in the Beloved, labouring because we realize that everything down here is passing away, and that, as we were previously saying, the path of righteousness is the path of life, I believe Scotland would be stirred. There is a great cry in these last days for revival. I am certain of this, revival begins not amongst the sinners, but amongst the saints, and when we arise from amongst the pot-herds of worldliness and earthly mindedness, and we get Christ before us and live with a single eye for His glory, then the revival will come.

Oh, may God ground us very firmly in just those simple words, "He hath made us accepted in the Beloved," and may He deepen in every one of our hearts the desire to labour to be acceptable to Him, and may we judge ourselves rather than He should judge us. Yet He will not shrink from judging us if we need it, because He is not going to allow us to be judged with the world, since we are Christ's. May God give His blessing, for Christ's name sake, Amen!

# ALLIANCES WHICH SHOULD BE AVOIDED.

(F. B. HOLE.)

An address given in Edinburgh on Wednesday, April 5th, 1922.

Scriptures read :—2 Chronicles, 18. 1-3 ; 19. 1-3 ; 20. 35-37.

I HAVE but a few words to say. I wish I could use a sledge hammer, though I am afraid I have only got the kind of hammer that is used to drive in tintacks ; but if I had a sledge hammer, I would like to direct a mighty blow on the end of the shaft which I hope has been directed to your hearts and consciences by the Spirit of God. I verily believe that in these days, and probably in all the days of the Church's history, no greater havoc has been wrought amongst the people of God than by *unholy alliances*.

Some of us, who are easy-going, kindly, amiable folk, find it rather difficult sometimes to frame a certain little word, that without any question is the most difficult word for the great majority of people to pronounce, though it only consists of two letters. There are times in every man and woman's history when it costs them more to get that word out pat, and firm and distinct, than any other word in the dictionary, the little word "No."

Have you ever had a time in your history when that little word has trembled on your lips, and you felt as if you could not say it ? It was the word that the Spirit of God indicated as the very word to be said. It was the very word evidently that Jehoshaphat ought to have said at this juncture, for he was grievously damaged by his alliances. To-day there are excellent Christians, unimpeachable in their piety and in their individual lives, yet entrapped by the devil in unscriptural alliances. He knows that a direct temptation will probably fail, and therefore he works round and delivers a kind of flank attack by means of alliances that will lead them into a false position, rendering their testimony to the Lord practically null and void.

This excellent Jehoshaphat—a man in whom good things were found, for he took away the groves out of the land, he prepared his heart to seek God, and he cultivated individual piety—was weak, he easily yielded and he made affinity with Ahab. Now Ahab, you may remember, was very notorious amongst the Kings of Israel in this respect, that "there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up." Ahab was a man who was out and out for Baal, that is, for the devil, and Jehoshaphat made an alliance with this man.

Do we know anything in modern life amongst the people of God that answers to this picture ? Alas, we do, and when we bring someone who is deeply offending in this matter face to face with the Word of God, what does he say ? He probably replies, "I am doing it with the very best of motives ; I want to help those people. How am I to do it except I get down alongside them ?" The argument then is this, that if someone tumbles into a ditch, you tumble in after them in order to help them. Far better to see to it that you get your own feet on the solid rock, and then you may be able to lend a helping hand, but do not think you are going to help them out of the mud by jumping into the mud. That was Jehoshaphat's process, and it was a dreadful failure.

Now, what happened ? Why, clearly enough Jehoshaphat did not help—the reverse was the way it worked. Instead of helping Ahab up, Ahab pulled him down. An unconverted man is a man with only the old fallen nature in him, and you, a child of God, have the divine nature. You may, if you ally yourself with him, put yourself in such

a position that the old nature, still in you, is refreshed and revived, and leaping into fresh life, the result is that you fall to a very low level, and you dishonour the Lord. You cannot lift up that man into the life you enjoy, because to begin with he has not got the life that he may enjoy it. Listen to the words out of Jehoshaphat's own mouth; "I am as thou art." He did not say, "Thou hast become as I am, Ahab; I have lifted thee to a higher standard." No, but the very opposite.

God has set before us parables in nature, and there we may find an illustration. The time comes when you pick your apple trees, and you put the apples in a convenient storeroom, and a few days after you carefully look them over. You want to see if even one is showing signs of rottenness as it will have a bad effect on the others. Leave one rotten apple amongst forty good ones, and you will soon have forty-one bad ones; but does goodness work in that way? I have a whole cupboard full of rotten apples. Now, how delightful it would be if you could put just one good apple amongst the rotten apples and they all became good! The greengrocers would soon flourish if they could turn all their rotten apples into good ones by putting one good apple in their midst!

Now, do not ask me to believe, when I see a Christian allying himself with a lot of worldly people, who do not love the Lord, that he is going to make them all good. No, he will run a very serious risk of being himself contaminated; and not a risk merely, for if he persists in this disobedience to the Word of God, he is bound to be contaminated, and end by saying, "I am as thou art"—a terrible confession indeed.

To Jehoshaphat there came Jehu the prophet asking a pertinent question, "Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the Lord." To help a man onward *seems*

kind, and kind it is, *if he is on the right road*, but not if he is on the wrong. Now you are not going to help any unconverted man by giving him a push on the wrong road. Fancy a Christian giving a helping hand to unconverted sinners on their way down to the pit! "Shouldest thou help the ungodly and love them that hate the Lord?" Should you go and link yourself up with them and join in their enterprises and despise the line of demarcation that God has made? No, indeed; to do so is of the devil, and not of God. The Word of God calls for the Christian to stand in his own proper character as a child of light, and not a child of darkness. What a wonderful effect would be produced in the Church of God if these exhortations were attended to and Christians everywhere started purging themselves from unholy associations.

One word more. The third Scripture that I read emphasizes the fact that Jehoshaphat sinned in this manner more than once, and God came down in His government upon him. The word of Eliezer the prophet was very definite. He said, "Because thou hast joined thyself with Ahaziah, the Lord hath broken thy works." Oh, how many of us are going to stand before the Lord at His judgment seat, when the day of review comes, and hear a word similar to that? Will it be true of any of us that the Lord will have to say, "You were very zealous in a way; you were very diligent; you ran far and you laboured, but because you linked yourself up with the world, because you were frequently compromising your true character by unworthy alliances, I have broken your works; they count for nothing in My presence"?

The only safe ground is the ground that the Word of God gives us. When you find that grave instruction in the Word of God: "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers," do not fall to arguing, and reason about it, but rather OBEY it, cost what it may.

## "I AM THE LIFE."

(F. L. HARRIS.)

TWICE does our blessed Lord announce this truth. He says, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life," and "I am the Resurrection and the Life." The former speaks more of character perhaps, the latter of contrast to and conquest over death.

When we contemplate our Lord Jesus as the Life, we are of necessity carried back to the eternal past, for the Life stands in inseparable union with Him as the great "I am." "He is the true God and Eternal Life."

Amongst men on earth He walked as a humbled and rejected Man; but, hidden by the veil of His flesh, there dwelt in Him at the same time all the fulness of the Godhead.

In the eternal past *He was*, and life dwelt in Him. None else lived but God—Father, Son and Holy Ghost. When time began, life was communicated to creatures. Responsible life to angels, and then to man, in relationship thereby to their great Creator. But this life must of necessity apply only to the sphere in which each was set in responsibility. It could never rise higher than its own sphere, the sphere of its responsibility, and its characteristics could only correspond to the sphere in which it was originally set.

Thus Adam might have lived on earth for ever had he been obedient, but his life must have been characterized by the conditions in which he was found—a life of innocent delight, indeed, and of supremacy *on the earth*. Knowing God in His beneficence and His power; and in that life perfectly satisfied, as he was, indeed, formed for it. But this is not the life of which our blessed Lord speaks in our text.

The elect angels, too, occupy their own sphere and will continue to do so. Their life is that which was bestowed upon them when they were created,

and will remain the same for ever—a blessed life of holy, happy and exalted service, but not the eternal life of the redeemed children of God.

What a marvel of divine grace is involved in our text!

That Eternal Life which was with the Father has stooped to earth, and to manhood's estate. And as to its characteristics it was manifested here, and the apostle could say, "We have seen it" (*see* 1 John 1. 1).

"In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." It displayed itself in its own blessed naturalness, may I say, uncomprehended by the darkness around it. It was the life of heaven, illuminating for the time the darkness of earth. It was *eternal* life displayed in the circumstances of *time*, and amidst those appointed to death on account of their sin—amongst those who had forfeited every right to earth, and for whom, but for Divine compassion, the lake of fire, the second death, was the inevitable destiny.

But that life, so blessedly shining forth, brought out the dark contrast by which it was surrounded, where all (if left to itself) was moral death, and this must have been the only result, had the blessed Fount and Vessel of it passed back to glory from the Mount of Transfiguration. Then the Light of that Life had only revealed the darkness and demonstrated the utter impossibility of the one dwelling with the other.

But—marvellous conception and counsel of everlasting love—the Eternal Life was so found in this world in connection with Manhood, that He might in resurrection associate with Himself in a new creation all on whom eternal love was set.

Clearly, ere this could be righteously possible, the responsible life of the guilty creature must be ended. His



responsibilities must be fully met, his guilt atoned for, his penalty suffered.

That "loud triumphant cry"—"It is finished"—resounding from the Cross of Jesus, the fountain of blood and water issuing from His side in death, and the empty tomb where the Lord once lay, witness to the perfect fulfilling of these conditions, and proclaim the sweeping aside by almighty love and power of every hindrance to the righteous accomplishment of all on which the heart of God was set.

His glory secured in the very place of sin, God reached down to the tomb and raised from the dead the sinner's Substitute, and set Him at His own right hand in the glory He had with Him before the world was.

In His own intrinsic majesty the Eternal Son rose from the dead, left the tomb, and seated Himself in glorious right on the throne of God.

Jesus is *there* as *Man*, and He is the believer's life.

The believer's Adam life was ended, for God, at the cross, when Jesus died in His stead, and now his life is measured and characterized by the life of Jesus on high. "Because I live, ye shall live also." Blessed, wondrous truth! "I have come that they might have life and that they might have it *more abundantly*." "When Christ who is our life shall appear."

This is not the life of the responsible creature. In that condition the lake of fire was our desert and destiny. It is a new life altogether. A life in which it has pleased God to set us for ever in association with the Son of His love. Its grand characteristic is the knowledge of the Father and the Son, in the power of the Holy Ghost (see John 17. 3)—a knowledge that we have the nature and capacity to enjoy, as born of God; by which, according to our measure, we can enter the blessedness of communion with the very thoughts and feelings of God our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ

(1 John 1. 3)—the very highest blessedness that any creature can share.

In this new life, and the relationships which attach to it, angels become ministering spirits to us, its happy possessors. To their joy they see the wonders of God's grace displayed in those who were once dead in sins, now set in eternal life in a place of nearness to God which they can never occupy.

Their life of responsibility they joyously fill, but they remain as they were created.

Oh, wonderful counsel, redeemed men are raised to a life of heavenly dignity and glory in association—living, eternal association—with Him who fills the throne!

It is life, then, in this character of which our blessed Lord spoke to His own while the path of death lay before Him—the death that He must taste in all its terribleness ere the life could be theirs.

He came to die that He might share this resurrection life with us. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

We have it now, He its source, and we in living union with Him on the other side of death; for "this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life." And as we have it now, He looks that it may be displayed. When here, He was the light of the world; now in His absence, He says, "Ye are the light of the world" . . . "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father."

Soon He will display Himself as the Resurrection, when the bodies of His saints shall respond to the power of His life-giving word, and then they will know Him as their life in the full blessedness of the sphere in which

eternal life has its home—the Father's house—the glory of God.

What fulness then, is there in the declaration of Jesus—"I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father but by Me."

He had only a little before taken the bread and the cup and "*given thanks.*"

The precious fruits of His death were present to His heart, at that moment,

and a little later He speaks to the Father of those He was bringing to Him (chap. 17.). Still a little later He "for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame." And when He has His own with Him in the home of His glory, in the full enjoyment of the life which He has brought them into, "He shall see of the travail of His Soul and SHALL BE SATISFIED."

Hallelujah, what a Saviour!

## NOTES ON JEREMIAH. No. 15.

(H. J. VINE.)

### The Lord: Babylon's Judge and Israel's Redeemer.

AGAIN we must remind ourselves that "whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning" (Rom. 15. 4). These two chapters (50. and 51.) certainly show us what happened to BABYLON and the land of the Chaldeans; but the prophecy goes deeper than what is merely historical, showing us principles which develop in the harlot Babylon of the book of Revelation, and which bring down the righteous judgment of God. As here (51. 48), so in Revelation 18. 20 and 19. 1: those in heaven rejoice in the overthrow of this cruel and idolatrous system.

The book of Jeremiah has clearly explained to us that God Himself raised up Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon, to be His servant. He gave him world-power and dominion. He took it away from Jerusalem, His proper city of earthly government, and directly bestowed it upon Babylon. Guilty Jerusalem was set aside and Babylon was exalted. Since that time several Gentile powers have had authority from God, as derived from that bestowed upon Babylon in a direct way. In our two chapters, however, this is not so much in view, for Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon are

looked at from the side of their own actings. Instead of being spoken of as the Lord's servant the king is styled contemptuously, "*This Nebuchadnezzar*" (50. 17), and Babylon, "*O destroying mountain*" (51. 25). She had destroyed instead of ruling the earth; she had corrupted the nations also; therefore she is rejected by God in these two chapters, and the redemption of Israel and Judah is determined. We have the opposite of what was spoken of before in Jeremiah. Babylon was to be in the ascendancy, and Israel was to go into captivity: now Babylon is to sink and not rise again, whereas Israel is to *remove out of the midst of Babylon*" (50. 8; 51. 6, 45) and return to Jerusalem. This again reminds us of Revelation 18. There we are told of the corrupting influences of the Babylon of the future, and, as in the Scriptures we have just referred to, God calls to the Jews to leave her, just before Babylon is thrown down to be found no more at all (21), saying, "*Come out of her, My people*" (Rev. 18. 4).

Many details in Jeremiah 50. and 51. give us to see there is more in the mind of the Spirit than the overthrow of Babylon by Cyrus and the partial

restoration of Israel afterwards. The day is yet to come when Israel is to be joined to the Lord in "a perpetual covenant which shall not be forgotten" (50. 5), and the day is yet future as Revelation 18. shows when "every purpose of the Lord shall be performed against Babylon" (51. 29), when finally "Babylon shall sink and shall not rise" again (51. 64). It is as we understand this we are able to grasp that which is for our learning now in these chapters. Babylonish principles largely obtain to-day, and as we see the judgment of God concerning this system we ourselves will be intelligently kept clear of it. We cannot over-estimate the importance of this for those who seek to exalt the Lord and to call upon Him out of a pure heart. That which is Babylonish is always ready to ensnare such, but as we learn the mind of God we are fortified against the inroads of this lawless and superstitious system. We see that the Lord has purposed to judge it, to overthrow it altogether, also that He will save His people from its power. In this connection it is said, "THEIR REDEEMER IS STRONG" (50. 34). This is encouraging for us to-day in the face of the rapid development of Babylonish religion with world power on its side. Thank God, divine power is given into the hands of Him on whom we call.

It was to be declared "among the nations" of which Babylon was mistress that she and her idols are confounded and broken in pieces (chapter 50. 1-3). Israel and Judah then seek the Lord their God. Their face is turned Zionwards: to the One who is their only hope they are seen going and weeping as they go (4-8). The *provisional* centre of government is overthrown: the *proper* centre is established when Christ returns and Israel returns to Him who is so strikingly styled here, "The Lord, the habitation of righteousness, even the Lord, the Hope of their fathers," against whom they had sinned. It is not simply a nation, but an assembly of great

nations which destroy Babylon: so in Revelation 17. 16. The holy character of this judgment is to be known in Zion, for it is the vengeance of the Lord, the vengeance of His temple (50. 28; 51. 11). The Redeemer of Israel and Judah pleads their cause. He is strong to overthrow their oppressors in judgment as He did Sodom and Gomorrah, and to deliver His people and give them rest. The earth is moved at the fall of Babylon and the cry is heard among the nations (33-46). All this goes beyond the past overthrow of Babylon.

### BABYLON CAST DOWN: THE LORD EXALTED.

CHAPTER 51. goes deeper still into the moral degradation of Babylon, but the deliverance of God's people is still in view. Men may think that He is showing very little care for them, but he assures such, "Israel is not forsaken, nor Judah of his God, of the Lord of hosts," He will deal with them and He will judge Babylon, He will render recompense. "The Lord God of recompenses will certainly requite" (56). She had made the nations drunken so that they became mad, she had corrupted them with idolatry the work of errors, therefore the Lord will punish Babylon which "dwells upon many waters," (13; see also Rev. 17. 1.) Her end shall come (1-18).

The Lord, who is exalted in the overthrow of this cruel and corrupt system, is the "Portion of Jacob": He is the "Former of all things" and Israel is the rod of His inheritance, His battle axe and weapons of war; Israel is the nation which is peculiarly His, they are His earthly treasure. The assembly shares Christ's rejection now as to the world: she is to reign with Him in the day of His glory. The false church, Babylon, seeks to reign now—"that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth" (Rev. 17. 18). She shall receive righteous retribution, and "I will do judgment upon the graven

images of Babylon," says the Lord, but the people of God shall be brought to Zion where God will set the true King according to Psalm 2.; and then they shall rejoice and say, "*The Lord hath brought forth our righteousness*" (10). That involves Christ being known as "*Jehovah Tsidkenu*." The judgment of Babylon "reacheth unto heaven" (9). "The heaven and the earth, and all that is therein, shall sing for Babylon" (48). Revelation 19. answers to this, "I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are His judgments: for He hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth."

The great voice of discord is destroyed out of Babylon (55): the great voice of harmony is heard in heavenly gladness above (Rev. 19. 1). Supremacy is taken from Babylon: the true King is to be found in Zion, in Jerusalem. It is only from thence that the earth can rightly be ruled. The King is of David's royal line, as Matthew 1. shows, not Nebuchadnezzar's. He must also be divine—the Son of God. It is with this in view, probably, that 51. 57 tells us that the One who decrees the destruction of the Babylonish princes and rulers is "THE KING, WHOSE NAME IS JEHOVAH TSEBAHOTH." Israel shall own Him as their Lord and their God, just as Thomas did when He showed Himself the second time to His gathered disciples. Thomas would not believe till he saw: Israel will believe when they look on Him whom they pierced (Zec. 12. 10).

"SERAIAH."

"THE LORD HAS PREVAILED."

The symbolic act recorded in the last 6 verses of our chapter is very interesting. It occurred as early as the fourth year of Zedekiah's reign. This is another instance of the exceptional arrangement of Jeremiah which we

have pointed out. The placing of this incident here is most appropriate.

Seraiah, who was Baruch's brother (see 32. 12), went with Zedekiah to Babylon at the time named. Jeremiah gave him a book which he was to read when he arrived, and having learned therefrom the terrible judgments which were to come upon Babylon (the greatest city the world has ever seen, and which was then rising rapidly into fame), he was to bind a stone to the book and cast it into the river of Babylon, the Euphrates, and say, "Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise, because of the evil that I will bring upon her, and they shall be weary." This signifies more than the overthrow of Babylon in the past: the Babylon which is to rapidly rise in worldly religious splendour presently is also in view. In the book of Revelation where the Spirit reveals this to us we read of "the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates" (9. 14); also that "the waters thereof were dried up" (16. 12), and as if continuing the thought expressed by Seraiah in the words of Jeremiah, "A mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all" (Rev. 18. 21). This strikingly signifies the end of the wearisome, worldly, religious working of fallen man. This same system, which rises up and claims unrivalled supremacy, saying, "I am, and none else beside me," is foretold by Isaiah. "*Thou art wearied*," he says, "in the multitude of thy counsels" (47. 13). Their conferences, schemes, and plans and labours are all wearisome and worthless! Our chapter says, "The people shall labour in vain, and the folk in the fire, and *they shall be weary*" (58)! Thus, too, Seraiah concludes his words which pronounce Babylon's doom—"And *they shall be weary*" (64)! This is enough to cause any servant of the Lord to cease from Babylonish building

to-day and to turn to Christ alone and labour for His glory. "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain" (Psa. 127. 1). "Your labour is not in vain *in the Lord*" (1 Cor. 15. 58), but it is altogether vain and wearisome, too, in worldly religion, *in Babylon*.

Babylon signifies confusion, and, thank God, this is to be ended both politically and religiously. The Euphrates means rushing, and probably signifies that Babylon grows up beside the rapid tides of fallen man's will and energy. It is singularly striking also that Seraiah means "*The Lord has prevailed*"!

Man may exalt himself, and claim the supremacy which belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ alone, and may even for awhile appear to prosper, but eventually the Lord alone shall be exalted: in all things He shall have the pre-eminence: all things in heaven and earth shall be headed up in Him, and all shall see that

#### "THE LORD HAS PREVAILED."

The heart which knows Him responds, "He is worthy!"

#### "THE EXALTATION OF THE LORD."

The last chapter of Jeremiah—the added chapter—has a special character of its own. The previous one closed with saying, "Thus far are the words of Jeremiah." This CHAPTER 52. therefore is rightly separated from the rest and called, *The Concluding Section*. Commencing with the beginning of Zedekiah's reign, it touches upon important events and carries us right forward to the thirty-seventh year of the captivity of Jehoiachin.

The Holy Spirit of God has a special reason for giving us such a comprehensive summary in this added conclusion. It is to picture for us the complete

failure of man on the ground of responsibility, and that illustrated in the most favoured nation of all, the nation to which God gave special privileges and a peculiar place of nearness to Himself. The importance of this is seen in that it demonstrates clearly that man cannot be trusted with national direction, for if the most favoured fails then nothing better can be expected from the others, but rather worse.

At the age of twenty-one opportunity was given to Zedekiah to show that he had benefited by the stern and striking lessons which God had taught the nation through the lips of the prophet and by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, but "he did that which was evil in the eyes of the Lord, according to all that Jehoiakim had done" (2). He also rebelled against the king of Babylon, whom God had used to set him on the throne at Jerusalem. We are told in verse 3 that this happened because the anger of the Lord was against Jerusalem and Judah till He had cast them out of His presence.

Judah, the representative at that time of the nation of Israel, still had the city of government and a king of David's line on the throne. The house of the Lord still stood before them, and spoke to them of the preserving mercy of God; the chief priest and others still maintained the ministry, but they not only failed to do the good, for they did that which was positively evil in God's sight.

We see the story repeated in another connection in Revelation 2. and 3. The assemblies, divinely set up—as we have symbolized in the seven golden candlesticks there spoken of—soon sink so low, that we read of Satan dwelling among them, and of some holding the doctrine of Balaam and other vile things, till finally the faithful and true Witness, our Lord Jesus Christ, says to the angel of the assembly in Laodicea, "I am about to spue thee out of My mouth" (3. 16). This tells

us of the failure of Christendom on the ground of responsibility; Jeremiah 52. tells us of the failure of Judaism. May we learn the lesson and cleave to the Lord Himself, abiding in Christ that our joy may be full in spite of the failure, and that we may be to God's glory in these "difficult times."

Verses 4 to 7 show us the overthrow of the city, and verses 8 to 11 the punishment and blinding of the king; verses 12 to 23 the destruction of the house of the Lord and all in connection with it; verses 24 to 27 the killing of the chief priest and others; solemnly closing with the words, "Thus Judah was carried away captive out of his land" (27). The next three verses give us dates and details of the three lots of captives which were carried away to captivity.

The last four verses conclude this remarkable book by presenting to us an incident at the palace of Babylon, which stands in vivid contrast to that given of Daniel at the same royal establishment. Daniel would not defile himself with the king's meat, but God gave him distinction nevertheless, by endowing him with divine wisdom and understanding. At this time, when Evil-merodach became king, Daniel does not seem to have been prominent; but Jehoiachin, the Coniah of chapter 22. 28, a despised broken idol, an out-cast of the Lord, is raised up. Evil-merodach, the son and successor of Nebuchadnezzar, brought him out of prison and exalted him above the other royal captives at the palace, and gave him a daily allowance till the day of his death.

The things which happened to Zedekiah on the one hand and to Jehoiachin on the other, typify the lot of the Jews during the times of the Gentiles, whilst the house of the Lord and Jerusalem are desolated, as we have depicted in this chapter. "Wrath is come upon them to the uttermost" (1 Thes. 2. 16), and like Zedekiah blindness has overtaken them. Chained

and cast into prison, many have died fearful deaths: sufferings of the severest sort have been theirs. Like Jehoiachin, however, some have held exceptionally exalted places among the kings of the Gentiles, and indeed do so at this very time, and will do so increasingly; but it is not, generally speaking, that they owe their high position to faithfulness to the God of Israel, as was the case with Daniel.

This state of things will be ended when our Lord Jesus Christ returns; then "all Israel shall be saved; according as it is written, The Deliverer shall come out of Zion; He shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. And this is the Covenant from Me to them, when I shall have taken away their sins" (Rom. 11. 26, 27). Their reception into favour again will not simply be a restoration, it will be like a resurrection to life, bringing in wealth and glory and blessing, as they rejoicingly recognize their once rejected but risen Messiah. They will repent and He will receive them, He will rule that nation as the head of all the nations, and great indeed shall be the glory. Nor need we wonder, for though Israel has been a nation terrible from their beginning, yet they are *the Israelites, who are as princes with God, "whose is the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the law giving, and the service, and the promises; whose are the fathers; and of whom, as according to the flesh, is—*

**THE CHRIST, WHO IS OVER ALL,  
GOD BLESSED FOR EVER. AMEN.**  
(Rom. 9. 4, 5.)

They shall yet be exalted in Him as a nation and He shall yet be exalted by them; yea, through Israel His Name shall be exalted in all the earth.

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NOTE.—**LAMENTATIONS:** for concise outline of this book, see the writer's "Alphabetical Scriptures" by our Publisher. Price 3d., or Cloth 6d. Jeremiah's Lamentations are constructed in an interesting acrostic form.

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

### The Scape-goat. Leviticus 16.

It is taught that the Scape-goat gives us a type of the Lord Jesus as Sin-bearer, taking up the sins, not of everybody, but of His people. I do not quite see that it is wrong for gospel preachers to tell an unconverted congregation that their sins have been borne by a Substitute—as, surely, if by the Holy Spirit they are brought to believe this they are saved. Should one preach Christ as having vindicated God's righteousness as to the natural sinful state of all, and then if faith be given tell that Christ has borne the personal sins? This would suggest that we are to preach faith in Christ rather than faith in Christ as the Substitute.—BLACK-HEATH.

YOU would be on perfectly safe and Scriptural ground in preaching Christ to an unconverted congregation as the One who has vindicated God's righteousness, and that not only as to the natural sinful state of all, but in regard to the question of sin in its totality. The propitiatory sacrifice of Christ in His blood is the declaration of God's righteousness both in His passing over of past sins—i.e., the sins of saints who lived before His work was accomplished—and also in the justification of the believer to-day (see Rom. 3. 25, 26).

The prime thought in "propitiation" is the satisfying of the Divine claims, the consequence of which is that "forgiveness of sins" can be boldly and happily declared to unconverted men after the fashion of Paul's preaching at Antioch (see Acts 13. 38). Forgiveness may be preached to any and every man, for the Divine throne is propitiated in the blood of Christ. This is typified in Lev. 16. by the blood of the first goat carried into the holiest of all.

When we speak of Christ bearing our sins as a Substitute, we take a much more limited, indeed an essentially *personal* view. It is a question of the definite application of the virtue of His death to our own individual cases. Hence the Scape-goat comes second in Lev. 16.; and Paul at Antioch completed his message by adding, "and by Him all that believe are justified from all things" (Acts 13. 39). Justified from all things because as believers Christ's sacrifice has a *substitutionary* bearing in regard to them, and not only a *propitiatory* bearing in regard to God. We are no more authorized by Scripture to tell unconverted people that Christ was *their* Substitute than we are to tell them that *they* are justified from all things.

We refrain from saying more as we had an answer in our February issue bearing upon this matter. It is dealt with also at greater length in the chapter "Propitiation and Substitution" in the small volume *Foundations of the Faith* advertised upon our cover.

### Making Atonement for the Holy Place.

In connection with Leviticus 4. 3-6 a writer says: "We see that sin borne by the ministration of the priest and the blood of the offering into the sanctuary." Is it true that SIN was borne into the sanctuary? Also what made it necessary for the sanctuary to be cleansed according to Leviticus 16. 16? I understand that the blood was presented before the Lord, but were the sins also?—MAIDA VALE.

IT is of course not true that sin was borne into the sanctuary. What was borne there was the blood of the sacrifice in virtue of which the sin was forgiven. We cannot tell from the brief extract you give if the writer in question is guilty of just a verbal slip or whether his words are with intent to support some teaching not in accord with Scripture.

What necessitated the cleansing of the Sanctuary is stated in the verse to which you allude. It clearly states it was "because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins." The tabernacle was the dwelling-place of God at that time, placed in the midst of a sinful people and daily entered by the priests who were not free from sin.

Hence it was continually in contact with those who were defiled, however diligently they were purified ceremonially according to the instructions given.

Typically the tabernacle set forth the things in the heavens, and hence when we turn from type to anti-type, we find that "the heavens are not clean in His sight" (Job 15. 15) and that just as "the patterns of things in the heavens" had to be purified with "the blood of

calves and of goats" so "the heavenly things themselves" with the better sacrifice of Christ Himself (see Heb. 9. 19-28).

All this should impress us with how defiling a thing is sin. It puts a blight upon everything it touches, though we may be quite unconscious of it. We must seek grace therefore to eschew it, not only personally, but also in all our surroundings and associations.

## Equality with the Father.

We know from many Scriptures that our Lord claimed equality with God the Father. Therefore His answer to the Jews in John 10. 34-36 puzzles me and many. Does it not look as if He withdrew from the claim? Can you explain?—A. G. L., LONDON.

THE passage to which you call attention is at first sight a difficult one. If you would understand it note the context. The Lord Jesus had just made a tremendous assertion in the hearing of these Jews, "I and My Father are one" (verse 20). In these words He claimed not merely equality, but an absolute *unity* with the Father. They are ONE; and that without any qualification whatever. At the conclusion of the argument He said, "that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in Me, and I in Him" (verse 38); so that evidently He had not withdrawn from the claim He had just made.

When, however, the Jews thought to stone Him, saying to Him in justification of their attempted violence, "because that Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God," the Lord met them upon the low ground which they had themselves chosen as the basis of their argument. Their own law had spoken of the judges—those responsible to receive God's word and administer in accordance therewith—as gods (Psa. 82. 1, 6). If then those who represented God in so small and distant a degree were addressed as "gods" in the inspired writings, was He—set apart and sent into the world

by the Father—a blasphemer, because He said "I am the Son of God"?

Such was His argument meeting them from their own Scriptures in an irrefutable way, and thus answering these fools according to their folly. Consequently in the argument there is no assertion of His equality with the Father—that had just been asserted. On the other hand, there is in it nothing inconsistent with His equality. There is no withdrawing of His claims.

He is "sanctified" or "set apart" by the Father, and He is "sent"; but both these great facts are entirely consistent with His equality. The Persons of the ever-blessed Godhead may assume relations that differ—the Father, for instance, may originate purposes and form plans, the Son may come forth to be the Accomplisher of those purposes and plans, and even become "a little lower than the angels" to that end—yet are they still absolutely one and equal.

Rightly understood, therefore, there is nothing in those verses that in the least imperils the great truth of the Son's equality with the Father, which as you correctly say is clear in many Scriptures.

F. McL., India.—We have received your inquiry as to the statement that "Christ had a mortal body." The extract, we notice, goes on to say, "Death was possible to that body, and actually endured by Him as part of His humiliation." This shows pretty clearly what was in the writer's mind.

All the same we do not like the expression, for "mortal" so often means on our

lips that a person is subject to death as a matter of course.

The sacred body of our Lord was mortal, in the limited sense that it *could* be made subject to death, for it *was* made subject to death in love for our sakes. It was mortal in no other sense. We have "mortal bodies" indeed (Rom 8. 11). We prefer to avoid the word in speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ.



## "IN HOLY SPLENDOUR."

(J. T. MAWSON.)

I HAD been sighing over the dull, drab, ordinary sort of Christian living that seems to characterize the most of us who profess the Name of the Lord, and praying that there might be revived in our souls a holy enthusiasm for Him and His interests. But by what means could this be brought about?—that was the question which exercised my mind through a somewhat sleepless night. I believe I got the answer to the question at the dawn, for just as the grey light of morning came softly stealing through my eastern window, Psalm 110. came with peculiar force to my mind. I had just at hand the "New Translation," by J. N. Darby, and I found in verse 3 a description of the very condition of things for which I was longing. "*The people shall be willing [or, shall offer themselves willingly] in the day of Thy power, in holy splendour: from the womb of the morning [shall come] to Thee the dew of Thy youth.*" This will be literally fulfilled in the day of the Lord's millennial power, but it should have a not less blessed fulfilment in us who know the glory of the Lord now.

I had a spiritual vision of the saints of God, wholly separated unto the Lord, yielding themselves with a glad and willing obedience to Him and His cause, like an army, triumphant and well equipped, shouting its enthusiasm for its king. I saw the saints as a company of Nazarites, such as the Nazarites in Israel once were. "Her Nazarites were purer than snow, they were whiter than milk, they were more ruddy in body than rubies, their polishing was of sapphire" (Lam. 4. 7). This surely is the meaning of the words. "The people shall offer themselves willingly . . . in holy splendour."

True Nazariteship, true sanctification of body, soul and spirit *unto the Lord*; this is holy splendour, the only splendid

thing in the eyes of heaven in this tawdry and sordid world.

It is this "holy splendour" that we must seek after; nothing less than this will wholly please the Lord; without it we have left our first love, and we are neither cold nor hot. The very thought of the possibility of it makes the heart glow, and quickens prayer that it might be so. Let us consider this "holy splendour;" it is not the doing of doughty deeds, the winning of wonderful victories over mighty foes, it may lead to that surely, but it is the full and glad acknowledgment of the Lord's absolute right to possess us wholly. It is that of which Paul speaks, "a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use." When Mary in silence and self-forgetfulness poured her spikenard upon the feet of her Lord, it was holy splendour; when there was forced from the heart of Paul the cry, "The love of Christ constraineth us," and, again, "for me to live is Christ," it was holy splendour. When any soul can truly sing—

"Thine, Jesus, Thine  
For ever to recline  
On love eternal, fixed and sure.  
Yes, I am Thine, for evermore  
Lord Jesus, Thine."

that soul is coming to the Lord in holy splendour.

But these who thus come to the Lord for His joy and use are "*from the womb of the morning.*" They are children of the day, they do not belong to the night, therefore they are not to sleep as do others, but must watch and be sober. They are like an army, alert, well disciplined, and watchful. And they are wonderfully accoutred, for the Scripture says, "Let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation"

(1 Thess. 5. 8). Behold this army standing ready for service or for the home-call, girt in these heavenly graces ; as the light of heaven shines upon them do they not appear in holy splendour ? This was my vision ; this is the " army with banners " beautiful in the eyes of the Lord.

But how can this be not a vision merely, but a great spiritual reality ? There is only one way. Never yet did any soul become *subject* to the Lord except as He became its sole *object*. So our Psalm begins : " The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool." These are familiar words. They are quoted three times in the New Testament, plainly showing the immense importance of them. They were quoted by the Lord Himself to the Pharisees when in His patience with them *He* asked, " What think ye of Christ ? " This declaration of the Eternal God plainly shows what *HE* thinks of Him. Herein is found His answer to all the contempt and hatred that men heaped upon Him. It is God's answer to the cross. The One who was thorn-crowned and crucified is now sitting at the right hand of the Majesty on high. But there is more in it than that. It means that though He was despised and rejected of men, and though it is still the day of His reproach, He is yet to be triumphant over every foe. But there is more even than that, for He is addressed as the Lord, He is not only the Man, infinitely delightful to God, but He is Himself the Lord, God and man in one Person. Could we possibly consider Him coming

" From Godhead's fullest glory  
Down to Calvary's depth of woe " ;

and going back again to the glory from

whence He came without being profoundly moved towards Him ? His humiliation and suffering and death, His resurrection and ascension and glory, and the love that lay behind it all claim us for Himself alone, and as we consider Him we shall most certainly desire to be " unto the Lord," and so be true Nazarites (see Numbers 6.). We shall willingly yield ourselves to Him in holy splendour.

But there is more. It is well to reach that point in our soul's history when we make a definite decision to be wholly for the Lord, but to carry out that decision is utterly beyond us, if we have no strength but our own, and hence there is a wonderful provision for us. Read the 4th verse of our Psalm, " Jehovah hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedek."

Have we considered our Lord in this character ? It will be well worth our while to do so. He has become, through His suffering, the Author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him. He can maintain us in the holy splendour of our willing obedience to Him. If we look to Him He becomes our strength in weakness, He can preserve our devotion to Himself, whiter than milk, purer than snow, more ruddy than rubies, and bright as the sapphires that shine in the city of God. When weary and like to faint in the conflict He brings forth the bread and wine to refresh us as Melchisedek did for Abraham in the days of old. He can never fail, and we may rely upon Him who is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. To Him be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

The saints will be rich in *circumstances* by-and-by, as now they are rich in *God Himself*. The kingdom will be established, " the world to come " will shine in its glories, and the saints shall be there, and the saints ought now to be rich *towards* God, as they are rich *in* Him, laying out their energies and their advantages, their talents, whatever such be, in His service.

## "THE SON OF THE FATHER."

(H. J. VINE.)

"MY FATHER!" From the lips of our Lord Jesus Christ those two precious words often fell. Their full meaning we may not yet have grasped, but the Spirit is here to lead us into all truth. It is plainly evident that Jesus must have been speaking as a Man when He said, "*MY Father is greater than I.*" This therefore explains to us how He stood in relation to His Father as "the Son of the Father," for when He spake of Himself as the Son, one with the Father, He did not then say "*My Father,*" but speaking as God the Son He told those who listened to His words, "*I and THE Father are one*" (N.T.). There is therefore no contradiction between John 14. 28 and 10. 30, but each Scripture glows with divine beauty, one revealing Him to us as Man and the other as God, the first in His obedient place as the Son of the Father, the second in His equality as the Son with the Father.

Often in the epistles we read of "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," and the Lord said when on earth, "My Father is greater than all." He also spake of His Father's glory, of His throne, and of His holy angels. When He spoke of *the sheep* which His Father had given to Him,—those to whom He Himself gave eternal life—in His own hand and in His Father's hand He said they were safe, yea, doubly secure for ever; but not only have *we* been given to the Son of the Father, for He also said, "*All things have been delivered to Me by My Father.*" When we learn therefore something of His Father's greatness thus made known, and of the relationship of Jesus to Him as His well-loved Son, we shall enter with greater appreciation into that burst of praise which comes from the hearts of His own at the beginning of the book of Revelation, and with elevated grace and spiritual

intelligence exclaim,—“Unto Him who loves us, and has washed us from our sins in His blood, and made us a kingdom, *priests to His God and Father*: to Him be the glory and the might to the ages of ages. Amen.”

When He was going to the cross to shed His precious blood for us, and to lay down His life for the glory of God, He spake of the commandment which He had received of His Father. At all cost to Himself it should be carried out. Satan might tempt Him, the power of darkness might rise against Him, but He would not swerve from the path of obedience nor turn away back. No flaw should be found in Him, and He Himself said, "The Ruler of the world comes and in Me he has nothing" (N.T.). In devoted love to the Father He went onward, not like men who zealously espouse a cause not knowing where and how the matter will end for them, but, having received a definite commandment, He, blessed be His holy Name, obediently went on to fulfil it, knowing all that awaited Him; so He could say,—“That the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father has commanded Me, thus I do. Arise, let us go hence.”

At the age of twelve He said to His earthly parents, "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business." Later, He said to the Jews who sought to slay Him, "My Father worketh hitherto and I work." Again, to His loved disciples, "I must work the works of Him that sent Me while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work." In John 17. He spake to the Father of the work which He had given Him to do (4). All was done by Him in obedience and love. Nothing could turn Him aside. No trial, however great, could soil His faithfulness. No sorrow, however deep, could mar the perfection of His love to the

Father. "I love the Father," He said, and went forward to fulfil His commandment.

"Faithful amidst unfaithfulness,  
'Mid darkness only light,  
Thou did'st 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."

When the rough band, with officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, came with lanterns and torches and weapons—led by Judas, the betrayer—to take Him, they were momentarily overcome as they felt themselves in the presence of the I AM, for when "He said to them, I AM (He), they went away backward and fell to the ground." GOD THE SON stood there before them. When, however, He had again spoken to them, and allowed the captain to take Him, Peter with a sword smote the servant of the high priest. Then Jesus healed him, and told Peter to sheath the sword, saying, "*The cup which the Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?*" Nothing could divert Thee, blessed Lord! Supreme in Thy personal greatness and majesty! Wonderful in Thy grace and humility! Thou didst press onward to accomplish Thy Father's will.

I lay down My life of Myself, He said. Man's guilt was none the less. As far as they were concerned they killed the Lord of glory. That, however, were impossible had Jesus not permitted it. For the salvation of men and for the glory of God His death was a necessity, and He willingly laid down His life. The Father ever loved His Son: He dwelt in His bosom. When, however, that well-loved Son laid down His life at Calvary His love went out to Him in a new way. A fresh motive was provided for the Father to love Him, as Jesus said, "Therefore doth My Father love Me because I lay down My life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself.

I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. *This commandment have I received of My Father*" (John 10. 17, 18). This was the commandment which He ever kept before Him, which He fulfilled at Calvary, and which drew out the heart of the Father to Him as never before.

Knowing this, we are not surprised to learn of the earliest Visitant to His new tomb: at the earliest dawning of that new day—the resurrection day—the first day of the week—He was raised again from among the dead by "*the glory of the Father*"—Before the disciples—before the women—the Father was there! Newness of life was then opened out for us in Christ risen, and newness of relationship unknown before was secured for the redeemed, and a new power given as a result when He sent the Spirit from on high. All is ours, for He has ascended as *Man*, the Son of the Father; and He could send by Mary a message to those He called "*My brethren*," saying, "*My Father your Father, My God your God.*" Such words had never been uttered before. A new and heavenly relationship was established. A new family appeared—the heavenly royalty!

In view of this, the Lord Jesus had spoken of going away to prepare a home on high for us. He had brought the Father's love to us here.—"The Father Himself loveth you," He said; and now, in the home of that love He has prepared a place for us, so that where He Himself is, where the Son of the Father's love is, we might be also. It is where He Himself is, our prepared place is. Where Jesus is we are to have our home along with Him, even as He said, "In My Father's house are many abodes; were it not so I would have told you: for I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto Myself that **WHERE I AM THERE YE MAY BE ALSO.**" (John 14. 2, 3). What marvellous grace and love! The beloved Son of

the Father who fulfilled His Father's commandment, who drank the cup which He gave to Him, who glorified Him on the earth and completed the work given to Him by the Father to do, who was raised from among the dead by His glory, who has gone on high to prepare a place for us in His Father's house, — what marvellous grace and love, again we say, that *He Himself* is coming again for us,

to receive us *to Himself*, that we might dwell *with Himself* in His Father's House for ever !

"Lord Jesus we bless Thee,  
Loved Son of the Father,  
The fame of Thy beauty  
Our anthem transcends :  
Oh, come soon and take us !  
We long to be with Thee,  
Uniting our praises  
Where song never ends."

## "HE IS THE ROCK."

(D. Ross.)

An Address on Hebrews 13. 7-9 ; Deuteronomy 34. 5-12 ; 2 Kings 2. 8-14 ;  
Matthew 28. 18-20.

THAT precious verse, Hebrews 13. 8, lies at the centre of all I want to say to you. First of all notice the context. Verse 7 speaks about leaders, and it uses the past tense, "Leaders, who have spoken unto you the Word of God" (N.T.). I have no doubt those leaders to whom he referred were dead and gone. And then in the ninth verse he exhorts them not to be carried about with divers and strange doctrines, and desires that their hearts should be established. So that before the eighth verse you get the thought of those leaders, men of God, who have passed away ; and after it you get the thought of ourselves, fickle, failing, changing and easily carried away. But, thank God, in between these two you have the wonderful statement,

"JESUS CHRIST the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever."

The verse about the leaders has been coming very much before me recently. One and another of the men that I looked up to in my boyhood, men that spoke the word of God, have passed away. We are told that we are to follow, not their failures, not features that presented some peculiarity, but their *faith*, and we are to consider the issue, the end of their life. Thank God, as we look

back, we can remember men whose lives were an inspiration and an encouragement to us, and we feel sad as we see them going—but they have passed. The writer of this epistle wants to fasten our minds upon Christ. All through he had been seeking to take the thoughts of these Hebrew Christians off angels, off men, off systems, off ritual, off everything earthly, and to fix their minds on the unchanging eternal Son of God. He died, but now He lives in the power of an endless life, and He carries on His work: "JESUS CHRIST the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

Think for one moment of Moses. There never was another like him until there appeared that One whom he foretold when he said, "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you like unto me." And he says, "That is the One you shall hear." What an inspiration that man's life is ! Brought up in Pharaoh's palace—refusing, choosing, enduring, and seeing the invisible things which are eternal. And now his time is come after a long useful strenuous life, and his eye is not dim ; his natural force is not abated. He has been carried on in the strength of the Lord, but he is not to lead the

people into the land. And then in that glorious death-song of his along with the roll of thunder there is a note of triumph and thanksgiving. He speaks about the strength of God. "He is the Rock"—that Rock that never trembled. The people failed, even Moses failed, but they found that God was their Rock. Oh, as we pass through a world of change, as we feel in ourselves that no two days are we without change, what a comfort and consolation it is to know that God is our Rock. There is stability there.

But there is another figure he uses. He compares God to the eagle that stirs up her nest and flutters over her young ones,—just as the mother bird drops the young ones over the precipice in order that they may try their wings, and then she swoops down under them and bears them up on her own wings of strength and maternal affection. God's love infinitely surpasses even a mother's love. His strength is unbounded. And the result is you get that wonderful review of the blessings of the tribes finishing up with the blessing given to Asher, "As thy days, so shall thy strength be." For every difficulty, for every circumstance, He the Rock, He the Lover of our souls, will provide the needed strength.

And now the day has come. God takes Moses up into the mountain, and with no eye-witnesses save the angels, He lays His servant to sleep. And then there was a cry. Those people had resisted and almost broken the heart of Moses, a stiff-necked and rebellious generation, but when the servant was gone there was a cry of bitterness, and for thirty days they mourned their great leader. But while God buries the workman, He raises up a Joshua and carries on His work.

Then look at Elijah, that great servant of God, called out to recover the people of God from the idolatry into which they had fallen. He was characterized by strength and by boldness, but his time has come and he has

got to go. And you notice that just as Joshua was raised up to succeed Moses, so when Elijah has to pass away He brings to the front an Elisha. God will never fail His people. Elisha saw Elijah go, but when he came to the waters of Jordan, he said, "Where is the Lord God?" Elisha is gone, but God is not gone; and though men may pass, Jesus Christ abides for ever.

In the south of England there used to be a great Methodist preacher called Jabez Bunting, who was evidently well known in the community to which he belonged. When he died a preacher, pronouncing his eulogy, made this foolishly exaggerated statement—"When Jabez Bunting died the sun of Methodism set." One of the audience, more truly perhaps than politely, shouted out, "Glory be to God, that's a lie." Whatever is of God will abide; no matter though the servants pass away. Jabez Bunting, such as he was, passed away, but his God remains; Moses passed away, but his God remains; Elijah passed away, but his God remains. Every servant has his little day, his work is done and he passes away, and his life is but an inspiration and example for us. He cannot be present with us—but Jesus Christ abides for ever.

Moses was but a man; Elijah was but a man. Moses was the meekest man that ever lived, but he failed in his strong point—he lost his temper. Elijah was one of the boldest men that ever lived, but he failed in his strong point, he fled before the face of a woman; and the man that asked to die like a hunted beast in the bush in the wilderness was carried into heaven in the whirlwind, to the glory of God.

But you get these two men, and there they stand during the transfiguration on the mount with Jesus, and they speak of his decease. Jesus is going to have an exodus: the word used there for decease is the word exodus. Moses went out of the world; God buried him. Elijah went out of

the world ; God carried him to heaven in a whirlwind. Jesus, the Son of God, is going out of the world, and how is He going ? He is going the way of a malefactor's cross. There as He stands transfigured, radiant with all the glory of God, His face shining as the sun, His raiment white and glistening, the subject of communion is the Cross, and the decease that Jesus was about to accomplish. And Peter stupidly, unwittingly, places these two men on the same level as Jesus ! The cloud comes and sweeps them away, and God's voice is heard saying, "This is My beloved Son, hear Him." That is what Moses had said. "A prophet will come, hear Him." Now the Father's voice announces that this is His Son, and they are to listen to Him.

Now look at the contrast. His exodus as far as the world was concerned was by way of the cross. But for His own—from the mount of Olives He went up into glory, and think of those last words that He left with His disciples. Oh, how they speak of His deity and power. Jesus is divine, the eternal Son of the eternal God. Moses failed in weakness, Elijah failed in weakness ; but this One who is parting from His own, what does He say ? The servants fail and die in weakness, but here is One in power, He has been into death and risen from the dead, and now in resurrection He says,

**"ALL POWER IS GIVEN UNTO ME."**

There is the token of *omnipotence*, One to whom all power is given. He is "God over all, blessed for ever." What else does He say ? "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel. And lo ! I am with you alway." We have got our limitations. You and I are simply limited to this work where we are ; but Christ to-day is with His servants in all the world. There you get the divine attribute of *omnipresence*. And we can know Jesus as His disciples never

knew Him in the days of His flesh. While He is risen at the right hand of God, He can be with us in all the world. It matters not where He sends us to do His bidding, it may be to the heart of Africa, it may be to the snows of Greenland, it may be to the slums of Glasgow, He says, "Lo ! I am with you always, even unto the end of the age." Omnipotence—Omnipresence. What else ? All knowledge. The Son of God has passed through the heavens, and though so high is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. Too often in difficulties we may sympathize and have no power ; we may have the power and too often we fail to sympathize. But Christ has the strength. He is the Son of God. Christ has the sympathy. He has been all the way before us, and He has felt what we are feeling. And that One we are exhorted to look to, He has perfect knowledge, or to use a similar word to those I have been using, He has *omniscience*, He knows everything. Omnipotence, all power ; omnipresence, He is with us wherever we go ; omniscience, He knows every detail of our lives and our circumstances.

Notice again. What was the result of Moses going away ? Thirty days' mourning. What was the result of Elijah going away ? Elisha crying out, "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof." What do you read at the end of Luke's Gospel as the result of Christ's departure ? They did not return to Jerusalem for thirty days' mourning ! They did not cry nor lament that He was gone from them ! They "returned to Jerusalem with great joy" and continued praising and blessing God. His going away did not cause sorrow, but meant an increase of power, because He says, "It is expedient that I go away, because if I go not away the Comforter will not come." He went to the right hand of God in order that His Spirit might be sent down, in order that His martyr Stephen, standing there face to face

with the enemies that were so eager for his life, might look up and say, "I see the glory of God, and Jesus."

That is what we find. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday." What was He yesterday when He was here in the days of His flesh? He yielded His life on the cross. The Jesus of "to-day," where is He? The strong Son of God exalted at the right hand of God, our High Priest and Intercessor. "And for ever,"—Jesus. By-and-by throughout eternity He will rule the universe; but while His circumstances may alter, He never alters. We alter with our circumstances, we are moulded and fashioned by our environment, and are continually changing. But Jesus is the same as in the days of His flesh, He is the same in the glory of God.

"Lord, on the throne Thy love's the same,  
As once upon Thy cross of shame :  
In lowliness Thou cam'st to die,  
Thou livest now for us on high."

There is His omnipotence, His omnipresence, His omniscience. There is the fact that His going, instead of causing sorrow, filled His disciples with joy. And then the fact of His *eternity*. God is He who inhabits eternity, and Jesus Christ is the same for ever. "Lo, I am with you *always*, even to the end of the age." We are finding our little systems have their day and then cease to be. We shall pass, and if we build up little systems they will pass; but Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. To Him God says,

"BUT THOU REMAINEST."

## THE CHURCH OF GOD.

(HAMILTON SMITH.)

### 8.—The Path of Faith in a Day of Ruin.

IN a former paper we viewed the Assembly as the house of God according to the mind of God. We have also seen that, through the failure of man in responsibility, evil doctrines and evil men have been brought into the house of God, reducing the house to a ruin, and exposing it to judgment.

It has been pointed out that while the 1st Epistle to Timothy presents the house of God in order according to the mind of God, the 2nd Epistle presents the house when it has become ruined by the failure of man, and, in its ruin, likened to "a great house" in which "there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour" (2 Tim. 2. 20). The believer who has once seen the truth of the Assembly, as the house of God, as unfolded in Scripture, may well say, "I see nothing on earth that answers to the truth." Alas, this is

true! In a day of ruin the truth of the house of God can only be known in an abstract way, there being no longer any concrete expression of the truth. All that can be actually seen in Christendom is "a great house" containing vessels to honour and dishonour. This raises other questions in the mind of the believer, who desires to walk in obedience to God—"Does the Word of God give any directions for God's people in a day of ruin? Is there any light as to how we are to walk, and with whom we are to walk, in a day when Christendom has become corrupt?" However great the difficulties, or however dark the day, it is not possible to think that God ever leaves His people without sufficient light for their pathway through this world. Through lack of spirituality we may fail to discern the light; through lack of devotedness we may fail to walk according to the light, or through sheer apathy we may be



wholly indifferent to it, nevertheless we may be sure the Word of God provides full light for our pathway.

There are three facts of the first importance for our souls to realize, if we desire to walk through this world according to the mind of God.

First, we have to learn that, however great our natural intelligence, however highly the mind may have been trained, however great our knowledge of Scripture, however sincere our desires, we cannot, if trusting to our own minds, find God's path for His people in the midst of the confusion of Christendom. We are not competent to find our way through the increasing difficulties of the path, to face the continual opposition to the truth, or solve the various questions that constantly arise.

But, secondly, having discovered our utter incompetency it is a very great relief to learn that we are not left to find our way as best we can, and that God never expected that we should have any wisdom or competency in ourselves to walk according to His mind. The Lord could say, "Without Me ye can do nothing."

Thirdly, it is a very great day when we discover the rich provision that God has made in order that we might be intelligent in His mind. First, we have a Head in heaven—Christ in glory is the Head of His body, the Church—and all wisdom is in the Head, so that though we have no wisdom in ourselves we have full wisdom in Christ. One has truly said, "Christ is made wisdom to us, that is intelligence. He alone could lead men through the perplexities of this world of moral confusion, where there is no way." It is then of the first importance to give up our own "heads" and look to Christ as "the Head" to guide us. If we trust our own heads we are "not holding the Head" (Col. 2. 19).

Second, the Holy Spirit—a Divine Person—is on earth. The Lord knew well that His people would not be able

to support themselves in a world from which He is absent; thus, before He left, He could say, "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" (John 14. 16, 17). The preservation and maintenance of the truth is not dependent upon the saints, but upon the abiding presence of the Spirit of Truth.

Thirdly, we have the Holy Scriptures given by inspiration of God and profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly furnished unto all good works (2 Tim. 3. 16, 17). We read that "the house of God which is the assembly of the living God" is "the pillar and base of the truth"; but, when the house of God has become a ruin, and we no longer have the truth livingly set forth in the Church, the man of God still has the infallible authority of Scripture by which to prove all things.

Now it must be manifest that no ruin in Christendom can for one moment alter Christ, or the Spirit, or the Scriptures. Christ remains the Head in Heaven, with boundless stores of wisdom for His people to draw upon, as much in these last days as in the first days of Christianity. The Holy Spirit abides with unabated power to guide and control. The Holy Scriptures remain with absolute authority.

Alas! Christendom has largely set aside Christ, the Spirit, and the Scriptures. The great religious systems of men have indeed retained the Name of Christ, but have set aside Christ as the Head in Heaven by appointing earthly heads. Rome has its Pope, the Greek Church its Patriarch, the Protestant Churches their Kings, Archbishops, Presidents or Moderators. Then in these great systems there is little or no place left for the Spirit. The religious machinery and carnal devices of men have largely shut out the Spirit. And, lastly, men have

made the most deadly attack upon the Scriptures, until there is hardly a sect in Christendom that holds with any degree of unanimity that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God."

If, then, we desire to give Christ His place as the Head of the Church, to own and submit to the control of the Holy Spirit, and to implicitly bow to Scripture, what are we to do? Scripture very definitely answers that we must maintain, and act upon two great principles. First *separation from all that is contrary to the truth of God*—all that is a denial of the truth of the Church, of Christ as the Head of His Church, of the Holy Spirit as our all-sufficient guide, and the Scriptures as our absolute authority. Then, having separated from evil, Scripture insists upon another equally important principle—*association with all that is according to God*. In a word, we must "Cease to do evil; learn to do well." First, then, let us seek to learn what Scripture has to say as to

### SEPARATION FROM EVIL.

All would admit, however much we may come short in practice, that separation from this evil world has ever been incumbent upon the people of God; but in a day when Christianity has become corrupted we have special instructions for a threefold separation. First, *separation from every religious system which by its constitution is a denial of the truth of Christ and the Church*. The word in Hebrews 13. 13, is very plain, "Let us go forth therefore unto Him *without the camp*, bearing His reproach." The camp was the Jewish religious system originally set up by God and making its appeal to the natural man. In it no question of new birth was raised, all depended upon natural birth. It was composed of people outwardly in relationship with God, with an earthly order of priests who stood between the people and God. It had a worldly sanctuary and an ordered ritual (Heb. 9. 1-10). It is only too manifest that the religious systems of Christendom have

been formed after the pattern of the camp. They are largely composed of unconverted men; they, too, make a definite appeal to the natural man; they, too, have their worldly sanctuaries, their ritual, and their humanly ordained priests that stand between the people and God. But, alas! in imitating the camp, Christians, as we have seen, have set aside Christ as the Head, the Holy Spirit as Guide, and the Scriptures as authority. If, then, we would give Christ His true place we must, in obedience to the Word, "Go forth unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach."

2. But separation from the camp order of things as set forth in these religious systems is not enough. Scripture plainly enjoins *separation from evil doctrine*. In the second chapter of the 2nd Epistle to Timothy and the 19th verse, we read, "Let every one that nameth the Name of the Lord *depart from iniquity*." Every one who confesses the Name of the Lord is, by profession, identified with the Lord and is responsible to withdraw from iniquity. The iniquity may take many forms, but the preceding verses plainly show that evil doctrines are especially in view. We must not link iniquity with the Name of the Lord. It may cost us much in time to separate from iniquity, but it will cost us much more in eternity to link up the Name of the Lord with iniquity.

3. Furthermore, the same Scripture demands *separation from evil persons*. Verse 20 speaks of vessels to honour and to dishonour, and in the following verse we are enjoined to purge ourselves from the vessels to dishonour in order to be sanctified and meet for the Master's use. Here it is clear that persons are in view, not merely doctrines. It has been truly remarked: "It is always in proportion to your separation from these vessels—persons, not their doctrine merely, that you are sanctified and meet for the Master's use. . . . Few have an idea how one suffers from unhallowed society. It

is not enough not to hold their doctrines ; but their society contaminates. You are coloured by the lowest company that you keep. Every effort has been tried in Christendom to weaken the force of this passage ; every one is great in proportion to his separation."

Thus it is clear Scripture plainly enjoins separation from religious systems that are a denial of the truth, from false doctrines that undermine the truth, and from vessels to dishonour who do not practice the truth. This, however, is not enough. Separation, however necessary, is only negative, there must be also that which is positive. This leads us to the second great principle,

#### ASSOCIATION WITH GOOD.

Just as separation is to be from evil things as well as evil persons, so, too, the association is to be with things that are right and good as well as with persons who are right with the Lord. We are to "follow righteousness, faith, love, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (2 Tim. 2. 22). Righteousness of necessity stands first. Whatever profession a man may make, if there is not the maintenance of practical righteousness, there cannot be a walk according to God. But righteousness is not enough : mere right and wrong is not sufficient to determine the Christian's path. He must indeed do right, but to take the path of the Lord requires faith. Hence with righteousness "faith" must be followed. But righteousness and faith make way for "love." If love is not guarded by righteousness and faith it will degenerate into mere human affection and be used as a plea for the allowance of laxity, and the passing over of evil. Then these three qualities lead to "peace." Not a dishonourable peace that is only a compromise with evil, unbelief, and hatred ; but an honourable peace that is the outcome of righteousness, faith, and love. But if we follow these beautiful qualities we shall find others who are doing the same—those who

call on the Lord out of a pure heart—and with such we are to associate. The fact that they call on the Lord out of a pure heart can plainly be discerned by their practical lives, inasmuch as it can be seen that they have "departed from iniquity," purged themselves from vessels to dishonour, and follow "righteousness, faith, love, peace." It is therefore clear that the path of separation is not a path of isolation. Scripture shows that there will always be those with whom we can associate.

However, those who, in the midst of the corruption of Christendom, take this path of separation from evil and association with good, will have raised against them "foolish and senseless questions" by those who oppose a path that they have not faith to take. To meet such it will be necessary to cultivate a spirit of "gentleness," "patience," and "meekness." Only as we wear this character will it be possible to avoid strife while seeking to instruct (2 Tim. 2. 23-26).

It will be noticed that in these Scriptures that give such definite instruction for the people of God in a day of ruin, it is not once suggested that we should go outside the house of God. Indeed, to do so is impossible without going outside Christendom which would involve leaving the world altogether. But while we cannot go outside the house, we are responsible to separate from the evil in the house. Again, we are not told to reconstruct anything. We are not told to rebuild the house. We are not called to form a pattern Church, or start anything new. We are simply to walk in the light of that which was in the beginning, and which still exists under the eye of God in spite of all the failure of man in responsibility. That is to say it is still our privilege and responsibility to walk in the truth of the Church, in the recognition of Christ as the Head, under the control and guidance of the Holy Spirit, and according to the instructions of Scripture.

# THE POWER OF TRANSFORMATION. (A. J. POLLOCK.)

An Address given in Edinburgh on Thursday, 6th April, 1922.

Scriptures read: Isaiah 6. 1-8 ; Acts 7. 2-4 ; 26. 12-19.

[T is well known, even in natural things, that it is the men of vision who come to the front, and when you get the extraordinary combination of both vision and great business aptitude, you have got a man who does great things in this world. It was a young Scotsman who went to Canada and had the vision of a railway running from Halifax, Nova Scotia, right across the continent, through Canada, over the Rocky Mountains, and terminating on the Pacific Coast ; and when everybody gave up faith in the project because of great difficulties, this man's faith carried it through, and the other day he died full of years and honour—Lord Strathcona. Now if we are to progress in spiritual things we must have vision ; not to be visionary, but to be practical ; to have the vision of faith.

Now I want to speak about these three instances that I have read in your hearing to-night. First of all take the case of Isaiah. In chapter 5. he cries, "Woe" upon a number of people, and he is right in doing so. It takes no particular grace to do that, but it does take a great deal of grace to condemn oneself, and we find how Isaiah was able to cry that seventh "Woe," that was the making of him. When he cried "Woe is me," he put his finger on the right spot. Now, what was it that made him say that ? Well, he had a vision. In this vision he saw the glory of the Lord ; he saw His throne high and lifted up ; he saw those holy seraphim veiling faces that had never looked upon evil ; veiling feet that had never trod in the paths of wickedness ; using their wings to fly with gladness at the bidding of their Master. He saw the very posts of the Temple move as he heard the cry, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory,"

and as Isaiah got that vision it shrivelled up all self-complacency, and it put before him that which completely transformed him ; and when the Lord said, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us ?" he said, "Here am I, send me."

Let me ask the Christians here, especially my younger brethren and sisters in Christ, Have you yet got a clear vision of Christ ? Has God put before you the inexpressible beauty and glory of Christ until you are withered in the dust so far as you yourself are concerned, and you arise very anxious and glad to say, "Here am I, send me." I would to God that some here would make a start for Christ. What is your object ? When, years ago, a man of scholarly ability was urged to adopt a certain course in regard to a University Professorship, and told he would carry everything before him, and make his fortune, what was his reply ? He said quietly, "*For which world ?*" Oh, the folly of laying ourselves out for things that perish with the grave ; but, oh, the nobility of a life surrendered to Christ !

Now let me say a word about Abraham. He was at the outset no different from his fellows, an idolater bounded by ignorance and superstition. In Stephen's eloquent address to the Sanhedrim we read that, one day "the God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran, and said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall show thee." How was Abraham drawn from that country of his where he was surrounded by these idolaters, and was one himself ? Ah, there is a wonderful vision ! The God of Glory appeared unto our father Abraham, and he began to move. On foot he did at least

twelve hundred miles. Now a person under impulse and excitement will start to do wonderful things, but it is perseverance that proves whether a person has got a true impetus, and I can see Abraham, step by step, amidst discomfort and dangers, journeying 600 miles north-west till he got to the place called Charran, and there, alas, he stuck fast for a good many years. Why did he stop? Well, he carried his Father with him. It is no use carrying people. If they do not walk upon their feet, they had better not make a start. Year after year went by, and you would think that Abraham had forgotten what his objective was; but no, one day God woke him up. Death came and removed the hindrance; his father died, and then he began to set his face towards the south, and completed his journey.

Then, look at him as he traverses the land that was given to him. He did not possess it, and his descendants so far have never yet possessed the Promised Land in all its extent. The Lord Jesus said, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day; he saw it, and was glad." Now what did the vision of Abraham make him? A stranger and pilgrim. I shall never forget an expression used by one who used to preach on this very site, though not in this building. A good many years ago he was talking very happily about approach and reproach: approach into God's presence; reproach in this world, where Christ was reproached and cast out, and He said, "No one can take up the reproach except as they enjoy the approach, and no one can fully enjoy approach like those who taste reproach." Happy are we if we are reproached for the testimony of Christ. I also remember him saying that approach and reproach are like the two blades of a pair of scissors; they cut together. Now, my dear friends, I ask you, Are you characterized by being strangers and pilgrims in this world?

Now, let me go to the third instance,

and that is Saul of Tarsus. What a transformation was made in him! There is no doubt about it that a strong character needs a deep experience. There was Saul in all the armour of his self-satisfaction, imagining that he was serving God in hounding the servants of Christ off the face of the earth, and we find him one day on his road to Damascus, full of murderous intent. A light above the brightness of the sun struck him down, and he woke up to this fact, that a Man that he thought was only an imposter was none less than the long promised Messiah, and that He was no longer in the grave, but sitting at God's right hand. What did it do for him? It reversed all the current of his life and all the desires of his heart, and turning right round he went into the synagogues and boldly preached that Christ was the Son of God. What is the secret of it? He tells us in recounting his conversion in the 22nd chapter—"When I could not see for the glory of that light." My friends, is the brightness you are looking at the brightness of the sun—the things of this life; it may be the pleasures of this life; the business enterprises of this life; the domestic relations in this life—or have you seen a light that is above the brightness of the sun? When Paul wrote those Epistles to the early Churches, he more than once spoke of himself as "a slave of Jesus Christ." It was not like the bondage that the children of Israel groaned under in the land of Egypt, but it was a slavery that was the delight of his heart as he spent and was spent in the cause of Christ. Ah, it is a question of the heart; it is the heart that governs the man, and the only way in which we can be right is, that by the Spirit of God we get such a glimpse of the heart of God and the love of Christ, that our hearts are filled with answering love to Him.

Now I can say with joy that everyone of you dear Christians are going to have a vision, for Scripture says, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be,

but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." It is in that state we shall see Him as He is, and that is when the transformation will take place; but we want that transformation to begin NOW.

Whom are we going to serve? There are plenty to serve the devil; there are plenty to live selfish lives; then let us rise with our eyes fixed on Christ, and gazing upon His face we shall be transformed as from glory to glory. I cease; but I would look into the faces of you young Christians, and ask,—Am I to speak to-night in vain? Are you going away to embrace the pleasures of this life that can only give you disappointment? Yet the only power against the *distraction*

which the world supplies is in *attraction*. You know those beech hedges in sheltered places. Winter comes with its rough winds and its heavy rains and its disintegrating frosts, and that hedge is still clothed with its dead brown leaves, and it seems as if those leaves will never be stripped off. Then one day they begin to fall. How is it that they are falling? The spring has come; the sap begins to rise; the bud begins to burst, and in the power of new life the old dead thing is pushed off, and the hedge is clothed in the beautiful verdure of Spring. That, my friends, is what Dr. Chalmers called, "The expulsive power of a new affection," and that is the secret of the Christian life. God give us to lead that life, for His glory, till Jesus comes!

## THE LOVE OF CHRIST. John 14. 31; 13. 1.

(JAMES BOYD)

THE love of Christ is said to surpass knowledge, and the more we meditate upon it the more we become conscious of our utter inability, even with the aid of the Holy Spirit, to seize the immensity of that infinite, self-sacrificing, knowledge-surpassing love, which led the eternal Son from the eternal Father, and the form of God to take a bondsman's form, being made in the likeness of men, and to subject Himself to the contempt, rejection, scorn and derision of His rebellious creatures, and in the end to take the place of the Sinbearer, suffer the forsaking of God, and give up His life upon a malefactor's gibbet. It was a journey of love, from the highest heights to the lowest depths, unpunctuated by one backward look, one moment of hesitation that might suggest uncertainty, or reluctance to go forward; no complaining word escaped those lips, through which only the voice of the living Father made itself heard; no curse was hurled against the heads of those that accepted His favours and

in the end clamoured for His crucifixion. One word from His lips would have brought more than twelve legions of angels against His miserable, thankless, and wicked antagonists, but that word was not spoken: "He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth" (Isa. 53. 7).

No terror that rose up in the pathway of that love could turn it aside from the goal to which it was steadily advancing. Beset by every sorrow, anathematized by the leaders of the nation, regarded as mad by His relatives, misunderstood by everybody, friendless and afflicted He pursued His pathway of unspeakable love, though the woes that encircled His lonely Person steadily increased, until they reached their culmination in the cursed death of the cross, and the abandonment of God; and there that love, that for the space of thirty-three years had made this

valley of death redolent with its odours, poured forth in infinite volume and in omnipotent power its everlasting and unutterable sweetness: love to His Father in the first instance, but love also to all given to Him of the Father.

The unapproachable light in which the Godhead dwells contains its own unfathomable secrets; but the things that are revealed belong to us, who have received the Holy Spirit in order that we may know the things that are freely given to us of God; which things have been spoken to us in words taught by the same Spirit. We can therefore be in the full light of the revealed will of God, and more than that we know nothing; nor into unrevealed mysteries have we any desire to penetrate. The light that the sun gives us is all that we require for light and health. A little more might be destructive to us, so the revelation that God has made to us is all that we need for our eternal happiness, and the subject mind desires no greater revelation, but only to know that revelation better.

The revelation that we have of God conveys to us the great truth that He is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; three persons, yet one God, and *God is Love*. This is what He is in His nature, what He is in His very being. There is nothing but love between those Divine and Eternal Persons. "Thou lovedst Me," says Jesus to the Father, "before the foundation of the world" (John 17. 24). "*God is Love*" is the only absolute appellative that is used of the supreme Being; and what a wave of infinite happiness and indescribable joy overwhelms the soul as we meditate upon the marvellous fact that love is the nature of the One with whom we have to do. That "*God is light*" the Word also declares, but we are also said to be light, and therefore I take it that light is a more relative term, and not so absolute as love.

But as my object is at present to meditate a little upon the love of

Christ, I must seek to engage the reader's attention with One of these Divine Persons in His manifestation here upon earth, the Son divested of the form of God, and clothed in the form of a Servant; no more to exercise authority as a despot, accountable to no higher power for His actions, but to be under the authority of another, and to do the will of the Father that sent Him. What a change of circumstances! How wondrous to behold the Creator of the worlds in the form of a Servant, a Man amongst men; in outward form not distinguishable from other men, thus in order that He might accomplish the will of the Father!

By the way in which we have the truth presented to us in the Scriptures we learn that counsels belong to the Father (Eph. 1. 3-14); the Son becomes Man, in order that through Him those counsels may be fulfilled (John 17.); and the Holy Spirit is the power by which all are brought to pass (Acts 10. 38). In proof of each of these statements many other texts of Scripture might be adduced, but they can be easily found by the reader, and this exercise will be full of both interest and spiritual profit.

The presence of the Son here upon this earth in humiliation is the witness of His love to the Father. Those eternal counsels of love were as dear to His heart as to the heart of the Father; and in the laying of a foundation upon which all those counsels could be righteously fulfilled He knew all the horrors that such a work entailed. But such was His great love to the Father, such His infinite desire that those counsels should have their fulfilment, such His delight to do the will of the Father, He would go through all those horrors, let the cost to Himself be what it might.

And having become a Servant He will be a Servant for ever. The descent from the form of God to that of a servant may be immeasurable, His lowly

birth humiliating, His death upon the cross ignominious, His descent into hades dishonourable in the extreme; but it was the hand of the Father that had marked out that path for His feet to tread; and He also knew that beyond the reproach, and the shame, and the gibbet, and the darkness, and the forsaking, and the death, there was for Him "Thy presence, where there is fulness of joy, and Thy right hand, where there are pleasures for evermore" (Ps. 16. 11). Therefore for the joy that was set before Him He could endure the cross and despise the shame (Heb. 12. 2). His words when going to that cross were: "That the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do" (John 14. 31). In His great love to the Father, and that the Father might be glorified, even to the giving up of His life He did everything that could be done upon earth, and then asked to be glorified, in order that He might still glorify Him upon the platform of resurrection. And when all those counsels of love have been fulfilled, and when every enemy has been subdued, His subjection to the Father shall be as eternally perfect, and His love as undiminished as it was when tested by the death of the cross.

But how can we speak of the Father's appreciation of that self-sacrificing love of His beloved Son? We can only estimate the delight that the Father has in Him, as we are able to estimate the place of exaltation given Him of the Father. He could say when here below: "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again" (John 10. 17). Because of that mighty work that He accomplished to the Father's glory, and at His commandment, He has been highly exalted, and a Name given to Him which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of heavenly, earthly, and infernal beings; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ

is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phil. 2. 9-11). The Son has loved the Father above all else, and His love has been proven, by His taking the place of a servant, and becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; and the love of the Father to the Son is proven, by the place which as Man He occupies on the Father's throne, and by the fact that the Father is determined that His Son shall have the same honour as Himself from every intelligent being; for all must honour the Son, even as they honour the Father (John 5. 23).

But in His becoming man, and in all the work that He has done, as well as His present activities on our behalf before the face of God, we see His love for those given Him of the Father. It is our privilege, as individual believers, to take up the words of the apostle into our lips, and confess: "He loved me, and gave Himself for me"; and as part of that wondrous organism of which He is the Head, rejoice in the fact that He loved the church, and gave Himself for it. Whatever He did, He did for the glory of the Father, but He did it no less for our eternal blessing. "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 life-time subject to bondage" (Heb. 2. 14, 15).

It is with holy adoration that we draw near in contemplation of His taking the form of a servant, and being found in fashion as a man, for the glory of the Godhead, and that the counsels of the Father might be carried out; but that He should set His affections upon such rebellious worms of the dust as we all are by nature, this is just where we lose ourselves in utter bewilderment, for it surely surpasses knowledge. Perhaps it is not always that we are in the blissful contemplation of its glory and its infinity,



but when the reality and greatness of it breaks with overwhelming power over heart and mind, we begin to realize that though we know it, and rejoice in its quickening beams, and that with a joy unspeakable, its sweetness, its vastness, its marvellous mystery, can never be fully known.

The blessed God has graciously given to us the power of speech, by means of which we can express the thoughts that rise up in our creature minds. We speak of eternity, infinity, and such-like words, but these terms are much more the expression of our own creature limitations, our utter ignorance of the things we know to be realities rather than an exposition of the things themselves. It is thus with the great verities of revelation, things that are much more to be felt and enjoyed than to be set forth in human parlance. When we think of eternity we have the thought of endless duration of time ; and when we think of infinity, that which has not bounds or limits is before our minds. But what know we of either ? May I not also ask, What need we know ? We know that the love of Christ is our sure and lasting portion : ours while we have our being, and that its magnitude is beyond all our ability to grasp. And we know that it is not only the little of it that we can grasp that is ours ; it is all ours. It has all been lavished upon us, and it is all ours to be enjoyed.

We know "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich" (2 Cor. 8. 9). What amazing down-stooping on His part we see in His advent into this world ! What marvellous self-abnegation ! From form of God into form of servant, from despot to slave, from omnipotence to infant weakness, from the adoration of angels to the contempt of men : love incarnate in a world of incarnate lust !

"Come now and view that manger,  
The Lord of glory see,  
A houseless, homeless stranger  
In this poor world for thee."

Love brought Him there—sovereign love. He had come forth from the Father, and was come into the world. He had come forth from riches, and was come into poverty. He had come from the throne of the universe, and was come to a manger where the cattle fed. He had called the creation into existence by the Word of His power, He was now in that creation in the form of a creature. He had been accustomed to give commandment, now He must hearken to, and execute, the behests of Another. In His presence seraphim veiled their faces, now must He meet the proud and persecuting stare of His rebellious creatures. How altered are the circumstances of the Lord of glory !

See the poverty into which His love has brought Him ! An outcast in a manger ! A stranger in His own world ! His delights had ever been with the sons of men (Prov. 8. 31). And now He is with them, and in their likeness, beginning where man begins, come of a woman, born into the world, love come down to heal sin-ruined souls. To the human eye the expression of weakness, but really the Upholder of the universe, which is the work of His own hands. Here under the protection of the Father, never to use His own power for His protection from insult or injury, but ever to commit Himself to Him that judges righteously ; well knowing that His career upon earth must begin in a manger and close on a gibbet, while all His history between must be marked by the scorn, derision, and persecution of His rebellious creatures.

But is it not just this that has endeared Him to our hearts ? It is in the evils that beset His path that we see His infinite moral perfections brought to light. We know Him where He is on the throne of the Father, but it is in His sojourn down here that we have learned Him. His present circumstances are very different to what they were in the days of His flesh, but there is no change in Him. He is "the

same yesterday, to-day, and for ever " (Heb. 13. 8). It is He who was here that we look forward to see face to face, and to be with at His coming again.

But it is His lowly grace, His poverty, His meekness, that has attracted our hearts; because all this shows us the extent to which He was willing to go to make us His own. And what else, O Lord, could have won our heart's affections? Not the worship of angels; not Thy works of mighty power; not even the Father's voice from the opened heavens. These wonders might have awed and terrified our creature souls, but they would not have led us to confide in Thee. No!

"We cling to Thee in weakness,  
The manger and the cross;  
We gaze upon Thy meekness  
Thro' suffering, pain, and loss."

Thou didst speak words the like of which never before had saluted the ears of men. They expressed that which lay in Thine own heart of unfathomable love for such as we know ourselves to be. They came through Thy lips warm from the bosom of the living Father, where Thou hadst Thine everlasting dwelling-place. As had been traced on the two tables of stone that which man should be for God, so Thou didst trace on the dust of this world that which God was in grace for man. And also Thou didst manifest in Thy lowly life the order of man, and the only order of man, that can live for ever in relation with God.

Surely Thou art all-powerful. Thou knowest all things, and Thou canst do all things. There is nothing too hard for Thee. But it is to Thee in weakness we cling—the deep weakness of the manger, and the deeper weakness of the cross; yet the Upholder of all things in both manger and cross as Thou now art on the throne of the Highest. What unfathomable mysteries surround Thy holy Person!

Only the Father knows the Son (Matt. 11. 28). It is utterly impossible for our creature minds to fathom the mysteries of the incarnation, nor should we have the least desire to do this. We should be perfectly satisfied with the revelation given to us, for all that the creature could receive, even with the aid of the Holy Spirit, is given to us in the Holy Scriptures. Not to frankly enter into that which is revealed is to greatly hinder the growth of our souls, and to attempt to go beyond the Word is to wander into dangerous error. But God would have our souls enlightened and nourished by the Word of truth. He would have us grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Therefore, while we must be careful not to go beyond the limits of Scripture, we must just be as careful not to allow our natural timidity to rob us of that which is vital to the welfare of our souls. Let us search the Scriptures diligently, but let us search them prayerfully also, and in distrust of our natural minds in whatever form they may assert themselves.

I make bold to say, however, that the soul who has not learned the excellencies of Christ as manifested in His lowly life, has never yet learned them. It is the humbled Christ that has won our hearts. The way in which He entered this world, and the way in which He went out of it, shall never be forgotten by His redeemed people. Whatever else we may have learned, these are the great verities that have won our affections. And the brightest hope we have is to be with Him who ever had His delight with the sons of men, and who in infinite grace, though He was rich, for our sakes became poor; in order that we through His poverty might become rich. May He be daily the study of our souls and the great light and joy of all our hearts.

## THE UPWARD WAY.

(F. B. HOLE.)

THE fifteen Psalms (120 to 134) which are entitled 'Songs of Degrees' have a progressive character which is strongly marked. They set before us prophetically the various and progressive exercises and stages by which in the future a remnant of Israel will be restored to the land, the city, and God's dwelling-place in Zion, and enjoy to the full millennial blessedness. If the reader will quietly read the whole series he will doubtless notice this for himself. Our present purpose is to notice how strikingly the last five illustrate the upward way of the saint to-day. Let these five Psalms at least be read. If they are not, the reading of this article will probably be waste of time.

Psalm 130 commences with the words "Out of the depths." Thence have we all come, and what depths they were! The Psalmist, however, set the Lord before him and addressed his cry to Him. Consequently he found what we find: first, that "there is forgiveness with Thee that Thou mayest be feared"; and second, that He not only forgives but redeems. "He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities." In a much earlier Psalm there had been the cry, "Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles" (25. 22). But *troubles* are, after all, only symptoms and results, while *iniquities* are the cause. We have not started on the upward way unless, having realized the depths in which we were plunged, we have cried to the Lord out of them and hence have tasted His forgiveness as to the guilt of our iniquities, and experienced His redeeming power in rescuing us from under their weight and oppression.

Nothing subdues the heart and weans it from the world save this grace. Psalm 131 gives us a picture of its blessed effects in the believer. In our unconverted condition our hearts were haughty and our eyes

lofty; we *did* exercise ourselves in great matters, and esteemed nothing too wonderful for us; and further the world fascinated us, so that in the presence of its allurements we were *then* unable to restrain ourselves. *Now* things are otherwise for those who have received the grace of God in truth. Such can say with the Psalmist, "Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me"—for they have learned something of their own littleness, and instead of exercising their own minds they are content to accept in faith the mind of God revealed in His Word. Further, they can add, "Surely I have restrained and composed my soul, like a weaned child with its mother: my soul within me is as a weaned child" (N. Trans.). The unweaned child may happily play with others, yet, if placed with its mother, it loses all its restraint and composure. The weaned child, on the other hand, can be with its mother restrained and composed, no longer feeling the peculiar attraction which once dominated it, for other sources of nutriment and satisfaction are known by it. Just in this manner the soul is weaned from the world and the old loves connected with the world. The believer has discovered in Christ an Object of supply and satisfaction which gives him a calm superiority to worldly joys.

In Psalm 132 the way is upward still. We are reminded of David in his afflictions, and of that feature which distinguished him and largely accounted for his being designated "a man after God's own heart." From a very early moment in his life he set his affection towards the ark of God, even though it had gone into captivity in the land of the Philistines, and subsequently, though given up by them, had reposed in obscurity in the house of one Abinadab (1 Sam. 7. 1). That ark was the symbol of God's

presence in the midst of Israel, and typified prophetically the way in which He would be amongst men in "the Man Christ Jesus" as Redeemer.

Now David heard of the ark at Ephratah (i.e., Bethlehem - Judah)—where he dwelt in boyhood's days, and ultimately he found it "in the fields of the wood" (verse 6)—a reference probably to Kirjath-jearim where Abinadab's house was. But between those two points of time came the long and testing period of his afflictions under Saul, when, though the anointed king, he was in rejection. As those years of trouble dragged their weary course, what was his supreme desire? For most of us would it not have been to reach an haven of rest, to have a house where we might abide in safety without continual alarms, and so be able to go up to our bed and give peaceful sleep to our eyes?

All this was doubtless as attractive to David as it would be to us, yet it was subject to a desire which overmastered it. So supremely did the other affection hold him that he solemnly expressed it in a vow to Jehovah, the mighty One of Jacob. His own security and comfort would be set aside until he should "find out a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob" (verse 5), and thus having found a suitable place for the ark, be able to say, "Arise, O Lord, into Thy rest; Thou, and the ark of Thy strength" (verse 8).

"Out of the depths" is drawn the soul of the saint, and as forgiven and redeemed from all iniquity his soul is freed from the lofty pretensions of the flesh within and the seductive attractions of the world without. This deliverance, however, has an end in view. We too pass through a time of affliction and patience as now identified with our rejected Lord, and beyond forgiveness and redemption and deliverance, beyond even the sweet rest which we do find already, while waiting for the rest of God which is to come, is

this enshrining of CHRIST—the true "ark of the testimony" in our affections, so that "a place for the Lord" is our great concern while we wait for the day when the Lord will arise and fully and finally enter into His rest.

As a matter of fact, though David could say, "I have set my affection to the house of my God" and consequently "I have prepared with all my might for the house of my God" (1 Chron 29. 2, 3), he was not permitted to build the temple. He did find "a place for the Lord" in Jerusalem and pitched a tabernacle for it there, still that was but provisional and preparatory to the erection of the temple, and it was the lips of Solomon that actually pronounced the words of Psalm 132. 8, 9 as recorded in 2 Chron. 6. 41. In the same way we wait for the moment when Jehovah and His Christ—who is the true "ark of His strength"—shall enter into their permanent rest; the moment when in the symbolic language of Revelation "the throne of God and the Lamb" shall be in the heavenly city, and "the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb" shall be "the temple of it."

Still even while we wait "a place for the Lord" has been secured in the scene of His rejection. He has built His church, and the gates of Hades cannot prevail against it. In spite of all human failure, the assembly as the house of God is on earth, and is of great interest to us. Of *great* interest, but not quite our *chief* interest. The church or assembly of God is indeed a *place* for the Lord. Still it ranks second to the LORD whose place it is. Apart from Him it would be nothing.

Dispensationally how great the change between David's day and ours! Still the underlying principles remain. God still deals with our souls after this pattern, leading us to find our supreme Object in Christ, and our great desire that while as the fruit of His rejection unto death He is personally absent, He may yet have a place here.

Have we all of us reached this point? Is it our supreme thought? Those of us who evangelize and labour for the winning of souls, do we find inspiration in it, and rejoice over every true convert with the thought—another soul in whom there is “a place” for Christ by His Spirit? Those of us who labour in the word and doctrine, or shepherd the flock of God, do we teach and pastor that Christ may practically have His proper place in the hearts of His saints and thus His life being reproduced, He may be visible in them? Those of us who have no gift at all and walk in quiet and shady paths, do we say with Paul, “My earnest expectation and my hope . . . as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death”? (Phil. 1. 20).

In the latter part of Psalm 132. we still pursue our upward way. Its characteristic note is *blessing*. “I will abundantly bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread . . . her saints shall shout aloud for joy.” There is no blessing, no satisfaction, like that which is known by the soul in which Christ has His proper place of supremacy.

But then His blessing is not enjoyed by each saint as a solitary unit. We do not each eat our morsel alone. We rather share it in common. Hence in Psalm 133. we get a further step, that of *unity*, which is a good and pleasant thing. Practical unity is only possible under the guidance of the Spirit, “like the precious ointment upon the head.” The unity that counts is the unity that flows in the grace of the Spirit from the great Head of the church above, as the precious ointment poured on Aaron’s head flowed down until it touched and imparted its fragrance to the bottom hem of his garment. Or, to change the figure, it is like “the dew of Hermon that descended on the mountains of Zion” (N. Trans.). The mountains of Zion were but little compared with Hermon’s lofty head; yet

the dew that was Hermon’s descended upon them and there was the blessing, even eternal life.

The New Testament doctrine of the unity of the body of Christ stands connected with the purpose of God and not with the experience of the saint. Psalm 133 deals with that practical unity amongst the saints as brethren which is so largely connected with their experimental entry into these things whereof we speak.

In Psalm 134. we reach the top of the staircase as regards these Songs of Degrees. It is *worship*, and beyond that the saint can hardly get. All that we may receive from God, and enter into by faith in the energy of the Spirit, must flow back to God in this way. The servants of the Lord bless the Lord even though they stand in the house by night. Night is the time of darkness and of sleep. All nature is quiet. The song-birds have gone to roost. The only voice is that of the servant who lifts up his hands in the sanctuary and blesses the Lord.

So it may be to-day. The night that settled upon this world when Christ was refused still persists. Yet may the saints have access to God and, like the nightingale, sing before the dawning of the day when other songsters will awake. Our hearts may flow forth freely in the worship of the Lord. Alas! how little they do so. Christ so little has the supreme place in all our hearts that we but little enter into any part of the threefold result thereof—*Blessing, Unity, and Worship*.

The last verse of the Psalm says, “The Lord that made heaven and earth bless thee out of Zion.” For even if we give to God, as is our privilege in worship, we always find what we give poured back to us again with added blessing, since God is no man’s debtor. Having reached the climax of the upward way *God has the last word, and that in blessing*.

How could it be otherwise? Does He not infinitely transcend the sweetest experience that we ever knew? Of course He does.

"Who hath first given to Him, and

it shall be recompensed to him again? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen."

## "OUR EARTHLY HOUSE OF THIS TABERNACLE."

(J. A. TRENCH.)

Written in answer to a question as to whether the "house not made with hands" of 2 Corinthians 5. 1, means that saints who have departed to be with Christ are already in possession of glorified bodies while they wait for the day of His advent.

AS to 2 Cor. 5. 1, do not let us make difficulties for ourselves by putting into the verse what is not there. Nothing comes out of heaven in that verse. The dissolution of the body is in view, and the contrast is drawn between "our earthly house of a tent"—the most transitory of all dwelling-places, so easily shifted from one place to another—and a *building*, and that "of God," in contrast with being "made with hands"; eternal in the heavens, instead of temporal and earthly.

The conscious knowledge of it (*ὁδῶμεν*), of such a condition makes us groan (would God it were more commonly the effect!), earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with, or "to have put on" our house which is from (*ἐκ*) heaven, i.e., heavenly in character. The third verse answers to many another warning note, in the 1st Epistle especially, that all the profession that he has to deal with may not be real—that in the day when there will be no more an unclothed spirit (i.e., spirit apart from body) some will be found awfully *naked* as never having had Christ as their righteousness; verses 1 and 2 then only belong to true Christians. Then in verse 4 he develops the thought of verse 2 and explains the designed use of the expression "clothed upon." We groan, but not to be unclothed—not to lay down the body in death—but to be clothed upon, which brings in (in one of its effects) the true normal hope

of the Christian, that is, the Lord's coming, which is so ingrained into the Christian's life that it does not need to be stated, and all that is mortal will be swallowed up by the power of the life we possess in Him.

Nothing is stated in the passage, of the time or manner of the transference from our earthly condition, to the glorified one that awaits us, of which the Holy Ghost in us is an earnest; only that we find that it was no shrinking from the dissolution of the body that made the apostle turn to the effect of the Lord's coming, for in verse 6 he reverts to the former with all the additional confidence that the knowledge of God's purpose, and the earnest of its accomplishment gives—"knowing that if present in the body we are absent from the Lord," for (verse 7) we walk by faith, and not in the actual sight of the things we enjoy, willing rather to be *absent from the body and present with the Lord*. Thus we have the clear disproof of the thought imported into verse 1, that those who have gone to be with Christ are in the body.

The deeply serious error of such an idea is, that it is the denial of resurrection from among the dead, of which Christ's resurrection was the first-fruits, and that we shall share with Him "at His coming." For in that great chapter, 1 Cor. 15., the *time* and *manner* of our being endued with a body of glory is given us. For if first we have the resurrection of the dead,

and the order of it proved by Christ's (verses 1-23), we have secondly, that our bodies shall have part in it (verses 35-49), and finally the manner of its accomplishment—"In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump . . . the *dead* shall be raised incorruptible, and *we* shall be changed." It is the first action of the hour that is coming (John 5. 28, 29) in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth, though (with 1000 years between) that coming hour will take in the resurrection of the unjust.

If the theory of 2 Cor. 5. 1 in question could be maintained, to whom would the resurrection apply at His coming?—not to those who have fallen asleep, for each one got his glorified body when he went to be with Christ, and not to those who are alive and remain, for "*whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die.*" The power of Him who is the Resurrection and the Life will be made good to such in the same twinkling of an eye by their being

"changed"; the corruptible putting on incorruption, and the mortal immortality. The character of the change, and the time of it, being also more particularly defined in Phil. 3. 20, where "we await the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour, who shall transform our body of humiliation into conformity to His body of glory," by the magnificent display of His power.

If again it had been true, would it not have been strange that the apostle should keep it back from the Thessalonian saints who were sorrowing over those that had fallen asleep, while they had learned to await the Son of God from the heavens, as though they might miss something at His coming. But that rather in the express revelation, then first given for them and us (1 Thess. 4. 15-18), they are comforted by the fact that they will be the first objects of the attention of the Lord Jesus when He comes. "The dead in Christ shall rise first, then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up *together* to meet the Lord in the air."

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

### "In Adam" and "in Christ." 1 Corinthians 15. 22.

When we read, "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive," does it mean that all mankind being in Adam die, because of that fact, and because Christ has been made alive so all will rise again, whether saint or sinner? or does "in Christ" have the same force as "in Christ Jesus" in Romans 8. 1?—R., LONDON.

"IN Christ" in this passage has, we believe, just the force of "in Christ Jesus" in Romans 8. 1, in this respect that it describes a race who stand in exactly the position of their Head.

"In Adam all die." The whole human race being in Adam—i.e., deriving their origin from him—the "all" here covers every human being.

"Even so in Christ shall all be made alive." The "all" here is more limited in its application, inasmuch as only believers are in Christ. But as regards those who are in Christ, *all* shall be made

alive or quickened. It is the quickening of the body which is referred to here which involves resurrection, for resurrection is the subject of the chapter.

When we reach verse 45 we find the thought of verse 22 again taken up and expanded. The two Heads again come before us. The first Adam, a living soul, but sinning and therefore involving himself and the race proceeding from him in death. The last Adam, a quickening or life-giving Spirit, and this involves our bearing the image of Himself the heavenly One as the fruit of His quickening power in resurrection (verse 49).

It is quite true, of course, that *all*, whether saints or sinners, will ultimately be raised. But this is not the subject of the chapter. Verse 24 speaks of the time of the resurrection of the wicked, as is clear if it be compared with Rev.

20. 11—21. 8. Yet that resurrection is not explicitly mentioned. The order given is "Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming. Then cometh the end. . . ."

## "In Him yea, and in Him Amen.

Will you kindly explain 2 Corinthians 1. 20?—CARDIFF.

THE preceding verses show us what was before the Apostle Paul in thus writing. He had intended a second visit to Corinth according to verses 15 and 16, but evidently the visit did not take place. Some who were antagonistic to him insinuated that this was because Paul was a man of no stability who would lightly propose a course one day and countermand it the next; freely saying "Yea, yea" on one occasion, only to say "Nay, nay" soon after.

But, says the apostle, "our word toward you was not yea and nay." He came to them with the word of the Gospel which was as stable as a rock, inasmuch as "the Son of God, Jesus Christ," the theme of his preaching had nothing unstable about Him. "In Him was yea" is what he says (verse 19).

The last statement he amplifies in verse 20. That verse in the New Translation runs, "For whatever promises of God [there are], in Him is the yea, and in Him the amen, for glory to God by us." That is, every promise of God, everywhere

and for all time, finds its ratification and accomplishment in Christ. The "yea" of every promise was reached in the cross: there in death everything was ratified and made secure. The "amen" to every promise will finally be reached when He who will sit on the throne shall say, "Behold I make all things new . . . It is done" (Rev. 21. 5, 6). Then all ratified in the cross will have been translated into accomplished fact and "amen" will be reached.

And all that is thus ratified and carried to its consummation is "for glory to God," and it is "by us" for just as of old all God's promises were to be put into effect through Israel, so now all is to be by us, i.e., Christians, the saints of the present hour—the church. And we, whether formerly Jews or Gentiles, are established ourselves in Christ. We are anointed, sealed, and possess the earnest of the Spirit. If we are to be, in God's great grace, taken up in connection with such stable purposes, we must be thus established ourselves.

J. M., DAVENTRY.—We have your question and remarks as to Abel occasioned by the second paragraph of p. 156, July issue. You refer us to Hebrews 11. 4, and it is to that very verse that the paragraph in question refers. The verse states that God gave witness to Abel that he was righteous by testifying of his gifts. Abel was certainly a righteous man. Moreover, God testified that fact to Abel, but He testified it not by testifying of Abel or of Abel's character or works in any way, but by testifying of his gifts, that is of the sacrifices he brought. He stood accepted in the virtue of his gifts, not of his character. That is the point of the paragraph you question.



# THE CREDENTIALS OF OUR LORD.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

Notes of an Address given in Sydney, N.S.W.

**MEN** must have a leader, and how ready they are to follow any upstart who can make enough promises of good times to come, and how constantly disappointed and deceived they are by those they follow. That must be the experience through life of all, until they find and follow the true Leader, the One whom God has appointed to be the Shepherd and Leader of men.

There is an old text which used to be quoted a great deal more by Gospel preachers in former days than it is now; it runs like this, "All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way." Those solemn words were true of every one of us once; they are true to-day of every man who has not listened to the voice of the God-appointed Shepherd of His sheep. Yes, whether you follow some demagogue with the silly crowd, or choose a leader from the learned amongst men, or refuse to be cajoled by any, and tread an independent road of your own, you go astray. You can only tread the paths of righteousness which end in the eternal glory of God as you follow the One whom God has ordained to be your Leader.

The question is of first importance; the eternal welfare of our souls depends upon our having the right Leader, and God has not been indifferent to this. He promised in the Old Testament Scriptures that He would raise up the One we need, One who would be able to combine in Himself faithfulness to God and mercy to us, and it is for us to search and see how wonderfully His promise has been fulfilled. In the 10th chapter of John, the Lord Jesus presents to us His credentials. He tells us that He is the Shepherd, the Leader, and I propose to examine with you His credentials so that we may prove

whether He is the One who should come or whether we should look for another.

## 1. HE COMES IN BY THE DOOR.

*"He that entereth in by the door is the Shepherd of the sheep"* (verse 2).

The door is the appointed way of entrance, and in the first place we ask, Is Jesus indeed the Christ, and did He come in by the appointed way? Did He come in the way in which God said He would in the Old Testament Scriptures? Did He fulfil the ancient word? Let us see. He is introduced to us in Matthew's Gospel; but how shall we know that it is He of whom wonderful things were foretold? Well, He must be the Son of a virgin daughter of David's royal house; for seven centuries before He came Isaiah had prophesied that the Great Sign of God's intervention on behalf of men would be that "A virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel" (Isa. 7. 14). And Matthew gives us the fulfilment of this, for the angel of the Lord appeared unto Joseph in a dream, saying, "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" (1. 20-22)—and will the critic please mark that it was the Lord that spoke in those prophecies. Thus we have *the manner of His birth in full accord with the prophetic word.*

Then the place of His birth was predicted by another prophet of God, and the visit of the wise men from the East, and their mistaken notion that He who was the king of the Jews must

necessarily be born in their capital city, is used to call our attention to the fulfilment of this. For the Scribes, when Herod demanded of them where Christ should be born, said, "In Bethlehem of Judæa, 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" (2. 5, 6).

Here we have indicated *the place of His birth*. And let us remember that the home of Joseph and Mary was in Galilee, and it was an Imperial decree that carried them to the royal city according to the prophetic word. The empurpled Cæsar little thought when he vaunted his world-wide authority in this way that he was bringing to pass the will of God and demonstrating the fact that the Scriptures are inspired by God; yet so it was. But what a tale of grace is here unfolded; this decree caused Mary and Joseph to be homeless strangers in Bethlehem, with no shelter but a stable, and no bed but a manger, when the holy Christ was born.

But at this point a problem faces us. Micah had said that Bethlehem was to be the place of the birth of Christ, but fifty years earlier Hosea had spoken the word of God saying, "I . . . called my son out of Egypt." This problem, however, is solved by the fact that the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and warned him that Herod would seek the young child's life. So he arose and "he took the young child and His mother by night, and departed into Egypt" (2. 14). And when this was done we read, "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet [note again that the Lord is the speaker] saying, Out of Egypt have I called My Son" (2. 15).

We should have thought that the birth of the long-promised Deliverer would have filled the land with joy, but instead Jeremiah had spoken of lamentation and bitter weeping. This

also was fulfilled when Herod in his determination to destroy Jesus commanded that all the children in Bethlehem under the age of two should be slain, for we read, "Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not" (2. 17, 18).

Again, He was to be despised by the great and haughty of the land; hence Joseph did not return to the royal Bethlehem from Egypt, but turned aside to the despised Nazareth, "*that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene*" (2. 23).

It would be a pleasant task to continue shewing how that step by step in His life from the manger to the cross Jesus answered to the word, fulfilling the law and the prophets. And specially so at the cross. See how all the sufferings and shame of crucifixion are detailed in Psalm 22, when, as it has been pointed out, crucifixion was not a Jewish mode of execution. The crucifixion of our Lord Jesus could not have been anticipated by David's or by any other Hebrew mind; it was God who inspired that prophetic psalm, and the Gospels give us the fulfilment of it in Christ's death.

A history of the Lord might be compiled from these Old Testament Scriptures. To do so would be an interesting and profitable study, and I commend it to the young Christians present.

The Apostle Peter divided the prophetic Scriptures into two parts: first, the sufferings of Christ, then the glories that should follow, and every jot and tittle that spoke of His sufferings has been fulfilled, "for thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer." In like manner every word that speaks of the glory to follow shall also be fulfilled. He shall reign in righteousness,

and the whole earth shall be full of His glory.

The first proof then that this is "He of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write" is that in His coming, His life, and His death, He fulfilled the word that was spoken of Him.

## 2. HE IS GOD.

It is clear from those Old Testament Scriptures which speak of the Shepherd that He is God the Creator. Take Isaiah 40. as an example: "Say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! . . . He shall feed His flock like a shepherd: He shall gather the lambs with His arms, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young. Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and meted out the heaven with a span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?" Can the lowly Nazarene, who was despised by the people, be indeed the Shepherd, so infinitely great and yet so good and gentle, as is described in this glorious Scripture? Well, in our chapter twice over He says, "I am the good Shepherd," and in so saying He declared that He was God.

It is said by the religious enemies of the truth of the Person of Jesus that He did not lay claim to Deity in the Synoptic Gospels, and that the "author of the Fourth Gospel" cannot be trusted. But they who thus talk read the Gospel with blind hearts; the truth as to the Lord's deity is woven into the very texture of all the Gospels, just as the gold was woven with the blue and scarlet and fine twined linen in the ephod of Aaron, and to tear it out would leave the whole fabric of them nothing more than useless rags. And here in this tenth chapter of John He declares His deity, for here we have not the words of His disciples about Him, even though their words were inspired by the Holy Spirit, but His own words about Himself. He says,

"I am the good Shepherd" and the Shepherd of Israel was the Almighty Creator of the heavens and the earth. He also says, "I and My Father are One."

Whatever modernists may think of this declaration the Jews had no doubt as to the meaning of it, for they took up stones to stone Him for blasphemy, saying, "Thou being a man makest thyself God." If we believe that the truth flowed from His lips without adulteration, we must accept this word as it stands; we have no alternative; to refuse it is to brand our Lord as the supreme impostor of all time. But let us examine this declaration, for it must be owned that for a man to make it opens up a tremendous question. If He was not what He said He was, those Jews were right when they took up those stones to cast at Him; if He lied He was neither God nor from God, for "it is impossible for God to lie."

He makes another declaration in this chapter which will help us here, and I claim your special attention for it. He says: "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself, I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father" (verses 17, 18). What man who ever lived but He could make such a statement? No man taketh my life from me! That means that it was impossible for men to slay Him; in intent they did it, on their part no effort was spared to bring Him down to death, but when they had done all He voluntarily laid down His life as a sacrifice for sin. He did not die by the violence of men, nor by any natural cause. I know the popular hymn says, "He died of a broken heart." It is not true. But was not His heart broken? Yes, it was. But He lived with that broken heart. Yes, the lowly Man of Sorrows stretched forth His hands in earnest entreaty to

men all the day long, and they answered Him with reproach and rejection. And His tender heart was broken by their conduct; but He lived until His hour was come; then He yielded up His life as a sacrifice for sin, so that when the soldiers came to close up the work of that brutal day, they marvelled that He was dead already. One act on their part alone remained to be done, and that was to pierce His sacred side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. "*And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe*" (John 19. 35). But why this care to emphasize the fact that blood and water flowed forth? Well, if the Lord had not been dead, and if the spear thrust had slain Him, blood only would have been seen; the blood and water proved that the spear was thrust into the side of a dead Christ; He had already yielded up His life.

In His own power and right, and yet in obedience to His Father's commandment, He yielded up His life; and by that same power and right, and according to that same commandment, He has taken His life up again. Death has met its Master, the power of the grave has been brought to naught, the gates of the morning were lifted up for Him, and the King of Glory, the Lord of Hosts, sits now in the glory where He was before, glorified with the glory that He had with the Father before the world began, and thus is proved the truth of His word, "I and My Father are One." "How do you know that Jesus is God?" asked a scoffer of a recently saved sinner. "How do I know that Jesus is God?" came the answer; "why, He saved me." Yes, He is the Saviour and Shepherd. We who are saved know the tenderness of His Shepherd care. We have proved in our own experience that He is the Shepherd, and who can the Shepherd be but the Lord?—the Lord triumphant over death, who laid down His life for the sheep.

### 3. HE MUST SAVE HIS SHEEP FROM EVERY THREATENING FOE.

To whom do the sheep belong? They belong to God. We might spend much time and gain much profit in searching out the Scriptures that declare this. One comes readily to the mind. In Acts 20. 28, Paul, the Apostle, speaks of the blood-purchased Church of God as the flock. In our chapter Jesus claims them as His, but to establish that claim He had to meet the foe and take them from his power. The hireling, whose own the sheep are not, will not suffer to save the sheep; but the Shepherd, who loves them with a never-dying love, will face every foe and every question on their behalf. He became a Man that He might die for them, for they lay under the condemnation of death, and only His death could deliver them from this; and by dying He destroyed him that had the power of death, which is the devil, and so He has delivered them from the bondage in which they were held.

"When blood from a victim must flow,  
This Shepherd by pity was led  
To stand between us and the foe,  
And willingly died in our stead."

Oh, my hearers, death rolled like a mighty flood between us and eternal blessing. No leader could be of any use to us, but one who could subdue those awful waves and make a way through them along which we could travel out of death into life. This Christ has done by His dying.

"He Satan's power laid low;  
Made sin, sin's reign o'erthrew;  
Bowed to the grave, destroyed it so,  
And death by dying slew."

The great prophet Isaiah anticipated this great victory for the flock of God when he cried, "Art Thou not it which hath dried the sea, the waters of the great deep; that hath made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over?" And the answer comes "I am the Lord thy God, that divided the sea, whose waves roared: the Lord of hosts is His Name."

"Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion, and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away" (Isa. 51.).

#### 4. HE MUST PRESERVE THEM FOR EVER, SO THAT NONE OF THEM PERISH.

This also He declares that He will do. How full of comfort are His words. "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand" (John 10. 27, 28).

Here we learn His ability to keep His own, and if He is able all who trust Him must be safe. The hand that holds them is the hand that broke the power of death, it is the hand of a Man in which omnipotence dwells, and so those whom He leads will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever. Does not the Psalm say so? "The Lord is my Shepherd . . . I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." Nothing else is possible. The Psalm that begins with "The Lord is my Shepherd" would not be complete if it did not end "in the house of the Lord for

ever"; for His sheep shall never perish. Yea, though they walk through the valley of the shadow of death, they shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever, for He will not abandon them until He gets them there. How could He, since He paid so great a price for them! How could He, since He has pledged His word that He will hold them in eternal safety!

I beg you to consider well these four great proofs that Jesus is the one and only Shepherd and Leader for us men; there are other proofs of this in this chapter that I might well have brought to your notice, but my time is done. These are enough for my purpose, they prove that our Lord stands without a rival. Invincible love and Almighty power dwell in Him; the tenderest heart and the strongest hand in the universe are His. How matchless is He! How supremely blest are all they who put their trust in Him. They shall never perish but have eternal life, for He changes not, and His love cannot wane.

"I thought His love would weaken  
As more and more He knew me;  
But it burneth like a beacon,  
And its light and heat go through me.  
And still I hear Him say,  
As He goes along His way,  
Wandering souls, Oh do come near Me!  
My sheep should never fear me,  
I am the Shepherd true."

## "WHO AM I, O LORD GOD?" 2 Sam. 7. (S. SCOTT.)

DAVID had attained the heights of kingly power and success. He was king over a united people, and established in the newly conquered city of Zion with most of his foes defeated. Above all, and dearer to his heart than any personal triumph, the Ark of Jehovah—that cherished symbol of the presence of God that marked off Israel from all other nations—was delivered from the hands of the idolatrous Philistine, and re-

stored in the divinely-appointed way to the place that God had chosen to place His name in (Psalm 132. 13).

David therefore would do yet more for the One whom he delighted in! He would add new glories to the God of his fathers. He would build a house becoming the name and greatness of the God of Israel. Will not God be honoured by such a work—the provision of his heart and hand?

God did find much pleasure in knowing that His servant contemplated such a work, but the time had not yet come for this nor was David the man to do it. There were other things higher and more glorious for the king to know and learn, things that far surpassed the glory of any house he might design and build.

These things were not revealed directly to David, as God's thoughts for Solomon were revealed to him on a similar occasion, but by the prophet Nathan (figure here no doubt of the Holy Spirit) who had received them by direct revelation from God.

For the first time David learns of God's sovereign choice, in taking him from his lowly occupation, leading him step by step, overcoming his enemies, breaking down opposition, and at last placing him in triumph over His chosen people. It was Jehovah that had given Israel their prosperous and pre-eminent place, that had chosen Zion—the place where His name would be established. Jehovah would build his house. He would set on the throne one of his seed, one of whom Solomon his son should be a type. This greater One to come should not only be David's seed, but also none other than Jehovah's Son, and who would know Him as Father. Such an One would He be that should establish, sustain and magnify David's throne and kingdom!

Such were the thoughts that burst in their splendour for the first time on David's soul. A new revelation! A new point of view! A new "manner of man!" So great and surprising an unfolding has the immediate effect of changing his future words and ways. It is no longer a matter of who *he* is, or of what *he* has done, or will do. Such thoughts find no place, but the unfolding of what has been preparing for him, all unknown and withal so wondrous, draws forth a deep desire to know more of the One in whose heart the scheme had had its inception.

He seeks His presence, and waits, as it were, to hear more of those matchless and surprising communications. He sits before the Lord—alone—to allow those blessed thoughts to mould His soul. "He went in and sat before the Lord." He sits there overcome, silenced yet adoring.

When at last he finds words to express his thoughts, he can only speak of his own insignificance and unworthiness on the one hand, and the comprehensive character of what God has wrought, and the fact that He has a new Man in His mind—a new kind of man—on the other. There had come before Him the One of whom he afterwards speaks saying, "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. And He shall be as the light of the morning" (2 Sam. 23. 3, 4). He will in every feature express the thoughts of God, and eclipse every other that was ever known or seen. It is the One of Psalm 8 who has been crowned with glory and honour and whose name is excellent in all the earth, the One of Psalm 110 who shall rule in the midst of His enemies and to whose authority all will gladly bow, the Man of Psalm 89—Jehovah's First-born made higher than the kings of the earth, the Man of Psalm 21 upon whom honour and majesty have been laid.

Yes this was He! and the glimpse David gets dispels for ever all former thoughts of self. Deep humiliation accompanies the profound sense of the grace that has granted him such a vision of the superabounding greatness and wisdom of God's scheme for the blessing of God's people.

His heart bursts forth, not in prayer, not even in thanksgiving, but in blessing God. Listen to the theme! It is all that has been wrought by God for His own satisfaction and glory—His people—His land—brought to Himself—His name magnified. All is complete—nothing can be changed

or added to it. No thought of his own blessing passes through his mind. His heart has found rest and satisfaction, and if there be a suggestion of a desire it is, that all may be carried out according to the way that had been shown.

Perfect, complete and unalloyed delight is found before Him who works all things after the fashion of His own will.

A further note of appreciation of this newly found intimacy is the wealth and diversity and suitability of the Divine titles employed. Twice he speaks of Jehovah (the One who was, and is, and is to come)—He who has entered into Covenant relations with Israel; twice as Jehovah Elohim—the Jehovah Creator; twice as Lord of Hosts—the conquering Jehovah; six times he uses the expression Adonai, that is, He who will carry out His ways in the earth, and six times Jehovah Adonai. What an astonishing combination of excellencies.

This chapter gives us an Old Testament saint glorying in what was going to be brought to pass when "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea,"

and the deep effect it had on his soul.

Can we measure how far the heavenly glories of Christ exceed His earthly ones, or learn how His exaltation, in consequence of His descent into death, surpasses the exaltation of David in his kingdom? Then, and then only, can we measure the surpassing greatness of what He has been made to God, and what God in His grace has made Him to us. How in the Spirit's day all the depths of God are made known, all the glories of Christ revealed. The One, God has exalted and extolled and made very high—God's Man—He who has given God cause to love Him, is set before us, for our contemplation, satisfaction, and adoration. God has "not withholden the desires of His heart," has crowned Him with honour and majesty, given Him length of days for ever and ever, placed all under his feet, and united "His own" to Him with an indissoluble link of living love. So that we are now before Him in love. This is the Man God has before Him. May He be the One whom we ever set before our eyes so that all else may be accounted as nought for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord.

## THE CHURCH OF GOD.

(HAMILTON SMITH.)

### 9.—The Body of Christ.

IN former papers, after taking a general view of the truth concerning the Church, we considered a special aspect of it—the house of God. There is, however, another important aspect in which the Church is presented in Scripture, namely as the body of Christ. This we may briefly consider.

In reference to this aspect of the

Church the language of Scripture is very precise. We read in Colossians 1. 18, that Christ "is the Head of the body, the Church," and again in 1 Corinthians 12. 12, 13, that "as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond

or free ; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." From these Scriptures it is plain that all believers are formed into one body and united to one Head in heaven by the Holy Spirit. We have seen that men were introduced by baptism with water into the Christian profession which forms the house of God on earth. It is clear, however, that no baptism by water can bring people into the body of Christ. This can only be effected by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Hence nothing but what is real can have any part in the body of Christ. In thinking of the body of Christ we must look at Christians solely in the light of God's work in them. It is true the flesh is yet in us, but God has condemned it, and, viewing us apart from it, sees us "in Christ" and "in the Spirit." That is, God ever views His people in connection with Christ and the Spirit, and we are privileged to view ourselves in the same way. Another has said, "It is in this light only that we can speak of the membership of the body ; nothing finds place in any way in the body of Christ but what is of Christ—of God. There is no such thing imaginable in the body of Christ as failure or flesh." Those who compose the body, having the flesh in them, may indeed fail to walk in correspondence to the truth, but in the body itself all is of Christ. It is His body.

There are three portions of Scripture which, in a special way, present this great truth, Ephesians 1. and 2. ; Colossians 1.-3. ; and 1 Corinthians 12.-14. In Ephesians the body is presented in its eternal aspect according to the counsels of the Father. In Colossians it is viewed in its time aspect as the vessel for the display of Christ. In Corinthians the body is introduced as the instrument for the manifestations of the Spirit on earth.

The manifestations of the Spirit through the body have in view the display of Christ in the body in time ; and the display of Christ now is but

the prelude to the setting forth of Christ in His fulness in the ages to come according to the counsels of the Father. First, then, we may consider the truth of

### THE BODY ACCORDING TO THE FATHER'S COUNSELS.

In Ephesians 1. the great subject is the Father's purpose for the glory of Christ. The chapter unfolds "the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself for the administration of the fulness of times ; to head up all things in the Christ" (verses 9, 10, N.T.). Moreover, in these counsels the Church has a place of highest privilege in connection with the glory of Christ, and hence we also learn the future destiny of the Church as the body of Christ. Here the Church is viewed, not in relation to present time, but in relation to the "fulness of times." We are permitted to look beyond the present moment, with all its failure, and see the future glory of the Church as the body of Christ. In that day "the Church which is His body" will be "the fulness of Him that filleth all in all" (verses 22, 23). According to the counsel of God the day is coming when Christ will fill all things. The whole universe will be filled with blessing through Christ, but, in that day, it will be the special privilege of the Church to express "*the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.*" Though all will be blessed through Christ, and be to the glory of Christ, yet all will not express His fulness. This will be reserved for the Church. An individual saint may display some trait of Christ, all things in the world to come will display Christ in yet larger measure, but only in the Church as the body of Christ will there be the perfect display of Christ in all His fulness. Fulness gives the thought of completeness. Thus not only will Christ be displayed, but He will be displayed in perfection. That is, not only every excellence of Christ will be seen, but all will be seen in



right proportion. No one trait will predominate, all will be displayed in perfect proportion and relation to one another, in the same way that the members of a normal human body are all in proportion and set forth the mind of the head. But what will be actually true then should be morally true now. This leads to the truth of

### THE BODY AS THE VESSEL FOR THE DISPLAY OF CHRIST IN TIME.

For this aspect of the Church, as the body of Christ, we must turn to the Epistle to the Colossians. The great object of this epistle is to unfold the glories of Christ as the Head. We read in chapter 1. 18, "He is the Head of the body the Church." It is moreover God's desire that the moral glories of the Head in heaven should have a present display in the body on earth. Hence the apostle, having spoken of the ministry of the Gospel, passes on to speak of a second ministry in connection with the body of Christ "which is the Church" (verse 24). He speaks of this truth as "the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but *now* is made manifest to his saints." Moreover, he speaks of the glory of this mystery as "*Christ in you*, the hope of glory."

The apostle lays special emphasis on these two great facts. First, the particular moment when the mystery is revealed, and second, the special glory of this mystery at the present time. These two facts have a direct bearing on one another. Why, we may ask, is the mystery made known "now," and not before? Because three great events had come to pass without which the Church could not exist as a fact or be made known as a truth. Christ had been exalted as the glorious Head in heaven, the Holy Spirit had come to earth, and lastly Christ had been finally rejected by the Jew.

The first two events were absolutely

necessary before the Church could be formed. There must be the Head in heaven before there could be the body on earth, and the Holy Spirit must come to dwell in the members and thus unite them to the Head in heaven, and to one another, to form the body. But the body existed as a fact before the truth was made known. For this the third great event was necessary. If the truth, of Jew and Gentile being formed into one body, had been revealed before Christ was rejected, it would have contradicted all the express promises of God to the Jew under the first covenant. But when the Jew had finally rejected Christ the first covenant was definitely at an end, and the way is prepared for unfolding the truth of the Church as the body of Christ. The rejection was final and complete when Stephen was stoned. By the cross man had rejected Christ on earth, and by the martyrdom of Stephen they rejected Christ in heaven. They stoned the man that witnessed to the fact that Christ is in heaven. Thus the moment arrived to disclose the great secret that though Christ Himself has been rejected, His body is on earth. Mark, not that sinners saved by grace will be in heaven—that is the Gospel and there is no mystery about it, the dying thief knew that—but the secret is now revealed that Christ has the Church—His body—in the place of His rejection during the time of His rejection. The first intimation of this great truth is given in connection with the conversion of the man who was made the minister of this truth. The Lord says to Saul, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" It is not "Why do you persecute My disciples," or "those belonging to Me," or "those who are part of Me," but "Why persecutest thou ME?" As one has said, "In that little word is conveyed the fact that Christ is *here*."

Moreover, if Christ is here in those that form His body, it is that Christ may be displayed by His body. And Christ displayed in the Church now is

"the hope of glory." In glory, as we have seen from the Epistle to the Ephesians, Christ will be displayed in His fulness. But the hope of glory is to have a present fulfilment. Hence the apostle passes on to show how Christ in the saints is to work out in the display of Christ by the saints. Thus God's present thought for the body—composed of all saints at any given moment on the earth—is that therein there should be the setting forth of Christ morally, and thus the body on earth correspond to the Head in heaven.

In the second chapter of Colossians the apostle shows how God has wrought to bring this to pass, and warns us of the different devices by which the devil seeks to frustrate the present purpose of God in the saints. First we are warned against the delusive opinions of men, presented in the most attractive way by persuasive speech (verse 8); then philosophy, or the love of human wisdom drawn from the traditions of men and the elements of the world (verse 8); further we are warned against religious flesh, connected with abstinence from certain food, and the observance of certain days (verse 16); finally we are warned against superstition, such as worshipping angels (verse 18).

If we are to display the moral beauties of Christ we must know Christ. We must know the One whose character we are to set forth. The opinions of men, the philosophy of man, the religion of the flesh, and the superstitions of men will neither teach us anything of the character of Christ, nor enable us to set forth that character when known.

Having warned us concerning the snares of the enemy we are instructed as to the provision that God has made in order that the moral perfections of the Head may be set forth in the body. In this connection four great truths are stated:—

1st. We are "*complete in Him*" (verse 10).

2nd. We are identified "*with Him*" (verses 11, 13).

3rd. We are *of Him*: "the body is of Christ" (verse 17).

4th. We derive all spiritual nourishment "*from Him*" (verse 19).

1. We are "*complete in Him.*" In Him there dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead, therefore everything that we can possibly need in order that we may know Christ and display Christ is found in Him—we are complete in Him. We are entirely independent of man as man. His opinions, his philosophy, and his religion cannot bring us to Christ, cannot unfold His character to us, or enable us to set forth His moral beauties.

2. We are identified "*with Him.*" At the cross, in burial, in resurrection, and in life, God has identified the believer with Christ. At the cross—set forth by circumcision—Christ actually died to everything after the flesh; in burial He actually passed out of sight; in resurrection He actually passed forever out of the dominion of death, and as quickened He passed into a scene of glory in a life and condition that is wholly suited to the glory of God. Now what is actually true of Christ is true of the saints in the sight of God who identifies us "*with Him,*" and faith sees with God. We know that our flesh has been put off in the death of Christ; and not only put off, but put out of sight, for we are "*buried with Him in baptism.*" Moreover, in spirit we are risen with Him, so that death has lost its power over us. And though our mortal bodies are not yet quickened, as to our souls, we live to God in that heavenly life set forth in Christ.

3. We are *of His order*—"the body is of Christ." The ordinances of the law were but shadows and were given to the first man who is of the earth earthy. But the things to come, of which the ordinances were but the shadow, are of Christ, the heavenly Man. And if

Christ is heavenly, the body which is of Christ is also heavenly. "As the heavenly One, such also the heavenly ones." For the moment we are on earth, but we are of the heavenly Man, and we thus belong to heaven.

4. *We derive all nourishment from the Head.* If the Church is heavenly it can only be nourished from heaven. There is nothing of earth that can minister to the man of heaven. There is nothing of man as such that can minister nourishment to the body, bind the members together, or lead to spiritual increase. All must come from the Head in heaven, ministered to the body through the joints and bands of the body. As the Head in heaven is for the nourishment of the body on earth, so the body on earth is for the display of the Head in heaven. Through not holding the Head, we may fail to set forth the Head, but Christ—the Head—will never fail to nourish His body; He cares for the body and every member of the body.

These four great facts—that we are "complete in Him," that we are identified "with Him," are of Him, and derive all nourishment from Him—all lead to the fulfilment of God's present purpose for the body, namely, the setting forth of the character of the Head in the body. This is seen in a practical way in the exhortations that follow.

Based on the doctrine of the Church in the first two chapters we are exhorted to "put on therefore, as the

elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any should have a complaint against any; even as the Christ has forgiven you, so also do ye. And to all these add love, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of Christ preside in your hearts, to which also ye have been called in one body, and be ye thankful" (3. 12-15, N.T.). This is the lovely character of Christ, marked by *grace* with its unlimited forgiveness, by *love* binding all other perfections together, and by *peace* ruling the heart, which the saints, in the unity of "one body," are called to display while yet in the scene of Christ's absence and waiting for the day of His appearing.

What a beautiful setting forth of Christ there would be if the saints, as "one body," were marked by grace, and love, and peace. Though in a day of ruin our practice falls far short of this beautiful picture, let us not lower the standard. One has truly said, "Even if practice may not come up to it, and even if it is impossible to bring saints back to the real standard, let us have the right idea. It is a great thing to get the right idea; but then if we get it, let us expect that the Lord will give grace to walk according to the right idea, in the truth of it, even though you may not expect to see things restored to what they were when first established."

## Some Startling Facts.

First fact: The Higher Critics have formulated over 700 different theories since the year 1850. Second fact: Each of these theories claimed to be endorsed by up-to-date science and to be the product of the latest scholarship. Third fact: At the present time, over 600 of these theories are exploded and abandoned, owing to deeper and wider knowledge. Fourth fact: The remaining hundred theories are rapidly becoming untenable from the same cause. Fifth fact: Notwithstanding all this these discredited Professors still loudly assert their ridiculous claims to superior scholarship.

## "HOLY AND WITHOUT BLAME"

(A. J. POLLOCK.)

"He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love" (Eph 1. 4).

"You . . . hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouable in His sight" (Col. 1. 22).

THESE two Scriptures show at a glance the same thing presented to us in two aspects—one from the standpoint of eternal purpose; the other presenting the means by which it is effected.

No Christian gets far in the things of God till he gets a view of eternal purpose. There we are lifted out of our own littleness, and have to view things, not from the standpoint of our individual need and blessing, but from the standpoint of God's wondrous thoughts. As we contemplate these we see the vast plan, which shall fill a universe of bliss, rising up before our souls, and ourselves a part of that plan, yet all headed up in Christ.

God has chosen us in Christ. Can anything set that aside? "Chosen us in Christ," that involves new creation—"if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature [literally, there is a new creation]" (2 Cor 5. 17). As that is brought about we are "holy and without blame before Him in love." This could never be true of us as viewed in our responsible life down here, but it is true, *now* as viewed in Christ. By and by the scene will be new creation in its full and absolute display, and then God's purpose will shine forth without a cloud.

Yet in carrying out this purpose God must meet our state of alienation and enmity and take account of our wicked works. He has met all this in the death of Christ—this is the means—the *righteous* means, by which this can be and was effected.

It is not sufficient that Christ should come "in the body of His flesh"—that is, become a Man down here. Only His death could effect God's purpose. On the ground of this death God can bring

man in reconciliation to Himself. He makes the true believer in Christ suitable to Himself; and again viewed from that standpoint presents him "holy and unblameable and unreprouable in His sight." When God looks upon His handiwork all is entirely suitable to Himself.

But the apostle, having stated this, adds; "If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel." Thank God, the true Christian does continue. It is the mark of the true Christian that he goes on to the end.

Meanwhile, as the Christian pursues his path in activity how happy to think of the eternal purposes of love and wisdom that have chosen him in Christ, and then to remember *how* it has been in God's wisdom brought about, even in the death of Christ, so that he is now, in God's sight,

"*Holy and unblameable and unreprouable in His sight.*"

If Christians would only reflect that God will be satisfied with nothing short of perfection, they would be forced to drop thoughts of their own fitness or perfection, and find it alone "in Christ." It is only possible in Him. Everything is for the believer "in Christ." The introduction of thoughts of our own fitness is only possible by lowering infinitely God's thoughts, and adapting them to our littleness and blindness. May we be preserved from this.

God's purpose is the *source* of our blessing. Christ's death is the *means* of our blessing. How full, how secure, how perfect must it all be—according to God's own thoughts and for His eternal glory.

## "WALK IN LOVE."

(W. BRAMWELL DICK.)

### Notes of an Address on Ephesians 4. 1-18 ; 5. 1-2.

IT is very interesting to notice in this very precious portion of God's word, where truth of the highest order with regard to Christian blessing is brought before us, that the apostle, inspired as he was by the Holy Spirit of God, devotes no less than three chapters, or the half of his letter, to very practical wholesome exhortations as to how God desires His people to walk down here in this world. We invariably find in the writings of the Apostle Paul, that he commences by setting forth some very precious truth, and after that he expresses his great desire that the truth might not only be wrought into the soul in divine power, but that it might also be wrought out practically in the everyday life.

In the epistle before us we have, as most of us know, the unfolding of the counsel and the purpose of God. We learn from chapter 1. how we were "chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world." As we read that chapter, as we learn how we were in the heart and in the mind of God in past eternal ages, we can not only wonder, but worship. Why He should have thought of us, why He should have set His love upon us, why He should have chosen us, is something that we never can and never shall be able to understand. But what we cannot understand, thank God, we can enjoy ; we can praise Him for it now, as we shall praise Him for it throughout eternal ages.

In the second chapter, we learn a little of the wonderful truth of "the One Body." The Gospel went out in the first place to the Jews, and reaching some amongst them, it brought them under its subduing influence and its saving power. Then it went out also to the Gentile and brought many a Gentile under its saving power.

That Gospel, however, is not confined simply to telling us how we may have our sins forgiven, how we may be delivered from sin's power and sin's consequences, but we learn that God had something greater and grander than that before His mind, and that was that those who were blessed by His grace, those who were redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, those who were delivered from all that was against them, should be formed into that of which our Scripture speaks : "the Body of Christ."

In the third chapter, the apostle turns aside for a moment. It is a beautiful parenthesis in the epistle, a parenthesis for which we shall ever have cause to thank God. He tells us how he got this revelation ; he carries us back to past eternal ages, and we are permitted to have a peep, as it were, into the counsel chamber of eternity. We are permitted to know a little of the purpose and the counsel of God ; and learn what has been brought to pass in the formation of the One Body, so that there should be on earth something that should express Christ down here. I think we want to get hold of that fact. The Church is spoken of in various ways in Scripture, but I take it that when it is spoken of in the character of "the Body," it is that in and through which Christ has to be expressed down here in this world. When we see that we can understand why, when we come to the beginning of chapter four, we should have this earnest exhortation on the part of the apostle, as he says, "I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called." And then in the succeeding verses in chapters 4., 5. and 6. we have exhortations that come into every detail of

our everyday life ; and we find how we are exhorted to comport ourselves here as those who are members of that Body. I take it that the key-note of these chapters is what we have in the fourth verse of chapter four, where we read, "there is One Body."

My brethren, I want to stop here a moment. I want to ask, do we realize the tremendous fact that there is in this world to-day that of which the Holy Spirit here speaks of as "the One Body?" I am not setting aside the fact of the failure, the fact of the divisions and the schisms and the break-up ; as we think of all that, we can only hang our heads with shame. God in His infinite grace has been pleased to communicate much to us and a terrible mess we have made of it all : it seems as if those who have most intelligence in these things are those who have done more than others to dishonour the name of the Lord, and to bring discredit upon the truth itself. Still the fact remains—here we have it stated, "there is One Body." Heaven is able to look down upon this world to-day, and take account of those who belong to Christ, who are members of that Body, and can look upon the One great whole ; and that in spite of all the work of the enemy in the way of break-up and confusion. Do not let us always be talking in gloomy tones about the break-up ; we don't want to ignore it, to make light of it, to let ourselves off as we think of our share in it, but let us get to God's side and thus realize and apprehend this great fact that "there is One Body."

Then if you and I have been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, and are indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God, we form part of that One Body. If we realize it, then there will be the desire on our part to answer to that to which we are exhorted in these chapters. There has, I think, been the danger on our part of speaking of the truth of the One Body as some doctrine that was peculiar, more or less,

to a certain company of God's people, we have clothed it with a sort of ecclesiastical cloak, with the result that we have lost the freshness and power of it, and there has not been the practical answer that God has sought in our everyday walk and conversation. The great truth has got to affect us not only in our relations to our fellow-Christians, but also in every detail of our everyday life. We want to take this matter seriously, we want to realize that to be a member of the Body of Christ is, on the one hand, unspeakably precious ; on the other hand it is unspeakably serious. It carries with it many privileges, thank God for that ; it carries with it many responsibilities, and do not let us seek to shirk them.

I want to speak very specially to my dear younger brethren. We are not left here simply to get through the world and get to heaven as best we can, as so many individual independent units. I think if we could see that, it would make a great difference in our walk and conduct. There is always the tendency for us to think, "Well, I can do pretty much as I like, and live pretty much as I like." It may be we find some brother or sister, and we are a little bit grieved by their walk or their ways, and we may venture very tenderly, and in the spirit of Christ, to speak to them about it. They say, "What business is it of yours ? What does it matter to you ? May I not do as I like ? May I not go where I please ?" No, my brother, you cannot do as you like, and you cannot go where you please, because what you do and what I do not only affects us individually, but it affects the whole Body of Christ. And if we see that, it will make us very guarded and very careful as to how we conduct ourselves here, and we shall understand why the beloved Apostle Paul was in such constant exercise, and even in an agony of soul that those, for whose blessing he had been used by God, might answer to all this, and walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they

were called. So, in the epistle to the Colossians—where the apostle writes not so much of what the Body is to the Head, as he does in this epistle, but what the Head is to the Body, and how necessary the Head is to the Body—after speaking a little with regard to that wonderful truth he says at the opening of chapter 2., "I would that ye knew what great conflict [what agony] I have for you, and for them at Laodicea." What for? In order that all this might be wrought *in* and wrought *out* in divine power.

There is one thing more at the beginning of Eph. 4., and it is very encouraging. It is this, that we learn in it the sufficiency of the Lord Jesus Christ. The One who is the Head of the Body, or the Assembly, is the One who has triumphed over every foe. He is the One who not only has ascended, but "also descended first into lower parts of the earth." He has invaded the realm of the enemy, even death itself, He has vanquished every enemy, triumphed and triumphed gloriously. And it is as the One who has laid every enemy low, who has triumphed and triumphed completely, that He has ascended up far above all heavens. And as we think of His triumph, as we look up to that place that He occupies, "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," we realize the sufficiency that there is in Him, and we can have unflinching confidence that He will carry us right on to the very end.

There are two reasons why we should heed the exhortations of these chapters 4., 5. and 6. One we have in the third chapter where the apostle tells us that principalities and powers in heavenly places are now learning through the Assembly the manifold wisdom of God. From that we learn that one great reason why we should seek to answer to God's purpose and desire for us, and walk worthy of the vocation

wherewith we are called, is because the eyes of heaven are upon us; and heavenly intelligences are learning through the Church the manifold wisdom of God. If that be so, we want that there should be nothing in our walk or ways or conversation that should in any way give them a misrepresentation of God. They learn His heart, they see something of His love, they learn something of His infinite wisdom. And what they learned in Christ when he was here, God desires that they should learn in us while we are here. Then if in chapter 3 we learn that the eyes of heaven are upon us, in chapters 4, 5. and 6. we learn that the eyes of the world are upon us; and that is yet another reason why it is desired that we should walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called.

Then we learn still further that He is the Head of His Body, the Assembly. He is keeping in His own hands the guarding, the caring for, and the carrying through of all those that are His. All that He is doing to-day is for the building up and for the nourishment of this One Body. So we learn that He who has ascended up on high has given gifts unto men; first, apostles; then, prophets; then there are evangelists, pastors and teachers, who are all working with the same grand end in view. If the evangelists go forth with the Gospel (God multiply their number!), it is not simply that men and women may get their sins forgiven and be saved from eternal judgment (though we thank God indeed when we see souls on every hand snatched as brands out of the fire. We want to see them by the thousand, do we not?); but what has God got in view? This, the forming, the building up of that which is spoken of here as "the Body of Christ," and God's joy is not simply that men and women have been delivered from eternal perdition, but that every soul that is brought to Christ as the evangelist proclaims his message, is yet a further fulfilling of

the great purpose of His heart. And as you and I are intelligent with regard to that we shall be able to share God's joy, when souls are brought under the subduing power of the Gospel, and to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Then we find, as we read just now in the seventeenth verse of chapter four, the result of this being wrought into the soul in divine power will be that we will no longer walk as other Gentiles walk. The great thing that God looks for to-day, the great thing that is going to be a power for God in the world to-day, is the walk of God's people. A beloved servant of God who has gone to heaven a year or two now, and who has spoken from this platform, used to say, "*What we want is not talk but walk.*" And it is true. I feel that to-day the Holy Spirit is calling the attention of God's people to this, and is arousing us to the necessity of spiritual energy in walking as those who are members of the Body of Christ.

In the closing part of chapter 4 we find how we ought to walk in our relations with our fellow-Christians, remembering that we are members of the Body of Christ. Then we have got to pass through the world, we have to rub shoulders with the men and women of the world, and we find, in the beginning of chapter 5. how we should walk in our relations with them, as members of the Body of Christ. At the end of chapter 5. and the beginning of chapter 6. we find how we are to conduct ourselves in our home lives, realizing that we are members of the Body of Christ; and perhaps this touches us closest of all. With regard to all three, the three words that we read just now from the beginning of chapter 5. show us how to walk—"walk in love."

Ah! my brethren, that is what we want. As our hearts are occupied with Christ, as we enter into the greatness of His love, "the love of Christ

which passeth knowledge," and the more we think of this glorious divine plan, the more we think of the infinite love that has brought us to be sharers in it, and of the infinite cost to the Lord Jesus, the more our hearts are filled, thrilled and saturated with that love, and as that is so, then we shall be enabled to "*Walk in love.*"

If it is a case of our relations with our fellow-Christians—we will walk in love with regard to them. One of the things that is damaging the gatherings of God's people to-day is picking holes, finding fault, and complaining, and because things are not done just as we should like them to be done, we find fault with this, that, and the other, and in that way we play into the hands of the devil and rob Christ of His portion and of His joy. He loves us notwithstanding our failure, and we want to look on our brethren as He looks on them, we want to take account of them as He takes account of them, we want to love them as He loves them.

And in our relations with the world, let us carry into it the love of Christ. Oh, my brethren, that is what men and women are thirsting for to-day. And it is not so much a question of our preaching as of our hearts being filled with that love, and if we have the glow and the warmth of that love in our souls, then we will gradually affect those with whom we come in contact in the home life. It is the great thing. The guiding controlling principle is this, "*Walk in love as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us.*"

Chapter 5. shows us the glorious end. When the Assembly is complete the blessed Lord shall come forth and summon the whole company to meet Him on the glory cloud; not one missing, not one forgotten, not one left behind. And then after all the battering of the enemy, after all the attempts of the devil to smash up that which is of God, He will present



that Assembly to Himself, a glorious Assembly, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. We have no cause to be pessimistic. A Christian is the only one who has right to be an optimist. And as we have our eye

upon Christ in glory, and that glorious end to which we are looking forward, we can walk with heads erect, and we can lift our hearts in praise and worship to Him who has loved us, and has given Himself for us.

## POSSESSING OUR POSSESSIONS.

(H. P. BARKER.)

"Go in to possess the land which the Lord your God giveth you to possess it."  
—Joshua 1. 11.

TO really possess our possessions does not mean to establish our title to them. They are ours by the gift of God's grace; and the title-deeds are firmly and eternally based upon the work of Calvary. The precious blood of Christ has sealed to us, in all perpetuity, the great inheritance that we possess.

Nor is it to acquire *the knowledge that the possessions are indeed our own*. It is good to know this, just as it is good for a man who benefits by a rich legacy to know that he is no longer a pauper. With such a charter of wealth as we find in Romans 8. 17, and Ephesians 1. 3, ignorance is inexcusable. We are told of the great possessions that are ours. We have but to believe the fact. But this is not appropriation. It is not "possessing our possessions."

To make quite plain what we mean let us quote three verses of Wordsworth's. For resorting to a secular poet for illustration we have apostolic precedent (Acts 17. 28).

I wandered lonely as a cloud  
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,  
When all at once I saw a crowd—  
A host of golden daffodils  
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,  
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine  
And twinkle on the Milky Way,  
They stretched in never-ending line  
Along the margin of a bay;  
I gazed, and gazed, but little thought  
WHAT WEALTH THE SHOW TO ME  
HAD BROUGHT:

For oft when on my couch I lie  
In vacant or in pensive mood,  
THEY FLASH UPON THAT INWARD  
EYE

Which is the bliss of solitude;  
And then my heart with pleasure fills,  
And dances with the daffodils.

Note the two lines which we have capitalized. The lovely sight of the "host of golden daffodils" was wealth to the poet in that they constantly stood out before his "inward eye" and filled him with pleasure. This effect (call it "subjective," if you will) was independent of possession in a legal sense. The flowers did not *belong* to Wordsworth; he was not the owner of the ground on which they grew. But he had viewed them with the eye of one who appreciated and revelled in such beauty.

It was not that he was perpetually rejoicing in his *ownership* of the daffodils (in his case that was impossible) but in the things themselves. The constantly recurring sight of them with the "inward eye" again and again made his heart dance with pleasure.

It is but an illustration, and necessarily one in which imperfections may be found by the reader that is disposed to be critical. It serves, however, to accentuate the distinction between rejoicing in the ownership of a thing, and rejoicing in the thing itself. This latter is the real possessing of our possessions, in the experimental sense of the word.

With the poet it was a case of possessing what in point of fact was somebody else's actual and legal possession. But with us it is our own real possessions that we may experimentally "possess" after such a manner that they again and again "flash upon that inward eye" and fill the heart with joy.

Who cannot discern the difference between this and the knowledge and realization that the "possessions" are indubitably our own? One may emphasize the "H-A-T-H" in Ephesians 1. 3, and join in giving praise to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ because He has blessed us with all spiritual blessings; one may rejoice continually in the wonderful truth that they are all ours, and ours for ever. But this is merely what the owner of the land on which the daffodils grew might have done, after an earthly fashion. Without any beauty flashing on his "inward eye" (if he had one) he might have found great pleasure in the assurance that the land and the flowers were his very own. One can similarly rejoice in the assurance of spiritual blessings being our very own and yet utterly fail to find delight in those blessings, and to have them "flash upon that inward eye."

To be assured that all spiritual blessings are ours in Christ, we need but to give credence to the statement of Scripture. But to truly *possess* this wealth we need to be "strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man." Only thus can the blessings themselves (as distinguished from our ownership of them) be comprehended by us in their breadth and length, their depth and height; only thus can we really know the love of Christ (a thought to be ever distinguished from the knowledge of the fact that He loves us).

If it be a great thing to be the "possessors" of heavenly wealth, it is a greater thing (as far as present joy is concerned) to *possess* that of which we are possessors. Wordsworth's enjoyment of the "wealth" that the sight of the daffodils brought to him was greater, and of a different kind, than that of their "possessor." With us, the two individuals are joined in one. We are the rightful "possessors," or owners, of what God's free grace has made ours in Christ. We may also "possess" these things, as Wordsworth did the daffodils.

Let us seek to do this, and not rest content with knowing, and thanking God, that we are indeed blessed with all these blessings.

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## EVIL MEN, SILLY WOMEN, AND THE MAN OF GOD.

(F. B. HOLE.)

THE one passage of Scripture which deals in direct fashion with the last days of the church's sojourn on earth is 2 Timothy 3. 1.—4. 5. Elsewhere we get predictions concerning "the latter times" (1 Tim. 4. 1), and also as to what shall happen after the church is removed, in such a Scripture as 2 Thessalonians 2. The former of these two passages, however, deals with a time a little before, and the latter passage with a time just after, "the last days" of 2 Timothy 3. 1.

We believe that these "last days" are now upon us, and consequently the Scripture we have indicated has a most urgent voice to us. Hence our calling attention to it in these pages. We ask that the passage be carefully read.

The apostle, we notice, fixes his prophetic gaze upon the sphere of religious profession in the last days, and not upon the condition of the world as such. The sphere where Christ's name is owned, and the Christian religion is

professed, is before him, and within it he discerns three classes.

1. "Evil men" (verse 13).
2. "Silly women" (verse 6).
3. "The man of God" (verse 17).

We have placed "evil men" first in order because their features are fully described in the opening verses of the chapter, though the actual words do not occur until verse 13 is reached. The "evil men and seducers" who are to "wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived" are those who resist the truth after the fashion of Jannes and Jambres (verse 8), they lead captive the "silly women" (verse 6), and they are "of this sort"—i.e., they are the stamp of person described so fully in verses 2-5. Those terrible verses give us a picture of the general state of the professors of Christianity in the last days, as is clear from verse 5, which shows that all the evils of verses 2, 3, and 4 are covered with a cloak, "a form of godliness," though of course the power of godliness is totally wanting—is rather denied.

In order that the import of these verses may more fully dawn upon us, we quote the rendering given in the New Translation:—"Men shall be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, evil speakers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, profane, without natural affection, implacable, slanderers, of unsubdued passions, savage, having no love for what is good, traitors, headlong, of vain pretensions, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; having a form of piety, but denying the power of it: and from these turn away."

Several features of this dreadful picture are very significant. "*Self*" stands first. "*God*" comes last, and even then He is only mentioned in order to be excluded. Does not this tell its own tale? The roots of this go back as far as to the garden of Eden. The sin of Adam was virtually this, that he set up self as his object and

excluded God by throwing off allegiance to Him.

After "self" comes "money." Those who are lovers of self are always lovers of money, since money is the well-nigh universal medium of exchange whereby all material things that minister to self are procured.

Following again are fifteen descriptions, most of which, if not all, are various manifestations of the self-assertive spirit, for instance:—

"Boastful"—glorying in the supposed prowess of *self*.

"Arrogant"—filled with an overweening sense of the importance of *self*.

"Evil speakers"—ready to decry others that *self* may be the more effectually elevated.

"Disobedient to parents"—*self*-assertion at a very early age.

"Ungrateful"—*self* treated as of such importance that all services are taken for granted and treated as unworthy of recognition.

"Profane"—*self* rising up in its fancied might and belittling God,—and so we might continue to the end of the list.

Last on the list comes "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God." If self is the great object, and money is prized as that which enables self to be gratified, pleasure in its many forms is that which gratifies, and it is loved accordingly.

In a word the whole picture presented to us is one of fierce, aggressive, unabashed self-assertion to a point where God is entirely excluded, though the outward form of piety is still retained for appearance sake.

The extraordinary way in which the description fits the present age is quite apparent. A great word in educational, and other similar circles, just at present is *self-expression*! Education, we are told, consists in drawing out of the young that which is in them;

they must be taught to express themselves. Indeed, the *right* of each individual to this self-expression is insisted upon. Educational ideas, now hopelessly out of date, might recognize there was latent in the child as much needing repression as that needing expression, if not more. Modern theories, denying the fall of man, also deny, or at least ignore, the ugly facts of fallen human nature, and hence repression is ruled out, and expression is all the rage.

In 2 Timothy 3. 2-5 we have, then, just human nature pretty fully expressed with a cloak of hypocrisy superimposed.

But though the description given covers in a general way the religious professors of the last days, out of the general mass there proceeds a special class of deceivers. "Of this sort are they which creep into houses and lead captive silly women" (verse 6). "Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth; men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith" (verse 8). "But evil men and seducers [or, juggling impostors] shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (verse 13). These three verses put together give us a full portrait of the character of the "evil men."

They are first and foremost active energetic agents of the powers of darkness. They are seducers, and in effect, deceiving, yet are they themselves deceived. They maintain a certain outward Christian profession and yet are thoroughly dominated and deceived by the spiritual forces of evil that they serve. Their minds are corrupted, hence their methods are crooked. They *creep* into houses to do their nefarious work instead of walking in erect by the front door. Judged by "the faith" they are reprobate or "found worthless," and as to "the truth" they resist it.

This last point seems to be their characteristic feature. They *resist the*

*truth*, as the two Egyptian magicians once withstood Moses. *Truth* is the great standard by which everything is judged. *Truth* is the great object of the assaults of the adversary whom these evil men serve, though perhaps they are not so directly and palpably under his influence as were the Egyptian magicians of old.

It is worthy of note that nothing immoral or outwardly abominable is alleged against these men, as for instance is alleged against those of whom Jude writes. The evil that marks them is of a more refined and subtle sort—evil in the region of soul and spirit rather than the body.

Men "of this sort" are much in evidence to-day. Self makes up their little world. Truth they hate and resist, and souls they corrupt and capture. We need not mention various names under which they work. They adopt a variety of banners, and have differing party cries, but essentially they are one. May we all be fully warned against them!

The victims of the deceiving teachings of these evil men, who are thus led captive by them, are designated "silly women." The term "women" is used, we judge, with a moral significance, i.e., it describes a class of person, and not exactly the female sex as such. The Old Testament provides us with a similar passage in Proverbs 2. 10-22. There we find warnings against "the evil man" (verse 12) and also "the strange woman" (verse 16). That there is a simple and literal meaning there is obvious. It is equally clear that the two expressions personify evil in its two main features; violence on the one hand, and corruption on the other. So, here; though it is true that in the main self-assertiveness, and boasting and active propagation of seducing deceits characterizes men rather than women, and a certain foolish shallowness and inability to reach settled convictions characterizes women rather than men, yet plenty of

exceptions to the general rule may be found. Hence, we judge, just as "evil men" in the passage before us indicates a class in which occasionally women may be found, so "silly women" indicates another class in which not a few men may be found.

The characteristic feature of the "silly women" is that they are "ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (verse 7). Always inquiring, always open to receive novelties, and yet never reaching a settled state of conviction about anything. "What is truth?" is their perpetual cry. The reason of this singular inability to reach definite knowledge is exposed for us in the words "laden with sins, led away with divers lusts." When the life is laden with sins, and various and conflicting desires and passions make a battle-ground of the heart, no divinely-reached conviction is possible.

Here is another proof of what has often been asserted, viz., that the origin of all mental and intellectual trouble, all scepticism, and uncertainty and indecision, is much more frequently found in the heart than in the mind. The difficulty is far more of a moral than of an intellectual nature. And, oh! with what frequency are the "silly women" to be met with to-day. How many learned professors are bending their energies to produce just this type! Our forefathers were men of rugged beliefs and sharp convictions, whether right or wrong, and lusty blows they gave and received in the conflict engendered. To-day all such loud vulgarity is condemned and eschewed and the fashionable thing is to inquire continually and be sure of nothing, so as the better to indulge one's various lusts conveniently, and become a "silly woman" indeed!

The present age is unquestionably marked by shallowness. The river of human thought and energy has so broadened out that depth has necessarily been sacrificed. Shallowness—

foolish shallowness—in the things of God is greatly to be dreaded. May the Lord in His goodness deliver both writer and reader from every taint of it.

Towards the end of our chapter a third class comes to light. There are "all that will live [or, desire to live] godly in Christ Jesus" (verse 12). The "evil men" are lovers of pleasures. The "silly women" are led by their various lusts. But in contrast these, far from living lives of self-gratification, "shall suffer persecution." The tide of the world is dead against them. Out of this class springs "the man of God" who is contemplated by the apostle in verse 17.

Not all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus attain to that remarkable title. In Old Testament times God had many saints and witnesses; a few only are called men of God; so in the New Testament. A "man of God" is a man raised up to stand for God when the mass of that which is professedly His is marked by decay and declension and even apostasy.

In this passage the "man of God" particularly before the mind of the apostle was Timothy himself, and we shall do well to notice the things that marked him.

In the first place, he had fully known Paul's doctrine and manner of life. He was thoroughly acquainted, that is, with the full truth of Christianity, and with the proper experimental effect of that truth as seen in the life of Paul, the pattern saint (see 1 Tim. i. 16).

Secondly, he knew from a child the Holy Scriptures given by inspiration of God. Here he had the unfolding of God's ways in deliverance and government, with every conceivable warning of the tendencies and workings of the fallen human heart. Thus he was to be made wise unto salvation from every pitfall which Satan would set for his feet, or the feet of saints generally. Scripture, too, is capable of so many different uses that it thoroughly

furnishes the man of God unto all good works. Here we have the positive equipment of the man of God. Verse 21 of chapter 2. has shown us his necessary equipment of a negative character. As a result of that he will be "prepared unto every good work," just as here he is "thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

Lastly, he preaches "the word" (4. 2). Fortified by the truth himself, made wise unto salvation from the raging tide of evil, and thoroughly furnished, he wields the word of truth for the deliverance of others. Truth may fall in the street to all appearance, for the populace may "turn away their ears from the truth," and "turn to fables," still the more earnestly and insistently he preaches the Word.

All this particularly characterizes the man of God. It characterizes also, though, doubtless, in lesser measure, all who will live godly in Christ Jesus. We are painfully conscious how far we come from being entitled to such a designation as "man of God." We may even be aware that we could hardly lay claim to the title "the godly in Christ Jesus," still how gracious is our God! How condescending to our littleness and feebleness in these last days! He even speaks of those who "*desire to live godly in Christ Jesus.*" Cannot we thankfully place ourselves here?

As we conclude our survey of the passage, let us notice how upon God's side all seems to hinge on the *truth*; and how on our side all hinges on what we *love*.

Whatever the "evil men" may be in themselves, the great object of the devil in raising them up is that they may "*resist the TRUTH.*" Whether they work in open opposition, or in the more dangerous form of imitation, this is the object.

If it be a question of the careless multitude that will be embraced within the capacious circle of a corrupted and

worldly Christianity, they "*turn away their ears from the TRUTH.*" They are glad enough to have teachers, but wish them to pander to their own lusts.

The "silly women" are of an inquiring turn of mind, and therefore at first sight, promise better things. They, however, are marked, as we have seen, by being "*never able to come to a knowledge of the TRUTH.*"

As for the "man of God," that which above all else characterizes him is that he is thoroughly saturated with Scripture, which is to us the *fountain head of TRUTH*. The word "truth" does not occur in the verses concerning the man of God. We do get, however, "my doctrine," "the Holy Scriptures," "all Scripture," "the word," and "sound doctrine," which is only another way of saying "THE TRUTH."

In the last days, as in all other days, the truth is of all importance. If that be lost *all* is lost indeed.

On our side we are coloured and controlled by what we love.

The evil men are "lovers" as we have seen. "Lovers of their own selves, lovers of money, . . . lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God." Their career of evil is controlled by this.

So, too, the "silly women." They are controlled and led away by their various lusts, — or unlawful loves. Demas, of whom we read in chapter 4. 10, seems to be a pretty fair example of such. Unstable was he, and ultimately controlled by the fact that he "*loved this present world.*"

On the other hand, the man of God is what the evil man is not—a lover of God, and, consequently, he loves Christ's appearing. In this he is not alone. Just as there are others who at least desire to live godly in Christ Jesus, so in anticipating "that day," he says, "not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing" (4. 8).

And now let us seriously ask ourselves—do we love Christ's appearing? If, indeed, we are Christ's we do most certainly love His coming into the air which will mean the rapture and translation of His saints. His appearing will mean the testing hour has come. The heavens and the earth will be shaken. All religious profession will be put to the test. "Evil men" and "silly women" will equally be tested and judged. The present world which ensnared Demas of old, and has so sorely tempted saints from that day to this, will be exposed in all its hollowness and sham. The truth will be gloriously vindicated, and those who are of the

truth, and have held to the Word, living godly in Christ Jesus, according to it, and proclaiming it, will be rewarded with a crown of righteousness. It will be a moment when light, divine light, will be shed on all things.

How does the thought of it affect us? Do we welcome it? Is His glorious appearing as dear to us as is His coming into the air and the rapture of the saints?

Let us brace ourselves afresh for the path of faithful walk and witness while we wait for that Day. May God Himself help us so to do.

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

### "In the body" and "in the flesh."

Can you give in your magazine something on the difference between being in the body and being in the flesh? Help also is desired on 1 John 1. 7 and 8, and as to whether Romans 7. gives us the experience of an unconverted person or not.—PONTEFRAC.

THESE are such large questions that our answers must be in the nature of brief summaries. The term "in the body" is used in 2 Cor. 12. 2, 3, and has just the same force as "at home in the body" in chapter 5. 6 of the same epistle. To be in the body is to be a living person in this world with one's spirit still dwelling in one's body."

"In the flesh" occurs in Rom. 8. 9. The Christian, indwelt by the Spirit of God, is not in the flesh but in the Spirit. Though the flesh, i.e., the *nature*, that is inseparably connected with the present fallen condition of all flesh—all of Adam's race, is still in the Christian, it does not characterize his state, and hence is not to dominate him. Proper Christian state or condition is characterized by the Spirit of God, just as proper Christian standing or position is seen in Christ.

The unconverted man is "in the flesh," and, for so long as he lives, "in the body." The Christian is "in the body" while here, but not "in the flesh." The departed saint is neither "in the flesh" nor "in the body," but with Christ.

As to 1 John 1. 7, 8, we get there three

things. First, what we may call the sphere of the believer's fellowship, "in the light," i.e., in the light and knowledge of God now fully revealed. Second, the basis of that fellowship, the blood that cleanses from all sin. Third, the indispensable qualification for fellowship on our side, viz., truth in the inward parts. To say that "we have no sin" is to claim that as far as we are concerned sin is not in us. This is only to deceive ourselves and prove that instead of *sin* not being in us, "the *truth* is not in us."

Romans 7. gives us the experience not of a totally unconverted person, for such an one has no such love of good and hatred of evil as is recounted there. It is rather the experience of a soul born again but *in conscience* yet under law. The apostle prefaces the chapter with a parenthetical remark in verse 1: "I speak to them that know the law." Law casts the soul necessarily in upon itself and its own resources. The deliverance that grace effects is by the power of an outside Deliverer. Sin is *in us* truly, yet we may know deliverance from its power.

## The True Seat of Authority.

I am enclosing you a short newspaper report of an address given by a celebrated preacher, and I must say I never was more puzzled to understand an address. The precious Bible not sufficient! He speaks of there being a wonderful intimacy about Jesus." But how are we to get this "wonderful intimacy" apart from the Bible?—WIGTON.

THE point Dr. R. J. Campbell is discussing is the need of authority in religion, and where it is to be found. First he speaks about "the church." He criticizes it and declares it has often been wrong. Then he turns to the Bible and he declares that "even the Bible is not of itself a sufficient and consistent authority for our souls." He also mentions "reason." Even that, however, does not quite satisfy him, for he says, "The church, Bible, and reason, had left them still longing for the authoritative word, the word that failed nowhere in its application to the needs of life." "He did not know anybody who did not believe in Jesus Christ. . . . Somehow or other, they did not in their heart of hearts repudiate His right to claim, whether they yielded to Him obedience or not. There was a wonderful intimacy about Jesus. 'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever'—in the church, but greater than the church, in the Bible, but more than the Bible, in the reason, but other and higher than the reason—was the guide of life that brought us home to God."

According to Dr. Campbell, then, we may possess Jesus Christ and find His authority in four ways. Taking them in ascending order they are: (1) "in the church"—this is Rome's position. (2) "in the Bible"—which was originally the position Protestantism took. (3) "in the reason"—the position of various forms of religious infidelity. (4) in some "other and higher" form, the nature of which we are left to guess. Indeed it would seem from the report that Dr. Campbell himself could hardly tell us, since he professes himself "still longing for the authoritative word."

Now in the presence of all this miserable uncertainty we have just one question to ask: Where was authority vested in the days of primitive Christianity, or in the days when Christ was upon earth?

Taking the latter half of the question first, it presents no difficulty. Our Lord fully maintained the authority of the Old Testament Scriptures, not one jot or tittle of them was to fail, but He also super-

imposed His own authority. The words "I say unto you," were frequently on His lips. Things were to be accepted simply because *He said it*—and He was God. If men did not accept what He said it simply showed that they were not of God. "He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God" (John 8. 47).

The answer to the former part of the question is very similar. In the primitive church the Old Testament Scriptures were still of full authority, so, too, was every word of our Lord; but further there was the word of God through the apostles. The apostles were the men chosen by the Lord through whom the further revelation should be given by the Spirit (John 15. 26, 27; 16. 12-15). Their word consequently was authoritative also; so much so, that the last survivor of them, writing at the close of the first century, could say, "We are of God: he that knoweth God *heareth us*" (1 John 4. 6). A distinguishing mark of the true believer is therefore that he accepts the apostolic writers, thereby bowing to apostolic authority.

Now step from the first century to the twentieth, and ask: Where is the authoritative word to-day? The answer is—Just where it always was: (1) In the Old Testament Scriptures. (2) In Christ's own personal word. (3) In the apostolic testimony. But since the only form in which the second and third are available to-day is in the New Testament Scriptures, we may summarize by saying—In the Old Testament and in the New Testament; in other words, *in the Bible*.

In so saying, we fully bear in mind that the Holy Spirit of God who gave by inspiration these holy Oracles alone can rightly interpret them, and to understand them we must be born of Him, indwelt by Him, and subject to Him.

We, thank God, are not left "still longing for the authoritative word." We have it in the Bible. Dr. Campbell, alas! remains uncertain, in what he calls "a world of bewilderment and trouble."



## ON MARRIAGE.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

IN the city in which I am staying, the editor of one of the daily papers has expressed great concern as to the laxity with which the marriage relationship is treated, and he has appealed to the leaders of religious thought in the city to state what in their view is wrong in this matter, and how it can be rectified. This sad feature of modern life is not confined to one city or country, it is stamped upon every country where western civilization prevails.

Various reasons are given for this state of things—the war with its inevitable loosening of morals, the love of pleasure, the shirking of the responsibilities that marriage entails, and many others; but in reality all these are but different symptoms of the same condition, and only those who reverently read and understand their Bibles can rightly interpret these signs of the times. The cause of the crowded divorce courts is that the fear of God is swiftly departing from the people. Marriage is the first and chiefest of God's institutions for the regulation and blessing of men in this natural life; but if God is not revered His institutions will not be respected. And if men and women enter this relationship with no fear of God before their eyes, if they enter it to please themselves alone, they will break it without compunction for the same reason. It is a sign of the times.

The Bible tells us of a wilful king who will exercise great authority in the earth (Dan. 11. 36). Amongst other sinister features of his rule will be these: "He shall regard not the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women." I take that to mean that he will banish religion and marriage from his realm, the two things that make decent life possible in the world. His reign shall be brief, for swift destruction shall fall upon him and his

corrupt kingdom from God, to make way for the righteous reign of Christ. The drift to-day is in the direction of that impious kingdom, and civilized society is being prepared to willingly accept and obey the will of this coming antichrist.

Nothing is helping towards this great apostasy more than the way the Bible is being treated. It is being discredited in divinity colleges and from the pulpits of professedly Christian churches; it is being banished from schools and neglected in homes. Men chafe at the restraint it imposes upon them, and are refusing its authority, hence ungodliness and worldly lusts prevail more and more, and there are none more to blame for this than those whose "little knowledge" has made them audacious enough to sit in the critic's chair and reject every part of that sacred Book that does not square with their notions.

But of the Christian it is said: "Ye are the salt of the earth." The presence of the children of God in the world preserves it from utter corruption, and will do so until they are taken out of it at the coming of the Lord for them (see 1 Thes. 4. 15-17). The world does not understand how much it owes to those who live in the fear of God in the midst of it, but it is necessary that these should be very watchful lest they lose their saltiness. Subjection to the will of God as it is given to us in the Holy Scriptures will keep the Christian as he should be in every walk of life, and enable him to be an example to others and a check upon the increasing ungodliness. It is to help in this that I desire to write briefly on marriage.

Except for a brief reference to divorce in the sermon on the mount, the first definite teaching as to marriage in the New Testament comes from the

Lord's own lips in Matt. 19. But He only gives emphasis to that which God ordained at the beginning. He sweeps aside the theory of evolution, the popular folly of the day, and puts His imprimatur upon the second chapter of Genesis, saying: "Have ye not read that He which made them at the beginning made them male and female" (verse 4). This was the crowning act of God's creative work, the result of His own counsels, and accomplished for the great good of man. The consideration of this would make the relationship thus created exceedingly sacred to all who fear the Lord. Hear, in this connection, the word in 1 Cor. 11. 12: "For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; *but all things of God.*" From God Himself the relationship originated. It is His own special design and work.

Up to the time of a man's marriage the chief relationship in which he stands is that of a son, and his responsibility is towards his parents, but when he marries he leaves his father and mother and cleaves to his wife. Henceforward she becomes his chief care, for he and she are no more twain but one flesh.

Every right-minded man will look upon his wife as the only woman in the world for him, he will desire no other; and that not because he has chosen her for his wife, but because God has joined them together. He will look upon her as the very woman that God made for him; he will treat her as God's gift to him, and more, he will treat her as himself, for they twain have become one flesh; and that by no mere ordinance of man, but by God's own act and decree, hence "what God hath joined together let not man put asunder."

In the law there was a compromise made between God's order and the hardness of men's hearts; and so under the law men were permitted to divorce their wives; but all that was set aside by the Lord's coming into the world.

He came to establish a kingdom in which the will of God would be done, and so He sweeps out of the way the provision that Moses had made because of the hardness of men's hearts, and in so doing astonished His disciples. God had said: "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an helpmeet for him." The disciples say, "If the case of the man with his wife be so, it is not good to marry." But that was merely because they saw the high place in which the Lord set this relationship in His kingdom, without knowing the grace that reigns in that kingdom to enable all who are in it to fulfil every relationship according to God.

There can be no question as to the sacred character of the marriage tie or that it is God's gift to those who enter into it, for 1 Tim. 4. 4 states that it is to be received with thanksgiving, and we give thanks for a gift, and if it is God's gift it must be sacred. And further it is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer. Men are not as Adam was in innocence, they are ignorant, and sin has hardened their hearts. Grace is needed to soften and mould us, and we need direction from God, and dependance upon Him—these we find in the Word of God and prayer. God is acknowledged in the relationship in this way and so His blessing is secured and He is glorified. The Scriptures do not suppose that the Word of God and prayer will be lacking when those who believe and know the truth enter into this relationship; but it does give warning as to things that might hinder prayer.

What an important passage is 1 Peter 3. 1-7. The wife is exhorted to live before God, adorned with a meek and quiet spirit which is in His sight of great price, and such living will result in spiritual blessing to the husband, even if he be disobedient to the Word. The husband must dwell with the wife according to knowledge, surely knowledge of the relationship as ordained of God, and the one who so

dwells with his wife will treat her not as an inferior, but as needing love and care, because she is the weaker vessel. Husband and wife are heirs together of the grace of life, they look to One source for all that life means, and are equally and together dependent upon that source, and so should pray together.

But it is in the Ephesian epistle that marriage is put on the highest plane, and there we learn that when God instituted it at the first He had Christ and the church in view. It was to be a figure of that which is so much greater. Ephesians 5. 22-33 scarcely requires any explanation, but it should be noted that in bringing the blessed truth of Christ and His church before the saints the Holy Spirit says much about the marriage tie. The wife will find her joy in submitting to her husband, as the church to Christ, and

the husband will find his delight in loving his wife as Christ the church. What a standard is this! Who can tell the depth of Christ's love to the church or the minuteness and persistence of His care for her?—so ought men to love their own wives, nourishing and cherishing them as Christ the church. And remember there is not an exhortation in Scripture that may not be carried out. It may be impossible with men, but it is possible with God, and His grace is equal to all our need.

If every Christian marriage were entered upon and maintained according to the truth thus revealed to us, what a pattern Christians would be to the world. God grant that His children may not be conformed to the world in this matter, but subject to the Word of God, doing the will of God, possessing their vessels in sanctification and honour unto the coming of the Lord.

## CREATION AND RECONSTRUCTION.

(A. J. POLLOCK.)

### Genesis. 1.

IT is a common idea that Genesis 1. contains an account of the seven days of creation. This is quite a mistake, as a small amount of reflection will convince. One verse only—Genesis 1. 1—contains the *general* account of creation, whilst the next verse states that "the earth was without form and void." God did not create it thus. Isaiah 45. 18 proves this, "God Himself that formed the earth and made it; He hath established it, He created it NOT in vain, He formed it to be inhabited." The same word in Hebrew occurs in Gen. 1. 2, and Isaiah 45. 18, quoted in our texts as "void" and "in vain." So that what this verse states is that God did not create the earth "without form and void."

That something happened, that some tremendous catastrophe occurred, sufficient to bring this earth formed in beauty into a state of chaos is evident, but we are not told particulars. The bare fact, tremendous in its significance, is announced.

This much we do know; that sin had entered into God's fair universe, for He planted in the garden of Eden "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil," and the sinister figure of Satan appears upon the scene as soon as God pronounced it "very good"—evidently thus Satan had fallen before Gen. 1. 2, occurred, and therefore evil existed. Here then is the scene set for Gen. 3.

As a matter of fact the actual word,

"create," is only used thrice in the chapter. In verse 1, it is used of the *general* creation of the world; in verses 21 and 27, it is used of the *special* creation of the lower orders of life and of man, God's masterpiece and topstone in creation.

With the exception of these *special* acts of creation, Gen. 1. 2-31 gives us an account of RECONSTRUCTION, and we should be quite correct if we spoke of seven days of reconstruction, as we are quite incorrect when we speak of seven days of creation.

So without straining a point we can say there may be millions of years between Gen. 1. 1 and 1. 2. Geologists claim that the earth is millions of years old, and this the Bible does not contradict. Man and the lower animals, as we know them, are not more than about six thousand years old; but the earth itself may be millions of years old. Probably every shovelful of coals is pre-adamic.

The Bible does not set out to teach geology, astronomy, or any of the sciences. It is intended to teach men *spiritual* lessons, and it contains much that is necessary for our information, but it does not give us details, which are not necessary to effect the object it has in view. And yet every now and again there is stated quietly some profound bit of knowledge, possibly tucked away in some little corner, something that man, after centuries of search, has announced as a great discovery, and which they might have learned long ago if they had turned to the Word of God for their knowledge. For instance, and this is germane to our subject, Mr. Herbert Spencer, the great scientist, said, and it made a good deal of stir at the time, that five things were needed for creation—force, motion, space, time, matter.

These five things are all to be found

in Gen. 1. 1, 2. (1) *Force*, God; (2) *motion*, moved; (3) *space*, heaven; (4) *time*, in the beginning; (5) *matter*, earth. Who inspired Moses to write so tritely and truly? It is evident that no man could describe creation from the standpoint of a witness. Nor could he describe creation by building up knowledge derived from the sciences. One has only to note the slow and painful acquisition of knowledge of such subjects, in which it is often impossible to say how much is knowledge and how much is guess.

Where did Moses get his knowledge? The only rational answer is, *from God*. He did not get it from his own inward knowledge. You have only to put his record of creation alongside that of other ancient writers, to see the enormous difference between the two. The one, dignified, majestic, true to really ascertained facts; the other, puerile, silly, fantastic, fanciful, no better than a fairy story.

In the very first verse of the Bible, inspiration is stamped. The word God is in the plural. In the Hebrew language there are three numbers—(1) singular, meaning only one; (2) dual, meaning only two; (3) plural, meaning three or more. The word God in the plural is evidently enshrining the thought of the Trinity in the very first sentence in the Bible. The heathen invented many gods, but not so Moses. God (plural) is followed by a verb "created," which is in the singular. How is this? The Jews were always fiercely monotheistic, yet their great writer—Moses—whilst emphasizing this in giving us a singular verb yet gives us an indication of the Trinity. For want of a better word, we speak of *three* persons—God, the Father; God, the Son; God, the Holy Spirit, yet *ONE* God—incomprehensible mystery, yet received in adoring worship by the faith of millions. Again, we repeat, where did Moses get his learning? Surely from above.

It has been pointed out how popular blasphemies are contradicted in Gen. 1. Take Unitarianism, that cold negation of Christianity which, whilst extolling Christ's humanity, denies His Godhead and atoning work. The fact of "God" being in the plural in Gen. 1. 1, denies the affirmation of the Unitarian that there are not three persons in the Godhead, but indicates it, which is borne out by the whole teaching of Scripture abundantly. Then it contradicts Pantheism, which affirms that God is only seen *in* created matter, whilst Gen. 1. 1, makes God the Creator of the heaven and the earth, and surely this Creator existed before what He created, and is therefore *outside* of what He created.

Then Evolution finds its quietus in Gen. 1. if Scripture is paramount in authority. Verse 25 tells us that God made the beast *after his kind* (including the ape) and cattle *after their kind*. Then God having done this "saw that it was good" (verse 25) and proceeded

*subsequently* to make man, saying, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." Did God make man in the likeness of the ape? That would be equivalent to saying that God was like an ape. How degrading to man is the theory of evolution, *but how infinitely more degrading to God*; and it is the complete overthrow of Scripture.

Finally Gen. 1. knocks on the head the vagaries of the hypochondriacal, hysterical Mrs. Eddy of *Christian Science* fame, when again and again in that wonderful chapter it is affirmed that matter is good, whilst she says there is no such thing as matter; and that what appears to us to be matter is only a manifestation of *evil*. A volume might be written on this chapter alone, so amazing is it in its simplicity, its fulness of information; yet the extraordinary condensation, which characterizes it, leaves one in adoring wonder at the "eternal power and Godhead" of the Creator.

## THE HOPE THAT PURIFIES.

### Notes of an Address on 1 John 3. 1-3.

(F. B. HOLE.)

THERE is great need to lay special emphasis upon this fact, that all truth—everything that God has been pleased to make known to us and which we have enshrined in Holy Scripture—is intended to have a present effect upon our souls. If we have set before us the truth of God, it is in order that it may powerfully affect our lives; that what we know of His Word should have a commanding and mighty influence over all our thoughts and ways.

Now here in three short verses you have a wonderful summary of truth. It would not perhaps be easy to quickly find three other verses, in

which so much is compressed. You find when you get to the third verse that all these blessed realities are to have a very powerful effect; they are to exert a purifying influence over all our lives, and, depend upon it, this is something that is greatly needed. Oh! if there were a purifying work in our hearts and in our ways and in our lives, how mightily the truth of God would grow and prevail even in these days.

I want in speaking of these verses, to give you a few words which I hope you will easily remember, and which will furnish a kind of little summary of what these verses contain. Now looking at them, you at once see that the

story as told us here begins with love. Of course that is just where the great story we know so well does begin. Behind everything lies the mighty living love of God, though it is not exactly the love of God that we have in these verses. If you want the love of God, you turn to John, chapter 3., verse 16, where you read of the love of God, and the measure of that love, "God so loved . . . that He gave His only begotten Son." Here you have the manner of the love rather than the measure of the love, and it is the Father's love that comes before us in this verse—"Behold," says the apostle, "what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us." This contemplates the Christian circle, that is, the whole family of God; upon us there has been bestowed all the Father's love, and love of this manner, that we should be called the "sons" or the "children" of God. In the New Translation you have it more correctly rendered. The word here is the word "children" rather than "sons." The last verse of chapter 2. is really intimately connected with it.

The paragraph really begins with the last verse of chapter 2., and there we are told that everyone that practises righteousness is born of Him. We are children of God, as born of God. Frequently, you know, people talk about our being God's adopted children just as though God adopted us as the late Dr. Barnardo adopted orphans into his great and growing Institution, but that is hardly correct. The truth represents far more than that. It is not that God has been pleased to adopt us, leaving no nearer connection between ourselves and Himself than is established between the homeless child when it has been adopted into this Institution and the Directors of the Institution; no, we are the children of God, because born of God, and the manner of the Father's love is this, that such a wonderful place, as children of God, is ours. Now the word I give you to summarize this point, is AFFECTION.

This affection, however, shows itself in relationship. We are put into relationship with the Father Himself. Oh, dear friends, is this a great reality, I wonder, to every one of us? Are we living our lives in the sweet and blessed consciousness that this relationship has been established, that we do stand in this new and near and intimate place with the Father Himself? Affection has expressed itself in relation, which involves the children's place in regard to God. But then there is another fact in connection with this new place of relationship in regard to God, and that is this, we are correspondingly put out of relation with the world. My second word then will be RELATION.

First AFFECTION, secondly RELATION, but thirdly DISCONNECTION. It says, "Therefore the world knoweth us not." You cannot, my good friend, have it both ways exactly. If you are brought into this new and wonderful relation, why then you will find there is carried out a process of disconnection from the world, and as the world knew not our Lord Jesus Christ, so it will not know you. You will not be the kind of man it will understand. How often does this kind of thing take place: an earnest, sincere, out-and-out young Christian enters some house of business, and in a week they are all saying, "Look here, he is a funny man, we don't understand him; he always seems to do the unexpected thing! We knew he was a bit religious, so we said to him the other day so and so, thinking it would suit him, but it did not. We can't understand him; he will not fit anyway into our system of things." He is like a stone cut on such a plan, with such angles and corners about him that he does not fit. You see, he has some resemblance to his Lord. The Lord Jesus Christ, when He came here, was the Stone that the builders rejected.

The builders had their ideas of how to build; they wanted a stone of a

certain shape, and the Lord Jesus Christ was of such a nature that they found they could not build Him according to their fashion. The kind of building that the leaders of that day had in their mind was such that the Lord Jesus would not, could not, did not fit in with their schemes. He was the Stone that the builders rejected, and you know what happened; how that in turn God rejected the builders, and the rejected Stone He made the chief corner Stone and Foundation of a building which is according to His thoughts, and it will abide, and into that you and I are brought by Christ. Here it is not the building; it is the family; we are put in relation with the Father made known to us in our Lord Jesus Christ, for He is His Father and our Father; His God, and our God; but equally He has disconnected us from the world's system and put us outside that.

It is possible of course for you to try and disguise that fact, and if you do I tell you plainly what you will be; you will be a bit of a hypocrite. Remember there are two kinds of hypocrites; there is the man who wants to appear to be what he is not, and there is the man who does not want to appear what he is. I quite admit the common-place hypocrite is the one that wants to be on the surface what he is not inside; he poses as being something very wonderful when he is not; he would like everybody to take him as the finest mahogany when, as a matter of fact, he is common deal. But there is another kind of hypocrite who is the finest mahogany, but lest he should not please those whom he is amongst he will pretend to be but deal, that is, he is quite prepared to accommodate himself to what is the popular and expected thing in the circles where he moves. Are there any young believers here a little inclined to hypocrisy of that kind? Would you, in order to have the smile of the world, appear *not* to be what you are—a child

of God in relation with God the Father, disconnected therefore from the world? If true to your character, the world does not know you; you *are* a child of God, but as far as the world is concerned you travel through it unknown.

The next verse goes on to speak of this, "Beloved, now are we the children of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like Him." What we shall be has not yet been manifested. You *are* a child of God, but you never yet have been manifested as such, just as the caterpillar which crawls on your cabbages, and works havoc there, has not yet been manifested in its true character—a butterfly. To all appearance it is but a crawling grub, yet presently it will go into a state of apparent death, what naturalists call the pupa stage. Then it will emerge later as the perfected insect, and instead of crawling on the earth, soar in the air, a butterfly. Here is one of God's parables in natural things. Children of God are we, but in the caterpillar stage, no outward signs mark us out as the heirs of glory. An hour is coming when we shall be manifested in such fashion that all must see who and what we are.

MANIFESTATION, then, is my fourth word. And when will the day of manifestation be? Oh, it will be when He is manifested. When the Lord Jesus Christ comes forth shining in His glory, then and not till then, will you come forth. What a wonderful thing it is; the One who is our Saviour, our Head, is hidden in the heavens. He is like that little King who was rescued out of the wreck of David's line, when the wicked Athaliah usurped the throne. Little King Joash was secreted by the wife of the godly High Priest, and for six years was hid in the house of the Lord. The populace did not know the King was there, but one day, Jehoiada the priest, knowing that the moment had arrived to bring things to a crisis, brought

forth the King and manifested him to the people. Athaliah was slain that same day, and the King of David's line was restored, and the people rejoiced and said "God save the King." When the King came forth it was the day of his manifestation. And the Lord Jesus Christ is hidden in the heavens; He has gone into the true Tabernacle, and a moment is before us, a grand day for this poor world, when the Lord Jesus Christ is coming to shine forth in His glory. We might say, in regard to His first advent, that He travelled incognito through His own creation, just as Kings occasionally do not officially travel as such; they travel incognito when they do not want to be recognized as Kings, but to enjoy a quiet untrammelled holiday. Thus it was when the Lord Jesus Christ came in humiliation. He travelled unknown through His own creation. Now is the day in which He is hidden, having done the mighty work of Redemption, and we His people also travel incognito, waiting for the manifestation of the King; and it says we know that when He shall be manifested we shall be like Him.

Thus my fifth word is CONFORMATION. What a great thing to know that when He shines out in His glory, you and I are going to shine forth in His likeness. When He appears we shall be like Him. We are coming forth at His side, forming part of His triumphant train from the heavens. It is perfectly clear that somehow or other we have got to be with Him before He comes. How we are to be with Him is brought out in the 4th chapter of 1st Thessalonians, which I must not stop to speak of; but when He comes we shall be *with* Him, and we shall be *like* Him, for *we shall see Him as He is*. Oh the privilege, the blessedness of that!

Now, I have seen King George. I saw him before he was King; I saw him after he was King, on the day of the Armistice; I saw him the follow-

ing day when he went to return thanks to Almighty God; but I have never yet seen him as he is. I have seen him in his official uniform; I have seen him as a General of the British Army, and as an Admiral of the British Navy; but I have not seen him as he is. Indeed, in keeping with this, it seems to be one of the penalties that is imposed on Royalty in regard to things in general, that they rarely see things just as they are. If His Majesty were to come amongst us the loyal citizens of this city would hardly allow him to see the main street just as it is; no, they would insist upon putting flags all over the place, stringing them across the thoroughfares, and dressing the houses in bunting. But if I were put in relation with the King; if I were a child of the King, I should see him as he is. I should have entrance into the royal presence. I should not only go into the State Apartments, but should have access into the private apartments of His Majesty, and should see him stripped of all that outward formality that state imposes upon him, and in the quiet harmony and freedom of the domestic circle I should know him. Think, oh! think, my Christian friends, of that which is the privilege of such as ourselves as children of God. When He comes forth we shall see Him; we shall see Him with the crowns upon His Head; we shall come with Him conquering and to conquer. What a splendid thing it will be! But there is something more splendid than that—to know Him as He is; to see Him as He is; to be brought into His secrets; to be treated as His friends—oh, this is a privilege of surpassing worth! And since there is to be this day of manifestation, then there will be the most absolute conformation of every saint to His likeness, because brought into such nearness to Himself that we see Him as He is. No wonder, that to the word *conformation* we can add the word PERFECTION.

Now comes the definite call of the Spirit of God to your conscience and



to mine. It says "And every man that hath this hope in Him [that does not mean in your heart and in my heart; it means that everyone that hath this hope in the One who is soon to be manifested] purifieth himself even as He is pure." There is a progressive, steady work of PURIFICATION going on with everybody who entertains such hope in Christ. Can you measure the holiness of Christ? Can you tell me the standard of purity that marks our Lord? Why, absolute purity in every detail. He is essentially the holy, spotless, undefiled One. Yes, that is the standard. If that is the standard, you may depend upon it there will be room for purification every hour of our lives in this world. There will never be a moment when we shall say, "Now then I am absolutely up to the standard; I am as pure as He is pure," until clothed in a body of glory we shine forth in His likeness and see Him as He is.

But notice this purification is not something that is going to be done *for* you; the responsibility as to it rests upon your shoulders. We purify ourselves. Does some young Christian say—I would like to know exactly what this means; how does it work? Well, I should reply—Have you ever formed the godly habit of self-judgment? Do you ever sit down and consider your ways, and test yourself somewhat and judge yourself in the light of the presence of God? If you were to look over some of those fine old works of the so-called Divines of the 17th and 18th centuries, you will find that these good men did a tremendous amount of this examination, indeed they carried it to excess; they were too much, perhaps, occupied with themselves, but I venture to say that in this rather superficial day when everybody is in a constant hurry, we do not stop nearly enough to solemnly examine ourselves in the presence of God. We do not sufficiently judge ourselves in the light of what was accomplished on the cross of Christ, and thus overhaul our

motives. All our lives are far too much like a broad bubbling river curving under the boulders and stones and making a great deal of noise, but without very much force and volume. If you inquired as to the horse-power of the river you would find it very small. It is the still waters that run deep.

Form, then, the good habit of self-judgment. If you learn to know yourselves, to test your ways, and to set your eyes upon the glorified Christ who is coming, you will surely say—If that is the standard; if that is my destiny, I want to be like Him now, and by the grace of God, that and that and that are going to go. One of the surest signs of progress in the Christian life is when there is an enlightening as to those things that please the Lord, and firmness and diligence to have done with things that defile and enfeeble and weaken the soul.

When I was a little boy electricity was in its infancy. I remember we had a great day at the little school that I went to, when a man came with a machine that generated electricity as the handle was turned. The most remarkable thing to our childlike minds was this, he brought in a dozen tumblers, turned them upside down on the table, and on the top of the tumblers a board was placed and then we were allowed to stand on the board. I was a little child, and was picked up by the demonstrator and placed there. Then I was told to grasp a handle. Well, I had a strange tingling coming in my limbs and then I was told to put my fingers to the gas which was turned on. I did so, a spark jumped out of my finger, and I lit the gas with my finger! Of course as a child I was very pleased with that. But never would that have been except for one thing. You know of course that glass is an absolute non-conductor of electricity. They had to have the tumblers to insulate me. My friends, the amount of trouble that comes into our

lives by reason of breakdown in insulation is remarkable. We have meetings and we work the machinery, so to speak, and pump a little spiritual energy into the people of God; but alas! it seems to be lost at once. Insulation from the world is sadly lacking. Insulation and purification are in practice closely allied.

Keep then your eye on Christ, the coming One, wait for His manifestation, purify yourselves, exercise self-judgment, remove defilement, keep up spiritual insulation and there will be in your lives something of the power of God.

## EXTRACTS.

(J. G. BELLETT.)

### Disproportioned Estimation of Points of Truth.

VARIETY of temper, different measures of attainment, the quality of the light, and the form of the kingdom in us, if I may so express it, will occasion collision and trial, even where there is nothing morally wrong. But from whatever cause it be, so is it still, and so has it been from the days of Job and his friends, that we form a great part of each other's trial. The Lord sits over it all, refining His silver and purifying His gold, but still so it is, that we help to heat each other's furnace for the trial of faith.

Nothing, perhaps, has been a more common source of this falling out by the way, than the holding of favourite religious opinions, or an undue, disproportioned estimation of certain doctrines or points of truth. And this was the case here. Job prized certain points of truth, and his friends had their favourites also. But each "knew but in part," and darkened the perfect counsels of God. And by reason of this, they fell out by the way. Job, sorely afflicted by stroke upon stroke, insisted on it, that God acted arbitrarily, and having a right to do as He pleased, did so. His friends would have it that God dealt retributively,

and that therefore His way with Job convicted Job of some unconfessed iniquity. Their doctrines also very much savoured of human thoughts; they were not refined from the lees of man's religiousness. They drew much from the traditions of the elders, and from their own experiences and observations. They accredited that false though favourite axiom in the morals of the world, that "honesty is the best policy." "Who ever perished being innocent? or Where were the righteous cut off?" is the challenge which their religion published. "I have esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food. But He is of one mind, and who can turn Him?" is the counsel of his heart. They insinuate that if all were told, nothing would be too bad for him; and he reproaches them, in the contempt and bitterness of a wounded spirit and an insulted character. "No doubt ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you."

Such was the strife of words, the bickering and debate, among them; as sad a sample of falling out by the way as has ever been known, I may say, among brethren.

### Why Satan Defeats Himself.

SATAN had understood Job. He knew the working of that corrupt nature which his own lie had formed

in the garden of Eden. He had said, "Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast Thou made a hedge about him?

... Touch all that he hath, and he will curse Thee to Thy face . . . Skin for skin; yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life." And serious and terrible is the thought, beloved, that he knows us so thoroughly and understands the springs of thoughts and will within us. But though he thus understood Job, he did not understand God. The counsels of grace are above him. And by reason of this, he has been always, in the history of this world, defeating himself, while thinking that he was getting advantage of us; for he has to meet God in the very thing he does, and the purposes he plans against us. When he interfered with Adam in the garden, he encountered God to

his confusion, and the promise to Adam announced his own doom. When he provoked David to number the people, Ornan's threshing floor was disclosed, and the spot where mercy rejoiced against judgment becomes the place of the temple. When he sifted the apostles as wheat, he was answered by the prayer of Jesus, and, instead of faith failing, brethren were strengthened. And, above all, when he touched Jesus on the cross, the very death he inflicted was his own perfect and accomplished ruin. So, in every trouble which he brings on any of us, he finds, or is to find, sooner or later, that he has met the mighty God, and not the feeble saint.

## The Nearness of the Glory.

THE sense of the nearness of the glory should be cherished by us—and here I mean its nearness in *place*, and we need be at no effort to persuade ourselves of it. The congregation of Israel were set at the door of the tabernacle and as soon as the appointed moment comes the glory is before them (Lev. 8 and 9). So at the erection of the tabernacle, and so at the introduction of the ark into the temple (Exodus 40; 2 Chron. 5). So when it had business to do (though in different characters) with the company on Mount Tabor, with the dying Stephen, or with Saul on the road to Damascus, wherever it may have to act and whatever it may be called to do—to convict, to cheer, or to transfigure, to smite to the earth the persecutor, or give triumph to the martyrs, or to conform an elect vessel to itself—it can be present in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. It is but a thin veil which either hides or distances it, the path

is short and the journey rapidly accomplished.

We should cherish the thought of this, beloved. It has its power as well as its consolation. And so, ere long, when the time of 1 Cor. 15. arrives, that moment of the general transfiguration, as soon as the voice of the archangel summons it, the glory will be here again, as in the twinkling of an eye, to do its business with us and bearing the *image* of the heavenly, to bear us up like Enoch to the country of the heavenlies.

Then shall the Lord be glorified in His saints, not as now, in their obedience and service, their holiness and fruitfulness, but in their personal beauty. Arrayed in white and shining in our glories, we shall be the witnesses of what He has done for the sinner that trusted in Him.

# THE SEVEN-FOLD EXHORTATION.

(F. L. FRLNCH.)

IN the first part of the epistle to the Hebrews, the Person and work of the Lord Jesus are brought before us, and upon this as a foundation are based the exhortations which we have in the latter part of the epistle.

The Lord Jesus is presented as the Son of God ; Heir of all things ; Maker of worlds ; the express Image of God's person ; the Object of worship ; whose throne is for ever and ever. But made a little lower than the angels (i.e., became man), for the suffering of death, that He by the grace of God should taste death for everything. Two things then are specially brought before us here :—

*The Blood of Jesus.*

*The Priesthood of Jesus.*

THE BLOOD of Christ, which puts away sin ; obtains eternal redemption ; opens for us a way into the holiest, and perfects for ever them that are sanctified.

THE GREAT HIGH PRIEST, our Lord Jesus Christ—holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, higher than the heavens, set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens—continuing unchanged for ever ; saving to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him, and presenting Himself in the presence of God for us. All this forms the basis of the seven exhortations which follow :—

1. "*Let us draw near*"—(10. 22).
2. "*Let us hold fast*"—(10. 23).
3. "*Let us consider one another*"—(10. 24).
4. "*Let us lay aside every weight and . . . sin*"—(12. 1).
5. "*Let your conversation be without covetousness*"—(13. 5).
6. "*Let us go forth therefore unto Him*"—(13. 13).

7. "*Let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually*"—(13. 15).

Our responsibilities grow out of our privileges, and it will be well to look at them a little in detail.

## 1. The exhortation to COMMUNION.

The first essential to a godly walk is that we "draw near" to God, "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith," and we can do so because we have been made fit to be in God's presence, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed in pure water—the water of the Word.

Under the law in the past dispensation the people could not draw near to God. Moses was commanded by God to set bounds around the Mount where God was, to keep the people from drawing near.

When the tabernacle was erected, the people at large could only enter the court ; the ordinary priests only the holy place ; and unto the holy of holies where God dwelt, even the high priest could enter on only one day in the year, the day of Atonement. Then he went with the blood, and the Holy Ghost signified that "the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing" (Heb. 9. 8).

But now, the way unto God's presence is opened for all His redeemed ; and where before it was death to draw near, now it is death to stay away.

How much communion with God and with Christ, how much comfort and guidance of the Holy Spirit, we miss by not constantly drawing near.

In God's presence is fulness of joy. He loves us as He loves His Son. When we love, we want our loved ones near us. Would that the Lord's people had more of the spirit of John who leaned on Jesus' bosom !

It is the desire of the Lord Jesus that His people be with Him in the glory (John 17. 24), and so we shall be some day. But we can and should be with Him now in communion, for faith leads us to take possession of the place for which God has fitted us.

## 2. The exhortation to CONFES- SION.

From the presence of God to whom we have drawn near, we go out into a world that hates Him, to confess Him before men. "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, for He is faithful that promised."

The word profession here is the same as that translated "confession" in 1 Tim. 6. 13, "Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession." A living stream must break out of the ground somewhere; it must find an outlet; so if we believe on Jesus as our Saviour, out of our innermost being the rivers will flow in faithful confession of Him before the world. These are days when on every side the faith is being denied, not by outsiders, but by those who claim to be Christians. A statement was recently made from a public platform that in the city of Boston, U.S.A., one could count on the fingers of one hand the number of Protestant clergymen who were preaching the Deity of Christ. And if the pew did not wish the occupants of the pulpit to be unfaithful, they could readily dispose of them.

Paul's exhortations to Timothy are in view of the perils of the last days—those in which we now live—and Mr. Grant has well said, "The perilous times of the last days are not such to the natural life; all the more are they perilous to the soul." We have the faith expounded in the infallible, unerring Word of God. Let us hold fast to our confession of it—of every word—no matter what may be conditions around us; no matter who may fail or apostatize

## 3. The exhortation to CONSIDERA- TION.

It sometimes seems as though the Lord's people forgot the "consideration" of this verse, and instead read it, "Let us provoke one another."

But, nay! We are to **CONSIDER** one another, and our provoking is only to be a stimulus, an inciting of each other to love and to good works. Such provoking is of God; any other comes of evil. Young's concordance gives the meaning of consider as used here, as "to perceive thoroughly (with the mind)." Thus the Lord's people should study each other, how we may best help one another and stimulate each other to love and good works. Let us exhort and encourage one another, not in a spirit of criticism or fault-finding, but kindly and thoughtfully and lovingly, as being in fellowship with God, seek to help one another. What a testimony would be ours if instead of differences and disputes and divisions among the children of God, we endeavoured to see Christ in our fellow-believers and were making every effort toward their growth in grace! May there be much love and consideration among the Lord's people in these days of peril, when we should be drawn closer together, as a defence against our common enemies!

## 4. The exhortation to "CIRCUM- CISION."

We have been exhorted as to our attitude towards God—let us draw near; as to our attitude towards the world—let us hold fast the confession of our faith without wavering; towards the Church—let us consider one another; and now come the exhortations as to our individual life and ways.

"Let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus." We cannot successfully run the Christian race encumbered with weights and sin. No Christian desires to hold on to anything which he can openly recognize as sin. The moment he discovers such in his life he will

seek God's face for deliverance from it. Confession and prayer with full trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and His strength will enable the child of God to overcome.

But let us ask, "Is there that in my life which, while I cannot definitely mark it as an open sin, is a weight which holds me back in my Christian race?"

It is said that Roman runners, practising for the races in the games, fastened weights to their ankles to hold them back. But when the day of the races came, these weights were discarded so that, unencumbered, they were able to put forth every effort to win the prize.

Let us examine ourselves and our lives, our ways and our associations, our business and our pleasures, our home and our Church affiliations, and see if there may not be something fastened to us which would hinder our progress in divine things. Let us apply the sharp knife of divine truth to ourselves to cut off anything which would hold us back or is not a help in our life for God. Above all our eyes are to be upon the Lord Jesus. Only as Christ fills the eye and heart and mind will the weights and sins be removed.

#### 5. The exhortation to CONTENTMENT.

Godliness with contentment is great gain; and as the Spirit of God wants His people to have the very best of everything, we are here exhorted, "Let your conversation [manner of life] be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have, for He hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee."

Contentment! happy is the man who has it!

Covetousness! the desire to have more, and how full of it the world is to-day! Men are busy seeking riches, pleasure, and honours, and yet at the same time they are filled with distress, discontent, and dissatisfaction.

In the midst of all this discontent and unhappiness, we are to "be content with such things as we have"; and the very good reason is given, "for He hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." One who has found his all in Jesus can joyfully say, "I have Christ, what want I more?"

"Is it a time to receive money and to receive garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and menservants and maidservants?" —Nay, a pilgrim earnestly pressing on cannot be encumbered with much baggage. If God puts into our hands as stewards more than we need, we are to accept the trust and use it for His glory. But the apostle says, "Having food and raiment let us be therewith content" (1 Tim. 6. 8). May we learn with Paul in whatsoever state we are to be content! He was content because the Lord Jesus filled his vision. Christ was all and in all. So he could abound and he could be hungry; he could be full or he could suffer need.

#### 6. The exhortation to COMPANIONSHIP.

The Son of God in mighty love came into this world to seek and to save the lost. But men hated Him; they spurned God's love. As He bore testimony to holiness and truth the very religious leaders of the people rejected Him. They were those who outwardly appeared righteous unto men, but inwardly were full of all corruption and iniquity.

They cast Him out! They crucified Him! Jesus was put outside the gate and there suffered on the cross. The religious "camp" would have none of Him, although professedly the people of God.

The exhortation is "Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach." For the religious camp in this our day is no better, no different, from that in Jerusalem nineteen hundred years ago. The place

where men profess religion without knowing God and His Son is not a whit different in our day than in the days when our Lord was upon earth.

The Jewish religious camp crucified the Lord of glory. To-day the Higher Critical, worldly, Unitarian, truth-denying camp of professed Christianity would do the same.

Are you, my Christian reader, associated with such a place? do you hold "membership" in such a thing? are you going on in fellowship (although perhaps personally free from it) with that which allows evil in doctrine and conduct? or are you in happy companionship with the Lord Jesus Christ—outside the camp?

There is reproach when we depart from the camp, but it is the reproach of Christ, which is "greater riches than the treasures in Egypt" (Heb. 11. 26), and with them is a wonderful recompence of reward. For it is Jesus who is without the camp. It is unto Him we are to go forth. It is not leaving a bad camp for a good camp, else one might remain inside and only change from one company to another. It is His reproach we are to bear; but, thank God! it is His companionship we are called to share. Jesus! Unto Him! His reproach! How the heart of a true child of God kindles with love as He is brought before us.

The apostle puts before us one Person—Jesus. He puts before us one place—unto Him. Everyone else and everything else fades into insignificance as Jesus fills the mind and heart. And as we own and acknowledge Himself and His place we become truly separated from all which is not of God, separated unto happy fellowship and companionship with Himself.

Many dear children of God love Him, who have not as yet taken their true place with Him, but are going on in association with that which does not keep His Word, and which *does* deny His Name. Early associations or

family ties and other excuses (not reasons) bind some to the camp, and they have not yet gone forth *unto Him*.

Let us go forth, urges the apostle. We have here no continuing city, we are seeking one to come. Let us be "strangers and pilgrims on the earth" (Heb. 11. 13), declaring plainly that we are seeking something better than all this world has to offer whether in business, religion, or society. Then God will not be ashamed of us and we shall not be ashamed before our Lord at His coming.

#### 7. The exhortation to CONTINUAL WORSHIP.

There is one thing which God specially desires—"Let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His Name." While this exhortation comes at the end of the seven we have had before us, it is first in God's purposes.

In John 4. 23, our Lord tells the sinful Samaritan woman that the Father is seeking worshippers. Not only servants, for though we are His servants, yet God has myriads of them in the legions of angels that do His bidding. Not only sons, although we have become His sons. First of all God is seeking worshippers who can worship Him in Spirit and in truth.

We who are saved have become a kingdom of priests to "offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 2. 5).

A priest is one who has right of access to God and who has somewhat to offer. We have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus and our sacrifice is the presentation to God of the perfections of His beloved Son. By the Lord Jesus, therefore, we are exhorted—all of us—to offer to God the sacrifice of praise, to worship. And it is to be a *continual* worship. Not something to be taken up on the Lord's Day and then put away and forgotten for the balance of the week.

No! We bring to God with grateful hearts the fragrance of Christ's perfections. It rises as acceptable incense to God. This is the true worship which God receives from His people, either in praise or song. Worship is to fill our heart continually, and it will as we realize our portion and position in Christ. And from this flows out our other sacrifice, doing good and

communicating to others what God has given to us.

Thus we have the seven-fold exhortation of the apostle. May it prove a most profitable meditation for the people of God, and may it develop our lives to the glory and praise of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!

## "THE SON OF GOD."

(H. J. VINE.)

**I**N regard to the assembly, the body of Christ, the ministry of the gifts bestowed by our ascended Head has in view its edifying, "until we all arrive at the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God" (Eph. 4. 12, 13). That is the present divine objective. It should be ours also.

When we think of our Lord Jesus Christ as *the Son of Man*, we see in Him the representative Man, according to eternal counsel, the One who is set over all the works of God (Psa. 8.), and the One who in dominion and kingdom and glory is to be served by all people, nations, and tongues (Dan. 7. 11), also the One who is the glorifier of God (John 13. 31), even as He is likewise the glorifier of the Father as *the Son* (14. 13). When, however, we view the purpose of God in relation to *the Son of God*, the One who perfectly represents God, we see Him ultimately in eternal blessedness surrounded by those who are called His brethren, sons of God who had been foreknown of God, His elect—called, saved, justified by grace, and glorified even as He had predestinated beforehand—"conformed to the image of *His Son* so that HE should be the Firstborn among many brethren. The knowledge of God's Son *now*! Conformity to His image in glory *then*!

"And is it so! we shall be like Thy Son, Is this the grace which He for us has won? Father of glory, thought beyond all thought, In glory, to His own blest likeness brought."

As the Christ, the Son of the living God, the Father first revealed Him to Peter. Paul, however, was the first to preach Him as the Son of God; while it is by the Apostle John the Spirit presents Him to us pre-eminently in this way. Upon Himself, thus revealed, Jesus made known to Peter that He, the Son of Man, would build His assembly. To the Corinthians Paul wrote, "Ye were called into the fellowship of God's Son." John says in regard to his Gospel, "These things are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, *the Son of God*, and that believing ye might *have* life in His Name"; and in regard to his first epistle, "These things have I written to you that believe on the name of *the Son of God*, that ye may *know* that ye have eternal life." Life and love are both intimately connected with our Lord Jesus Christ thus: "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might *live* through Him. Herein is *love*, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

When the raising of Lazarus was in question, the Lord said it was that the Son of God might be glorified thereby," and to Martha He said, "I am the resurrection and the life." He raised others also from the dead, nor could He Himself be holden of death, for He rose again from among



the dead after He had laid down His life for us in infinite love. This also demonstrates who He is, for who but the Son of God could bring the dead back to life and rise Himself from the grave? Upon this glorious fact the Apostle Paul bases the foundation teachings of the Gospel in Romans, as he says of the Saviour, "marked out Son of God in power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by resurrection of the dead (1. 4). God's love is declared in the down-coming and death of His Son. Life and glory are known in the risen and ascended Son of God!

"Son of God! with joy we praise Thee,  
Living now in heaven above,  
All Thy wondrous work displays Thee,  
Telling too that 'God is love.'"

\* \* \* \*

God in Thee His thoughts unfolding  
Shows the riches of His grace;  
Blest our lot with joy beholding  
All His glory in Thy face."

Moreover the Spirit of God's Son has been given to the redeemed, and a capability also granted to them so that they might grow in the knowledge of the One into whose fellowship the Gospel of God's grace has called them. Although they are not yet glorified they are sons already. They were redeemed by the Son of God that sonship might be theirs. Therefore it is written, "Because ye are sons, God has sent forth *the Spirit of His Son into our hearts*, crying, Abba, Father." Notice, it is the Spirit of God's Son which has been given to us. The very Spirit which He has now in heaven we have here on earth, and that same Spirit gives us to address God in the same relationship in which He Himself is! Notice again, this precious gift is a matter of the heart. We are told that the Spirit of God indwells our bodies, and they are the temples of the Holy Ghost, but the Spirit of His Son is sent into our hearts, giving us the cry of relationship in divine love, and giving us power too to know Him in a deeper and fuller way.

In Luke 1. 35 we read of His birth

in time when it is recorded, "That holy thing which shall be born of thee [of the Virgin] shall be called the *Son of God*." Thus Luke presents Him to us in all His gracious perfection, the divine Man here for God's pleasure and the blessing of men. In John, however, He is shown to us in His own personal glory and deity, so that his first epistle thus closes: "*The Son of God* has come and has given us an understanding that we should know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. He is *the true God* and eternal life." We see Him therefore as a perfect Man, and know Him to be also truly God. As this is rightly apprehended many glorious truths are explained. Who but God could fully reveal God? and yet how else could this be perfectly done for men except by a Man? Until such an One came, we read, "No man hath seen God at any time;" but when the Son of God was here, He "declared Him" (John 1. 18); and, "being the effulgence of His glory and the expression of His substance," all that God is shone out in moral perfection in Him. God is known in His Son, and the Son of the Father's love is His very image, for the invisible God has become visible in Him (Col. 1. 15). This indeed is encouraging to those who love and rejoice in our Lord Jesus Christ.

When Satan began the temptation he said, "If thou be *Son of God*" (Luke 4. 3), but when he was defeated and Jesus began to spoil his goods, setting free his captives, the fleeing demons owned Him as they cried out, "Thou art Christ the Son of God (4. 41). Legion likewise with a loud voice said, "What have I to do with Thee, Jesus Son of the most high God" (8. 28). The Roman centurion too, who saw Him and heard His loud voice when He gave up His Spirit, said, "Truly this Man was Son of God." John also said, "I saw and bare record that this is the Son of God." Nathanael exclaimed, "Rabbi, Thou art the Son

of God ; Thou art the King of Israel." Martha said unto Him, "I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God." And when the stormy waves tossed the ship in which the disciples were crossing the raging sea, and Jesus brought Peter safely into the boat after he had walked on the water, they came and *worshipped Him*, saying, "Of a truth Thou art the Son of God." Nor did He refuse to receive their heartfelt homage, for He truly was the Son of God.

It was the same in the case of the blind man whose eyes were opened by our Lord Jesus Christ. He had reaped the benefit of this gracious work, although he suffered the rejection of the religious leaders when he afterwards spake well of the Saviour, but when the Lord made Himself known to him as the Son of God, *he wor-*

*shipped Him* (John 9. 38). He might have previously prayed for the Lord to open his eyes, and then have thanked Him for having done it, but it was the knowledge of who He was that called forth the homage of his heart. See that drowning youth call for help ! and another plunge into the deep and save the grateful man ! He heartily thanks him for doing so, but who shall describe his feelings when he learns that his saviour was none less than a Prince ! Just so with the soul that has been saved by our Lord Jesus Christ ; his thankgivings are sincere, but as he grows and learns the wonderful glories of His Saviour, heartfelt homage will make him a worshipper in His presence, for the Son of God in His infinite worth and love is increasingly known and appreciated for what He is in Himself.

## THE CHURCH OF GOD.

(HAMILTON SMITH.)

### 10.—The Body of Christ. (1. Cor. 12.)

WE have seen that the Church, as the body of Christ, is viewed in Scripture in a threefold way. First, in the epistle to the Ephesians, in connection with the counsels of the Father ; second, in the epistle to the Colossians, as the vessel for the display of Christ ; third, in 1 Corinthians 12., as the instrument for the manifestations of the Spirit.

In the last paper we viewed the body in the first two aspects. It remains to briefly look at the body in connection with the manifestations of the Spirit brought before us in 1 Corinthians 12. The subject, however, of this chapter is, not the body, but the Spirit. The body is introduced as the instrument which the Spirit uses for the display of Christ.

The ruin of Christendom has been largely brought about by the loss of all sense of the presence and power

of the Holy Spirit. Clerisy, human organization, and the adoption of carnal methods, have set aside the Holy Spirit. Hence the great importance of this chapter in which the rights of the Holy Spirit in the assembly are maintained, and instruction is given as to the true character of spiritual manifestations. Taking a rapid view of the chapter we first notice in verses 2 and 3

#### THE AIM OF SPIRITUAL MANIFESTATIONS.

The great end that the Holy Spirit ever has in view, whatever form the manifestations take, is to exalt Christ. He ever leads to the confession of Jesus as Lord. Admitting this we are at once able to test the spirit by which men speak. It is not a question of distinguishing between a believer and an unbeliever, but of testing the spirit by which men speak. Is it by

an evil spirit, or is it by the Spirit of God? If speaking by an evil spirit, however learned the speaker, however eloquent the discourse, however apparently moral the tone, in some form or other Christ will be degraded. If speaking by the Holy Spirit, however simple the discourse or unlearned the speaker, Christ will be exalted. Apply this test to Unitarians, to Higher Critics, or Modernists, and at once they are exposed, for, in different ways, all unite in robbing Christ of His glory. But though all who speak by the Holy Spirit exalt Christ, it does not follow that all have the same gift. This leads the apostle in verses 4 to 6 to speak of

### THE DIVERSITY OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS.

The apostle tells us there are diversities of gifts; at the same time we are reminded that diversity of gifts does not sacrifice unity of aim. For the diversity of gifts are controlled by the same Spirit, and hence all lead to the exaltation and expression of Christ (4).

Moreover the different gifts exercised by the Spirit have in view different forms of *service* under the control of one Lord who directs the service (5).

Furthermore the exercise of the gifts in different services will produce different effects in *operations* on souls, but it is the same God who works all that is wrought in all (6).

These verses (4-6) rebuke, and at the same time correct much of the grave disorder in Christendom. For the exercise of gift in Christendom, human ability, human wisdom, and a theological training is demanded as a preliminary necessity. No, says the apostle, you require that which no schools of men can give and no human attainments can supply—you require the power and energy of the Holy Spirit.

The religious world demands that you must be ordained of men, and have the authority of man before ministering

to others. No, says the apostle, service according to God requires the authority and direction of the Lord, and will brook no rival authority.

Again we are apt to think that by eloquence and moving appeals an impression will be made on the souls of men. No, says the apostle, it is "God which worketh all in all." God worketh *everything* that is divine, in *everyone* in whom there is a vital work.

Having spoken of diversities of gifts the apostle, in verses 7 to 11, proceeds to speak of

### THE DISTRIBUTION OF SPIRITUAL MANIFESTATIONS.

It is important to notice that it is not simply the gifts that are said to be given but the *manifestations* of the gifts. That is, the apostle is speaking primarily of the exercise of the gifts. Hence it is not simply "wisdom" but "*the word of wisdom*"; not only "knowledge" but "*the word of knowledge*"; not simply "miracles" but "*the working of miracles*." Four important truths are pressed. First, whatever the character of the manifestations and however distributed, all flow from the same Spirit (8, 9, 10). Thus unity is maintained.

Second, the Spirit distributes the manifestations of the gifts to "*every man*" (7, 11). He entirely refuses to concentrate all his manifestations in "one man," or in a particular "class of men." This rebukes that greatest of all disorders in Christendom—the setting apart of a special class of men for the ministry and thus dividing the professing people of God into clergy and laity. Scripture allows of no such distinction. Christendom in its practice contradicts God's order and says the manifestations of the Spirit are given to "one man" who presides over the assembly. No, says the apostle, it is to "*every man*" in the assembly.

Third, the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man "*to profit*

*withal.*" It is given in view of the common good. It is not given for the exaltation or prominence of the individual, for obtaining personal influence or gain, or as a means of livelihood. It is given for profit—spiritual profit.

Fourth, the Spirit distributes the manifestations to every man severally "*as He will*" (11). This shuts out the will of man. We must then leave room for the Spirit to work according to His will. If we appoint the minister or arrange the ministry, we shall be putting restrictions upon His will by the exercise of our wills, and thus hinder the Holy Spirit using whom He will.

Having spoken of the distribution of the gifts, and shown that the "working" of the gifts is by the Spirit, the apostle proceeds to speak, in verses 12 to 27 of

#### THE INSTRUMENT FOR SPIRITUAL MANIFESTATIONS.

This introduces the body of Christ. It is well to note that the body is only actually mentioned in verses 13 and 27. In all the other verses the apostle is speaking of the human body as an illustration. Apart from this great truth there can be no intelligent exercise of gift. For, according to God's order, the Spirit does not use us as isolated individuals but as members of the body of Christ, and for the good of the whole body. Using the human body as an illustration, the apostle shows that as the human body is one, and yet composed of many members, each having a special place and function in the body, "so also is the Christ." This is a striking way of presenting the truth. The subject is the one body, but the apostle does not say, "so also is the body of Christ," but "so also is the Christ." Because the one body is viewed under the eye of God as the expression of Christ. This one body has been formed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and it has been truly said that the

baptism of the Spirit was not intended to take us to heaven, but that there might be one body on earth which should be morally a reproduction of Christ. To enter into the true significance of the one body we must remember two facts. First, that Christ personally is absent from the world, secondly, the Holy Spirit is present in the world; and during the time of Christ's absence Jewish and Gentile believers have been formed into one body, by the Holy Spirit, in order that Christ characteristically may be reproduced in His body—that all that He did in perfection in His body when here—pastoring, teaching, preaching, and blessing—may be continued in His mystical body now that He is gone.

This baptism of the Holy Ghost took place in connection with Jewish believers at Pentecost (see Acts 1. 5 and 2. 1-4); and in reference to Gentile believers at the call of Cornelius and his friends (Acts 10. 44, and 11. 15-17). The baptism of the Spirit involves the setting aside of all that is after the flesh. Natural distinctions such as Jew or Gentile, and social position such as bond or free, give no place in the one body. There all depends upon the Holy Spirit. In the one body we cannot think of ourselves as Jew or Gentile, or according to any other fleshly distinction, for "by *one Spirit* are we all baptized into one body." All forming the one body have been "made to drink of one Spirit." We enjoy the same blessings and privileges, for this enjoyment springs from one source—the Holy Spirit.

From this point the apostle again takes up the human body to enforce certain practical truths in connection with spiritual manifestations in the one body. First, he presses [that in the body there is *diversity in unity* (14-19). "The body is not <sup>1</sup>one member but many"; that is, <sup>2</sup>while there is one body there are many members. But this diversity would be

entirely lost, and the gravest disorder ensue if each member neglected its own function through envy of members having perhaps a higher function. If the foot began to complain because it was not a hand, and the ear complain that it was not an eye, the work of the body would cease, for complaining members cease to work effectually for the good of the body. How then is disorder prevented amongst the many members? By the recognition that it is God who hath "set the members every one of them in the body as it hath pleased Him." So in the body of Christ it is God that has given each his appointed place and function, with the result that *no member is pre-eminent*. The pre-eminence of one member would do away with the body altogether. "If they were all one member, where were the body?"

Furthermore the apostle presses the other side of the truth. There is *unity in diversity* (20-24). If there are many members, we must remember there is only one body. But the unity of the body would be greatly imperilled if the higher members were to look with disdain upon the lower. We have seen that envy of one another would break up the diversity, now we learn that disdain would break up the unity. If the eye treats the hand with contempt, and the head sneers at the feet, all unity of the body would be gone. What meets this danger? Again the recognition of God's own work. God hath tempered the body together in such fashion, that no member can do without the other. The greatest member requires the least—nay, much more those members of the body which seem to be more feeble are necessary. It is not simply that all work to the common good, but that no one member can properly carry out its functions without the other members—in a word, *every member is indispensable*.

There are thus two grave dangers that can bring in disorder into the

body. One, discontent on the part of the less prominent members with the place allotted to them; the other, disdain on the part of the more prominent members for those which seem to be more feeble. One breaks up the diversity, the other destroys the unity; both destroy the proper functions of the body. Bring God in, and in each case the disorder is met. It is God that has given each member his special work, and God has so tempered together the members of the body that *no member is pre-eminent and every member is indispensable*.

The result of God's work and wisdom is that the members of the human body have "the same care one for another" (25). Not simply that they "take care of one another," but that they have a mutual interest in one another, so that if "one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it." The apostle does not say that this should be so, but that it is so. In the application to the body of Christ, the expression of this truth is greatly hindered by sectarianism, and denominational barriers that have been set up by man; but the truth remains that what affects one member affects all members because the members are united to one another by the Holy Spirit, and what depends upon the Spirit abides, however much our failure may hinder its expression. The broken condition of the people of God has lowered our spiritual sensibilities; but the more we are controlled by the Spirit the deeper will be our realization of this truth. As one has said, "We consciously suffer or rejoice, in the measure of our spiritual power."

The apostle has been speaking of the human body as the figure of the body of Christ. Now he gives these truths a local application. He says to the Corinthian saints, "Ye are body of Christ, and members in particular." He does not say, "Ye are *the* body of Christ," as the Authorized translation

has it. The Corinthian assembly was not "the whole body of Christ," but they were the local expression of the one body. Such is the privilege and responsibility of the local assembly. They are "body of Christ," not independently—which would deny the truth of the one body, but representatively, which maintains the truth.

To-day we could hardly say of any

local company of saints, "ye are body of Christ," for no local company includes all the saints in a given locality. Alas as to fact, the various communities are locally only the expression of their respective denominations. However, it is still our responsibility to refuse to go on with anything that denies this great truth and our privilege and blessing to walk in the light of it.

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## SHINE FORTH, O LORD!

(J. T. MAWSON.)

SHINE forth, O Lord, Thou bright and morning Star!

Come, quickly come! Thy people waiting are,  
To see Thy light dispel the deepening gloom,  
Waiting the power that vanquishes the tomb.

Shine forth, O Lord, and drive away our fears,  
Fulfil our hopes, and give us joy for tears;  
Shout, shout the word that bids Thy dead arise,  
And calls Thy saints to meet Thee in the skies.

Shine forth, O Lord, come soon for Thy redeemed,  
For those on whom Thy tender love has beamed;  
Thy pilgrim saints oft weary in the way  
Cry out for Thee—Star of the coming day!

Shine forth, O Lord, by sorrow oft baptized,  
We quit the world, and all things by it prized,  
Shake ourselves free from every earthly care,  
And onward press to meet Thee in the air.

Shine forth, O Lord, and claim Thy blood-bought bride,  
Put forth Thy power and raise her to Thy side.  
We wait the hour when our glad shout shall be  
That death is swallowed up in victory.

Shine forth, O Lord, and bring to pass the day  
When every clime shall own Thy rightful sway,  
When all mankind before Thy throne shall fall,  
And heaven and earth shall crown Thee Lord of all.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

DEAR MR. EDITOR.—Your reply on page 192 of the August issue of **SCRIPTURE TRUTH** is of interest, particularly in the distinction which it makes between the “yea” and the “amen” of 2 Cor. 1. 20.

But a further distinction becomes evident when we observe that the great preponderance of authorities gives us a different preposition before the second word. *In* Him is the “yea,” *through* Him is the “amen.” See, for this reading, Alford, Conybeare, Lloyd, Moffatt, R. V., etc., F. W. Grant accordingly translates (“Numerical Bible”) :—“For whatever may be the promises of God, in him is the yea, wherefore also through him is the amen, for glory to God by us.”

The yea, the confirmation of all God’s promises, could only be in Christ. In that He could have no associates. As the Apostle (Heb. 3. 1) He has come forth to declare God and to give effect to His promises by His death on the cross.

But what about the response on the part of man, to grace so great? The wonderful truth is that God has provided that *the response shall be as great as the revelation*. Therefore it must be in and by the same Person, who alone is sufficient for these things. The same blessed One who, as the Apostle, has revealed God is the Priest (Heb. 3. 1) to answer, as Man, to every thought, counsel and promise of God. But *in this* (oh, wonder of wonders!) He has His associates. He is the Leader of a priestly company linked with Himself in the Amen to the promises of God, an Amen which means glory to Him. Hence our passage says, “Wherefore through Him is the amen, *for glory to God by us*.” We come in, in association with the Priest, in the response on the part of man, but its being through Him ensures its greatness and adequacy.

Yours, etc.,

H. P. BARKER.

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

### The Washing by Water of the Word.

Will you please tell me what is meant by the daily washing by the Word. Does it mean that when we pray for cleansing morning and evening we are to wait for the Holy Spirit to bring to our minds a promise from God’s Word? or that we are to believe that God says “yes” to our request to be cleansed? or is that we are cleansed by daily reading God’s Word? I know what it is to be cleansed once for all by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, but I don’t understand what you mean when you say there is the washing by the water of the word, needed daily.—BRAMPTON JUNCTION.

WE think that we shall best answer your question if we first of all point out that Scripture speaks of three things connected with cleansing :—

1. Cleansing by blood. This is what we may call *judicial* cleansing: the cleansing of the guilty sinner in such fashion that he stands without blemish before the throne of God. (Rev. 1. 5).

2. Cleansing by water in new birth (John 3. 5). This occurs once for all. It is alluded to by the Apostle Peter in his first epistle, “Ye have *purified* your souls . . . being *born again* . . . by the Word of God” (1. 22, 23). This is *spiritual* cleansing by the impartation of a new nature.

3. Cleansing by the water of the Word as a repeated necessity. “Now ye are clean through the Word which I have spoken unto ‘you’” (John 15. 3). This is that *moral* cleansing to which you more particularly refer.

These three cleansings are referred to typically in the Old Testament. When Aaron and his sons were consecrated to the priestly office they were bathed all over with water, and then on their right ears, right hands, and right feet the blood was put (see Lev. 8. 6, 22–24). This, however, was not all, for a laver was provided at the door of the tabernacle and here they had to wash their hands and feet every time they entered

the holy place in the service of God. The Lord Jesus refers to this in John 13. 10, when he says, "He that is washed [i.e., *bathed*] needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit."

Now we Christians have received the great spiritual cleansing of the new birth, and we stand judicially cleansed by the blood of Christ, but we frequently need the moral cleansing of the water of the Word, and your question is as to how this really takes place in our experience.

A believer is unwatchful and sins. What is he to do? His wisdom is to obey 1 John 1. 9, and without leaving the matter until morning or evening when in a general way he may seek cleansing, to *at once* turn to God his Father in very special and *particular* confession of his sin. It is *confession* that the verse speaks of, and not mere asking for forgiveness or cleansing: these two things are ours on confession being made. According to the verse *we confess*, and *He cleanses us*.

That cleansing reaches us through His

Word. Hebrews 4. 12, tells us of the power of that Word. It searches, it discerns, it divides asunder between things that differ, though to us the difference between them may be hardly perceptible. In short, the Word of God enables us to know and judge ourselves.

There are of course the blessed promises and assurances of God's Word: 1 John 1. 9, is a case in point. That same verse shows us that God does indeed say "yes" when we turn to Him for cleansing. It is also true that the reading of God's Word, and meditation thereon, and obedience to it, means cleansing—see Psalm 119. 9; still we believe that the chief way in which this moral cleansing reaches us is by the Word in its convicting power, bringing us to self-judgment.

When saints are brought to self-judgment about a thing they are brought to view themselves and the thing in question from God's standpoint, and the power of that thing over their souls is instantly broken; and thereby from it they are cleansed.

## The Gifts of the Spirit. 1. Corinthians 12.

Would you give some explanation regarding the different gifts mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12.—whether these gifts which were once in the church have ceased, and whether the gifts of faith, prophecy, healing, and tongues are withdrawn, or should be in the church to-day?—  
SHOLING, SOUTHAMPTON.

**T**HERE was evidently a very special display of these "gifts" or "manifestations" of the Spirit in the Corinthian assembly. They came "behind in no gift" (1 Cor. 1. 7), yet they thought far too much of them since they were carnally minded (3. 1-3), and therefore the apostle shows them that all their gifts together were not nearly so valuable as "love" (ch. 13). In particular they thought far too much of "tongues," hence the apostle shows that in value it comes last on the list. They also abused the gifts and perverted them from the divine purpose in their bestowal. Hence the regulations of chapter 14.

As a plain matter of fact, these gifts as found originally at Corinth have ceased. Attempts we know have been made to revive them, but what has resulted therefrom, we cannot for one moment accept as the genuine thing.

As to whether such gifts as those of faith, prophecy, healing, and tongues

*should* be in the church to-day, it is difficult to say. It may be that if the church had continued in pristine faithfulness and power, the gifts would have remained. We incline ourselves to think that they were, however, special endowments for the inauguration of the church upon earth, designed to make it perfectly plain at the outset that God accredited it and not Judaism since the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost. Be that as it may, the fact is that the church did not long retain its early purity, the fine gold became dim, and these miraculous displays of the Spirit's power ceased, as indeed chapter 13. 8 indicated they would.

In these days of the church's unfaithfulness and ruin, we shall do well to **SEEK EARNESTLY** the more excellent way of love, while thankfully accepting any gift which God in His mercy may be pleased to grant us, and taking care not to be deceived by any imitations.



# THE FIRST GENTILE ASSEMBLY.

( T. MAWSON.)

Notes of an address given in Sydney, N.S.W., on Acts II. 19-30 ;  
13. 1-4 ; 14. 26-28.

WE have in these Scriptures a description of the first Christian assembly formed by the Spirit of God amongst the Gentiles, and as it seems to be God's way, when commencing anything new, to give us at the very beginning a pattern of what He intends that new thing to be, we might well study the characteristics of this assembly to see whether we bear them in this present day. I hope, before I come to the end of the address, that you may clearly see what I mean by the word "assembly." The SPIRIT OF GOD came down from THE RISEN LORD JESUS CHRIST at Pentecost. There is a Man upon the throne of God in glory, and God the Holy Ghost is on earth. We shall never understand the truth of the assembly of God unless we see these two things. It was the exalted Christ, who shed His blood upon Calvary to redeem His people, that sent from the glory the Holy Spirit, and He, coming down upon those 120 gathered together in the upper room in Jerusalem, formed them into one body. The truth as to the one body was not immediately revealed, and there had first to be witness borne to the Jews as to the exaltation of Christ. It was consequent upon their refusal of this witness, the proof of which was the stoning of Stephen, that the truth of the one body was revealed. Nevertheless Pentecost was the beginning ; that was the church's birthday.

This assembly of God in Jerusalem was most delightful to God, for He looked down from heaven, and saw there reproduced in the members of the body of Christ the very life of Christ, for the assembly is something formed upon earth by the Holy Ghost in the life of a risen Christ. The devil

never received a greater defeat or got a greater surprise in his existence than he did then ; he thought when he had got rid of Christ, that there was an end of Him as far as this earth was concerned. To his astonishment, on the day of Pentecost he found Christ was still here ; not Christ personally, but Christ in the members of His body ; the life of the risen Head making itself manifest in the members of His body upon the earth. That made the devil angry ; he was full of wrath, and he sought by a great persecution to crush out that which God in His transcendent wisdom had brought about. He thought to scatter the members of the body of Christ and so destroy it. Of course he was outwitted. The only result of the persecution was that those who were scattered by it carried the glad tidings everywhere, and in that way God's purpose was fulfilled. God made the devil subserve His will. The Lord Jesus told His disciples to preach the Gospel amongst all nations, and instead of doing that they remained in Jerusalem, but the persecution that arose about Stephen scattered them, and then the will of the Lord was fulfilled, for they went everywhere preaching the Gospel. So the fame of Jesus was spread, it was carried as far as to Antioch and preached for the first time to Grecians, and the result of the preaching was the formation of this first assembly amongst the Gentiles.

## WHAT THEY PREACHED.

They preached the Lord Jesus. Do not imagine that when the Spirit of God wrote the Scriptures, He used the titles He gives the Lord Jesus in a haphazard or chance sort of way. No, each name and title has its own significance. Here it was the Lord Jesus

that they preached. It was not Jesus Christ, or Jesus, but the Lord Jesus. What have we to learn from this? Well, we all know what Jesus means.

“There is a Name I love to hear,  
I love to sing its worth,  
It sounds like music in my ear,  
The sweetest Name on earth.”

What has made that name so sweet to us? Why, the mention of that name carries us to Calvary, and we think of Him as our Saviour, as the One who laid down His life to redeem us; we think of His lowly life on earth; we think of all the love, the patience, the tenderness, the mercy, the meekness that was made manifest in Him. That name encircles every grace, and He carried that name to the Cross. When Pilate, the judge, had to write the superscription to be fastened over that cross, he little knew how truly he wrote. The Spirit of God was behind that writing. He sat down and wrote, “THIS IS JESUS.” Which? The thorn-crowned, crucified, suffering Man of sorrows, making that wondrous sacrifice in His infinite love, that men might be saved. This is Jesus.

But these disciples not only preached Jesus, but the Lord Jesus. Our thoughts are carried from the cross beyond the grave to the glory. He has been exalted at the right hand of God. “God hath made this same Jesus both Lord and Christ.” He has been put in the place of authority, so that every knee must bow to Him and every tongue confess that He is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. But that title “Lord” carries with it another thought other than that of authority. It does mean authority, and every creature, from the highest archangel in heaven to the meanest devil in hell, will be compelled to confess Him as Lord, but it also means administration. God has made Him to be the great Administrator, in this present day of His grace. The illustration of it in the Old Testament is Joseph. Joseph did not say to his brethren that Pharaoh had made him lord over all Egypt, but “GOD

hath made me lord over all Egypt.” He was the lord in Egypt, and upon him the life of every Egyptian depended. He was the one who had charge of all the supplies of life, and he was the one who administered those supplies for the good of the people. The Lord Jesus Christ has been taken by God and exalted to the throne in heaven to be the administrator of His grace, and since He was thus exalted not one soul ever received any favour or blessing from God except through our Lord Jesus Christ. As Christians, we need the administration of the grace of God continually, and it is only as we are in contact with that living Lord that we receive that grace. Salvation is connected with His name as Lord. “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.” And all the blessings of grace come through Him, as Romans 5. shows.

### THE RESULT OF THE PREACHING.

They preached the Lord Jesus. They preached the One who suffered on the cross that men might be saved, exalted now to the throne of God on high, administering from that place in glory the grace of God for the blessing of men. What was the result of that preaching? A great number believed. That was the first thing, and having believed they turned to the LORD. They believed the glad tidings that God sent them, those wonderful tidings of the full and free salvation, and the result of believing those tidings was, they turned to the LORD. A great many people profess to believe who never turn. It is not a bit of use professing to believe if you do not turn. The result of real faith is that you turn.

What was the meaning of turning to the Lord? Why, they had got an entirely new source of supply. Before, they had turned to the world, and whatever they wanted they found in

the world, just as you did before you were converted. If you wanted friendship, you went to the world; if you wanted pleasure, you went to the world; if you wanted help, you went to the world; if you wanted sympathy, you went to the world. Oh! I know you went to a cistern that was broken and could hold no water, but still, with hope springing eternal in your breast, you went to the world. Having believed the glad tidings, what have you done? You have turned to the LORD, and He has become your new source of supply, and He is a Fountain of living water, perennial, free and inexhaustible. If you want friendship now, you find it in Him; if you want satisfaction now, you find it in Him; if you want help now, you find it in Him. The Lord is your new source of supply; at least, He ought to be, and your believing is not very much good if He is not. That is how it was with these disciples at Antioch. They turned to the LORD and in turning to the LORD they became the recipients of the grace of God continually.

#### A NECESSARY EXHORTATION.

To prove that what I am saying is exactly the truth, we find that news of these things reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem and they sent Barnabas to Antioch, to see what had taken place, and when Barnabas got there, he saw "the grace of God." Evidently the grace of God had been flowing freely down to that company of Christians. It was something he could see, and I assure you there is nothing so pleasing to Christian eyes as the grace of God. There is nothing so delightful to the hearts of those who are in sympathy with the heart of the Lord as the grace of God in this world. I wonder if the grace of God is seen in you? If the LORD has become your new source of supply, those who watch your ways will see the grace of God in you. When Barnabas saw the grace of God he was glad, and to those young converts he had only one exhortation to give. I have no doubt he spoke

often to them, it may be he spoke long, but every time he spoke, and no matter how long, all he had to say was summed up in this one exhortation, "that with purpose of heart they should cleave to the LORD."

He did not exhort them to "cleave to the Saviour," nor "cleave to the Shepherd." Of course the Lord is the Saviour and the Shepherd, but he did not tell them to cleave to Him in those characters. Why? Do you think you need to cleave to the Lord as the Shepherd? He is cleaving to you in that character. He says, "None shall take them out of My hand." He is holding you. The sheep do not cleave to the Shepherd, the Shepherd cleaves to the sheep. But if we are to prosper spiritually we must cleave to the LORD. We must hold on to Him as the source of our supply, as the Administrator of the grace of God. Everybody can understand that. Here is a General at the head of a great army, he is advancing into the enemy's country. What must he do? There is one thing absolutely necessary if he is to be victorious, and that is, he must keep in constant communication with his base. If by any means he is cut off from his base, then defeat will stare him in the face. His foe will use every kind of strategy to get between him and the base of his supply, so he must hold his lines of communication intact. We have advanced into the enemy's country, are we keeping the line of communication intact? Who is our base? The LORD. He is the Administrator of the grace of God, the base of our supply, and if we are to be victorious we must keep in constant contact with the base of our supply. So said Barnabas, cleave to the LORD, hold on to Him, remember you have no strength in yourselves, no wisdom, and the devil is stronger than you and wiser than you, but cleave to the LORD, and as you cleave to the LORD you will be victorious over the devil, for he is not wiser than the Lord, nor stronger. So they were told

to keep in constant contact with the base of their supply, and to do it with purpose of heart.

Oh! how we break down and fail here. We get an impulse, and thank God for every spiritual impulse, and for a little while we go ahead, and then we begin to droop and fall back and get slack, and we are not so careful to keep the line of our communications intact, and the result is we fail and are disappointed, and other people are disappointed too. It is purpose of heart that is needed and the Lord can give that to us. May God grant to every one of us purpose of heart to cleave to the Lord, and I would say to you young Christians very specially, for Barnabas spoke to young Christians, let the first great purpose and object in your life be to cleave to the Lord. Remember He is the base of your supply and that you have nothing in yourselves at all that can enable you to stand against the foe. They did this at Antioch, for we read much people was added to the LORD. The supplies were continuing and making themselves manifest, and the result was that the Christians at Antioch were channels of blessing to others.

#### THE ASSEMBLY ITSELF.

Then Barnabas went to find Saul, afterwards called Paul, and he brought him down to this Gentile assembly, and it is very interesting to see that, because Paul was to be the great minister of the truth of the assembly, and Barnabas, no doubt under the special direction of the Spirit of God, went to Tarsus to find him, and he went down with Barnabas to Antioch, and they stayed there a whole year and taught much people. I want you to notice that those disciples must have been cleaving to the Lord, and that in consequence they were cleaving to one another and were ready to receive teaching by which they could make progress. They assembled themselves a whole year with the Christians at Antioch; keeping close to the Lord kept them close to one another, and

they grew in the truth. The devil has always sought to divide and scatter the saints of God, and hinder them from standing perfect and complete in all the will of God, and all the divisions and the break-up in Christendom to-day are the work of the devil who has been able to work on the flesh in the saints of God. If every saint of God had been cleaving to the Lord from the beginning, the devil would never have got the slightest opening.

They assembled together thus a whole year. That is a perfect cycle of time, spring, summer, autumn, and winter, all the year round. I would to God we could see a great many more "all the year round" Christians. We need more such Christians in Sydney, those who can go through the drought and storm, who are happy and bright when the days are dull. But, you say, how can anybody be like that? Everyone will be like that who cleaves to the Lord with purpose of heart, for the supply is greater than the demand. The Lord, the source of supply, is above the storms, and if we are cleaving to Him we are independent of circumstances here below, and we shall be "all the year round" Christians, able to face all sorts of weather and circumstances, and bring forth leaves and fruit when all about us is a parched desert.

#### THE TEACHING.

They taught much people, and here I come to the very heart of my subject. What do you think they taught? Would not Saul teach them that which he had himself learned from the Lord at his conversion? Two things impressed him then and specially marked him from the very beginning to the end of his service. They were that Jesus is the Son of God, and that His body is on earth. Barnabas had instructed them and exhorted them on the line of the Lordship of Christ, and this is indispensable to all progress, it is the foundation of all, but it is not enough; no company of Christians can stand perfect and complete in all the will of

God if they go no further than this. Paul's ministry must come in—Christ must be known as the Head of His body, the church, and we the members of His body must hold the Head (Col. 2.). There are many companies of Christians who have had the ministries of Barnabas and Peter, but have not Paul, and in some of them there does not seem to be room for him, hence there is a great lack in these companies. We must have Paul's gospel, and the truth of Christ and His body of which Paul was made a minister, and by which great ministry he completed the word of God (Col. 1. 25), i.e., he put the crown upon it.

He preached that Jesus is the Son of God, for so Acts 9. 20 should read. This is not what He is officially, but personally. It is His personal glory, and Saul of Tarsus learned as he lay prone in the dust of the road to Damascus that Jesus was rightly in the glory of God, for He is the Son of God.

The next thing that he learned from the glory was contained in the words that were addressed to him. Jesus said to him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" and he said, "Who art Thou, Lord?" and the reply was, "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest." Was Saul of Tarsus persecuting Jesus? Jesus was on the throne of God, how could he be persecuting Him? He was persecuting the members of His body, and the Lord Jesus said, "Saul, you are persecuting Me." If my hand is injured, then I am injured, every member of my body is me; so the Lord Jesus said, "Why persecutest thou Me?" Is it possible that the Lord Jesus is looking down into this meeting this afternoon and saying, That is Me, and that is Me, and every Christian in that company is Me? Yes, that is the truth, that is the meaning of the truth of the one body. Jesus the exalted Man has got a body on earth, and every member of that body is united to Him. It is not a theory but a fact, every saint of God has His life, His nature, and is united to Him by the

Holy Ghost. That is the very heart of Christian truth. I am sure Saul taught that at Antioch. It is the thing that permeates his epistles, that was ever before him. He preached the gospel of the grace of God, the glad tidings by which men are saved, but he had this in view, that every person that believed the Gospel would be indwelt by the Holy Ghost and so become a member of the body of Christ.

Jesus the glorified Man calls His members Himself. Do not think that I for a moment am going to overlook the fact that He is God. How could He sit on the throne of God if He were not God? But He is there as a Man, the risen Man. We could not be united to Him as God, we could have no share in His deity, we are united to Him as the risen Man, we share His risen humanity, in the life and nature of it now, and in bodies like His own hereafter, and this will be made manifest in the glory when by His resurrection power we are conformed to His image. The great truth for Christians in this present day is that they have a Head in heaven, they are members of the body of Christ, and that body is one. We are formed into one body by the Holy Ghost.

I have spoken of the assembly at Antioch. The saints of God in each locality are so addressed. There is the assembly in Sydney, and Melbourne, and so forth, but the assembly which is the body of Christ, is not made up of a number of assemblies but of individuals. A local assembly is the local expression of the one body on earth, but then there should be in each local assembly all those characteristics that belong to the one assembly, and each should be formed in and controlled by the truth that belongs to the whole.

Now you will not find in reading the 11th chapter of Acts in connection with this assembly one word about baptism, and I do not wonder at that at all. Paul definitely tells us in 1 Corinthians,

the epistle which sets before us the truth of assembly fellowship, that he was not commissioned to baptize, as Peter had been. Baptism has its place, but its place is outside the assembly; it belongs to the individual relationship to the Lord; it is in figure the closing up of the old existence of sin, it puts us in the place of death, while the assembly is a sphere of life, it belongs to that eternal day

“Where sin, nor want, nor woe, nor death can come;”

and we are in that sphere by the Holy Ghost; for we are all baptized into one body by one Spirit. Nor did they select a minister to lead and instruct them; there were in that church several prophets and teachers, serving under the Lord's direction in the power of the Spirit. The minister of modern days is unknown in Scripture.

Is it true that the risen exalted Lord in glory, whose glory was brighter than the noon-day sun, can speak of poor Christians such as Saul persecuted, and such as you and me, as Himself? Does that risen, exalted, glorified Lord esteem us as members of His body? Yes, He does. If only we entered into the reality of this, would it not make us careful as to our associations? Would it not impress upon us the fact that we must be heavenly in character, as our Head is heavenly? I do not think anything could have a more sanctifying effect upon us than the realization of this great truth that Saul would teach these disciples at Antioch.

#### WHAT THE WORLD THOUGHT.

What was the result? Why, the next thing we read is this, “The disciples were first called Christians at Antioch.” They did not call them Christians amid the bright Pentecostal days, they called them Christians first in Antioch. I have no doubt the people looked at them and said, “A wonderful change has come over these people, we shall have to give them some sort of designation.” You know people cannot bear you in this world if

you do not put a label on yourself. You cannot give a tract away in a train without being asked, “What denomination do you belong to?” and if you say you do not belong to any denomination they say, “Why, you must belong to some denomination.” If you do not put a label on yourself, they will put a label on for you, but if you know the truth of the assembly of God you will refuse the labels. But the world sometimes labels us more truly than they intend. At Antioch they said, “What shall we call them?” They noticed they talked a great deal about Christ, and I am very certain of this, since they were cleaving to the Lord with purpose of heart, and growing in the truth of His Headship, they were acting in the grace of Christ, and so they said, “We must call them something, and the only name we can put upon them is Christians,” and so the disciples were first called Christians at Antioch. God grant that we may be called Christians because of what we are. God grant that we may be known as Christians by the way we conduct ourselves. If that is the only label they can put upon us, happy are we.

#### THE PRACTICAL RESULT OF THE TRUTH.

Then there came prophets from Jerusalem, and one of them named Agabus prophesied that there would be a great dearth throughout all the world. Then these Christians at Antioch proved at once that the truth of the one body was no mere doctrine to them. They did not say, “Well, if this dearth is coming we had better put by for the rainy day.” There was no such selfishness as that. They were not self-centred, self-occupied, they were not thinking about themselves. What did they do when they heard that there was to be a great dearth throughout all the earth, which of course would touch Antioch as well as Jerusalem? They said, “We must make a collection and send to the poor

saints at Jerusalem." They recognized them as members of the same body. They recognized, if they suffered at Jerusalem, the saints at Antioch would suffer as well. There was the great reality of the truth of God. It was not, there is one assembly here and another there, and we are in watertight compartments, and each must look after his own, but we are one with them, we are part of them, and they part of us, and so they treated them as they would treat themselves. "No man ever yet hateth his own flesh, but loveth it and cherisheth it, as Christ the church." You are part of my flesh in a spiritual way, and I am part of yours, for you are a member of the body of Christ, and so am I, and Christ is the Head caring for us all, and so ought we to care for each other in the love of Christ.

Then there was something more, namely, ministry to the Lord. The assembly had become a sanctuary. They did not go there to get blessing, that was not the thought. They ministered to the Lord. It was a sanctuary where worship and adoration went up to the Lord, and where that is lacking I greatly question whether the truth of the assembly is known at all. This does not mean merely giving thanks that I am saved, or blessing the Lord that He has redeemed my soul. How did the priests of old minister to the Lord? They brought the incense and offered it upon the golden altar; they brought the sacrifices also, and these went up as a sweet savour to God. The incense and the sacrifices spoke of what Christ is to God. We cannot minister unto the Lord in the assembly until we know something of that. They ministered to the Lord, and so the assembly became the sanctuary in which worship and adoration and praise went up to God. You may be sure that was a happy spot. Those disciples were cleaving to the Lord, they were receiving constant supplies of grace from Him, they were growing in the knowledge of the truth

of Christ the Head of His body, and were able to act in the truth of the one body, but not only this, they were His brethren also, a race of priests in the sanctuary, ministering to the Lord (Hebrews 2. 11, 12).

The next thing is, the Spirit of God, being unhindered in an undivided church, could say unto them in His sovereign rights, "Separate Me Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them." So the Spirit of God made Himself manifest in the assembly in that way, and these servants of the Lord are commended by the assembly. They went forth from the assembly, commended by the assembly; the assembly was the centre from which their service flowed, and back they came to it. They served the Lord in their individual responsibility to Him. They did not take their directions from the assembly, they took their directions straight from the Lord Himself, and they served the Lord in the power of the Holy Ghost and as guided by Him, but the assembly was their centre. They had found a centre on earth, and that was where the presence of the Lord was, "Where two or three are gathered together unto My Name, there am I in the midst of them," and that became the centre of these apostles as they went forth to proclaim the glad tidings amongst the Gentiles.

There is such a thing as being used of God in the salvation of souls without the knowledge of this at all, and I say earnestly, may God prosper every servant who preaches Christ, no matter how little he knows of the truth, but you may be sure of this, it will be a blessed thing for us when we come face to face with our Lord in the glory and hear Him say to us, "You were interested in that in which I was interested; My thoughts and affections were centred on My body, the church on earth, and you in your little way sought grace to be interested in that in which I was interested." Don't you think that would be a blessed thing?

I would like to have my Lord's commendation in that way. Yes, I want to preach the Gospel, I want to see sinners saved, it is a constant grief to me that I see so few, but the one thing I desire above all is to receive the Lord's commendation in regard to this when I stand face to face with Him. "You sought the good of the members of My body, you sought to gather the saints together in one, and not to scatter them, you sought to minister the word, so that those who

heard it might see that I was the Centre and Source of everything, and that they might realize how precious My church is to Me": that is the great ambition of my soul.

Oh! that it might be the ambition of every one of us here to be really caring for that which is so precious to Christ, His body on the earth, that which is so intimately connected with Himself, that He speaks of it as His own flesh, and His bones.

## "IT ABIDETH ALONE."

(H. NUNNERLEY.)

"IT abideth alone." How wholly ALONE the blessed Lord was when here! In the manner of His birth there was none like Him. The body "prepared," though that of a servant and in the likeness of men, was holy, and had no taint of sin.

At twelve years of age wisdom incarnate astonished all who heard His understanding and answers. At thirty He was marked out from all others as personally worthy; to none other was the Spirit given, nor could it be apart from redemption.

He was the one solitary Man who afforded increasing delight to God, and was marked out as the Vessel of the Father's pleasure by a voice from heaven and by the seal of the Spirit.

The approval which marked that first step in fulfilling righteousness followed Him onward to the holy mount. Moses and Elias must retire, and He ALONE must occupy that scene; none other could fill or control it. Descending, He travelled onwards to the sorrows of Gethsemane. How He stood alone there! "Could ye not watch with Me one hour?" (Matt. 26. 40). He looked for comforters and found none. His disciples forsook Him and fled. Above all, how alone in the sorrows of Calvary! When He went into the holy place, to make an atone-

ment, "there was no man with Him" (Lev. 16. 17). The Sinbearer was not only deserted by man, but forsaken of God.

"Alone He bare the cross,  
Alone its grief sustained."

No mind can conceive the solitude of those hours, when, forsaken of God, enveloped in thick darkness, He tasted all the bitterness of the cup which He only could drink. The awful loneliness of that moment none could know but Himself; we may, however, dwell upon the magnitude of the love displayed there, a love in which He was alone, and a love which He only could express.

Whether He passes before the vision of our souls as the incarnate One, whose joys none could enter into, whose sorrows none could share, whose service none could understand—for "He had meat to eat" His disciples knew not of—or whether we contemplate Him on Calvary's accursed tree, we learn how wholly apart He was from all other men, in the nature of His being, in the service He rendered, and in the joys and sorrows He tasted.

He alone could set man in a new relationship to God. He compares Himself to "a corn of wheat." How expressive is this term! In order to germinate, it must die. Having died,



the blade appears, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. The blade may be compared to Christ risen. The ear, to Christ fruitful in resurrection. The **FULL** corn in the ear, to the much fruit, the glorious results of His death. But if He was alone in His life, and in His death, he shall never again be as "a sparrow alone upon the house-top" (Ps. 102. 7). He finds present and eternal joy in associating others with Himself. He is the germ from which all the ears come. He is not only the Giver of life, but the life itself, and has now in resurrection become the life of those for whom He died. He is **HEAD** now of a body and the **FIRSTBORN** among many brethren, for He must have "the first place in all things" (Col. 1. 18). He has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, but He is the great High Priest and the King of kings and Lord of lords.

Among those that shepherd the flock of God He is the chief Shepherd and the great Shepherd of the sheep.

How jealously the Spirit guards His personal excellence, and exalts Him in every circle **ABOVE** His fellows. When a man here, all the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in Him bodily (Col. 1. 19). He never ceased to be God in becoming man, and will never cease to be man, though God over all blessed for ever, in that eternal future. No other man could **BY RIGHT** seat himself on the Father's throne. None other could command the homage of every created being, to none other every knee shall bow. In all this He is alone. It will be our unceasing joy to behold the glory He had with the Father before the world was—to exalt Him as the only worthy One.

Is it not well, whilst our souls rejoice in all that He is as man, and dwell upon our present and eternal associations with Him, to constantly remind ourselves that in the offices He fills and the intrinsic glories of His person, He is and ever will be **ALONE**, not only exalted above His fellows, but God over all, blessed for ever!

## WHY? AND HOW?

### Two Questions Concerning Resurrection.

(H. P. BARKER.)

WHY should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead? — Acts 26. 8.

**THAT** some people *do* think it incredible, we are all well aware. A philosopher propounds some new theory, and men swallow it down without troubling to understand it. A man of science announces a discovery, and even before proof is forthcoming it is received as indubitable truth. But when **GOD** declares something He will bring to pass by His power, there are plenty who exhibit their own crass folly by smiling incredulously.

"It is as likely that I should rise again from the dead as that a tree

should grow out of the middle of my coffin," said Lady Anne Grimston, daughter of the Earl of Thanet. She lived and died an atheist, some two hundred years ago. But a tree *has* grown from the very middle of her coffin. It is a sturdy oak, and by its side grows a second tree, a sycamore. The vault where the lady lies buried is square, built solidly of brick and granite. The two trees filled the interior first. Then they burst through the masonry and spread out to such an extent that they completely enveloped the grave. They broke the iron railings surrounding it, and in the

churchyard of Tewin, Hertfordshire, they may be seen to-day, carrying the railings skyward.

Thus has God demonstrated the contemptible folly of one who doubted His Word.

The power of *life* is irresistible. No scientist has yet been able to make dead matter live. Spontaneous generation remains nothing but a biological phrase. But God can do it. His ability to bring it to pass has been known for centuries. Even Hannah, the mother of the prophet Samuel, spoke of God as One that "killeth and maketh alive," and as One that "bringeth down to the grave and bringeth up." There is no difficulty in believing it when *the power of God* is remembered.

One of the most magnificent utterances of the Old Testament is the fortieth chapter of Isaiah. We have there a glowing description of God's might.

The OCEANS are spoken of, and the DUST OF THE EARTH. These He has measured and weighed. He deals with the huge Atlantic as a draper's assistant deals with a bale of cloth. The incomprehensible Sahara and the towering summits of the Himalayas are no more to Him than an ounce of salts to the chemist.

Then come the NATIONS. To Him they are but a drop of water in His bucket. What were Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Greece, and Rome? What are the British Empire, the United States, Russia, China, and France to God? Like the fine dust that adheres to the balance and is not sufficient to affect its accuracy.

Then the GODS of the nations, the idols that men have fashioned as objects of their worship. No words are wasted on these, but the question is asked with withering scorn: "To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto Him?"

The INHABITANTS of the world come next into view. How many are

there? Some 1,200,000,000. What are they, compared with God? Grass-hoppers.

Does such a description apply to the mighty ones of earth, its PRINCES AND RULERS? What of the great Rameses, the Asur-bani-pals, and Nebuchadnezzars of ancient days? What of the Cæsars, the Czars, and the Kaisers? What of Kings, Emperors, and Presidents? To God they are "nothing," mere "vanity." He blows with His wind and these men of majesty are "stubble," wafted away as feathers before the storm.

Now look up! View the transcendent HOST OF HEAVEN. Think of the shining worlds that sparkle in the far firmament by night. They own, every one of them, God as their Creator. You call your dog by his name. God does that with the stars!

Well may the inspired prophet conclude: "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, Jehovah, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of His understanding."

Now God has been pleased to show His illimitable power in other ways than in creation. He is the God of Resurrection. And this omnipotence is all in the hands of One who, though Himself the great Creator, became a Man, died, and rose again. He, the Son from heaven, will cause the dead to live by the might of His voice! So we are taught in John 5. 28, 29.

HOW say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? 1 Cor. 15. 12.

It is comprehensible that among those who know nothing of God there should be men who deny the possibility of resurrection. But it is to our utter shame that there should be such *among us*, men who bear the Christian name.

Various theories, each framed with the idea of contradicting the evidence that history has furnished as to the resurrection of Christ, have had their

little day and been relegated to the refuse heap. The Fraud theory, the Imagination theory, the Vision theory, the Swoon theory—one has followed the other into the land of oblivion. Now we have the Materialized Spirit theory. We are told that the actual body of Jesus remained in the grave, while His "spirit-body" arose, and was materialized, so that He talked, and ate, and ascended to heaven in sight of His disciples. We are informed also that it will be even thus in our own case. Our mortal bodies will never come from the grave, but our "etheric" bodies, released from their earth-bonds, will continue to live, and that this constitutes resurrection! We are gravely asked, *How* can there be a resurrection of these mortal bodies? Says one:—

"Men's bodies, being dead, are turned into dust, and so are mingled with the bodies of beasts and other creatures, and one man's body with another, and by reason of this confusion men *cannot* possibly rise with their own bodies."

Cannot! Think of using such a word when it is a question of the power of the God of Isaiah 40. ! A worm of the dust says his infinite Creator *cannot* do what He declares He will do!

Madame de Gasparin gives us a narrative which perhaps readers whose nerves are not of the strongest should pass over. She says:—

"I am about to relate to you one of the strong emotions of my life.

"I found myself in the crypt of a church at Palermo. My friends and I had gone down into it without exactly knowing where we went, and walked with more of surprise than terror between a double line of skeletons. And yet the spectacle was ghastly enough. Those perpendicular dead bodies, dressed in brown garments that hung loosely around their bony limbs, with crossed hands, holding some sort of shield with their names written on it, had fallen into dislocated attitudes—even more grotesque than horrible . . . Yet we were not

conscious of any terror. Death presented us, indeed, with his material aspect, his sad, repulsive aspect, but the likeness of humanity was still there.

"With one word, we felt *God could call those dry bones to life again.*

"The next chamber had a more appalling spectacle in reserve. All along the walls, as in the cabin of some great ship, were ranged berths of equal length, and on these, dressed in gorgeous attire, hands gloved, lay corpses of women, with discoloured faces, empty eye-sockets, sunken features, hollow mouth, and wreaths of roses upon their heads. There were hundreds upon hundreds of them, all in the pomp of their court dresses, and a nauseating smell, the cold, faint smell of death, rose from the vaults where the bodies were drying.

"In the presence of these faces, with their beauty so inexorably destroyed, of this ghastly satire on worldly vanities, I felt my blood congeal. But when at the end of the passage, lit by our guide's torch, a well yawned before us, and he lowered the red and smoking light he held to show it better; when I saw that nameless *detritus*, damp, pestilential, which overflowed the well's mouth, and when our guide said, 'This is the dust of those yonder; when they have lain their time, we throw them in here.' I remained almost lifeless with horror. With my hand half plunged in those ashes, looking at what they had left on my fingers, a despairing doubt flashed blighting across my soul.

"As I fled in haste from that fatal crypt, and mounted with unsteady step the stair that led us back into the nave, just where the daylight began to appear, I suddenly saw four letters carved on the wall: I.N.R.I. Then a voice resounded very near my heart: '*Believest thou that I am able to do this?*' Jesus of Nazareth. King of the Jews, yea verily, THOU wilt do it!"

Nor when we know Christ, and remember who He is, "the Mighty God, the Father of Eternity," shall we doubt. We shall drop every treasonable misgiving, and rest upon the inspired "shall": "There SHALL be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust" (Acts 24. 15).

# GENESIS 1., 2. 1-3; AND THE TYPICAL MEANING OF THE SEVEN DAYS.

(A. J. POLLOCK.)

IN a previous article we saw that the six days of Gen. 1. were not days of creation, but days of reconstruction, and in the case of life, whether human or animal, of *special* acts of creation. Gen. 1. 1 covers the *general* act of creation.

The way God takes to repair the breakdown of the material illustrates very remarkably the way He takes to repair the breakdown of the spiritual. We believe that the material is but the scaffolding of the spiritual building God has in hand. When the spiritual building is completed, the scaffolding will be removed.

## THE FIRST DAY.

God's first action towards the rehabilitation of the wrecked world was the introduction of *light*. Darkness was upon the face of the deep—brooding impenetrable darkness save for Divine power. "The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light."

Just in the same way the Spirit is the Agent in connection with God's first move towards man for his blessing. Just as Genesis begins with the words, "*In the beginning*," so the Gospel of John begins with the selfsame words, "*In the beginning*." And just as in Genesis the Spirit of God moves and in His sovereign power says, "*Let there be light*," so in John we get, "Ye must be born again" (John 3. 7), and "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God" (verse 3). *The ability to see is the ability to appreciate light*. Eyes are no use without light. New birth is the spiritual eye for spiritual light. The Spirit of God is the sovereign Producer of this new birth. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the

sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit" (verse 8).

As the result then of the word of God, light existed where formerly only darkness had been. The diurnal motion of the earth revolving upon its axis doubtless produced the phenomenon of evening and morning. God called the darkness Night and the light Day. Here we get what is ever a principle in God's word—*separation*. Separation is a blessed word, for it is always spiritually separation from evil, and leaves the one who practises it according to God connected only with light and love and holiness and happiness. So we get, "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: . . . and what communion hath light with darkness?" (2 Cor. 6. 14). Of course material darkness is a creation of God as much as light, but in its moral application it is used as a type of what is evil. So when Christ came it was "to give light to them that sit in darkness" (Luke 1. 79). The saints are exhorted to "Cast off the works of darkness, and . . . put on the armour of light" (Rom. 13. 12). Lastly, Scripture itself uses the analogy we have just presented: "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4. 6).

## THE SECOND DAY.

On the second day God ordained the distinction between heaven and this earth on which we find ourselves. He made a firmament or expansion, and divided the waters which were above the firmament from the waters below the firmament. This illustrates the

two great lines of God's dealings with men, viz., the heavenly and the earthly. This was first indicated when God called out Abraham.

It has been happily pointed out by Adolf Saphir that there were three great testings of man before man as a whole was set aside and God began to exercise His new principle of calling out. First Adam was set up in innocence and failed. "The generations of the heavens and of the earth" (Gen. 2. 4) include Adam *unfallen*. Next, man was tested as having no restraint up to the flood, and "the book of the generations of Adam" [fallen] (Gen. 5. 1) brings us up to the flood and Noah. After the flood man is tested—government was put into the hands of Noah—and he failed. Noah's son, Shem, is chosen, and "these are the generations of Shem" (Gen. 11. 10) brings us up to Abram. Henceforth Bible history circles round Abram as being called out, and after Abram in Isaac and Jacob, heirs of the promise, till it enlarges into a nation, a called-out nation—"Out of Egypt have I called My Son" (Matt. 2. 15). But when Abram is called, God indicated two lines of blessing—heavenly and earthly. God said He would multiply His seed, "as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore" (Gen. 22. 17).

Even before the heavenly side of blessing came out in the church God ever had two lines in view. It is important never to confound them. It is the confounding of them that brings in great confusion and loss in the things of God. It is true that the heavenly line of blessing did not come into actual view till the day of Pentecost, when the church was formed, but it was before the mind of God from all eternity, and formed part of His eternal counsels, and was indicated prophetically when God called Abraham, and doubtless in all God's dealings He was working up to this.

### THE THIRD DAY.

God's attention was directed to the earth itself in this day. He gathered the waters into one place and let the dry land appear. Up to this day the earth presented the appearance of being wholly covered by water. God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering together of the waters called He Seas.

This illustrates the relation of Israel to the nations. The sea is typical of the uncontrolled nations. Dan. 7. 3 tells us of four great beasts coming up from the sea. These are not actual beasts nor an actual sea, but four great world empires that have their origin in the nations. Also we have a similar thought expressed in Rev. 13. 1, where we read of a beast rising up out of the sea.

Israel is typified by the earth, a place of order and fruitfulness, for God bade the earth bring forth grass and herb and fruit tree yielding fruit and seed after its own kind.

The place and importance of Israel's land in the Scriptures is very great indeed. Practically all the Old Testament from the call of Abraham centres round that land. His feet trod it first as a stranger and pilgrim; his descendants possessed themselves of it. The four Gospels likewise centre on that land as the place of interest. Abraham and David—heads of patriarchal and kingly promise—were important because of their relation to God's ways, and this is seen to rise to its culmination in Matthew 1. when it is pointed out that of their line CHRIST came, in whom alone these promises of blessing could be effected. His death is the basis of all these blessings, and it was in that land Jesus died, was buried, rose again, and from that land He will return and effect the fulfilment of all God's promises to Abraham, and then indeed Israel will be fruitful and be the joy and blessing of the whole earth.

### THE FOURTH DAY.

On this day God ordered the lights in the expanse of heaven for the

dividing of night from day and for signs and seasons and days and years. Two great lights, as far as this earth is concerned, were set in their ordered place, the greater light—the sun—to rule the day, the lesser light—the moon—to rule the night: He made the stars also.

Here we get prefigured Christ and the church. How apposite are the figures. Christ speaks of Himself as the Light of the world, and the Old Testament ends with the Sun of righteousness arising with healing in His wings. In nature the light of the sun is original and the earth gets but a small portion of its life-giving heat. Without the sun this planet would be frozen and all life upon its surface be impossible. So *all* our blessings—whether heavenly or earthly—come from Christ. And when He comes to bless this earth in His millennial reign of righteousness and peace, it will be as the fulfilment of Malachi's glowing prophecy, as the Sun of Righteousness with healing in His wings.

But meanwhile He is absent from this earth, but He has not left this world without a testimony, and this testimony is seen in the church of heavenly origin. It is the church which is in testimony till Christ displays Himself as the Sun of Righteousness to Israel.

But here we are on ground that has its dangers. The Roman Catholic system exalted the church at the expense of her Head, and this tendency is clearly seen in quarters where it was least expected. The moon is a happy illustration of the church, as guarding against this tendency, inasmuch as it is an opaque body with no light of its own, and its only usefulness lies in its reflecting the light of the sun. Moonshine, strictly, there is none—it is the reflected light of the sun. So the only use the church can be in this world is shedding the light of Christ during the night of His absence.

The moon is a planet revolving round the earth, whilst the earth

revolves round the sun. Her place is clearly (1) in subordination to the sun and (2) in transmitting the light of the sun by reflection during the night. So it is with the church. As individual Christians we are said to be lights in the world, and corporately we see what the church will be in display in the holy city in Rev. 21. 24 when the saved of the nations shall walk in its light—hence the absolute necessity of Christians walking in the light of Christ and in communion with Him, for it is as the individual walks rightly that the whole can give a right testimony; for the whole is made up of its component parts.

Further, this is illustrated in the wife being in relation to her husband in reverence and subjection. So we read, "Christ is the Head of the church . . . the church is subject to Christ" (Eph. 5. 23, 24).

#### THE FIFTH DAY.

On this day God created the denizens of the sea and air, every step preparing the scene for the reception of man. It is sweet to trace God's way thus in creation as illustrating His ways in grace.

It may be—we do not dogmatize—that the peopling of the seas sets forth God's way in blessing man. It is remarkable that the Lord made the disciples to be fishers of men and that the Lord Himself was the only One who performed miracles with fish—one a hook and line miracle, illustrating the present methods of the Gospel, when God is calling out of the nations a people for His name; and the drag net miracle, illustrating the blessing of the Jewish and Gentile nations in the day to come when they will be brought into national and earthly blessing. When Peter enclosed a great multitude of fishes, where previously all night toilsome fishing had drawn a blank, two ships were filled with the harvest of the sea, setting forth doubtless Jew and Gentile coming into blessing in a future day. The fish in the sea may thus set forth the subjects of the Gospel.

The denizens of the air would set forth that God will bless with heavenly as well as earthly blessing.

### THE SIXTH DAY.

On this day God brought into existence the lower animal creation, and finally when all is prepared He created *man*. With the creation of man God's activity had reached its climax. Up to now we read four times over the formula, "And God saw that it was good," including all reconstruction and creation (exclusive of the creation of man), but when we come to the sixth day and God surveys the whole scene, *including man and woman in their ordered place as having dominion over the whole*, we read, "And God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was **VERY good**."

The whole creation was ordered for the pleasure of man, and man was made for the glory of God. Day by day, as God acted, He revealed His power and wisdom and tender care for man, and when the day came for him to be set in his ordered place it was to be surrounded by all these evidences of God's care and interest.

But man thus placed as the head of the old creation is typical of Christ as the Head of the new creation. So we read in Rom. 5. 14 of Adam as "the figure of Him that was to come."

Of course all types fail to fully express the glorious Antitype, and this must be so in the nature of things. How can a shadow be equal to the Substance? So Adam was a mere man, however wonderful, God's masterpiece and topstone in the old creation; the blessed Lord was and is and ever will be, "God over all, blessed for ever," uncreated, self-contained, sustaining all things by the word of His power, who became Man, never ceasing to be the mighty God.

Bearing this in mind, how touching is the type. Adam is the head of the first creation, and it was as head, before ever Eve was formed, that he named the animals at the bidding of

God, thus guarding his absolute headship, Eve coming in for associated headship.

Flung into a deep sleep, typical of Christ's death on the cross, a rib was taken from his side and a woman builded therefrom, typifying that the church is of Christ. It was not good for the man to be alone. He had dominion over the wide creation, but as his eye ranged over his fair dominion he had no one to commune with, to share his joys and his occupations.

Eve brought to him by the Lord God brought the exclamation of Adam, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman [Hebrew, *Isha*] because she was taken out of Man" [Hebrew, *Ish*] (Gen. 2. 23)—he recognized that she was of him. So as antitype answers to type, we read in Eph. 5. 30, "For we [the church] are members of His [Christ's] body, of His flesh and of His bones," and we are let into the secret that the union of man and woman is not a convenient illustration, but is expressly designed to typify the great truth of Christ and the church.

We can understand in the light of all this how man was not made to spring forth at the bidding of the Creator, as is indicated in the words, "Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind," etc., but that God said, "Let us make man in our image and after our likeness, and let *them* have dominion," etc. How this knocks on the head the fatuous folly of evolution—that infidel attempt to elbow God out of His universe.

And further, we can see why God did not create Adam and Eve together, but departed from his method hitherto followed in the creation, firstly, in the case of Adam, and still more in that of the creation of Eve, putting Adam as head of the creation, but associating Eve with him in this dominion; yet, by the very method He employed in her creation, giving her to derive everything from Adam, even her being under

God's hand, and so constituting her as is seen in the expression—"male and female created He them."

So we find the great scheme of God in things spiritual—the profound mystery of His will—is to head up all things in Christ, so that "Christ is the Head of the church" (Eph. 5. 23), and yet associating the church with Him—"let *them* have dominion"—we read, God "gave Him to be Head over all things *to the church*, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1. 22, 23).

### THE SEVENTH DAY.

Here we find God resting from His labours, fit type of that fixed eternal state when God shall be all in all, all His activities of grace and government over, and He shall rest in the complacency of His love. Christ and the

church will then occupy their place for ever as John the seer describes in his beatific vision, "And I, John, saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, *prepared as a bride adorned for her husband*" (Rev. 21. 2). What a day that will be! Denominations wiped out, splits, divisions, sections, parties, things of the past, and only and altogether new creation seen in that blissful day.

As day succeeded day in Gen. 1. we read, "And the evening and the morning were the first day," and so on, but when we come to the seventh day we have no statement as to evening and morning, but simply, "On the seventh day God rested." Seven is the number of perfection, and God has indeed found perfection in Christ and all that is of Christ in that eternal day of fadeless splendour.

## NOTES ON ETERNAL PUNISHMENT. (W. H. WESTCOTT)

**EIS** tous aiōnas tōn aiōnōn (To the ages of the ages). Used exclusively of what is eternal, and absolutely so. Relating to the glory, praise, and dominion of God (Galatians, Philippians, Timothy, Hebrews, Peter, Revelation). To the life of God (Rev. 4. 9, 10; 10. 6; 15. 7), to the smoke of judgment on those who compose and actuate the apostate church (Rev. 19. 3), to the torment of the devil in the lake of fire (Rev. 20. 10). See Young's Analytical Concordance under *EVER* (and *ever*), Nos. 5, 6, and 7.

The simple word aiōnios (*for ever, everlasting, age-lasting*) depends of course on the character of the age in question. It is applied to consolation (2 Thes. 2. 16) which as far as we are concerned reaches us during the present age, or our own lifetime: to the millennium (2 Pet. 1. 11: aiōn—*world [to come]*)—Matthew, Mark, Luke, Ephesians, Hebrews 6. 5); and to the *life* which will be in vogue then, manifestly

in vogue (Gospels, Epistles, and Revelation), and to *eternal* life abstractly as in 1 John 5. 20, where it is applied to One who is eternally before God in resurrection, and certainly cannot mean age-lasting in any limited sense.

If therefore the word aiōnios be used in relation to that which is in its own essence and nature time lasting, it bears its limited application to the age or time under consideration. If it be applied to that which is in its own nature and essence absolutely abiding, its use extends to eternity, the eternal age. And in this context, the *eternal life*—granted to the saint but subsisting in Christ—and the *eternal judgment* of the lost, stand or fall together (*Life*—Gospels and Epistles. *Fire, damnation, punishment*—Matthew and Mark. *Salvation, judgment, redemption, Spirit, inheritance*—Hebrews. Also 2 Cor. 4. 18, in contrast with things temporal, the things that are not seen are *eternal*. Such are instances of its use.)



See what value attaches to the expression "to the ages of the ages," which every honest soul must admit refers to absolute eternity. Three things are spoken of under this absolute category. (1) The life of God (Rev. 4. 9, 10, etc.). ; (2) The smoke of Rev. 19. 3 ; (3) The torment of Rev. 20. 10. So that the eternity of God, judgment administered in wrath, and judgment felt by the subject of it, are all referred to as absolutely eternal. Satan himself will absolutely and eternally reap the consequence of his sin. This is because his sin has affected God in a way we are not prepared nor competent to measure.

When once this is conceded (and it must be, or we lose God Himself) then—solemn as the issue is—the objection against the doom of the wicked breaks

down. The sin which is punished cannot be measured by any measure we possess ; God alone can estimate what sin against God involves. The garden of Gethsemane bears witness that no other outlet could be found for the sinner. Christ must die. And Rev. 21. 8 proves to every subject mind that those who reject Christ in favour of sin, undergo the same doom as the devil. Not necessarily the same measure of woe, but in the very nature and essence of things (when time is no more) eternal. Not only judgment administered but judgment felt, to the ages of ages. To be cast into it for such unutterable grief and immeasurable distance from God, is the second death.

The words in italics may all be examined in Young's Analytical Concordance.

*This article may be had as a separate leaflet of our Publishers, Price 4d.*

## "OF GOD, AND NOT OF US."

(F. B. HOIE.)

WE do not easily learn the lesson that all power is of God, and that the greatest of the servants of the Lord is but a vessel of that power, and nothing more.

In 2 Corinthians 3. the Apostle Paul institutes a striking contrast between the old covenant of demand and that ministry of new covenant blessing which he was appointed to carry on ; the one glorious in its measure but transitory, the other of surpassing glory and abiding : the one bringing with it death and condemnation, the other bringing righteousness and the Spirit, and resulting in transformation for those who come into the light of the unveiled glory of the Lord.

In chapter 4 he turns from the character of the ministry to the character of the minister, and shows that the latter was in keeping with the former. As entrusted with such a ministry he not only rejected all the discreditable artifices so common amongst men when

they are engaged in pushing "a cause" (verse 2), but he kept himself in the background. "We preach not ourselves," he says, "but Christ Jesus the Lord" (verse 5). That "knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," which is the power of transformation in the believer, is also that which shines forth from the servant of the Lord as he carries on this new covenant ministry (verse 6).

The apostle then adds that this treasure, great as it is, reposes in "earthen vessels" (verse 7) and in the succeeding verses he shows how God Himself dealt with the earthen vessel, and permitted all manner of trying circumstances to come upon it, so that in everything the sentence of death might lie upon the vessel, and the excellency of the treasure contained therein be thereby the more clearly manifested. In this way it was shown beyond dispute that the vessel as such was nothing and the "excellency" or

"surpassingness" of the power was "of God and not of us."

In the allusions here to the *light* which shines forth, and to the *earthen vessels*, and to the *dealings of God* with those vessels, some have seen a reference by the Apostle Paul to the Old Testament incident of Gideon and his men with the pitchers and lamps inside them, likening the breaking of the pitchers, which permitted the light of the lamps to be seen, to the dealings of God with the earthen vessels, reducing them to nothingness that the light may shine.

Be that as it may, it is very certain that the book of Judges, which contains the story of Gideon, does furnish us with very striking illustrations of the fact that it is God's way to take up instruments and vessels of such a sort as to make it very plain that the power which operates is in no wise that of the instrument or vessel but purely of Himself.

There are at least seven such illustrations in the book.

1. Ehud, the Benjamite, raised up of God to be the deliverer from Eglon, king of Moab, was "a man lefthanded" (chap. 3. 15), or as the margin has it, "shut of his right hand." Another translation gives "bound as to his right hand" as a literal rendering of the Hebrew idiom. The "right hand" has become almost an equivalent of "power" or "strength" in ordinary speech. Here was a man "bound" as to his strength, a man quite unlikely to deliver by one powerful blow the whole nation from the oppressor. Yet that was what he did, and as the result of the stroke of Ehud's left hand the land had rest for no less than eighty years.

2. "And after him was Shamgar . . . which slew of the Philistines six hundred men with an ox goad; and he also delivered Israel" (chap. 3. 31).

Of this Shamgar we know very little. The Philistines sorely oppressed Israel, at least the southern part of the land, for in his days "the highways were

unoccupied, and the travellers walked through byways" (chap. 5. 6). Apparently too they pursued the policy, adopted by their descendants several hundred years later, of extirpating all smiths from the land of Israel, so that the Israelites might be without weapons and defenceless (see 1 Sam. 13. 19-21). Shamgar was consequently reduced to an ox goad for a weapon of war. See him as he confronts at least 600 men armed only with a long stick, on the end of which is a small spike of iron! For the farmer or drover an excellent implement, of course, but when Shamgar turned from his oxen and stood as a warrior with this as his only weapon, the thing became supremely ridiculous. Yet the stars looked down that night on 600 Philistines stark dead, slain every man of them by this primitive weapon. Shall we praise the ox goad? Nay, the excellency of the power was not of it.

3. Again the people fell under the power of their foes, and Jabin, king of Hazor, enslaved them. His oppression is described as "mighty." Yet God began to work, he fell and was subdued. The elect vessel for this fresh service was Deborah, a prophetess. She roused up and inspired the tremulous Barak. There was another vessel used in a secondary way, and this was Jael, wife of Heber the Kenite, again a woman; and yet again there was an instrument used, particularly as regarded Sisera, the captain of Jabin's host, and this was "a nail of the tent"—just an iron spike used for holding the ropes.

Directed by a woman, Barak and his ten thousand men confronted Jabin's mighty host and utterly defeated them, though they were fortified by nine hundred chariots of iron. "All the host of Sisera fell upon the edge of the sword; and there was not a man left" is the terse record of Scripture. To crown the defeat, the great Sisera, the hero of so many victories, fell before a woman and a tent pin! Barak had been told previously that the enterprise he so reluctantly and timidly under-

took should not be for his honour; and so it turned out. The very weakness and insignificance of the means employed made it clear that all the honour and glory was God's.

4. Yet again Israel sinned and the Midianites oppressed them. God now selected as deliverer Gideon, who himself confessed, "My family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house" (chap. 6. 15). Presently we find Gideon the leader of 32,000 men, and so the hosts of Israel began to assume respectable proportions. Yet before they were usable by God they were reduced to a paltry 300; and to make this contemptible little army really ridiculous their sole weapons were trumpets, pitchers and lamps!

Gideon and his feeble 300 men, however, utterly discomfited the great Midianitish host. They were like "a cake of barley bread" which "tumbled into the host of Midian, and came unto a tent, and smote it that it fell, and overturned it, that the tent lay along" (chap. 7. 13). Trumpets, pitchers and lamps are wonderfully effective weapons if God is pleased to use them, but then manifestly the excellency of the power is not of them but of God.

5. Following Gideon came Abimelech, his very unscrupulous son, who became a real scourge to the nation. They were now afflicted from within and not from without, and for a few years there was unrest and civil war. Abimelech, however, was a forceful character, and it looked as if his tyrannical yoke would be only the more securely fastened on Israel's shoulders, when suddenly deliverance came. Abimelech had taken Thebez, and in desperation its surviving inhabitants had taken refuge in a tower. Just as fire was about to be applied to their destruction Abimelech was smitten down. And how? A woman threw down from the tower a piece of a millstone. It struck his head, "and all to brake his skull" (chap. 9. 53).

Again a woman became the vessel of God's power, and a worthless frag-

ment of a once useful millstone became the instrument.

6. Once more Israel fell under foreign domination and Ammon became their oppressors. This trouble stirred up Israel to a measure of repentance and confession, and the putting away of strange gods. Finally they rose up to shake themselves free of the enemy, but a leader was lacking, and the question was as to where one was to be found.

Upon whom did God lay His hand for the leadership in this work of deliverance? Upon a most unexpected individual. Hitherto we have noticed how He was pleased to use weak and insignificant and even ridiculous things. Now we see Him selecting one whose very origin suggests not insignificance but *shame*.

"Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty man of valour, and *he was the son of an harlot*" (chap. 11. 1). Truly in these things God's ways are different from ours.

7. Last on the list of Judges came Samson. In physical frame he was by far the strongest of them all: in character he appears to have been the weakest of any.

His remarkable physical powers were clearly not his own, however. They lasted for just so long as he preserved his Nazariteship intact. Then the presence of danger nerved him and in moments of crisis "the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him." True to God's way, even then the instruments used to accomplish his mighty feats were of the simplest. On one occasion we read "he had *nothing* in his hand" (chap. 14. 6), and on yet another, when an instrument was used it was but "a new jawbone of an ass" and therewith he slew a thousand men (chap. 15. 15).

We should all agree that viewed as an instrument the jawbone of an ass, new or old, is about the limit of inefficiency, yet even so it is after all better than nothing at all!

How fully, then, do these incidents from the book of Judges illustrate that great Scripture in 1 Corinthians 1. where we are told that "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world, . . . the weak things, . . . the base things, . . . things which are despised, . . . yea, and things which are not . . ."—the nothings of the world. Not only has God chosen such to be His saints, but also in His work He chooses such as His servants.

The Corinthian saints, being carnal, thought far too much of man and of his qualifications and powers. Eloquence and wisdom mightily appealed to them. The Apostle Paul expressly disclaimed such things (1 Cor. 2. 1). To him they were only an encumbrance, as Saul's armour was to David. He laid them aside as definitely as he did the disreputable artifices which men sometimes employ to achieve their own ends, as we have seen in 2 Cor. 4. 2. The weapons of his warfare were not carnal at all (2 Cor. 10. 4), for he recognized that only the power of God suffices for the accomplishment of the work of God. But let us remember that God does not vary the fundamental principles of His procedure. His way of working is just the same to-day.

We have often heard much surprise expressed, and felt it ourselves, when God has manifestly wrought through what were to us most unlikely and unsuitable channels. We listened to a gifted servant of the Lord who preached the Gospel with much faithfulness and point, and with an intelligent grasp of its foundation principles that delighted us; yet no striking results followed. Another came with none of these qualifications; we could but regard him as sadly lacking in ability and in understanding, and yet very notable effects were produced. We need not have been astonished, however, for such a dealing on God's part was in strict keeping with what we have seen in the book of Judges.

The truth, we judge, is this: that since the power that really does God's

work is "of God and not of us," the thing of prime importance is that what is done should be manifestly by God's power and to God's glory. Ability and gift and intelligence on the part of the servant are desirable, and not to be despised, but if the servant possessing them be at all tempted to rely on them, or, what is even worse, parade them, God will pass him by and use some foolish or insignificant instrument to our astonishment.

God has frequently done this in the past and is frequently doing it to-day—sad evidence this of how rarely any of us do possess ability or gift or intelligence without our being tempted into relying upon it.

Let no one imagine that we are issuing a kind of plea against intelligence and understanding in the things of God. We are not. Were we doing so we should be advocating what is quite opposed to Scripture, since the apostle's prayer for saints was that they "might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding" (Col. 1. 9). Further, let no one say to themselves, "Well, then, I shall not aim at Scriptural knowledge. I shall go in for what aims at the conversion of souls, but I shall not attempt to travel beyond that." To deliberately stunt one's growth in spiritual understanding in that fashion is to ask for ultimate trouble and disaster.

We do, however, earnestly pray that we may all remember that the first qualification in a servant of Christ is that he thoroughly takes the servant's place of insignificance and nothingness: that while exercising what gift he may possess with all the intelligence he may have gained, he, in his own mind, divests himself of all the appearance of power and *éclat* which his gift may give him, so that as to his own state and consciousness he is like a lefthanded man, or an ox goad, or a tent nail, or trumpets, pitchers and lamps, or a piece of millstone, or the son of a harlot,

or the jawbone of an ass, or even nothing at all.

Thus pre-eminently was the Apostle Paul. Who had such mighty spiritual gifts as he? Who such intelligence in the whole counsel of God? Who such forcefulness of character? Yet as an earthen vessel he was buffeted and reduced to nothingness. Hence the accomplishment through him of such results as have never been equalled in the church's history. He and his companions were known as "These that have turned the world upside down" (Acts 17. 6). There was a

power about them that none could deny, and the excellency of that power was very manifestly OF GOD.

The apostolic age is long since passed, and we are in days very analogous, in many respects, to the time of the Judges, and this only accentuates what we have been saying. "My glory will I not give to another" (Isa. 42. 8) is ever God's word, and we may depend upon it that in these days, the days of the church's unfaithfulness and consequent confusion, God will accomplish His work in such a way as to manifest His glory and make nothing of man.

## BABYLON.

(G. F. EDINGTON.)

THE first recorded notice in the Bible, in regard to Babylon, or Babel, as it is sometimes called, is found in Genesis 10. and 11., where we learn that Nimrod, a "mighty hunter before the Lord," founded a kingdom in the land of Shinar, with Babel as one of its chief cities: and also, that an attempt was here made to build a tower: "which should reach up to Heaven"; but, which was frustrated by God, who confounded their language, and scattered the people abroad over the face of the earth.

It seems clear that it was man's pride and ambition that led him to set about the erection of a monument, which would give him distinction, and become a centre for the world-system, which was now rapidly developing. Ever since Satan whispered his lying insinuations in the ears of our first parents in the garden of Eden (Gen. 3. 4, 5) man has sought to exalt himself, by his own efforts, leaving God out of his reckoning. This is the "way of Cain," which ends in *death* (see Jude 11-13).

In the book of Jeremiah, a great deal is said about the wickedness of Babylon and the solemn judgments pronounced by Jehovah upon it. Its final over-

throw is foretold in chapters 50. and 51. We do well to bear in mind that God's principles of government—whether in regard to nations, cities, or individuals—are unvarying in their application; so that our wisdom is to take heed to the plain and pointed word in Gal. 6. 7, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

When we turn to the book of Daniel, God's earthly people, on account of their sin and rebellion, had been carried captive into Babylon. Amongst the number were Daniel, and his three companions, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. These four young men, on account of their intelligence, and superior attainments, were chosen for special advancement, by command of the king, Nebuchadnezzar. A certain prescribed diet, from the royal table, was appointed them: so that, at the end of a specified time, according to Eastern custom, they should be qualified to stand in the presence of the great Babylonish monarch. It might seem presumptuous on the part of an exile and a captive to set the king's command at defiance, and refuse to eat of the royal fare; but Daniel's path was plain. To a godly Israelite, who

feared the Lord, there was only one course open. Nebuchadnezzar was an idolator. To partake of the king's food which was offered in sacrifice to dumb idols, was a direct violation of Jehovah's holy law, and a recognition of the heathen god (see 2nd Kings 17. 35-39). It was simply a question of being *true* or *false* to Israel's God. So "Daniel purposed in his heart, that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank" (chap. 1. 8).

Young Christian, you, too, will be tested, for God *will* have *reality* in those who profess His name; but remember this: *God will always support the one who stedfastly sets his face in the direction of truth and righteousness.* This is abundantly illustrated in the history of Daniel and his three companions (see chapters 1., 2., 3. and 6.). Let this encourage you to lean upon the same Almighty arm, when *your* time of testing comes.

In the book of Revelation, the Holy Spirit, through the Apostle John, depicts the rise, progress, and final doom of a gigantic system of evil dominated by Satan, which spreads its branches over the whole earth. This great confederacy, which takes, largely, the outward form of Christianity, and is, therefore, most subtle and plausible

in its character, is traced by the apostle to its *true source*; and the people of God are warned to clear themselves from its deadening influence (see chap. 18. 1-5). "Babylon the great," is the symbolic name given to this vast confederation which is Satan's counterfeit of Christianity, his grand master-stroke to rob God of His glory, and His saints of the enjoyment of their blessings.

Its final doom is recorded in chapters 17. and 18., and that of its great originator in chapter 20. 10. Babylon signifies *confusion*, and "God is *not* the author of confusion but of PEACE" (1 Cor. 14. 33). How comforting for the true believer to know, that every element, which raises its head in opposition to God, will be swept out of the way to make room for the rightful Heir, and Lord of all, the Blessed Son of God, who will presently fill the universe with happy and intelligent worshippers. The decree has gone forth that *every* knee shall bow to Jesus, and *every* tongue confess that He is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Till He comes, let us find our joy and satisfaction, in bearing witness for Him in the hour and scene of His rejection, where we can have the comfort of His love and the enjoyed sense of His smile and approval, until we see Him face to face.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

DEAR MR. EDITOR,—Will you allow me to protest most emphatically and earnestly against a statement made by an esteemed contributor to your October issue? I refer to the last paragraph of the admirable and helpful article entitled, "The Church of God."

On page 238 this astonishing statement is made: "To-day we could hardly say of any local company of saints, 'ye are body of Christ,' for no local company includes all the saints in a given locality."

Why, I could take your contributor to scores of places, and could name hundreds,

where "the local company" includes all the saints in that locality. In some cases, as in Western Europe, there is, outside "the local company" the persecuting Church of Rome, and in some cases there *may be* saints among the persecutors. But they are not known as such, nor have they any assurance as to their acceptance with God.

But in Mohammedan and heathen lands there are hundreds, if not thousands, of places where not a single professing Christian is to be found outside "the local company."

Take, for instance, a certain small town in Japan, known by name to many of your readers. Wherein does the assembly of Christians there differ from the assemblies of apostolic times? Is it not *the Church of God* in that town? Outside of it there is nothing but heathenism, unless perhaps a solitary Jew may be there.

The statement of your correspondent displays an *insularity* of mind which is found in many Englishmen. They look out upon the church as they know it in the little island where they live, not as it exists throughout the earth to-day.

Yours, etc.,

H. P. BARKER.

We thank our correspondent for his kind criticism. We may point out that our contributor in the sentence which is questioned qualified his statement by the word **HARDLY**, showing that he recognized that there might be exceptions to the condition of things which he treats as the general rule. Still, even so, we feel inclined to plead guilty to frequently falling into that insularity of mind which he rightly deplores. We do need to have our thoughts carried outside what is local or peculiar to any given nation or land, when speaking of the Church of God and its present condition on earth. We are glad, therefore, to have his forceful reminder of this fact.—[ED.]

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Would you kindly open up a couple of Scriptures through your magazine? The first is John 17. 17. What is the sanctification spoken of there by our Lord? The other is the last two verses of Isaiah 53. What is referred to when our Lord is said to have "a portion with the great," and to "divide the spoil with the strong"?—J. G. DEVONSHIRE.

**THE** sanctification spoken of in John 17. 17 is clearly of a practical nature. We must, of course, begin by recognizing that there is a very important sense in which we may speak of every true believer as sanctified once for all, the idea of "sanctification" being "set apart for God."

This absolute sanctification with which we start is connected with the Spirit of God (see 1 Peter 1. 2), for we are set apart for God by the Spirit's work within us in new birth and by His subsequent indwelling. It is also connected with the death of Christ. Hebrews 10. 10 says that according to God's will "we *are* sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

Further, it is connected with Christ's present position in glory, for in Hebrews 2., after speaking of "Jesus . . . crowned with glory and honour," and showing how fitting it was that He, the Captain of our salvation, should be made "perfect through sufferings," it says in verse 11 that "both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one." We,

believers, are the sanctified ones, but He, the risen and glorified "Captain" or "Leader," is the Sanctifier. This accords with what we have in John 17. 19, "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." The Lord Jesus, as "the Captain of our salvation," has taken up His present place in glory, sanctified, or set apart to God, that we His followers might be set apart to God here by virtue of our relation to Him.

Now, from this flows the practical sanctification of which verse 17 speaks. Notice the setting of the verse. Verse 16 declares the wonderful fact that we are not of the world even as He was not of the world. In our origin and, consequently, in our character we are entirely separated from the world-system, just as the Lord Jesus Himself was wholly apart from it, and could say to the men of the world, religionists though they were, "Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world" (John 8. 23). Verse 18 shows that just as He was sent into the world by the Father, so we are by Him. We

are not of the world but separated *from* it to God, still we are sent into it as the representatives of the One who once was in it for the Father, and is now set apart on high in glory.

This being so we shall need great separateness of heart and affections to God if we are in any degree to rightly accomplish our mission. The world spreads its glittering attractions before us; the flesh is still in us; we shall need to come under the power of an overmastering attraction—some “light above the brightness of the sun” which will take the shine and glitter out of the world’s fairest deceits.

“Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth.” We believe that great emphasis has to be laid on that twice-repeated word, **THY**.

Much truth concerning God had been made known in Old Testament times, but it remained for the Lord Jesus to fully make Him known, to reveal Him as Father. Having thus revealed Him, and anticipating the cross as already accomplished, the Lord Jesus in this wonderful prayer addressed **THE FATHER** in the light of the revelation He had made.

The truth that sanctifies is, then, the *Father’s* truth. The word that enshrines that truth is the *Father’s* word. All Scripture as given by inspiration of God is the word of God, but for the Father’s word we turn, of course, to the New Testament Scriptures, which give us the light of all that was revealed in and through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Old Testament truth did not separate saints from the world-system as such, though it separated one nation from the other nations. The advent of Christ, however, revealed the fact that this separated nation was as much involved in the world-system as any, if not more so, for its leaders were “the princes of this world” (1 Cor. 2. 8). It is truth connected with the Father as revealed in the Son, with whom we are now brought into relationship on the ground of accomplished redemption, that will sanctify us in an experimental and practical

way. May we know the power of that truth more and more!

Now as to your question on Isaiah 53.: this turns not upon Christ’s present place of glory at the Father’s right hand, but on the place that He will publicly take in the approaching day of earthly glory. The passage really begins with verse 13 of chapter 52., and in the closing three verses of that chapter we have the prophet announcing the fact that Jehovah’s servant, whose “visage was so marred more than any man,” that He was a subject of astonishment, should Himself “sprinkle” or “astonish” many nations, and strike the kings of the earth dumb with surprise in the day when He shall be “exalted and extolled and be very high.”

Chapter 53. opens with the prophet’s question as to who had believed his report in the presence of every token that told of Messiah’s humiliation and rejection. The body of the chapter is occupied with a wonderful description of His sufferings, and then in verse 10 the prophet recalls us to the fact that, after all, the thing of infinite importance is what He suffered from the hand of Jehovah, and not from the hand of man. But just as “it pleased Jehovah to bruise Him,” so in the coming day of glory “the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in His hand.”

Then come verses 11 and 12 as the voice of Jehovah Himself confirming the prophetic announcement, and we discover that instead of His sufferings and reproach and dishonour being any impediment to His glory they are the very foundation and cause of His glory. It is just because He has “poured out His soul unto death” that He is to have “a portion with the great” and to “divide the spoil with the strong,” and says Jehovah, “*I will divide Him*” that portion.

These words refer us back to the opening verses of the passage at the end of chapter 52. Once He was “set at nought,” or made *little*, but Jehovah will place Him amongst the *great*. Once the strong *despoiled* Him, but Jehovah will place Him among the strong and roll into His lap the *spoils* of victory.



## FELLOWSHIP AND SERVICE.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

THOSE parts of the New Testament which describe these last days make it very clear that the spheres of fellowship and service are not the same. The Second Epistle to Timothy especially brings this out, and being written for those servants of the Lord who desire, at least, to be "faithful men" it is of exceptional value in guiding us as to these supremely important questions.

The first consideration with the faithful man will be how he stands in regard to the testimony of the Lord, and to God; to be not ashamed of the testimony of the Lord, and to be approved unto God will take precedence of all else. Then will come his fellowship with others, and this can only be with those "that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." To be fit for such fellowship he must have purged himself from vessels to dishonour. He must be absolute in his separation from those who are not faithful to the truth as to the Person and work of Christ, or who deny in any way our holy faith.

2 Timothy 2. encourages us to believe that those who do this will not lack company, they will find others who have purified themselves from unholy associations too, and with these they may walk. The bond that will bind such together will be a very positive one—the Lord Himself—they "call on the Lord out of a pure heart"; but is this possible apart from separation from evil? It is significant that immediately before speaking of the truth of His Assembly for the first time in Scripture (Matt. 16.) the Lord warns us against the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. These leavens are ecclesiastical and doctrinal pride and iniquity, and because they are leaven they must contaminate more or

less all who are in association with them. "Evil communications corrupt good manners," and the truth as to the person of Christ and as to His Assembly cannot be held with one hand while that which destroys the truth is gripped by the other. That which is pure does not purify what is corrupt, but is quickly corrupted. Hence, let "him that nameth the name of the Lord depart from iniquity." Let him purify himself from the vessels of dishonour by separating from them. But the bond that binds such a man in fellowship with others must be a positive one, mere separation from evil is no guarantee that our feet will be kept in the path of truth, our separation must be *unto the Lord*, or it will have small value in His eyes, and will only tend to pride, and spoil us for both the spheres of fellowship and service.

In addition to this separation to the Lord from evil there must be diligence and energy of purpose in pursuing "righteousness, faith, love and peace." These were the brightest traits of the church on earth in the freshness of its first love for Christ; they were then the general habit and practice of all; the very atmosphere too in which the disciples lived and rejoiced and prospered; but it is not so now. Worldly principles and aims have displaced these divine qualities in the house of God on earth, and if they are to be practised now they must be pursued; there must be diligence in reaching out after them and holding on to them, and this entails constant exercise of heart and conscience.

Thank God they are not beyond the reach of any or of all, but it is only in separation from evil and in the energy of faithfulness to the Lord that any can hold on to them. The early days of the church were as when all Israel

gathered themselves to David at Hebron and made him king. These last days are as when David fled before Absalom; then were brought to light the Cherethites and Pelethites and Gittites, and Ittai and his men and little ones. Their love to David was their bond; they were gladly willing to share *his rejection and to be with him in life and death*. They did not form a new fellowship, they were but true to that which was from the beginning; to the covenant made more than thirty years before at Hebron. So those that call on the Lord out of a pure heart form nothing new when they walk together, they only go back to that which was at the beginning, to find in the Lord in the darkest day that which He was to His church in the brightest. The Lord is the bond. This is the fellowship, and it demands that we are uncompromising with that which is really treachery to the Lord.

The sphere of service is much wider than this sphere of fellowship, and carries us into chapter 4. of our Epistle. How solemn is the charge with which that chapter opens. "I charge thee, therefore, before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and dead at His appearing and kingdom; preach the Word, be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." Not before his brethren must the faithful man serve the Lord, as though they could define when and where he might serve, for that would make him the servant of man and bring him under the yoke of bondage; nor yet before the standard of his own will must he serve as though he were his own judge, for that would lead to loose independency; but before God, *the source of his ministry*, and before *the Lord Jesus Christ who will scrutinize all that is done in His Name* according to His own perfect standard when it is finished. Upon what a high plane does this charge lift all true service! In what searching light does it set it! Who with a sense of the gravity

of it could serve with levity? Or compromise the truth that he is called to preach? Or pander to the notions of men for popularity? Or hide the truth for fear of men? Or even limit the sphere of his service to meet the prejudices of his brethren? The service of the Lord is sacred; it is directly from God, and everyone who takes it up is held by the Lord as responsible to Him above, and will be called to account by Him in regard to it. The thought, by its very solemnity, brings the exercised servant to his knees. He bows before the God who knows all, and before the Lord who will test all; and men and time sink into their own insignificance, or become simply the objects and opportunities for the carrying out of his great trust that lies outside and beyond their control or criticism.

Our fellowship must be marked by *purity*, but our service is to be exercised where *need* is. "*Do the work of an evangelist*" brings out this latter. No matter how completely those who profess Christianity abandon or oppose the truth; no matter how godless and indifferent to the claims of God the multitudes become; the faithful man will still proclaim the fact that God is a Saviour God, that the precious blood of Jesus is the great proof of His love and justice, and the ground upon which He can justify and bless even the worst of men. Those Christians who slight the Gospel, or say that it is not their interest, or settle themselves down into select and selected circles to study the Word, to justify the position they have assumed, only prove how faithless to their great trust they have become, or how their faith has succumbed to the general pressure. The servant of the Lord must seek the unconverted; if the love of God fills his heart he will. He will meet with disappointments, with rebuffs, and opposition and persecution; prayers and tears and exercise of heart will be his portion, but having received his trust from the Lord he will be sustained

by grace from Him, and will not flag ; for sin and sorrow and death and hell-fire are the same as ever they were ; and the world does not satisfy the souls of men, and their hearts are empty and often broken ; and Christ died for them, and God yearns for them, and life is offered them, and heaven is open for them, and "there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth," and the very nature of God is glorified in the salvation of every one of them.

There are those who are specially entrusted with the work of the evangelist, let them exercise their gift whenever and wherever the opportunity presents itself, in season and out of season ; but they and all others who serve the Lord as faithful men must address themselves also to those who profess the name of the Lord. They must "*preach the Word*" ; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine. This surely means that they must carry the Word into the very circles where it is opposed. They will not be called upon to reprove and rebuke those who are calling on the Lord out of a pure heart, but they must do this where those are who "will not endure sound doctrine," and where "they turn their ears away from the truth." But how shall the servant of the Lord preach the Word to such ? They certainly will not come to him to hear it, nor must he expect them to, he is not told to stand and wait for them ; he is SENT, for "how shall they preach except they be sent ?" He must go to them if he is to fulfil his God-given trust. Could anything be clearer than this ? If we dismiss all our prejudices and face the Word as it is, is it not clear that the servant of the Lord, subject to the guidance of the Lord, must seize every occasion, and enter every open door, in making full proof of his ministry ?

But what wisdom, what courage will be needed for this ! How easy it is for "fools to rush in where angels fear to tread," and having rushed in to pro-

claim their own folly instead of the truth of God. How easy, if not sustained of the Lord, to break down in courage, and water the truth to the surroundings, or to be drawn into fellowship with what is hateful to God. But if, according to Jude, while we build ourselves upon our most holy faith, with those who are like minded, we are also to snatch others out of the fire, having compassion upon them ; we must go where they are, as the angels went to Sodom to drag Lot out of that doomed city, but the pernicious, soul-destroying doctrines and worldly lusts in which Christendom is wallowing along with the world, and out of which we have to drag souls, will be just as obnoxious to us as the filth of Sodom was to those angels from heaven.

The disobedient prophet (1 Kings 13.) is an example and a warning to us. He was sent to proclaim the Word of the Lord beside a flaming altar of idolatry in Bethel, and so far he was faithful ; but when he was drawn into fellowship in that place, even though it was with one who claimed to be a prophet even as he was, his service came to an abrupt end under the judgment of God.

I am not urging the liberty of the servants of the Lord, that is far too low ground for the "faithful man" to take, and it savours too much of the democratic spirit of the day, and may degenerate into every man doing that which is right in his own eyes, but I urge **THE RIGHTS OF THE LORD OVER HIS SERVANTS**. His rights are sovereign ; they are absolute. His servants are bondmen, their only liberty is to be free from every other yoke of bondage to be entirely at His disposal. No man that warreth can obey two captains. He must be free to please only the one who has enlisted him as a soldier. The Lord is outside Laodicea, hence His servants in loyalty to Him will be outside it too ; they will find no fellowship in that which excludes Him, but He may use them

to knock on His behalf at the closed door, and may send them to say with what longsuffering mercy He waits to restore those who have an ear to hear.

His household is scattered in many strange circles in Christendom, and His faithful and wise servants will be ready in subjection to Him to carry a portion of meat to any to whom He may send them. Ecclesiastical position is not everything, the souls of the Lord's people must be fed. I fear that this side of the question has not sufficiently engaged our attention; we have talked sometimes of the obligations of the Lord's servants to the fellowship: whatever obligations they may have as members of Christ's body, they have no obligations as His servants to anyone but Himself; let them discharge these faithfully and then they will surely be contending lawfully.

There are religious circles where the

truth is not known, but where it would not be opposed; where even it might be readily welcomed; there are others with a measure of truth, who would be glad to know more. Wherever there is a readiness to listen, "an ear to hear," there is surely a work of God's Spirit, and the faithful man will recognize it and rejoice in it. He will go on with what is of God wherever he sees it as far as it goes, and be ready to advance it, for how could he expect to be favoured himself by the Spirit of God in his labours if he refused to recognize what He has already done.

The time is short, and the servants of the Lord who trade for Him must put out that which they have received from Him at the best rate of interest, ever subject to His gracious will who in infinite grace has called them to His service.

## "AT THAT TIME."

(H. NUNNERLEY.)

"AT THAT TIME." These words are another illustration of the unfailing resource God ever had in Christ. They commence Deut. 10. In the previous chapter we have a proof that man at his best can never answer to the claims of God. Moses by the command of God was in the mount to receive the tables of the law written by the finger of God. The people who had just pledged themselves to keep that law break into open rebellion against God. Moses is hurried away to pronounce judgment on them. As he reached them the two tables were broken before their eyes and all was over with them on the ground of their obedience to law. Moses interceded with God on their behalf. In reply he is instructed to make an ark of wood and come into the mount with two other tables of stone. After forty

days he again comes forth, but this time NOT TO GIVE THE TABLES TO THE PEOPLE BUT TO PUT THEM IN THE ARK.

How this speaks to us of Christ. He is here set before us in the ark. The only One whom God could entrust with His will; the alone One who could perfectly and completely answer to all the claims of God. Nay, more, He not only came to do God's will, but the way in which He did it delighted the Father's heart. He was the true meat offering, the incense of which ever ascended from Him, who always afforded pleasure to the Father, drawing out the delight of the heart of God in every word and deed. Once and again heaven opened to declare that there was One here who has fulfilled its good pleasure; no other

man could say, "I do always those things that please Him," "I have glorified Thee on the earth."

It is this blessed One who is thus set before us in the ark. How good it is then to learn that if man has utterly failed there is One who never has failed and never can fail, and what grace on the part of our God to take us into the secret of His delight in that blessed One. So we read in verse 8 that "at that time" God separated a company for Himself. The tribe of Levi took the place of the firstborn in Israel. They became His "firstborn ones." We know how they failed to enter into the thoughts of God, and at the death of Christ they were set aside and a new company formed to take their place. The church is said in Hebrews 12. to be the company of the "firstborn ones." Just as God took the tribe of Levi instead of Israel, so He has now taken believers to be His "firstborn ones."

Now what was their occupation to be? We read that three things were to mark them. In the first place they were to "carry the ark." That ark as we know sets forth Christ, so that wherever they journeyed the ark journeyed with them, or rather the ark indicated where they were to go. How this would settle a thousand questions for us, as to what we shall do or where we shall go. Their everyday occupation was to carry that which typified Christ through this world; so with us, in each step of our journey it is our privileged place to carry the true Ark through this world.

Next they were to stand before the Lord to "minister to Him." God delights to have His people near to Him; delights in the adoring worship of their hearts as they speak well of that beloved Man of His good pleasure. We thus learn that there is a ministry Godward. We are to know what it is to stand before the Lord; to be in His very presence; to enter into the divine delight of the Father in the Son;

to realize the precious consciousness of all that Christ is to God, and to utter His praises and celebrate His worth in the very holiest.

In the third place they were to bless IN His Name. May we not gather the meaning of this from the close of Numbers 6. ? They were to announce to His people Israel the delight of God to bless, the shining of His face, the grace of His heart, the peace He delights to impart, with other blessed attributes which are set forth in His name.

THEN, one highly favoured nation is alone mentioned as the recipient of this blessing, NOW, as the name of Jotbath in verse 7 suggests, rivers of blessing can flow unhinderedly. May we not gather from the suggestive name of Jotbath (streams or places of rivers of water) that those who are called "firstborn ones" are those through whom divine love flows forth for this weary world. The firstborn one of to-day has to enter into the largeness of the grace of the blessed God, and as he drinks from the fountain, out of his belly streams flow for the refreshment and blessing of others. He is to show forth the virtues of Him who has called him out of darkness into His marvellous light; to make known the unsearchable riches of Christ; to proclaim among men the name of the Father and the Son; to declare that all blessing for man is bound up with the name of Jesus, Christ and Lord.

In the last place, they had no resources here, no inheritance. The Lord was their inheritance, all their portion was to be found in Him. Apart from what they found in Him they were poor indeed. So to-day, "having nothing, yet possessing all things," marks the true Levite. All our blessings are found in the Lord, God becomes our everlasting portion, and the more simply and truly we enter into this the more we shall seek to minister to Him and bless in His Name.

# "HIGH TIME TO AWAKE OUT OF SLEEP."

(F. B. HOLF.)

ANOTHER year of the church's pilgrimage is fast running to its close, and we have a desire to sound out, before it ends, a word of warning and an awakening cry to all our fellow-believers within reach. A very stealthy and unsuspected foe is amongst us. Its presence is not signalized by grave sins or scandals. It gains the ascendancy and holds sway even when the outward religious life of the Christian is conducted with regularity and smooth propriety. Its name is SLEEP.

*Sleep* is evidently a foe marked by peculiar pertinacity during the present dispensation, and this for the simple reason that *watchfulness* was intended to characterize it. We are living in the moment in which the kingdom of heaven was likened by the Lord Jesus to "ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom," and of these He said,

*"While the bridegroom tarried they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps"* (Matt. 25. 5-7)

Our Lord's parabolic prophecy was duly fulfilled. Rejected and condemned to death by His own people, and handed over by them to the Gentiles by whom He was crucified, He took up His place in risen glory, outside every existing institution on earth, and consequently those who believed in His name and became His followers went forth also outside all existing human institutions, sharing His rejection and awaiting His return. This was the church's proper and primitive position. They "went forth to meet the Bridegroom."

Again the prophecy was fulfilled.

The Bridegroom tarried and consequently sleep supervened. Both wise and foolish, "they all slumbered and slept." Drowsiness overcame the people of God. First love waned, as we find in Rev. 2. 4, and consequently the soporific influences of the world prevailed against them and they lapsed into that condition of insensibility and lethargy which is sleep of a spiritual sort. As the result of the insensible condition of the people of God, every kind of corruption invaded the church, and all the abominations of the Romish system appeared.

We may pursue the parable one step further and point out that the "midnight cry" has gone forth. The coming of the Bridegroom has again become an expectation and a hope and consequently once more its separating power has been known. Saints reverted once more to the original position that they had left but which should have marked them all along. The cry was, "Go ye out to meet Him," and they obeyed and consequently found themselves where they had been when first they "went forth to meet the Bridegroom."

And now, especially in these highly-favoured English-speaking lands, there are serious symptoms which would lead us to fear that sleep is again supervening with many. The world is tolerant, outward persecution is lacking, circumstances are comfortable compared with most lands; how easy, then, whilst doing nothing that can be objected to by one's fellow-Christians, to become insensible to the urgent needs of the hour and lethargic as to the Lord's interests; to be kindly and amiable and orthodox, and as to the things of God regular enough and quite willing to help, if such help does not involve the setting aside of one's

own interests, and yet to be *asleep* in the Scriptural sense of the word.

We need to awake from dull lethargy and to shake off the drowsy influences of the earth and the world. The coming of the Lord draws nigh, and shall we, who are His and consequently identified with His interests and testimony, be frittering away the present opportunity of being wholeheartedly for Him by immersion in the pursuits and the pleasures of the age?—even if "harmless" judged by ordinary standards. Listen to the words of the apostle:—

*"And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep : for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand : let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly as in the day . . ."* (Rom. 13. 11-13).

Here the exhortation to awake is based upon the fact that the day is approaching which will mean our full and final deliverance from the present age. We are still in the night but we belong to that day and are to walk "honestly" or "becomingly" *as in that day*—not taking the ways and customs of the night-age as our standard, but walking according to the ways and principles of the day-age, before the day comes.

The day, carrying with it our salvation, is at hand! Do we really believe it? Is it plain to us that the night is rapidly approaching its darkest hour of apostasy and the consequent outpouring—once the church is gone—of the long pent-up wrath of God?

The signs of the last days are fully manifested. We have no wish to occupy our readers with the doings of the present evil age, but, on the other hand, it is well sometimes to take a good look at conditions as they are. Many of our readers have learned the blessedness of the true Christian path

of separation from the world-system, and perhaps for that very reason they hardly realize how fully the world is approximating in its ways to the days of Noah and of Lot, only on a much greater scale. The days of Noah ended in a deluge of water; the days of Lot in a deluge of fire; the present age will soon end in a deluge, not providential nor provisional, but of the direct judgment of God.

We have just received from the United States of America a small leaflet giving a review of conditions as they struck one of the Lord's watchmen in that great country early in 1921. We give below a substantial extract from it. The writer is dealing with signs of the times.

"COMMERCIAL SIGNS. Daniel 12. 4. God told Daniel to close up the book until 'The time of the end. Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.' When? *In the time of the end.*

"One hundred years ago there was not a railroad in this land. If a man wished to come from London, he must spend a month or more on the voyage, take a stage coach after landing, as far perhaps as the Ohio river, and then have an unexplored route before him if he wished to journey further. To-day he crosses on an ocean greyhound in six days, takes a palatial palace car, and speeds away to the Pacific coast. If this is not fast enough he can take an airship. Men are running to and fro. Railroads cross and recross this land; they run from Chili to Alaska, and penetrate the heart of Africa and China. The Inter Transit Company in New York sold in one year 1,700,000,000 tickets—one city alone. And besides this there is the automobile traffic. One state boasts enough machines to carry all its inhabitants at once.

"'Knowledge shall be increased.' An event takes place in the middle of the Atlantic at night, and the metropolitan papers print the news the next morning. The daily paper circulates everywhere. We have schoolhouses on every hill, high schools and colleges in abundance, and universities in every state, disseminating

knowledge ; and too often a knowledge which denies the very God that bought them and rejects His Word which has been given to enlighten the world. Yes, Daniel was right. Knowledge has increased until men have placed it on a pedestal, worship it, and call it a god.

“SOCIAL SIGNS, James 5. 1-8. James speaks of treasures heaped together. For what time ? ‘*The last days.*’ He then offers comfort to the oppressed, but the hope is not in legislation ; it is not in labour unions ; it is not in the triumph of justice through the ministry of a church which is in apostasy. It is in the Blessed Hope of our Lord’s return. ‘Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord.’

“It is said that ninety-nine per cent of this nation’s wealth is controlled by one per cent of its population. Ten thousand millionaires have made their appearance in the last four years. By their combines and monopolies they have heaped treasures together, and at the cost of much suffering. Senator Curtis says that the sugar combine cost the nation billions of dollars in just a few months. If Adam had lived to this day, 6,000 years, and accumulated \$100,000 a year he would not be as rich as some ‘Self-made’ men to-day. Can they acquire such wealth honestly ? Let God answer in the last day.

“One woman invited a number of poodle dogs to join her dog in a \$30,000 banquet ; another spent \$25,000 for a string of pearls for her cat ; yet thousands of little children went to bed hungry near by. They have lived wantonly, they have nourished their hearts as in the day of slaughter. The great gulf between capital and labour is ever widening, and none but the Son of God can solve the problem.

“MORAL SIGNS, 2 Tim. 3. 1-5. These verses also speak of that time we are considering. ‘This know also, that *in the last days* perilous times shall come.’ Men are here shown to be lovers of pleasure, lovers of their own selves ; but not lovers of God. All the wickedness of the age is held within these few verses. Paul, if living now, could not better describe the present time.

“The year 1920, just ended, is said to have been the worst on record for

crime,—not only in scope and numbers, but in blackness, magnitude and daring. The ancient Blue Beard is no longer fiction but a fearful reality. For the first time the Federal prison at Atlanta is unable to care for all the prisoners sentenced there. Reformers said prohibition would do away with crime. It may have relieved the suffering on the part of many who were innocent, but crime marches on. A sober criminal can function better than a drunken one, and they now have more time to spend at their trade.

“Others said that education was the key to the solution of crime ; but, alas ! we have found the educated criminal is the worst type. It takes more than education to change the heart ; but it enabled them to commit crimes that the uneducated could not have done. For instance, the bombs used by anarchists are products of the highest mechanical and chemical skill.

“Divorce is likewise on the increase. In some places the ratio is about one divorce to three marriages. What will be the result with this ulcer eating away at the home and social life of our people ? The time seems to have come, spoken of by Sam Jones, when marriage licences will be issued with divorce coupons attached ; and the shame that once followed the divorced is no longer present.

“After an automobile accident at two o’clock in the morning two girls were taken to a hospital. By ten o’clock over seventy mothers had called to see if they were their daughters ! Yes, there is disobedience to parents, and many a parent’s heart aches at the thought of their children having to face the fearful temptations that confront them. The moving picture business is like a mighty vampire spreading its black wings of death over the land and sucking away at the very life blood. The crowded dance halls are also sending a steady stream down the broad path of degradation into the dark night where the star of hope will never again pierce their sky.

“RELIGIOUS SIGNS, 1 Tim. 4. 1, 2, ; 2 Tim. 4. 3, 4. Here perhaps lies the greatest peril of all. If the church of Christ stood steadfast, holding its proper place as a separated people, living in the



world, yet not of the world, this warning message might not be needed. But the church has lost its bearings and is fast drifting towards the rocks. Critical times are upon us because of false doctrines, and because after their own lusts men are heaping to themselves teachers, having itching ears. Reformation is taught now instead of regeneration; *social life instead of spiritual life*. Instead of thundering out God's warnings against evil, the ministry is compromising with it. The Methodist Centenary Commission boasted that 5000 moving picture machines were sold at the Columbus exhibition. 5000 churches turned into houses of amusement instead of places of prayer and praise!

"Practically every fundamental doctrine is being denied in the pulpits to-day. A prominent preacher in Cleveland said that since the Holy Land was open to research, no doubt the very body of our Lord and Saviour would be discovered, embalmed in the lost tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. Did that poor blinded preacher never read the fifteenth of First Corinthians?

"Dr. Charles Foster Kent and his associates have given the world 'The Shorter Bible,' with the 'Non-essentials' eliminated; and the sad part is that the so-called 'Non-essentials' are the things so dear to the heart of every true child of God—The Atonement by Blood, Resurrection, Regeneration, the Blessed Hope, etc. When Jehoakim of old attempted to make a Shorter Bible by the use of his penknife, God did not say, 'Well done, it needed revision.' No, He told him he should be 'Buried with the burial of an ass.' God says that he that taketh away from the words of His Holy Book, shall have his part taken away out of the book of life. Of all the treachery since Judas kissed our Saviour, I know of none so base as the so-called attempt to eliminate the 'Non-essentials' from the Bible.

"Everywhere there is the cry of a shortage in students for the ministry, and church councils have decided that the cause is insufficient support. Friends, the cause is more serious than this. It is because, under the withering power of rationalism, many who go to the Seminaries lose the conviction that they must preach the Gospel. They leave

without a Christ to preach. No wonder they quit. They are more honourable in doing so than those who continue to hold pulpits and deny the very Lord that bought them. I wish a thousand more would quit, but do not slander them and say it is because the support is insufficient. Men that are called of God are still willing to bear the reproach and suffer *physical need if need be*. Our Seminaries are in truth 'Cemeteries,' where hopes die and many make shipwreck of faith."

Are conditions in Great Britain very different? We think not. Here there is rather more restraint and reserve, and tendency to reverence ancient religious landmarks. There all novelties are more eagerly welcomed, people are less restrained, and the general pace of things is hotter; but substantially things are much the same.

The present condition of affairs in both world and church, apart from any other consideration, constitutes a loud call to every true saint to awake. Supposing these things were no sign of the end of the age being upon us; supposing we knew for a certainty that another thousand years must elapse before the coming of the Lord, they ought still to warn us of a great crisis, and stir us to our depths with desire to be faithful witnesses and servants of our absent Lord in the emergency. How much more should they awake us and stir us to this, seeing that they are very clear signs of the end of the age, and consequently of the fact that the Lord may be in the air with the assembling shout for His saints at any moment?—and thus the day of grace and of the church's testimony may end. It is indeed high time that we should awake out of sleep.

The present conflict is intensely real, and we long to be fully in it ourselves through the power of the Spirit of God, and also to see every true saint, however small and feeble their measure, thoroughly alive to it, and wholeheartedly identified with the interests of their Lord. Zeal in the things of God we do most badly need; we need intelligence as well.

We shall not serve our Lord's cause, no matter how fervid our zeal, if we ignore His word and attempt a service which He has not prescribed. It is not our work to attempt to put the world right. We are not sent to convert the world and much less to Christianize it. No mistaken notion has had more disastrous results than this. It has led directly to the adopting of social service as the great objective and has opened the door to the whole flood of modernist heresy which has swept over the professing church.

To clean up the world, whether socially or nationally, is not our business; it will be effectually accomplished by the Lord Himself at His return in glory. He cleaned up the world *temporarily* in the days of Noah by water, and *partially* in the days of Lot by fire. He will do it *altogether* and *for ever* in the coming day of His wrath and judgment. Our business is not to attempt before the time what belongs to the coming dispensation, but to be true to the Lord's present commission, and to all that has been revealed and accomplished by his first advent, and which has consequently become the subject of testimony. That which was set forth in Christ here is, according to God's purpose, to be continued in the church—in his servants—during the time of His absence.

Two great things marked our Lord's exit from this world. First, as recorded in John's Gospel, *He bore unfaltering witness to the truth. Before Pontius Pilate He "witnessed a good confession."*

*"Pilate therefore said unto Him, Art Thou a king, then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice" (18. 37).*

Secondly, as recorded in Luke's Gospel He spent His latest breath not

in protesting against the world's unrighteousness, or in formulating an ideal scheme of righteous principles, but in *saving one soul out of the world for heaven.*

*"And he [the other malefactor] said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise" (23. 42, 43).*

Behold, then, in the great Master Himself that which should mark all His servants to-day! If you would be in the current of His will, and follow in His steps, make these two things your objective. Earnestly covet this from the hand of God, that you may be set as a witness to His truth—to the whole of it and not a part merely—and that you may be of use in the completion of His present purpose of gathering out of the nations "a people for His name" (Acts 15. 14). If these two are laid down firmly as the rails on which you travel, then you may safely generate every possible ounce of zeal. Off these lines your zeal may be largely destructive, like an engine under full steam which jumps the metals.

Brethren in Christ—you who are young, especially—it is indeed high time to awake out of sleep! The night grows darker, but our salvation out of it, and the subsequent dawning of the day, is now very near. Shall we ever forgive ourselves if we spend these last hours in easy-going slumber and self-pleasing? Certain it is that if we miss the present opportunity we shall suffer irreparable loss in the day of the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Rather let us bestir ourselves from our natural lethargy and wholeheartedly identify ourselves with the whole truth of God as revealed in the New Testament, and the service of God according to that truth, to-day.

# "WHAT HAS THE CHURCH OF CHRIST TO SAY?"

(W. BRANWELL DICK.)

THE religious world has been stirred by the appearance in a weekly paper, under the above challenging title, of a Manifesto by one who is supposed to stand in the front rank among English Nonconformist ministers.

The article is practically a call to every so-called church in Christendom, and to all the denominations in the country, to close up their ranks, to unite in forming one great confederacy, and to work for the introduction of a warless world. Protestants, Roman Catholics, and those belonging to the Greek Church are called upon to sink their differences and to unite for this one great end. If need be, the aid of the Pope is to be invoked.

This was followed by a shoal of letters from men of all creeds, and varied positions, and they almost unanimously endorsed the Manifesto. As we write we learn that the Archbishop of Canterbury has summoned a meeting of representative men to consider what should be done.

All this brings us right up against the fact that the end is near, and that "the coming of the Lord draweth nigh" (James 5. 8).

The League of Nations was an indication of how the nations of the world would combine politically; and, though at present it seems to be struggling for existence, it serves to show how things are going. The one who is "the prince of this world," and who is thus directing its political affairs, is also "the god of this world," and he is directing its religious affairs.

The great landslide at the World's Missionary Conference held in Edinburgh a few years ago gave an idea of how things were going; this Manifesto seems to show that what then appeared

to be merely in embryo is now well nigh full blown. Observe the subtlety of the enemy! He uses not avowed opponents of religion. He invaded the Conference just referred to, and where it should have been least expected the idea that toleration was to be extended towards all the different false religions was set forth and received. His latest attempt comes through one whose name has been respected wherever it was known, and from whom much was expected on behalf of the cause of Christ.

All this shows how rapidly we are approaching the time when the Beast and the False Prophet shall appear, and when there shall be a confederacy of nations and also of religions "against Jehovah and against His Anointed." If this be so, then the coming of the Lord for His own must be very, very near. Fellow Christians! Let us have our loins girt and our lamps burning, and let us be on the look-out for His return.

The Manifesto asks for the impossible. It necessarily leaves God out; for if that at which it aims were realized, the Word of God would be proved to be untrue. War *will* continue; and in comparison with the battle of Armageddon which has yet to take place, the last dreadful war will seem as nothing. For all this, God is not responsible. This world deliberately and in cold blood rejected Christ. It rejects Him still. There is no place for Him in the aforesaid Manifesto. "He IS despised and rejected of men" (Isa. 53. 3). Politicians and preachers may sigh for the millennium; they may devise their schemes, but all are doomed to fail. They are *working* for a millennium without Christ; and that they cannot and shall not have. Christ *will* come, not because the

world wants Him to come, nor because it will invite Him to come, but because His Word plainly declares that "Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (Heb. 10. 37).

The second Psalm supplies the divine explanation of, and answer to, the machinations of men, whether politicians or ecclesiastics. They are amalgamating "against Jehovah and against His Anointed" (verse 2). They are uniting to resist all restraint (verse 3). "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh" (verse 4). Already we can see the principle of verse 5 being worked out. Before the public had had time to digest the aforesaid Manifesto, and while the League of Nations was actually in session at Geneva, the British Empire was brought to the very brink of war, and rulers and religionists seemed alike impotent. Verse 6 sets before us the One who will put all things right; and verse 9 tells us how He will do it.

If God appears to be inactive to-day, it is because He is allowing men to get to the end of their tether in their mad hatred of and opposition to His Christ. It is, on the other hand, because in Christ He has the One to whom He has committed all things; who will carry all His counsels to perfect fruition, and in Him He rests. The question, "What has the church of Christ to say?" may be answered in one word—NOTHING.

The church of Christ is composed only of those who are "born again," cleansed from their sins in "the precious blood of Christ," and indwelt by the Holy Spirit. No matter where they are found, or of what nationality or colour, these and these alone form the church of Christ. It acknowledges no head but Christ, no authority but that of the Holy Spirit of God, and no standard other than the sacred Word of God.

The church belongs to heaven. It

was chosen in heaven; it draws all its supplies from heaven, and it is going to heaven. Meanwhile it is left in this world to occupy Christ's place here. His place here was that of rejection; that is the church's place now. His work here was to do good; that is the church's privilege now. His grace led Him to pray for His enemies. The church, viewed as the house of God, may do the same; and those who are part of it are exhorted to pray "for all men, for kings, and for all that are in authority." They do not issue manifestoes; they do not stand for Parliament; they do not go to the polling booth; they do not invoke the aid of men of all creeds and kinds; they pray—not that war may cease; not that great conferences may be formed; not that pious resolutions may be made; not that the world may become a better place; but that God would so order things that His people might "live a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty" (1 Tim. 2. 1, 2). The world owes more than it imagines to the prayers of those who seek to be true to their heavenly calling, and to exercise their holy function as seen in this portion of Scripture.

We make no apology for calling the attention of our readers to this matter. "We are not ignorant of Satan's devices" (2 Cor. 2. 11), and in this latest subtle move his hand can be traced. The fact is, men at the head of affairs are getting desperate. Their "hearts are failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth" (Luke 21. 26). Those who are supposed to know the Scriptures are ignorant of them, and therefore resort to their own devices. The year 1922 threatens to close under a cloud. Trouble at home, trouble abroad, the unrest of the human heart reflected in every department of life, and yet the world will not have Christ at any cost.

If for the world the year seems likely to close under a cloud, for "us which are saved" there is the prospect

of the speedy rising of "the Bright and Morning Star."

"Our hearts beat high, the dawn is nigh  
That ends our pilgrim story,  
In Thine eternal glory."

It may be that ere the clock has struck ushering the old year out and the new year in, we shall have heard the summoning shout of our adorable Lord, and shall be with Him, and that for ever. Then after a welter of bloodshed in this world, as men with all restraint gone (see 2 Thess. 2. 7) and with unbridled passions let loose, shall pursue their mad career, He shall come whose right it is to reign. Just as He stilled the tempest on the sea of Galilee, so shall He then

"Bid the whole creation smile,  
And hush its groan."

"He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For HE must reign till HE hath put all enemies

under HIS feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." Then the glorious end, the dawn of a cloudless, sinless, deathless eternity; "HE shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; . . . that God [Father, Son, and Holy Spirit] may be all in all" (1 Cor. xv. 24-28).

Therefore our hearts are kept in perfect tranquillity. If He sees fit to leave us here for a little longer, we shall pray for the world—at any rate for all who are in it; we shall carry the Gospel to the world; we shall seek, as He may enable us, to do good in the world; we shall ask for grace to walk in separation from the world; and as day by day "we look for the Saviour," our happy expectant hearts shall ever say to Him—

"COME, LORD JESUS!"  
Till then, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with all the saints. Amen"  
(Rev. 22. 20, 21).

## "THE SONS OF THE PROPHETS."

(A. J. POLLOCK.)

"And the sons of the prophets said unto Elisha, Behold now, the place where we dwell WITH THEE is too strait FOR US" (2 Kings 6. 1).

THE sons of the prophets stand as a type of a large class to-day, who demand our special sympathy and attention.

The contrast lies between the prophets and the sons of the prophets. The prophets were men of God, men of strong convictions, men who took a firm stand in their day. Look at Elijah standing against Ahab, Jezebel and the prophets of Baal. Look at Jeremiah and the continual risks he ran even of his life in giving God's messages to the people. Look at Daniel in the den of lions.

The sons of the prophets were their fathers' sons, but without their fathers' soul-history, and spiritual stamina. This can be said without attributing

fault to them. They were born in a certain circle, and found themselves without effort in circumstances outwardly very much where their fathers stood. But they had not, and could not have, in the nature of things, the experimental knowledge of God that their fathers had, and so they had to learn what they did learn, be it much or little, for themselves.

In the same way, the wonderful movements of God's Spirit during last century resulted in deep exercise as to the truth on the part of many of God's people, and the deep exercise eventuated in decisions for the Lord, and many stepped out of systems and human organizations to put into practice the truth God had taught them.

Their children, brought up in the atmosphere of the truth, not called upon to fight for their spiritual freedom, but having things pretty well ready-made to their hand, find themselves outwardly in the position that their parents reached at considerable cost to themselves. They are in no wise to blame because they have not got the spiritual fibre of their parents in many cases, and it is not to be expected. Soul-history is not jumped into in a day.

But their very position, often beyond their apprehension of that position and the truth that governs it, exposes them to certain dangers, and it is possible that the consideration of the incident in 2 Kings 6. may be a help to some.

Evidently the sons of the prophets were youths who were placed under Elisha's charge for their training. One day they came up to him, and said, "Behold now the place where we dwell **WITH THEE** is too strait **FOR US**." What a stab to the heart for the old man! Their remark certainly did not lack directness. They did not attempt to sugar-coat the bitter pill. They were dissatisfied with the room he could give them, and they thought they could do better for themselves.

Is this not like the tendency on the part of many of the dear young Christians to-day? They find the old-fashioned ways too narrow, and they want to broaden out and make things really move. We do not blame them for it, but we plead that they should listen attentively to what the aged and experienced Christian says. The young cannot do without the old—the old cannot do without the young. The young have energy—the old have experience. We want both.

Peter exhorted the elders in his day, not altogether as an apostle, but as "also an elder" (1 Pet. 5. 1). He also says, "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another

and be clothed with humility" (1 Pet. 5. 5). This is the spirit we all—young and old—need. Remember how even the Apostle Paul had to lament, "All they which are in Asia be turned away from me" (2 Tim. 1. 15).

Now it is true that if we are on earthly and carnal lines the truth will prove too strait for us. There is a place the Lord has formed for us as revealed in His word. There is the house of God upon this earth, the assembly, the pillar and ground of the truth. There nothing is made of man. The flesh is refused and everything is of the Spirit.

Let us follow our narrative. The young men asked Elisha that they might go to Jordan, take thence every man a beam and make a place "where **WE** may dwell." It looked like shaking loose from the old man altogether.

The prophet replied, "Go ye." He would not stand in their way. Wise old man, he saw clearly that they must learn their own lessons and not walk in the strength of tradition or anything of a secondhand nature.

But one of their number could not bear the thought of losing Elisha. They were prepared to turn their back upon Elisha's house, but not upon him. In grace and love he answered simply, "I will go."

But what a difference! The young men had been with Elisha; now Elisha is with them. How often have we experienced that even going our own way in our ignorance the Lord has been with us, not as approving our course, but as caring for us. If we had been *with the Lord* how different it would have been. With Him in His ordering of things, instead of Him with us in our path of ignorance. "Safety is of the Lord" (Prov. 21. 31).

We can and do believe that some of our young brethren, who find things too strait for them, have an earnest desire to serve the Lord. They would

not knowingly embark on a career of self-will. Ignorance is at the root of much difficulty.

Arrived at the Jordan the young men set to work. Sadly must the prophet have looked on, yet there was a link of affection between the young men and himself—they wanted his company, *he* bore with them in tender love.

As one was felling a beam, off flew the axe head, which fell into the river and quickly sank out of sight and reach. Deprived of his tool the truth came out. "Alas, master! for it was borrowed."

Here we get into the secret of all the trouble we may have as Christians in the things of the Lord, whether as individuals or assemblies. "Master, where dwellest Thou?" (John 1. 38) was the query of the two disciples. "Come and see," was the Divine invitation. The sons of the prophets found the place where they dwelt with the prophet too strait for them. We may find that to dwell with the Lord is too strait for us. It is not too strait for the Spirit. There all is blessed width and true liberty. But it is narrow, nay intolerable for the flesh.

"Alas, Master! for it was borrowed," might be applied in two ways. First, to second-hand truth—truth intellectually grasped in the mind, but never having gripped the conscience and formed the affections. For instance, the truth of God's house, the truth of the church, the behaviour suitable to it, how much is it in mere terms with many, and therefore they naturally seek satisfaction in other directions.

Second, how often it shows itself in the additions of worldly methods in the service of the Lord. Choirs, solo-singing, duets, glees, oratory, social intercourse, athletics, etc., etc., are all introduced under the plea that we need to keep the many. But does it keep them? It only feeds what is not

spiritual in them and strengthens that which tends to strangle the spiritual.

How many a movement has started on spiritual lines and God has richly blessed it, but these "borrowed" lines were introduced till the spiritual power in the movement was strangled, and now they stand as warning beacons to us.

These expedients are largely a cover for the lack of spiritual power, and they have the tendency of increasing powerlessness, as the Spirit is grieved, and thus making more room for themselves till the process is complete and you get philanthropy and not the Gospel, the culture of the first man and not the graces of the second man, and the way is introduced for—*apostasy*. Are there not these warnings in Christendom as plentiful as blackberries in autumn, and are we any better than our fathers?

It is not that bodily exercise is not profitable, for it is and has its lawful place, but let it not be linked up with what is spiritual. We are not dead to nature, but nature has its place in believers who are to be controlled and upheld by the Spirit of God; it must not therefore intrude into the things of God.

The young man, who lost his axe-head, turned to the prophet in his dilemma. He discovered he could not do without the prophet.

The man of God said, "Where fell it?" Being shown the place he cut down a stick and the iron did swim. In this striking action we get a type of the way God is working. The stick symbolizes the cross of Christ. The iron swimming as the result of the stick being cast in the water symbolizes that divine things are found in resurrection. That which fell into the water of Jordan, type of death, rose, type of resurrection.

It teaches that the old order has passed away, and that God is working on new lines altogether. It reminds

one of Romans 6. and baptism. The believer goes into the water, and is *buried* with Christ by baptism unto death. All that we are as fallen sons of Adam passes under the condemnation of death. Yes, but we are baptized unto the death of *Christ*. If we had only been baptized in relation to what we are there would be no coming up out of the water, but seeing we are baptized *unto the death of CHRIST*, we rise because He has risen. This is morally true of us now but will be actually true of the saints who have fallen asleep at the resurrection.

But what is involved? *Walking in newness of life*. There will then be no use for borrowed axe heads, we shall be in the power of the truth and refuse as mischievous and corrupting these

aids, that are outside the Scripture, and anything outside the Scripture is "borrowed."

There the incident ends, and I am persuaded it has lessons for us.

May we never say to the Lord, "Behold now the place where we dwell WITH THEE is too strait FOR US." It is not that we should ever dream of saying anything so bald as this, but in refusing to go on with the truth *in any shape or form* as revealed in the Scriptures, and adding to it human organizations and methods we say this in principle. May God continually exercise us on our knees as to His path for us, and may we be WITH HIM by His grace in all the blessed breadth and liberty of the Spirit.

## ' BROUGHT TO THE KING.'

(S. SCOTT.)

[T is surely the desire of God that all those things which are heard in the Gospel, and received into the heart concerning Himself, should so become an integral part of the believer that there shall be perfect correspondence between his way and conversation and the Truth itself.

But how long the interval, how varied the experience, how difficult the way ere the desired end is reached!

The group of Psalms, 42 to 48 inclusive, well illustrates the passage from one point to the other, describing the fervent longings, the trials and the perfecting work of patience that finally not only satisfies every desire after God, and His temple, but beyond all this makes the work of the Spirit, the glories of Christ, acceptance with God and finally the perfect fulfilment of promise that had ever reached the ear concerning the journey's end, to be the present possession and joy of the heart.

In Psalm 42. the felt need, the distance from God, the lack of communion, that are so keenly realized, find their expression in terms of intense thirst after God; the distress of the parched and hunted deer being alone comparable with the greatness of the Psalmist's longings.

Persecuted and an outcast (Ps. 42. 6), the Psalmist accepts readily all his affliction and sorrows from the hand of Jehovah—"All *Thy* waves and *Thy* billows are gone over me," and even in the land of the Hermonites he has no resource but in God, and awaits with chastened spirit the delights that will assuredly be his on looking to Him for light and truth (Psalm 43. 3) to lead him to the place on which his heart is set—Thy holy mount and Thy habitation. Thus he looks out from amidst his uncongenial surroundings to singing the praises of his God without hindrance in the future.



Psalm 44. narrates the faithfulness of God in sharp contrast to Israel's failure, faithfulness absolutely unmerited though still shown because "Thou hadst a favour unto them" (verse 3).

What an incentive to true holiness is this knowledge of God's unflagging interest and care for His own. He uses it to teach them the dependence on Himself which it was His desire they should exercise, keeping themselves circumcised in heart, and to stimulate their devotion to Himself (see Deut. 7. 7, and 10. 15-18).

In this Psalm, too, the writer, boasting in God, is delivered from his enemies and is at the end a worshipper (verse 8).

But lest the newly acquired happiness should prove to lack depth and reality, a season of testing ensues. This consists of scattering, reproach, derision and enmity (verses 9, 10), and even though persecution may mean the loss of everything here, and may rise to martyrdom (verse 22), there is happily no loss of confidence.

The testing is successful: willingness to go to the last extremity for the love of God is evident, and nothing here can hold his affections. Hence God is, as it were, free now to hold up to him the glorious One for the contemplation of his soul.

What a magnificent outburst Psalm 45. is! He beholds the One "fairer than the children of men"—Him who has grace poured unto His lips. This One who now rivets the Psalmist's gaze is saluted as King and as God, and is exalted above all His fellows by His righteousness. Every attribute, every feature is lovingly dwelt upon, and is an object of delight, so that there is no charm or attraction elsewhere; even his own people and father's house are forgotten (verse 10). Thus are all the longings of Psalm 42. completely set at rest, as indeed they must be, for

they are the product of the Spirit, and these He *must*—nay *delights* to satisfy.

"Her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needlework." Every blow of the hammer in fashioning the gold, every stitch in these garments of beauty, is indicative of the loving care and continuous diligence required to produce fitness for the King's presence, and introduce to the palace of the King—after whom such yearnings have been expressed—with joy and gladness. What a climax! How truly blessed are the ways of God with His own.

Of old the fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, had been they in whom the children of Israel boasted, and to whom they looked as illustrations of divine leading and blessing. Christ having come in all His majesty and glory, the eye can no longer look backward but forward. The *children* shall be made "princes in all the earth." In the future, not the past, shall be the crown of their blessing.

In Psalm 46. 5-7 is the public answer to the insulting taunts of the wicked, "Where is now thy God?" "God is in the midst of her." "Jehovah of hosts is with us. The God of Jacob is our refuge." He brings in peace and is exalted among the nations. Whilst in the next Psalm He reigns OVER the nations and sits upon the throne of holiness (Ps. 47. 7-8).

Two great things follow when God has His peace recognized, one, that He is the centre of all attention and of worship (Ps. 48.), and then that every promised blessing is fulfilled. For "as we have heard so have we seen, in the city of the Lord of Hosts" (verse 8).

All that the prophet had ever foretold of His wondrous reign, all that minstrel had ever sung, all that figure ever portrayed, is more than realized when God has His own place, in His own city, and amongst His own people.

## "THAT WHICH IS SPIRITUAL."

(H. J. VINE.)

THE true condition of every believer in Christ in the present dispensation is designated by the Spirit in Scripture as "*spiritual*." The house of God, too, of which he forms part, is also called spiritual. The food which he assimilates and the drink which he appropriates are likewise termed spiritual. Moreover, the praises which he offers to God, the sacrifices which he gives to Him, the songs which he sings, are all spoken of in the Word of God as spiritual. It is important, therefore, to seek understanding from God as to this, for we live in days when it is despised by some, misunderstood by others, and carried too far by many.

Now, though the true and normal condition of each believer is *spiritual*, yet we see that brethren in Christ may become *fleshly*, for we read of those who heard the Gospel through Paul at Corinth, and were in the assembly in Christ there, becoming such; therefore, the apostle writes to them thus, "I, brethren, have not been able to speak to you as to spiritual, but as to fleshly, as to babes in Christ, . . . for ye are yet carnal" (1 Cor. 3. 1-3). Let this, therefore, weigh well with us. It is not enough to say, "I believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and confess His Name." These brethren at Corinth did that; but the fleshly lusts which war against the soul had hindered their progress in spiritual things, and emulation and strife and dissension among themselves rose high through their exalting special men, boasting in them and their peculiar teachings, and through ordering their walk according to them and not according to the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom all faithful servants point, and whose glory the Spirit of God is here to bring before us.

### NATURAL, CARNAL AND SPIRITUAL.

It is the *carnal* mind which opposes the spiritual. The *natural* is not that

which is in itself antagonistic so much, but rather is it *unable* to enter into that which is spiritual. We read, "The *natural man* receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God . . . he cannot know them, for they are spiritually discerned." Spiritual things are *above* him and he is incapable in himself of entering into them. Carnality is altogether *against* them. The natural mind may be educated, adopting too as its religion *Christianity* (as it is often termed), yet without the Spirit of God, it may also despise low practices and the failures even of true believers, it may be zealous for human righteousness and honourable behaviour, nevertheless it is still natural. Often it freely admits it does not, and has no disposition to appreciate spiritual things. Natural things and natural affection are rightly and ably appreciated, it may be, but not the spiritual. The latter may not be opposed, but the natural man lacks the necessary ability to discern spiritual things, whereas that which is carnal bitterly wars against that which is spiritual.

Just a word before leaving this. It is important to remember that if the natural is not in itself against the spiritual neither is the spiritual against the natural, but its abilities are supernatural and above it, and when one is truly spiritual he will view that which is natural from a higher standpoint than the other, and bring into his own natural relationships a heavenly grace to which the purely natural man is a stranger. This we see in the closing exhortations of such epistles as Ephesians and Colossians. To be without "natural affection" is an awful mark of apostasy from that which is in Christ Jesus (2 Tim. 3. 3). We do not become unnatural by being spiritual, but carnality is to be fled from as a foe to all true progress.

Even the law in itself is not *against* what is purely natural. It is against

the fleshly man. Indeed, the law, being given of God, must itself be spiritual, and its fulness is love. The man in Romans 7. says, "The law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin" (14).

### WHAT IT MEANS TO BE SPIRITUAL.

It may be asked, What is exactly meant by that which is spiritual? Through wrong teaching as to this many sincere souls have been led astray! Often it has been contrasted with that which is material, and a state of mind has consequently been produced of a most harmful nature. Scripture does not so speak, for the Spirit tells us that *the body* which the saints will have in the resurrection will not only be incorruptible and immortal but also *spiritual*. When He rose from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ said to His disciples, "Handle Me and see, for a spirit has not *flesh and bones* as ye see Me having" (Luke 24. 39); nevertheless His body was spiritual although still "*flesh and bones*," and the body of the believer will be the same in resurrection; it will be "*a spiritual body*" (1 Cor. 15. 44).

Some, too, have said, That which is spiritual is neither seen nor heard! but "*the house of God*" is formed of all true believers on Christ, the Living Stone rejected by men, and that house is spiritual, and it is *seen*. Moreover, the praises which they offer to God are spiritual and their songs are called "*spiritual songs*," and they are *heard*. The believer himself in his right condition and character is spoken of as spiritual—"ye which are spiritual"—and he is both seen and heard, and as he behaves himself accordingly even unconverted men are made conscious that he acts and speaks from a standpoint to which they are strangers.

In a bad sense we read of certain forms of evil being spiritual, of "*spiritual wickedness*" (Eph. 6. 12), and of Jerusalem, when it presently becomes

dominated by Antichrist, being "the great city which is called spiritually Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified" (Rev. 11. 8). In both these cases we have that which is characterized by Satan,—by the evil spirit.

To be spiritual therefore in the true sense is to be characterized by the Holy Spirit of God who has been given from our ascended Head and Lord. We do not, therefore, find this condition in the Old Testament, Hosea 9. 7 being wrongly translated. We read of men doing mighty acts by the power of the Spirit, such as Samson, but their own state could not be described as spiritual. Extraordinary things, too, have been done in later days by men who have not been marked by true spirituality, nor by the fruit of the Spirit which is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, fidelity, meekness and self-control. Not simply power but grace and truth will mark those who are truly spiritual, for they will be characterized by the Holy Spirit; and, as we have said, even the believer's mortal body will be eventually so characterized, for it will be quickened by the Spirit at the coming of Christ and be subject to mortality no more.

The saints in Galatia had fallen under teaching which made them think they were hyper-spiritual, but in reality they were brought into bondage to "*beggarly principles*," and the apostle, seeing their danger, has to say, "If ye bite and devour one another beware that ye are not consumed one of another" (5. 15). What a state for saints of God to get into even when apostles were on the earth, ill-treating each other through wrongly directed zeal! Again he writes, "Brethren, if even a man be taken in some fault, ye who are spiritual restore such an one in a spirit of meekness, considering thyself lest thou also be tempted" (6. 1). This restoring grace and lowliness is a mark of spirituality. Is restoration very much in evidence to-

day? It would be, were there more true spirituality.

We are also exhorted to "follow after love and desire *spiritual gifts*" (1 Cor. 14. 1). The blessings, too, which are ours in Christ Jesus are spiritual (Eph. 1. 3), and as we rightly enter into and possess these blessings they will give character to us. Our discernment, then, will be clearer, for "the spiritual discerns all things and he is discerned of no one" (1 Cor. 2. 15).

The faithful servant of Christ seeks to impart spiritual benefit to those who hear him,—“some spiritual gift to establish you” (Rom. 1. 11),—that such may participate experimentally in “spiritual things” (15, 27), and these things cannot be imparted in a merely natural way; “not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, communicating [or expounding] spiritual things by spiritual means” (1 Cor. 2. 13); and the apostle Paul, who thus served the Lord, could add, “If we have sown to you spiritual things, is it a *great thing* if we shall reap your carnal things?” (9. 11). Many look at the latter,—giving to servants of our Lord Jesus Christ,—as the “*great thing*.” That is a mistake! The giving of spiritual things is what is truly great, and the other but a right and ordinary return. The labourer must be supported, and it is not well for those who benefit by his service to neglect the one who sows spiritual things lest spiritual poverty follows.

In the case of the Colossian saints we find the apostle praying that they may be filled with the knowledge of God’s will in all wisdom and *spiritual understanding*, so as to walk worthily of the Lord unto all well-pleasing, bearing fruit in every good work (Col. 1. 9). This fruitfulness is another mark of true spirituality: evidence is thus borne as to our condition. Bad fruit witnesses to a bad condition. No fruit shows a faulty condition. “Fruit in every good work” evidences a truly spiritual condition, along with a true knowledge of God in Christ.

## SPIRITUAL POSSESSIONS.

When God redeemed Israel He gave them earthly possessions, but to those who have redemption in Christ to-day are given “spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ” (Eph. 1. 3). These are possessed at the present time in faith in the power of the Spirit, and in them the believer may stand victoriously against all the attacks of the powers of darkness and against spiritual wickedness, strong in the Lord and clad in the panoply of God. Ephesians 6. 10–17 shows this.

As we are therefore characterized by the Holy Spirit of God, that is, as we are characteristically spiritual, this triumph and victory will be ours in spite of all the outward failure in the assemblies. Provision has been divinely made that we may stand in our glorious possessions, so that with gladness and praise filling our hearts, like the apostle to the Gentiles we may exclaim, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has thus blessed us.

But not only do we read in the epistles of spiritual *persons* possessing spiritual “*blessings*,” raising spiritual “*songs*,” offering spiritual “*sacrifices*”—the sacrifice of praise—in a spiritual “*house*,” but of such spiritual persons having spiritual “*discernment*,” receiving and rejoicing in spiritual “*things*,” increasing in wisdom and spiritual “*understanding*,” having spiritual “*food*” to sustain them in divine energy, so as to be well-pleasing to the Lord. As we have said, the faithful servant seeks to impart spiritual gain to the saints, to feed them with spiritual food.

When Israel journeyed onward to the land, we are told that they were types of us, and “all ate the same spiritual food, and drank the same spiritual drink, for they drank of a spiritual Rock which followed them; and that Rock was Christ” (1 Cor. 10. 4). Here then we find the secret of being kept in vigour on our way to the Father’s

house, where we shall see our Lord Jesus Christ face to face. Fleeing from fleshly lusts we appropriate the food provided for us, and press onward to our heavenly goal. When here on earth Jesus Himself could say, "As the living Father has sent Me and I live on account of the Father, he also who eats Me shall live also on account of Me"; and, again, "I am the bread of life: he that comes to Me shall never hunger, and he that believes on Me shall never thirst at any time" (John 6. 35). He is our food, our drink, our all.

As we thus make this gracious provision our own we shall find strength and spring in our steps heavenward, we shall be renewed day by day in the inner man. Long ago it was said, man shall not live by bread alone but by every word of God. As Christ is therefore appropriated we shall be encouraged and invigorated on our homeward way!

The body,—the outer man,—may become less agile, and we may be conscious of increasing feebleness as age tells upon the present tabernacle; the earthly house may prove itself to be as the apostle said a "body of humiliation," and weakness may be evident in

its various chambers and compartments; many testings and trials, snares and temptations, along with ups and downs, may beset the path which we tread, but the end of it will be an "UP." The last step taken, and we shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air! All the besetments of the way will be left behind in the twinkling of an eye and we shall be forever with the Lord!

Then we shall possess our possessions in bodies of glory; not simply as now in faith, but as glorified with Christ. The mortal body of the saint will have put on immortality, and this corruptible will have put on incorruptibility: no longer earthly it will be heavenly; no longer in dishonour, it will have been raised in glory; and no more in weakness it will have been raised in power; the Lord will then have quickened it, and each saint will possess for ever "a spiritual body." Conformed fully to the image of God's beloved Son we shall then surround Him as His brethren in His Father's house and be to His eternal praise.

"And now Thy love is waiting  
Thy saints like Thee to raise;  
Firstborn of many brethren,  
To Thee be all the praise."

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## The Church and the World.

THE church must be in the world; but the world should not be in the church.

A ship is in the sea, but if the sea gets into the ship it becomes water-logged, and if this advances beyond a certain point the ship will founder. The church is in the world in order that she may be a blessing to the world, but her ability to be a blessing is in proportion to her unworldliness.

A prelate of high rank was showing a distinguished visitor over a celebrated church in Rome. As they beheld the glittering ornaments, gold, silver, precious stones, etc., the prelate said, "You see, we cannot say with St. Peter, 'Silver and gold have I none.''" "Neither can you say with St. Peter, 'In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk,'" was the unexpected response.

How true it is that worldliness and spiritual power cannot go together. Oh! for an unworldly spirit in every Christian!

## A REMARKABLE LETTER.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:**—The writer of this letter was a missionary in the Telugu country, India. Just when, in answer to fervent prayer, many were turning to God from their idols, and the work was being carried forward as on the crest of a wave, he was struck down, and at last he had to return home. At the time of his writing he had been slowly dying of leprosy for fifteen years, cut off from his loved ones and from the service to the Lord which he loved so well.

Having been ourselves refreshed and edified by its perusal, we pass it on that our readers may also share the refreshment that comes from every fresh proof of the truth of those excellent words that we often sing:—

“ Jesus! Thou art enough  
The mind and heart to fill;  
Thy patient life—to calm the soul;  
Thy love—its fear dispel.

### THE LETTER.

“ It is about fifteen years since I last saw you, so I appreciated your letter all the more. I have had a heavy cross to carry, but I am glad to tell you that His grace has been sufficient for me at every step of the way. At first I was somewhat rebellious, for I had great plans for the future. Many souls were turning to the Lord in all parts of the field, and I looked forward to the time when I should have the privilege of baptizing thousands.

“ I had said, ‘ Lord, let me be Thy servant, filled with Thy Spirit, giving all my thought, all my energy and my life for Thee.’ And He answered me. But instead of letting me serve Him as I had planned to do, He suddenly took me away from the work for ever. As I lay in the hospital in England, when the first horror of the final outcome was upon me, I thought sometimes that the Lord had forgotten and forsaken me, that He had hidden His face from me. But it was not so.

The more sorrow I have had to bear, the easier it has become, and now I am rejoicing in my Saviour every hour. I know the time cannot be long before I shall be with Him, but while I am in the body I cannot keep still. I must testify; I must tell of His great love for me, and I have written a paper to be read at the Missionary Conference in India, on ‘ Filling full our place in life.’

“ You ask how I am. I have lost my eyesight now and my voice; I have no feet or ankles; no arms; but my heart is far from dead. I still feel, and long, and sympathize. I still yearn for the extension of Christ’s kingdom on earth as much as ever I did. I cannot read or write, but the kind sisters in charge of the hospital come and read to me and write for me, as I can find means to dictate to them. I have everything I need, and could not be more comfortable were I in my own home. While I live I expect to prepare others for India. . . . And though I am slowly dying I must keep on doing something to help on the Redeemer’s kingdom when I have passed beyond.

“ I know you will remember me in your prayers, that I may be humble and patient, and faithful to the end. I have no doubt in these days, and if I had my voice I should be singing all the day long. Sometimes I feel so happy that I long to go to my heavenly home and be with ‘ my Beloved ’ for ever.

“ May the God of all comfort, comfort you, and grant you His grace, filling you with the sunshine of His presence, so that day by day you will be transformed into His likeness from glory to glory, is the prayer of

“ Your brother in Christ’s Kingdom,  
“ J. E. D.”

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

### "Your Heavenly Father."

Should Christians address God in prayer as "Heavenly Father"? Some say "heavenly" has the thought of distance, not true to the near relationship that Christians have.—T. R., LONDON.

The term "your heavenly Father," and its companion phrase "your Father which is in heaven" occur exclusively in the Synoptic Gospels—Matthew, Mark, and Luke. The occurrences in Mark and Luke are few and far between. In Matthew they occur much more frequently, and especially so in chapters 5 and 6—the Sermon on the Mount. In the rest of the New Testament the phrases do not occur at all.

A good concordance will further show you at a glance that the Gospel of John, though never giving us "heavenly Father," is full of references to "the Father." The name "Father" as applied to God occurs in it more frequently than in the other three Gospels put together. So also in the Epistles, "Father" occurs with frequency by itself and in different combinations, yet never once as "heavenly Father."

We believe that there is something to be learned from this. Matthew's is pretty clearly the Gospel written in the first instance for Jewish readers, and therefore emphasizing the dispensational change effected by the advent of Christ. It opens with Christ as "the Son of David, the Son of Abraham." How striking then that He, who was truly the Son of Abraham, should lead those children of Abraham who became His disciples into the knowledge of the Father who is in heaven. Abraham was indeed their earthly father; the important thing for them was, however, implicit faith in their heavenly Father.

This dispensational element does not enter into John's Gospel. There we have the Word, who was before all worlds, become flesh, rejected by His own from the outset and yet fully revealing the Father—not now the heavenly Father caring for the disciples on earth, as in Matthew, but the Father in His own house, and according to what He is in Himself. It ends by the risen Saviour introducing his disciples into His own place and relationship with the Father as the fruit of redemption. "My Father, and your Father . . . My God, and your God" (20. 17). This is in germ the presentation of God as Father, such as we have it developed in the Epistles. The privilege of the Christian is to know God, and address Him as "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. 1. 3).

The above being accepted, your question is easily answered. Christians may address God as "heavenly Father," but in doing so they speak to Him in the light of the revelation made to the disciples *before the cross*, when as yet they were but a godly remnant of Israel surrounding their Messiah, and not in the light of the revelation which is distinctively Christian. To habitually address God in this way would betoken some lack in the understanding of that near relationship that Christians have as now standing identified with the risen Christ as Man in the presence of the Father.

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### The Accuracy of our Bibles.

How and in what way were the Holy Scriptures preserved down through the ages? How could we best convince a Romanist that we have the correct translations? They seem to make so lightly of the sacred Writings. For instance, theirs say "do penance" while the version we have says "repent."

The preservation of the Scriptures we owe to the providential care of God. Acting behind the scenes He saw to it that the Lord Jesus, the incarnate Word, was not destroyed by the wicked malice

of Herod; so also, acting behind the scenes, has He watched over the written Word and preserved it against every attempt at its destruction.

Doubtless, He used His<sup>7</sup> people<sup>7</sup> as instruments to this end. The Jews carefully guarded the Old Testament down to the time of our Lord. Then in the course of about half a century the New Testament was written in Greek, a tongue which largely prevailed at that time in the world's history. No original manuscripts have survived, but quite a number of ancient copies remain to us together with a mass of more fragmentary manuscripts, ancient versions in other tongues, and quotations by early writers; the result being that we have a wonderfully accurate knowledge of the originals: the passages where any doubt exists as to the exact word or form of the word being few and of small importance.

If you are in touch with a sincere Romanist willing to listen, we should advise you not to spend time arguing over details of translation. Persuade him to get a Bible of the version authorized by the Romish church, lay beside it an ordinary authorized version and it will be at once seen that allowing for differences in phraseology there is no very great difference. Then we should advise you to adopt *his* version and show him from *that* how it destroys the Romish position. Take him, for instance, to Hebrews 9. and 10.

We quote from a Douay version lying before us. It was printed in Ireland and carries an "Approbation" signed by twenty-six Irish Roman Catholic Bishops and Archbishops.

"Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy places every year with the blood of others; for then he ought to have suffered often from the beginning of the world: but now once at the end of ages he hath appeared for the destruction of sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed for men once to die, and after this the judgment: so Christ was offered once to exhaust the sins of many: the second time he shall appear without sin to them that expect him unto salvation" (9. 25-28).

The language here is stronger than in the "Protestant" version: "*The DESTRUCTION of sin by the sacrifice of Himself, . . . Christ . . . offered once to EXHAUST the sins of many*"—and yet Rome's devotees are left saying continual masses in order to exhaust sins while they live, and paying for more masses to extricate souls after death from the purgatory which they have inserted between death and the judgment!

## The Heart and the Conscience.

THE whip and the scourge may be righteous, but there is no winning the heart of man with these. Nor is it righteousness that reigns among saints, but grace through righteousness, unto eternal life. Alas! how many sins that might have been washed away (John 13.) have been retained! How many brethren alienated for all time, that might have been won back to God and to us, because we have hammered at the *conscience* merely, with the heart ungained—with the heart, I may say *almost unsought*!

We have not overcome evil, because we have not overcome it with good. We have taken the judge's chair, and have

got back judgment; but the Master's lowly work we have little done.

But how little yet do we understand that mere righteous dealing—absolutely righteous as it may be—will not work the restoration of souls; that judgment, however temperate and however true, will not touch and soften, and subdue hearts to receive instruction, that, by the very facts of the case, are shown not to be in their true place before God.

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.