

SCRIPTURE TRUTH

VOLUME XVII. 1925

“And now, brethren, I commend you to God,
and to the word of His grace, which is
able to build you up.”—*Acts 20. 32.*

THE CENTRAL BIBLE TRUTH DEPÔT
5, ROSE STREET, LONDON, E.C.4.

INDEX

	PAGE		PAGE
A			
Assembling Shout, The - <i>J. C. Trench</i>	7	Why so little Blessing through Gospel Preach- ing ? - - - - -	190
All Sufficiency of the Son of God, The - - <i>Inglis Flemming</i>	259, 281	New Birth and the Heal- ing of the Spirit - - - - -	190
ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS :—			
What is the Portion of Children who Die ? - - - - -	22	The Temple of God - - - - -	191
The Meal Offering - - - - -	22	Thou Shalt not Kill - - - - -	192
Whether we Wake or Sleep - - - - -	23	Who is the Object of Worship ? - - - - -	214
“ Thou art My Son ” - - - - -	46	Is Faith the Gift of God ? - - - - -	216
The Fulness of the Gen- tiles - - - - -	46	David, their King - - - - -	216
Delivered unto Satan - - - - -	76	The Blood and Flesh of the Sin-offering - - - - -	239
The Judgment Seat of Christ - - - - -	76	Hearts Sprinkled and Bodies Washed - - - - -	239
Christ and His Members are One - - - - -	76	Saved by His Life - - - - -	262
The Coming of the Lord - - - - -	76	Discerning the Lord's Body - - - - -	262
To Make a Brother Perish - - - - -	93	Believing a Lie - - - - -	263
The Lord's Body in Resur- rection - - - - -	93	Neither Male nor Female - - - - -	263
The Scape-Goat (Lev. 16.) - - - - -	94	The Son of Man - - - - -	264
Isaiah 53 : Is it the Gospel for To-day ? - - - - -	95	B	
Salvation and Redemp- tion - - - - -	96	Blessing of Jacob, The - <i>H. Smith</i>	4
Romans 4. 4 - - - - -	118	Best Robe, The - - <i>J. T. Mawson</i>	35
Must the Gospel be Preached to all Nations before the Coming of the Lord ? - - - - -	118	Blessed be God - - <i>J. T. Mawson</i>	97
Raised up at the Last Day - - - - -	119	Bitter Waters - - <i>J. T. Mawson</i>	217
Baptized for the Dead - - - - -	120	C	
Christians in Sorrow - - - - -	140	Christian Conflict - - <i>F. B. Hole</i>	36
Prayer for the Unsaved - - - - -	141	Colossians, Epistles of - <i>J. A. Trench</i>	40, 63, 92, 114
Women in the Assemblies - - - - -	142	Coincidence, or the Hand of God - - - - <i>F. B. Hole</i>	77
The Lord's Heel Bruised - - - - -	143	Come unto Me - - - - -	96
Falling in the Wilderness - - - - -	143	Christ, The—Could He Sin ? <i>James Boyd</i>	111
The Fellowship of God's Son - - - - -	165	Christ Formed in You - <i>F. B. Hole</i>	184
Conditional Immortality - - - - -	166	Complete in Him - - <i>H. J. Vine</i>	208
A Female from the Flock - - - - -	167	Christ the Eternal Son - <i>James Green</i>	269
The Kingdom of God - - - - -	168	D	
		Death of the Lord, The - <i>F. B. Hole</i>	223
		Diversity of Administra- tion - - - - <i>T. Oliver</i>	274

Scripture Truth

	PAGE		PAGE
E			
Epaphras, a Servant of Christ - - - - <i>G. F. Edington</i>	186	Messianic Prophecies and Predictive Types - - - <i>R. McCallum</i>	242
		Master is so Fair, The - - - - -	245
F			
Father, The - - - - <i>H. J. Vine</i>	47	N	
Fundamentals of the Christian Faith, The :—		Notes on Service - - - <i>J. T. Mawson</i>	161
Preliminary - - - - <i>A. J. Pollock</i>	32	Notes on Prophecy - - - <i>J. T. Mawson</i>	153
The Bible - - - - <i>A. J. Pollock</i>	51, 84, 100, 127, 147	P	
The Deity of Jesus - - <i>A. J. Pollock</i>	175	Put on, Therefore - - - <i>J. J. Anning</i>	219
The Virgin Birth - - - <i>A. J. Pollock</i>	198	Q	
The Atonement - - - - <i>A. J. Pollock</i>	230	Questions Raised by Young Christians :—	
The Resurrection - - - <i>A. J. Pollock</i>	255	God's Full Knowledge of Us - - - - -	180
The Second Coming - - <i>A. J. Pollock</i>	270	The Will of God - - - - -	181
G			
God's Work and our Part in It - - - - <i>J. T. Mawson</i>	48	Christians in Trouble - - - - -	205
Great Calm, A - - - - <i>J. T. Mawson</i>	49	Has God a Life-plan for Each of Us ? - - - - -	205
Grace Reigns - - - - <i>H. J. Vine</i>	55	Christian Endeavour - - - - -	235
Great While Before Day, A <i>J. T. Mawson</i>	145	Evening Classes or Bible Study - - - - -	253
God, as Father - - - - <i>A. W. Trench</i>	212	A Call to Service - - - - -	287
H			
Hebrews, Epistle of - - <i>G. J. Stewart</i>	19, 42, 66, 115, 137, 163, 179, 206, 237, 260, 283,	R	
Heavenly Calling, The - <i>James Boyd</i>	8, 27, 60, 88	Rapture and the Appearing, The - - - - -	69
Home Coming, The - - - <i>L. R.</i>	113	Riband of Blue, The - - <i>E. A. Walker</i>	151
How to Finish Well - - <i>J. T. Mawson</i>	193	Revelation and Interpretation - - - - -	183
I			
I Haved Loved Thee - - <i>H. J. Vine</i>	224	S	
I Will Come Again - - <i>J. T. Mawson</i>	241	Shew Us the Father - - <i>H. J. Vine</i>	12
J			
Jesus the Son of God - - <i>H. G. G.</i>	80	Sabbath of the Lord in Your Dwellings, The - <i>J. T. Mawson</i>	73
John's Gospel, Meditations on - - - - <i>James Boyd</i>	124, 157, 172, 202, 226, 248, 276	Son, The - - - - - <i>James Boyd</i>	152
L			
Let God be Magnified - <i>W. B. Dick</i>	196	Searched, Saved, Satisfied <i>J. T. Mawson</i>	169
Looking upon Jesus as He Walked - - - - <i>J. T. Mawson</i>	265	T	
M			
Marriage in the Lord - <i>J. B. S.</i>	59	Therefore I have Hope - <i>J. T. Mawson</i>	2
Matthew 24. - - - - <i>C. N. Snow</i>	65	Three Minds, The - - - <i>D. Ross</i>	221
Mystery of God's Will, The <i>H. J. Vine</i>	107, 134, 155, 189	Tell My Brethren - - - <i>H. J. Vine</i>	246
		They Spake Often One to Another - - - - - <i>E. Cross</i>	286
N			
P			
Q			
R			
S			
T			
U			
W			
Y			

Scripture Truth.

Vol. XVII

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

No. 1.

THANKSGIVING.

OUR God and Father, we remember that it was on the same night on which He was betrayed that the Lord Jesus gave thanks. When hatred without and treachery within combined to destroy Him, and when the floods of sorrow and death were rising in their strength to overwhelm Him, then He lifted heart and voice in thanksgiving to Thee. Terrible was the road that His feet had to tread, bitter was the cup that His lips had to drink, yet greater than all wert Thou to Him, and in the full consciousness of Thy love and favour, and accepting all from Thy hands, He gave thanks. Above the world's discord this thanksgiving ascended to Thee and thus wert Thou glorified by Him in the darkest hour of His earth-life. Our hearts are moved as we think of it, and we rejoice that there has been One here on earth who thought only of Thee and Thy glory and ever gave thanks to Thee.

And we can give thanks to Thee. We can do it because of what He has done. We were dead in sins, and alienated from Thee, but in the cross of Christ Thou hast reached us ; in the cross of Christ we see Thy love in all its blessedness declared. Herein is love, not that we loved Thee, but that Thou lovedst us and didst send Thy Son that we might live through Him, and that He might be the propitiation for our sins. The precious blood which has put away our sins from Thy sight is the pledge and token of Thy love to us, and we live now in the light. Thou hast been fully revealed by Him who dwells in Thy bosom, Thy only-begotten Son ; and in the joy of the light that He brought into the world we can give thanks, for we know Thee now ; Thou art His Father and our Father, His God and ours. We know that God is love.

Because the judgment that was against us is passed in His death, we give thanks ; because death and darkness are behind us, we give thanks ; because we stand now in Thine unclouded favour in Him who died for us and rose again, we give thanks. We own Thee as the source and fountain of every good, and give thanks unto Thee. But in Thy presence we think of Him who gave thanks to Thee at the other side of the sea. When the waves of it arose in their strength, and lifted up their voice against Him, and when lover and friend were to be put far from Him, and when *alone* He was to meet the sorrow and the judgment, then He gave thanks, anticipating the joy that awaited Him, when, the great work finished, He should stand in resurrection triumph in the midst of the church to sing praises unto Thee. He gave thanks as the Representative before Thee of His disciples, who were the pattern of His assembly yet to be ; He gave thanks with a perfect knowledge of the favour in which they were to stand with Him before Thee, hence His thanksgiving was perfect, and its fragrance and perfection abide, and in all the blessedness of it, and in all the value of His one Offering we appear to-day in Thy sight—a company of saints, delivered from Satan's power by His death ; sanctified in Him who has been raised from the dead, and giving thanks to Thee in the Spirit who dwells in us.

In holy, happy fellowship, in the joy of what Thou art, and on the changeless basis of the precious blood of Jesus Christ, Thy Son, we give Thee thanks in His precious Name. Amen.

"THEREFORE I HAVE HOPE."

(J. T. MAWSON.)

Lamentations 3. 21.

THERE was some great cause for this hope that seems suddenly to have illumined the soul of the weeping prophet ; his **THEREFORE** proves this.

It is the word that is specially used to introduce the conclusion as a result of something that has been previously stated. "*Therefore*" looks in two directions and is a splendid word with which to begin a New Year. It looks backward to the preceding sufficient cause, and forward to the infallible consequence. The consequence in Jeremiah's case was **HOPE**. "Therefore," says he, "I have hope." That is an inspiring thing to have ; without it life were impossible ; with it the heart is made strong to meet any trial, if, of course, the hope is not a false one.

But what was the cause that brought the prophet to this blessed conclusion ? A strange one indeed. Hear him ! He is in the midst of a great lament ; never from human heart and lips did dirge break forth more dolefully. In this centre section of it he tells in harrowing detail the story of his woe. An irresistible power had driven him into a tangled gloom, and his every effort to find a path to light and freedom only involved him in a deeper darkness and a denser thicket. He had struggled and strained for a way of escape, but it was in vain. "I cannot get out," he cried. His shouts for help brought him no succour, for he says, "I cry and shout, but He shutteth out my prayer." One answer only seemed to come to his agony, and that was the derisive laughter of his foes. Truly he was a man who had seen affliction, and had drunk deep draughts from the cup of wormwood and gall.

It would appear as though he had once lived in peace, and prospered, but that was long ago, or the magnitude of his calamities made it appear long ago, for now his soul was far removed from

peace and he forgot prosperity, and utterly crushed and broken, he cries, "My strength and my hope is perished from the Lord." Could mortal man be so beset and buffeted and yet live ? If his strength and hope had perished from the Lord, what had he more ? Surely that was his last despairing gasp ere the slough in which he struggled swallowed him up ! Yet that was not the end of the story, though it was indeed the prophet's extremity.

He can do no more, and his cries and struggles cease, and with a heart humbled within him, he dwells upon his experience, remembering his affliction and misery, the wormwood and the gall—as a man might remember, sitting before the dying embers on his hearthstone, with back bent and head bowed in hands and misery in his heart, while the winter storm moans and beats about his dwelling. A stricken man was this prophet, and a stricken man is a disillusioned man, and a disillusioned man is more likely to reason rightly than one who lives in dreams. As he remembered and reasoned, he arrived at his conclusion and got the solution of the great problem ; then he lifted his long-bowed head and cried, "Therefore I have hope." Strange yet triumphant conclusion to be wrung from such unpromising premises ! A great logician was this weeping prophet.

But how could this be ? And from whence came his hope ? Let nature teach us. How deeply into the soil the ploughman thrusts his share, leaving in his wake a gaping furrow ! To what purpose is this determined labour ? Ah, a great purpose ! He is preparing the ground for a miracle. The seed-basket shall follow the ploughshare and into the furrowed soil shall golden grain be cast. Then shall come the reapers, when rain and sun and summer months have done their work, and sheaves shall he gather home in the joy of harvest

time. But the field would yield no harvest were it not first cut and seamed and ploughed. Because the ploughshare does its work in the soil there is hope. Has the ploughshare of adversity or sorrow left deep furrows in your soul, "therefore have hope." The good seed of the Word can take no root in a heart that has not been prepared for it. Therefore the ploughing was needed, and the gaping wounds, and though the process is not joyous but grievous, yet afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby.

But to return to our prophet, for we must not miss the great message that he has for us at the opening of this New Year. He remembered the wormwood and the gall, but another cup had been put to his lips that, in his misery, he had almost forgotten—a cup of mercies. "It is of the Lord's mercies," he says, "that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not." "Therefore we have hope." What was it that sustained our souls in the past when they were all but overwhelmed? The Lord's mercies! Therefore we have hope. When other helpers failed and comforts fled, what was it that failed not? His compassions. For "His compassions are new every morning and great is His faithfulness." Aye, the sorrows did not come alone, the mercies followed hard upon their heels. Therefore we have hope! And suppose there were neither mercies nor compassions, What then? Then, "The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in Him." It is good to hear the song that hope sings break in upon the prophet's dirge, and to learn that the Lord was greater than his greatest sorrow, and it carries us into the New Testament, where hope not only sings her song, but sings it

with a great confidence. "And not only so," says the Apostle, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience, and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed: because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost that is given unto us" (Romans 5. 3-5).

This is a word that will bear considering. Never did a trial visit any heart but it brought an experience with it, and everything depends upon whether that experience be the bitterness and resentment of an unsubdued will; or the indifference of a proud and unbroken heart; or of the sustaining mercies and compassion of the Lord. One of these three it must be, and if the last, which is always the experience of the humbled and contrite spirit, then way is made for hope to enter, not as a visitor only, but to abide as a most blessed companion.

And a wonderful teacher is this hope as she sings. She shows us that the present affliction is light, and the coming glories are exceeding and eternal in their weight, and that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory that shall be revealed.

We begin the year with hope; the sorrows and the joys of the past—and the sorrows more than the joys—fill us with hope, and our hope maketh not ashamed; it will not disappoint us, for it is based upon what God is—God whose matchless love we know, whose immutable word we trust, and whose Son we wait for—this is our blessed hope.

"Hope, blessed hope, abide with me,
Still sing thy cheerful melody,
Till clouds and tears for ever gone,
I reach the glory farther on."

HE LOVETH ME!

When drooping on my way I go,
That sweet assurance can bestow
Peace in the darkest hour: I know
He loveth me!

THE BLESSING OF JACOB

(HAMILTON SMITH)

Genesis 47. 27-31 : 48.

DURING the first seventeen years of Joseph's life he was cared for by his father Jacob, and, with beautiful fitness the aged father during the last seventeen years of his life becomes the object of tender care on the part of the son (Gen. 47. 28). At the end of this period we reach the last and brightest stage of Jacob's chequered path, the tranquil calm of his dying hours being in bright contrast to the stormy life through which he had pursued his crooked and self-willed way. To this holy and elevated scene Joseph is specially called, and in it he and his two sons have a peculiar place of privilege.

Jacob—the man of nature—is weakened by age and sickness. The world to which he had clung with such tenacity is fast fading from his view, his eyes being dim by reason of age (verse 10). But when the strength of nature is weakened, and the natural vision is dim—when all things earthly are fast slipping from his grasp—he rises above the loss of all earthly joys and finds in God his sole trust and unfailing resource. Hence it is that his mind travels back to that great moment at the commencement of his pilgrim path when God Almighty appeared to him at Luz in the land of Canaan, and there blessed him and gave the land to his seed for an everlasting possession on the ground of unconditional promise. The futile scheming, the mean shifts, and underhanded planning, that had so often marred his way are all passed over as of no avail; and for every hope for a far-reaching future he rests in the unconditional promise of God with which he commenced his journey (verses 3, 4).

But if there is blessing on the ground of promise secured to Jacob's seed, then Jacob can claim a blessing for Joseph's sons. Jacob can say, "they shall be mine." He claims them as his seed and

therefore as the heirs to the inheritance (verses 5, 6).

Then, reverting to his own history, he contrasts his earthly lot with the bright future of Joseph's sons (verse 7). He sees stretching before them, and their seed, a great inheritance in the land, but as for himself, all his earthly joys in the land of Canaan were ended with the death of his best-loved wife. Rachel was the loved object of his life. Rachel was the special object of his care at the ford Jabbok. Rachel's sons were loved above all his children. At Rachel's death love marked her burial place with a pillar to keep her name in perpetual remembrance. For Rachel he had suffered, toiled, and lived, and with her all earthly joys were closed for Jacob. It was as if he said to Joseph, "Your two sons have bright earthly prospects before them, but, as for me, mine were all buried in Rachel's tomb." But the faith of the dying patriarch looks beyond the end of all earthly joys; and the man who was for ever talking of going down to the grave—now that his feet reach the edge of the grave—looks beyond death and corruption, for if he speaks of Rachel's tomb "in the way of Ephrath," he significantly adds, "the same is Bethlehem." The very spot which closed up the earthly joys and natural affections of Jacob's life is the place from whence would come the One who would bring in everlasting blessing for Jacob's seed. "Thou, Bethlehem-Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be the ruler in Israel whose goings forth have been from old, from everlasting" (Micah 5. 2). One has said, "the tomb of Jacob's earthly hopes was the birth-place of his heavenly ones. Ephrath and Bethlehem were one and the same place. Death and resurrection go together in the counsels of God and the

experience of His people. As surely as Ephrath does the work of death for us, so surely it will become a Bethlehem to us."

Jacob has spoken hitherto, but from this point in the story he speaks as Israel. Jacob the man of nature has recalled the past and seen the end of all his hopes in death, now as Israel (the prince with God) he will declare the mind of God. As Jacob he has seen death ending the plans of man. As Israel he looks beyond death and unfolds the purpose of God (verses 8-11). But the eyes of Israel were dim for age, so that he could not see (verse 10). If heavenly things are opening to him, earthly things are fading from him. And so it is he no longer thinks of the sorrows by the way, but of the goodness of God that had never forsaken him. He owns that God had been better to him than all his natural thoughts. He can say, "I had not thought to see thy face; and, lo, God hath showed me also thy seed."

With the goodness of God filling his soul, Joseph and his two sons for the moment pass from his thoughts, and in the presence of God "he bowed himself with his face to the earth." He has reached the highest moment in his spiritual life—he is a worshipper. This, we know from the Holy Spirit's comment in Hebrews 11., was the crowning act of faith in the life of Jacob. "By faith," we read, "Jacob, when he was dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff." The scheming, the supplanting, the selfishness, and the independence that so often marred his path had passed away, and at last Jacob is marked by faith, dependence, and worship (verse 12).

The result is very blessed. As a worshipper in the presence of God he learns the mind of God. He acts no longer as nature would dictate, but as God would direct. He crosses his hands "intelligently" (N. Tr.), placing the right hand on the younger and the

left hand on the elder (verses 13, 14). Thereupon Jacob blesses Joseph, but does so by blessing his two sons, for the blessing that he pronounces is upon "the lads." He speaks of God according to his experience of God. It is the God that shepherded him all the days of his life—the Angel that had redeemed him from all evil—into whose hands he commends the lads (verses 15, 16). Joseph, allowing his natural thoughts to govern him, and not discerning the sovereignty of God that blesses according to His purpose, protests against Jacob giving pre-eminence to the younger son. Jacob, however, will not give way to Joseph's natural wishes. He is perfectly aware of the course he is taking. He can say, "I know it, my son, I know it." He is not only acting according to the mind of God, but he is doing so intelligently. His spiritual vision was never brighter than at the moment when his natural vision had become dim with age. Another has said, "There never was a man who saw more brightly than Joseph; but Jacob dying, sees the future with steadier, fuller gaze than the most famous interpreter of dreams and visions since the world began."

In Genesis 49. we pass from the private scene between Jacob and his son Joseph and we have the closing moments of Jacob's life to which all his sons were summoned, though here again we shall find that Joseph has a pre-eminent place. The twelve sons of Jacob were the nucleus of the nation of Israel, and thus, under the guidance of God, Jacob uses their different characteristics to give a prophetic outline of the moral history of the nation, and God's purpose for the blessing of Israel through Christ, more especially setting forth the condition of the nation "in the last days" that precede their entrance into blessing under the reign of Christ.

The first three sons present by their characteristics the moral failure of Israel as a nation marked by *corruption* as exemplified in Reuben, and *violence*

as expressed in Simeon and Levi. As such the nation would be rejected. God will not enter into their assembly or connect His honour with those marked by corruption and violence. It is not by such means that the purposes of God will be brought to pass (verses 3-7).

The fulfilment of God's purposes is connected with Judah, for from Judah the King who wields the sceptre, and the Judge who administers the law, would arise, and the gathering of the people will be to Him (verses 8-12).

The King, however, who arises from Judah will be rejected; so for a time the nation falls under the power of the Gentile set forth by Zebulon and Issachar. These two sons foretell how the nation would fall under the influence of the world through the pursuit of commerce, and willingly pay tribute to the world for the sake of ease (verses 13-14).

In Dan we see that through this tribe the nation would fall, like a rider falling backwards. Dan is an instrument of Satan's power, bringing about the apostasy of the nation. But at the darkest moment of their history—when the mass fall under the power of Satan—there will be a remnant who look to the Lord and wait for His salvation (verses 16-18).

When the remnant look to Jehovah for salvation, then the moment of deliverance is at hand, hence in Gad we have the great fact set forth that though the godly remnant may be overcome at first, and pass through great suffering, yet in the end they will overcome. Abundance of blessing for the nation will follow as set forth by the "royal dainties" of Asher (verses 19-20).

Moreover, the nation brought into liberty will break forth in praise as seen in Naphtali, "the hind let loose," and the "goodly words" he giveth (verse 21).

This necessarily brings us to Joseph, a beautiful picture of the One through whom all the blessing will be brought

in. As in his history he sets forth Christ in His supremacy, so in the dying words of Jacob he is the son that is chosen to set forth Christ personally. Christ is the fruitful bough. Jehovah sought for fruit from Israel, but found the nation to be but a barren vine. But in Christ there is fruit for God and blessing for man. Not only by "a well," speaking of one favoured spot, "the land of Israel," but blessing that runs "over the wall" to the far-off Gentile. But the One through whom all the blessing comes was once "sorely grieved" by the archers who shot at and hated Him. He was the rejected one of his brethren. But the One rejected by His own is made strong by the mighty God of Jacob, and "*from thence*" is the Shepherd the Stone of Israel. "From thence"—from the place of weakness—He is exalted to a place of strength; from the place of death where He was "shot at" He is brought again from the dead, as Joseph was brought from the pit, to be the "great Shepherd of the sheep" (Heb. 13. 20). And "the stone which the builders cast away as worthless, the same is made the head of the corner" (1 Pet. 2. 7, N. Tr.).

The rejected but exalted Christ becomes the source of blessing far exceeding all known blessings, for He will bless "with the blessings of heaven above" in addition to the blessings of the deep "that lieth under." Blessing that will far exceed any blessing that the nation has enjoyed in the past. Moreover, the blessing will reach beyond the land "unto the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills." Furthermore, the boundless blessing that will fill this world of bliss will be to the glory and exaltation of the once-rejected Christ—a crown of glory to Him that was once separate from his brethren (verses 22-26).

Finally, in Benjamin we have Christ brought before us as the victorious King of kings, delivering His people, destroying His enemies, and sharing with his people the fruits of His victory (verse 27).

THE ASSEMBLING SHOUT.

(JAMES C. TRENCH.)

“For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God : and the dead in Christ shall rise first : Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air : and so shall we ever be with the Lord ” (1 Thess. 4. 16, 17).

WHAT impresses me most as to the subject of the coming again of the Lord Jesus Christ for His saints is the wonderful fact that accounts for it, namely, *the love of Christ that passeth knowledge*. He loved the Church and gave Himself for it, and He is longing for the day when He shall present her to Himself, “a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing” (Ephes. 5. 27). He has been waiting through the centuries, exercising patience in regard to the gratification of His deep desire—waiting until His Church is complete, the full number of His redeemed of this period made up. Then His assembling shout will awake “the dead in Christ,” and these shall rise first, then “we which are alive and remain shall be changed” by that same voice, and we shall be all caught up in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, to meet Him in the air (1 Thess. 4.). His shout will be one of supreme joy, so long pent up, but now breaking forth that at last the time has come for the blessed meeting to take place.

And as it is His love which inspires His coming for us, so it is only responsive love in our hearts that can make us look and long and wait and watch for Him.

What a chill would come over our hearts were we really to accept the teaching, which is being assiduously

pressed, that what we are to wait for and look for is Antichrist instead of Christ—Antichrist, through whose devilish instrumentality—(governmentally permitted, of course)—the great Tribulation will come both upon Jew and Gentile.

The Christians at Thessalonica, by an epistle bearing the forged signature of the Apostle, had been deceived into thinking that the day of Christ, the time of judgment on earth, was already present (2 Thess. 2. 1, 2). The Apostle reminds them that “our gathering together unto Christ” (the rapture of 1 Thess. 4.) must first take place ; and that the day of Christ cannot come until the “apostasy” takes place and the man of sin is revealed. So that our gathering together to the great open-air meeting in the clouds is the very first thing to take place, and it may be at any moment. Then will follow the apostasy and the revelation of Antichrist and the great tribulation.

It would delight the devil greatly if he could induce the Lord’s dear people to fall in with what the evil servant said in his heart (afraid to preach it openly as is now done), “My Lord delayeth His coming” ; and to turn expectant eyes from heaven to evil, to look for evil happenings here as necessary before the blessed Lord comes for His Church.

HE LOVETH ME !

It is a shadow from the heat,
It is a star to guide my feet,
My pillow, and my night-song sweet,
He loveth me.

He loveth me ! that thought hath flung
A joy and gladness o’er my song ;
Its burden echoes all day long,

HE LOVETH ME !

THE HEAVENLY CALLING—*contd.*

(JAMES BOYD)

The Book mentioned in these papers is "The Judgment Seat of Christ," by D. M. Panton.

THE CASE OF THE WICKED SERVANT.

MATTHEW 25. 14-30 is adduced in this book to prove the assertion that not all true believers shall reign with Christ. It is admitted that the man who had five talents, and also the man that had two, shall reign with Him, but that the man who had received only one talent shall not, though the three are all servants of the Lord. Now this last-mentioned servant brought forth nothing for his Lord from the talent that was given to him, and we learn from the parable of the sower (Matt. 13.), that where the seed of the Word fell into good ground it brought forth, some a hundred-fold, some sixty, and some thirty-fold. Every soul in whom there is a work of Divine grace brings forth fruit; there may be little, or there may be much, but where life is there is activity; and the activity of Divine life is the fruit spoken of, for the life the believer has received from Christ is in the power of the Holy Spirit. Love is one of the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5. 22), and where love is not, God is unknown (1 John 4. 7, 8). This wicked servant brought forth nothing and he knew not God. See the account he gives of Him: "I knew thee that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed." Is that what God is? His own confession proved the darkness in which he was. "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness" (1 John 5. 19). On "them that know not God" His vengeance shall fall at His appearing, and they shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power (2 Thess. 1. 8, 9). Such men as this wicked servant is shall meet their doom in that day.

We are also referred to "the faithful

and wise servant" in Matt. 24. 45-51, and also the evil servant in the same place, and we are told that both these servants are one. Now if they both were one *person* he must be maintained in life throughout the whole dispensation, and Methuselah when he died would be, compared with him, only an infant. To-day he would be almost two thousand years old. The fact is, the whole dispensation is in view, and in the parable we are given to see the way in which the servants of the Lord have departed from Himself. The servants that had a charge in the household of God were at the beginning of the dispensation faithful and wise, for they were directly under the eye of the Apostles, and in most cases were appointed by them; but the profession did not long remain in its primitive freshness. Before the Apostle John had left the world the church had left its first love, and from that day until the present it has gone on from bad to worse. We see the progress of its departure in the seven churches of Revelation. There we get a better insight into the history of the church than we could get in all the books that ever were written on the subject. In the parable we see that which the servants of the Lord became while the church was running its course down through the centuries, from its establishment until it will become so nauseous to Christ that He says: "I will spue thee out of My mouth" (Rev. 2., 3.). It was not long until the servants had usurped the position of "lords over God's heritage" (1 Pet. 5. 3); and *priests* they styled themselves, as though all the saints of the Lord were not priests (1 Pet. 2. 5, 9). Next, the formation of sects and parties and everyone seeking to get as many disciples as he could after himself.

That all who take upon themselves the service of Christ must own Him as Lord need scarcely be said, for other-

wise he would have no right to call himself a Christian. But not all that call Him Lord love either Him or His service. There are many reasons why people enter that service. It is taken up by some as a respectable way of earning a living; by others for the purpose of gaining ascendancy over the souls of men; not so many take it up out of pure devotedness to the interests of Christ. But those who take the place of His servants have the responsibility devolving upon the position, and may have a talent given to them to be used in their service for Him. "Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name have done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matt. 7. 22, 23). The fact of their being servants of His and gifted with power to serve Him does not prove them to be in vital relationship with Him. These certainly were not, for He says: "*I never knew you.*" That He is omniscient and knows all men is just what the Word says (John 2. 24, 25). But here it is knowledge involving intimacy in the Divine life and nature. Jesus says, "I know My sheep, and am known of Mine as the Father knoweth Me and I know the Father" (John 10. 15). This is the intimacy that subsists between Him and all His own, and outside of this is every other human being. The wicked servants are not in this fellowship.

Apostles were specially called of God, and had their mission marked out for them by the Lord Himself. These or their delegates ordained elders in all the Gentile Churches (Acts 14. 23; Titus 1. 5). Others who were gifted by the Lord, evangelists and teachers, went forth in His service, and seemingly without any special call. But whether directly sent forth by the Lord Himself, or whether addicting themselves to the ministry, all were directly responsible to Him, with respect to the way in

which they carried out the service they took up. Whatever they might be, they were His servants, and to Him bound to give account.

Nowadays we hear people talking about having a call to the ministry, and in association with this or that sect, and this call is supposed to be from the Lord, but really it is more often from a congregation of unconverted men, and the man called anything but a child of God. Yet seeing they take this place, the Lord holds them to the responsibility of the position. There were such in the past dispensation, and of them He says: "I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran; I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. But if they had stood in My counsel, and had caused My people to hear My words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings" (Jer. 33. 21, 22). And Peter tells us that as there were false prophets among the people, so shall there be false teachers among you, who shall privily bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bringing upon themselves swift destruction (2 Pet. 2. 1). And Paul: "False apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ" (2 Cor. 11. 13). Even Balaam, a servant of the devil, was taken up by God, and made to set forth the mind of God regarding His people Israel and that in the most glowing terms, yet was he judged on account of his wickedness (Num. 22.-24.; 31. 8).

But yet another question is raised, and 1 Cor. 3. is referred to, in which Paul speaks of the Assembly at Corinth as "God's building," and himself and Apollos as "God's fellow-workmen." Paul, as a wise master-builder, had laid the foundation of the Assembly at Corinth. The foundation was laid in the souls of the saints, and it was Jesus Christ. Later on the Apostle could say to these same saints, when he writes his second epistle to them, "Know ye not your own selves, how

that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates" (2 Cor. 13. 5). The saints are the building, the servants are the workmen engaged on the building. These are not "master-builders"; Paul was that, and the foundation was laid once for all. Those who follow in the work of the edifice need to be careful to build with material that will stand the test. The day of trial is sure to come; some day that shall test all that has been done, and the fire of that day shall destroy and bring to nothing everything that is inflammable, such as wood, hay, straw. There are many builders that build with bad material, turning saints and those that hear them to a sacramental system, the law, and a Christless ritual. These doctrines are worthless to produce or to build up believers, and the work of such builders shall be burned up, and they shall have no reward for their labour. But it does not necessarily follow that he shall be lost; his work shall be lost, but he himself shall be saved as by fire. The builder may be more than a builder, he may be a true saint of God, and in his life as a believer he may bring forth a good deal of fruit; but his service as a builder is lost. All saints are not builders in this sense, though in another sense all are, for we are exhorted to build up ourselves on our most holy faith (Jude 20); but the passage under consideration is the work of a teacher on the saints viewed as God's Building. Paul tells the saints that they were his glory and joy, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thess. 2. 19). And John: "And now, little children, abide in Him; that when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming" (1 John 2. 28). These faithful builders wrought so that they would find in the day of Christ the saints they sought to build up glorified with Christ. Lot lost everything that he possessed in Sodom, but his relationship with God remained uninjured. Scripture says of the bad builder: "He shall suffer loss," and the loss is stated, and no one who fears God will add to His Word. There

is also the destroyer, or defiler, of God's temple, and him shall God destroy. The man who builds with good material shall have his reward. We are not told what his reward shall be. It will be reward enough for him, when he shall see those who have been built up by his faithful ministry in the glory with Christ. But let my reader keep in mind that the Scripture referred to has for its subject *teachers* of the Word, and not simply *saints*. A man might be a very godly saint, and yet very defective in the doctrine of Christ. Therefore he might be unintentionally building with material that in a day of trial would not stand. He might be a bad builder, but in his Christian life there might be produced much of the fruit of the Spirit: "Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Gal. 5. 22, 23). I think I have seen such.

But what about the Israelites who fell in the wilderness, and never reached the promised land? Are the things that happened to them not types of us? Certainly: the Scriptures say they are types of us. Well, they had been all sheltered by the blood of the lamb; they had been baptized to Moses in the cloud and in the sea; they had all eaten the same spiritual meat; they had all drunk the same spiritual drink; but not all entered Canaan. Why? Simply because they had no faith (Deut. 32. 20; Heb. 3. 19) and because they refused to go into the land (Num. 14. 1-23).

But we are told that Israel was standing in grace. The people were brought out of Egypt in grace, and stood in grace up till they came to Sinai, but there they came under the covenant of works, and from that day all was changed. They were placed under law with a little grace added, or none of them had left Sinai alive (Exod. 19. 4-8; 20. 1-17; 34. 6, 7). Had they known the deceitfulness of their own hearts they would never have put their signature to that covenant. But they did sign it, saying, "All that the Lord

hath spoken we will do." No one can inherit blessing on the ground of the fulfilment of their obligations.

But I am told: "Overthrown Israel are a type, either of the believer's eternal destruction, or of his forfeited reward." There are three ways in which Israelites are types of Christians. (1) As sheltered by blood in Egypt, but still in bondage, and viewing God as a Judge. This is a soul in whom there is a work of grace, the blood of Christ giving a righteous ground of passing over those who have turned to Him in faith (Rom. 3.); but the soul not planted on the ground of redemption. (2) The profession of faith in Christ delivered for our offences, and raised again for justification (Rom. 4. 24, 25). This brings into the wilderness where the testing begins. If a soul has not genuine faith he will not go on in the face of difficulties, but in his heart he turns back into the world. This is eternal destruction: "We ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip . . . for how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" (Heb. 2. 1-4). In chapter 12. 25 we are told there is no escape. Should one fall in the wilderness (and many fall there), his case is hopeless. "Many are called, but few are chosen" (Matt. 20. 14). (3) The failure of the two and a half tribes to go over Jordan. The land given to them was from the

Mediterranean to the Euphrates (Gen. 15. 18), but their place of abode was on the west side of the Jordan. The territory on the east side was theirs, but they were not to have their home, but tribal inheritance in it. The two and a half tribes pleaded to be allowed to dwell in the land of Bashan, which was on the east of Jordan, and Moses allowed them to do this on the ground that they went across Jordan armed, and helped their brethren against the inhabitants of Canaan. Now this represents many true believers who refuse to take the ground of heavenly men, but are content to remain down here as justified through grace, and in hope of the glory of God. A large number of so-called evangelicals are in occupation of this ground. They are good men, and well able on certain occasions to contend for the faith and for the heavenly hopes of believers; but to take Ephesian ground, as *risen with Christ*, and seated in Him in the heavenlies—from this they shrink. Those in Egypt have not reached *salvation*, those in the wilderness may or may not have a vital link with Christ, those at home in Bashan have not accepted in any full measure the position into which they have been called by the Gospel. We are not only going to heaven, but we are now a heavenly people (1 Cor. 15. 48). Unbelievers do not enter into the rest of God; we that have believed do (Heb. 4. 3).

PRAYER, ALWAYS AND EVERYWHERE.

Does it matter to the Lord whether we pray or not? It certainly does, for "He spake a parable unto them TO THIS END, that men ought *always* to pray and not to faint." And it is the will of God "that men pray *everywhere*, lifting up holy hands without wrath or doubting" (1 Tim. 2. 8). "ALWAYS" and "EVERYWHERE." No prayer, no grace. And the preacher who excels not in grace excels in nothing. His preaching may be soft and sweet as music; he may be as gifted as Apollo, yet his work will be light as a feather, visionary, fleeting, if he lack grace; and grace comes through prayer, and prayer is the result of devotion of heart to God and Christ and the work of God on earth. The devoted man is the prayerful man, and the prayerful man is the man of grace, and he it is who is fitted to carry the Lord's messages.

“SHEW US THE FATHER.”

(H. J. VINE.)

THESE words expressed the height to which the desires of the Lord's disciples rose.

They had seen His wonderful works, they had heard His gracious words, they had observed His perfect life, and they had contemplated His glory,—as an only one with a father;—and now, Philip says to Him, “Lord, shew us the Father and it sufficeth us” (John 14. 8). After all the disclosures which the One who had come in the Father's Name had made to them, if this were added, then satisfaction would be theirs.

The revelation of the Father is made that our “*joy may be full*,” and that in spite of the failure of men in the assemblies on earth, as well as in every other position in which they have been placed,—but Jesus replied, “He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.” It is vain to look elsewhere therefore, or for some advance on what has been made known in Him. We are limited to the Son for the knowledge of the Father, and in Him He is fully revealed.

Creation may declare a measure of God's glory, and manifest His eternal power and divinity, rendering inexcusable those who do not seek Him; but no one had seen God Himself at any time, until the One who is in the bosom of the Father declared Him (John 1. 18). Indeed, in Matt. 11. 27 we are told, no one knows the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son may be pleased to reveal Him. This clearly confines us to the Son for the revelation of the Father, and that too, according to His Divine pleasure. “No one cometh to the Father except by Me” (John 14. 6).

Those who are begotten of God and have the Holy Spirit,—those who are “the children of God,”—are enabled to appreciate this Divine favour of the Son. In beholding Him they behold the Father; in hearing His words,—recorded for us in the Gospels,—they hear the Father's words (John 14. 10;

17. 8); in seeing His works they see the Father's works (9. 4; 14. 10); and in knowing Him they know the Father (14. 6). The Spirit gives the power for this, and the favour is indeed both high and holy; nevertheless, it must be pointed out, even the babes in the family of God know the Father (1 John 2. 13), for they have, as begotten of God, the nature and the life for this, as well as the power.

Seeing, therefore, the revelation of the Father and of the things of the Father is for all God's children, we may proceed with confidence in our consideration of this. It is truly great and glorious, but the anointing which we have received is all-sufficient to guide into all truth. The Spirit of truth^h has come for this purpose. May we therefore on our side be diligent in responding to His leading, and thus become enriched in spiritual understanding, being filled with the wealth of the disclosures which have been made by and in the Son. To this end we will look first at that which has come *from* the Father, then at that which is *with* the Father, and afterward at *the Name* of the Father, for that tells us what He is in Himself.

THAT WHICH IS FROM HIM.

We speak of what proceeds from Him first of all because this will provide us with clear evidence of that which distinguishes the Father and of the eternity of His most glorious Person. In the inspired writing by John, we are told over and over again that the Father sent our Lord Jesus Christ,—that He came from the Father,—that He came in His Name,—to represent Him, and to be the world's Saviour. Varied and subtle as are the many attacks upon the Person of our Lord Jesus to-day, nevertheless the incomparable greatness of Christ is admitted even by those who would rob Him of some of His distinctions. They own the moral superiority of Jesus as towering above all others!

What then must be predicated of the One He represented? the One from whom He came?—"I came out from the Father and have come into the world," He said (John 16. 28);—and, speaking as a man amongst men, He also said, "My Father is greater than I" (14. 28).—The exalted perfections of the Representative necessarily therefore enhance the glories of the One represented. How great is He who came from the Father! How great, then, must be the Father from whom He came! We will not follow this further at present.

Among other things which have come into this world from the Father are His words,—words of vital and surpassing import,—words which bring eternal blessing and present comfort to those who receive them in faith,—words which nevertheless contain depths of meaning which the strongest minds fail to fathom. These words were given to us by the Son as the anointed Prophet of God, and the voice which spake from the excellent glory upon the holy mount, when He received from God the Father honour and glory, said, "*Hear Him.*" They asked John the Baptist, "Art thou that Prophet?" What Prophet? The Prophet promised by Jehovah, of whom He said, I will put "*My words*" in His mouth (Deut. 18. 18). That One was Jesus, not John. He said of Him, "He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God"; and Peter said to Him, "Thou hast the words of eternal life." Many of the people, too, exclaimed,—when he fed the five thousand in the desert and spoke God's words to them,—"*This is of a truth that Prophet that should come into the world!*" Moreover He Himself said to the Father concerning His disciples, "Now they have known that all things whatsoever Thou hast given Me are of Thee, for I have given unto them *the words* which Thou gavest Me" (John 17. 7, 8). These Scriptures clearly identify the Father with Jehovah of the Old Testament, just as others identify the Lord Jesus with Jehovah. The words are

Jehovah's in Deuteronomy and they are called the Father's in John.

Along with the words were the wonderful works of the Father, and they were works of such a nature, that never had the like been seen in the world before. They also bore witness to the Divine origin of the words. The words and the works were together. The Son, by whom both came, said, "If I do not the works of My Father, believe Me not. But if I do, though ye believe Me not, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in Me, and I in Him" (John 10. 37, 38). When they sought to stone Him He said, "Many good works have I shewed you from My Father; for which of those works do ye stone Me?" They replied, it was not for the works, but the words! Surely the origin of the one bore evidence to the origin of the other! They were too blind to see this; and, having referred to both, the Lord showed that their sin was inexcusable, for in these things they had seen and hated both the Son and the Father (John 15. 24). This was a serious matter, for so awful does it reveal the condition of man to be, that, even along with the outward advantages of religion, he nevertheless hates God. Yet, in spite of that hatred, the works of the Father done by the Son showed forth the mercy, the kindness, the grace, the compassion, the tenderness and the love, as well as the power of the Father, in a way that faith could appreciate and rejoice in. The Lord was desirous that His own should fully recognize this, for it was to them He said, "The Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me: or else believe Me for the very works' sake" (John. 14. 11). Surely they amply expressed the abounding goodness of the Father.

The Apostle Paul spoke of Him as the Father of mercies or of compassions, as well as the God of all comfort or encouragement. These things

find their source in the Father, and flow from Him. James, too, reminds us that every good and perfect gift comes from Him who is the Father of lights, and who Himself knows no variableness nor shadow of turning, whatever may be said of the lights He has given. Again, however great may be the splendour and the magnificence which shall yet fill all things, with Christ as the Centre,—as the Epistle to the Ephesians discloses,—He Himself is said to be “the Father of glory” (1. 17). All comes from Him. Moreover, the Lord spoke of the promise of the Father,—the gift of the Spirit (Acts 1. 4). All these things eloquently proclaim His infinite grace and His Divine greatness; but how vast must be the durable riches and wondrous wisdom of the Father also, for has He not given constitution and distinctive being to every family in the heavens and on the earth? therefore all are separately named of Him, as Ephes. 3. 15 tells us. Finally, does not 1 Cor. 8. 6 clearly show that He is eternal, when it says, There is one God, the Father, of whom are all things? Elsewhere we are told that all things were created by the Son of His love (Col. 1. 16); and the Holy Ghost is said to be the eternal Spirit (Heb. 9. 14); yet this Scripture plainly declares the eternity as well as the deity of the Father, for how could “all things” be of Him were He not before all? The Father’s counsel, the Son’s work, and the Spirit’s power, explain for us the relative activities of Him who is first called in the Bible by that Name of plural majesty,—“ELOHIM” (Gen 1. 1). This is He who said, *Let us make man*; and again we read in Luke 15., *Let us make merry*. There the relative activities of the Son, the Spirit and the Father in relation to redemption are vividly and beautifully illustrated for us. Great and eternal are the joys resulting from the Father’s counsel of blessing.

THAT WHICH IS WITH HIM.

We have seen that all things are of the Father, but the Holy Spirit in

1 John 2. 16 excepts two things: “Because all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (N.T.). These two world-energies,—lust and pride,—have not,—nay, could not,—have their origin in Him, for with Him are righteousness, holiness and love in infinite perfection. Such things, therefore, could not have their source in the Father.

In John 17. our Lord Jesus Christ addressed Him as righteous Father (verse 25), and as holy Father (verse 11). We read, too, of the love of the Father (1 John 2. 15). In all three passages the world is contrasted and exposed. First as ignorant, then as evil, and finally as that which excludes the love of the Father.

Constant familiarity with terms is apt to cause us to lose the sense of the importance of that which they express. In a world of unrighteousness and ignorance of the true God, it should surely be a strong stay to be assured that the One to whom we belong is righteous. Amidst the unholy scenes, too, through which we pass, how comforting to our trusting hearts it is to know that He is holy! And, if the love of the world shuts out His love, we can surely rejoice that the love of the Father filling our hearts expels the other. Nor need we allow the sense of our sinful condition as children of fallen Adam to cause fear and distance. It is rather a cause for thanksgiving that the truth has enabled us to discover this, and to behold the grace which has provided a perfect Saviour and Deliverer in the Son, giving us to avail ourselves also of His all-prevailing sacrifice, so that the righteousness and holiness and love, which are with the Father, are all for us, who through the Son have access to the Father by the Spirit (Ephes. 2. 18). The work of perfect love casts out fear (1 John 4. 18).

In speaking of that which is with the Father we must again remind our

hearts, only One who knew what was there could tell us. The Son alone could "all its secrets tell." And it is in the abiding ministry of the Spirit through John, given after failure had invaded the assemblies, that these riches are fully unveiled for us. It is there "*THE FATHER*" is so named 88 times: 72 in the Gospel and 16 in his epistles; whereas Matthew gives but 3 (11. 27; 28. 19), Mark 1 (13. 32), and Luke 2 (10. 22). It is also in John's writings we have "*THE SON*" so named 22 times, and only ONCE in the Old Testament (Psa. 2. 12), and but 10 times in the rest of the New. These figures speak for themselves, and are consistent with the fact that the Spirit gives us the perfect revelation of the Father and His things in and by the Son through John. The Son was with the Father, and shared along with Him in Godhead glory before the world was (John 17. 5). He came forth from the Father, and, as a Man, the Son of the Father, declared what was with Him from whom He came.

Pre-eminently He made known the love which was there, and though He Himself was truly a man, nevertheless He was still the Son in the bosom of the Father (John 1. 18), and the Father who sent Him was both with Him and in Him (16. 32; 14. 11), as He too was in the Father; therefore, that love which He knew so well could be revealed by Him in perfection; and when He speaks of it as that which the Father had for Him before the foundation of the world (17. 24), we may well rejoice; but when He further says that the Father loves us, who have believed on the Son, as He loves Him, we can only bow in adoration. How marvellous! and yet how true! for the Son has disclosed the fact,—*The Father loves us as He loved the Son before the world's foundation!*

With the Father was also life—eternal life. This, too, He would have made ours along with the love; therefore He sent the Son in view of this, and

the Son came that we might have life, and have it abundantly (10. 10). This, however, necessitated His death, for we were sinners. He therefore died that we might live, and all who appropriate His death have eternal life; but the life itself, "which was with the Father" (1 John 1. 2), has been shown in the Son for our contemplation and delight,—in Him, "the Word of life,"—its embodiment and expression,—who was seen and heard by the disciples. What they saw and heard they passed on to us, and it is in that way we who have believed receive the truth, and with that abiding in us, we "abide in the Son and in the Father; and *this is* the promise which He promised us, *life eternal*" (1 John 2. 24, 25). He that hath the Son hath life (1 John 5. 12), for in having the Son we have the Father also. The Son brought the life which was with the Father into manifestation here, as well as the love, and both are now the portion of His own. This is surely heaven upon earth. No wonder it is said to be made known to us that our "joy may be full" (1 John 1. 4).

We are told, too, that glory was with Him before the world was. In that glory the Son shared, for in John 17. 5 He speaks of it to the Father as "the glory which I had along with Thee before the world was." That surely was Godhead glory. But all true glory finds its source there; and counselled glory through redemption shall soon be fully established. "The Father of glory," "the Lord of glory," and "the Spirit of glory" shall be all in all in a suitable realm of "eternal glory." "The God of glory" shall rejoice eternally in the glorious results of Divine counsel, service, power and love. Foreknowledge (1 Pet. 1. 2) too, being with the Father, along with perfect wisdom, He could elect and predestinate accordingly without flaw.

There is one undisclosed secret, which remains with the Father. It concerns the time of the Son of Man's return in majesty and power (Mark 13. 32; Acts

1. 7). This is by Divine arrangement clearly, and only emphasizes the Son's Omniscience, for it was He who told us of it, and how could He have done so had He been less than He was?

Moreover, all the Father's things are the Son's! This is twice mentioned (Isa. 16. 15; 17. 10). The Spirit makes them known to us. Here again we find evidence of the eternal relations of the Father, the Son and the Spirit. Speaking of the Son *as man* we read of the Father giving Him to have life in Himself, as the Father had; also of Him giving all judgment, and all things, into His hands (John 5. 26, 27; 3. 35). And it was the Father's will that those who saw the Son and believed on Him should have eternal life (John 6. 40). This was His promise, as we have seen, and His commandment too (John 12. 50). How unspeakably wealthy then are those who "continue in the Son and in the Father"!

Space and time fail us to speak of the home, the best robe, the ring and the shoes of Luke 15.; and of the music, the dancing and merry-making, where light and love and life and glory dwell.

THE FATHER'S NAME.

Anticipating His ascension as a man to His Father, our Lord Jesus Christ spoke certain things in the world in the hearing of His own, that they might have the peculiar joy which was fulfilled in themselves (John 17. 13). Among other things, they heard Him tell the Father He had manifested His Name to them (verse 6); and again He said, "I have made known to them Thy Name, and will make it known; that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them and I in them" (verse 26). Of all the disclosures which the Son made when here on earth, none surely surpassed the supreme blessedness of this.

After He had opened the way of life for us through His death, and when He was about to ascend to His Father as the risen man,—the Son of God,—He made it known to those He called His

brethren, that a new relationship was now theirs,—His Father was their Father, and His God was their God (chapter 20. 17). In the life and power of this wonderful relationship, we shall be in liberty to rejoice in the revelation of the Father's Name. Nor must we overlook the fact that though Christ is here seen in John 20. as the risen man, yet in verse 28 He accepts homage as LORD and GOD, because He never ceased to be the Son who was one with the Father (10. 30). Had He only been man, His very perfection as such would have refused this; but He saw that the faith of Thomas had taken in who He was, and He therefore received from him this expression of the dignity and of the deity which were truly His. Moreover, had He not been one with the Father, how could He have fully manifested His Name?—told out what He is in Himself, for that is what it means.

There is an elevated sense of apartness from the world in the truth made known concerning the Father, so Jesus prayed to Him thus regarding His own: "Sanctify them by Thy truth, Thy word is truth." Here in John 17. we have what may be truly called "the Lord's prayer"; but in the prayer after the "*manner*" of which He taught His earthly disciples to pray in "*secret*," and not with "*vain repetitions*," He expresses the same thought of sanctity, "Hallowed be Thy Name" (Matt. 6. 9; Luke 11. 2). That which energizes and glorifies the world in its own eyes is in no sense of the Father, and the love of it is exclusive of the love of the Father, as we have seen. The Son said to Him, while He was in the world, He kept those whom He had given to Him in the Father's Name. Here lies the great truth of preservation as we go through a world of moral evil. So Jesus asked, "Holy Father, keep through Thine own Name those whom Thou hast given Me." If in the Name "Holy Father" we have preservation from the world, so in the Name "Righteous Father" we have the

exposure of its ignorance,—“the world hath not known Thee” (verse 25). Judaism was worldly, so is Christendom; where then is righteousness to be found?—With the Father!—With God! and for the revelation of it we are dependent on the Son. He has made known His Name. The voice from heaven said, “Hear Him.” He came *in His Father’s Name*, and the religionists of that day received Him not (John 5. 43), but in the same verse we are told of “another.” He will come “*in His own name*” and the world-religionists will receive Him, but only to be led into blackness and darkness and wrath. From the present tendencies in this direction there is preservation as we have seen, thank God, in the knowledge of the Father’s Name.

To pretend to honour Jesus Christ, as many do to-day, and yet to remain indifferent to the supreme revelation made by Him, does not savour of genuineness. When He Himself drew near to the hour of the great expression of His love to the Father (16. 31),—when He was about to lay down His life according to the Father’s commandment,—when in lowly obedience He would drink the cup given to Him by the Father, He said, “*Now is My soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour. But for this cause came I to this hour. FATHER, GLORIFY THY NAME.*” That is what filled His thoughts amidst the scenes of rejection and betrayal through which He was passing, and can a true believer to-day be callous as to the glory of that holy Name? The crowd that stood by thought it thundered when the voice from heaven answered, “I have both glorified it and will glorify it again,” while others thought an angel had spoken to Him; but it was the response of the Father to Him who at all costs to Himself sought the glory of His great Name. We do not wonder, therefore, that,—after He had laid down His life to this end, as well as for our eternal blessing,—He was

raised again from among the dead by the glory of the Father (Rom. 6. 4), for He thus expressed His deep delight and satisfaction in the One who had fully sustained the honour of His Name.

It was the Father who sent the Son to be the world’s Saviour (1 John 4. 14); and, in keeping with this, although men crucified Him between two malefactors, He prayed, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” And when risen, He sent the Gospel to every creature, telling the disciples to baptize in the Name of the Father as well as that of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28. 19). Grace, therefore, beams forth in the Father’s Name,—forgiving grace,—saving grace,—grace for the guilty,—grace Divine, as well as holiness and righteousness and love. It has been said, The Father is God in grace. What a proof of this we have in Luke 15.: “I have sinned,” confessed the prodigal! “Let us make merry,” said the father, “for this my son was dead and is alive again, was lost and is found!”

Infinite and varied are the moral splendours that combine to show forth the living glories of that Name of sanctity and grace. Jesus spoke of Him as “the living Father” (John 6. 57); and the eternal life, the eternal glory, and the eternal love known in light and liberty, as we “continue in the Son and in the Father” by the Spirit’s grace and power, are more than sufficient to make our cup run over in the darkest days of the assemblies’ failure; but what will it be when “God is all in all”?—when all that the Father counselled, all that the Son secured, and all that the Spirit gave power for, is fully established in eternal blessedness?

Do we read of Him being addressed as “Father, Lord of heaven and earth” (Matt. 11. 25)? and again, in James 3. 9, of Him who is “the Lord’s Father” (N.T.)?—Do we confess Jesus as Lord (Rom. 10. 9, N.T.)? and “no man can

say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost" (1 Cor. 12. 3).—Do we also read of "the Lord the Spirit" (2 Cor. 3. 17, 18)? Do not these and many other Scriptures identify these three ever-glorious Persons, not only with "ELOHIM" (Gen. 1. 1, etc.), but also with the "LORD our Lord" ("JEHOVAH our ADONAHY"—*plural*) of Psa. 8. 1, 9? His Name of excellence is to be spread abroad over all the earth, and His glory is above the heavens. "In that day shall there be one Jehovah and His Name one" (Zech. 14. 9); but this is HE who put all things under the Son as Son of Man (compare Psa. 8. 6; and 1 Cor. 15. 27-29); and He came to do the work necessary that God might be all in all, and also to show us the Father as we have seen. Moreover, consequent upon His ascension to the Father, the Spirit has come to make good to our adoring hearts that which

has been revealed in and by the Son. Even in this we see the mutuality and oneness of the Persons of the Godhead: the Spirit has been *sent by the Father* as the Comforter in the Son's Name (John 14. 26); He was *sent by the Son* from the Father as the great witness (chapter 15. 26); and *He came Himself* to guide us into all truth (chapter 16. 13). It was concerning the very day in which we live,—the day of the abiding presence of the Spirit,—Jesus said, "In that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you" (chapter 20).

Redeemed by the Son, it is in Him as man we are brought to the Father, whom He has revealed; and the Father has received us with rejoicing in life and light and love and liberty where there is fulness of joy; and the Spirit ungrieved leads us into all truth and deepens our joy in the Father and the things of the Father.

"A LITTLE WHILE."

"A little while, a little while," O Master,
What is it Thou hast said?

The vast train of expectant years grows vaster,
The deep, dark tide of sin flows wider, faster,
We listen for Thy tread.

Hope watching stands, her storm-tossed vessel steering,
But the dark sky vouchsafes no sign of Thine appearing.

"A little while," Faith reads the promise over,
While louder roars the storm—

She gazes keener-eyed than any lover
O'er the night-blackened surges to discover
Some vestige of Thy form;

And oft, the dreary night-watch to beguile,
Repeats, "A little while," He said, "A little while."

But Love, with instinct truer, deeper, keener,
Nor sign nor vision craving,

Garnering Thy precious words up like a gleaner
The golden ears: with heart and brow serener
For all the tempest's raving,

Feeling Thee near, and conscious of Thy smile,
Counts the slow-rolling ages but "A little while."

A STUDY OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

Chapter 2. verses 9-18. *Continued from Oct. 1924, number.* (J. G. STEWART.)

WE SEE JESUS CROWNED WITH GLORY AND HONOUR.

A VERY different sight this from that which met David's view. Nor moon nor stars arrest faith's vision now; a rift in the heavens caused by the entry there of that Man to whom all things are subjected lets the glory through. The heavens are opened! That glory is seen to shine from the unveiled face of Jesus, who is there crowned with glory and beauty. May God occupy our hearts with Him! This brings us into the full light of the coming day.

The words translated "glory and honour" here, are the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew words rendered glory and beauty in the description of the High Priest's dress in Exod. 28., and are so rendered in the Septuagint. On that dress the names of the twelve tribes of Israel were twice engraven; once on the breast-plate and once on the shoulder-pieces. So our names are engraven on the heart and on the shoulders of Christ. His affections are ours; the measure of those affections is shown in the death He endured for us. The love of Christ is strong as death. Blessed be His Name, it is sovereign also; if a man should give all the substance of his house for this love it would utterly be contemned. His strength also is ours; its omnipotence proved in that He burst the bonds of death and rose again triumphant to the right hand of God. Thence He makes us still the objects of His love and strength while we are here.

This at once introduces Him as Priest, in whom we have a present interest and in whose perfections (Thummim) we approach God. All that the Light (Urim) of God had discovered in us, has been put away by His death; while all that Light discovers to us of His perfections is made ours by His grace for ever. "In Him dwelleth all the completeness of the

Godhead bodily, and we are complete in Him."

There are here:—

SIX NOTICES OF THE DEATH OF JESUS.

Three are contained in verses 9 and 10. In these it is the basis of that to which it is referred; that is His Priesthood; His dominion; His bringing many sons to glory. The other three are applications of His death to us to-day, to deliver us from disabilities to worship.—Nothing is made good to us save in resurrection, but that means everything has been forfeited upon any other ground and the penalty of that forfeiture is death. Death is therefore the only righteous basis upon which we can again be brought into blessing of any kind, whether it be remission of sins, of glory, or anything lying between.

Romans 3. 25 tells us God hath set forth Christ the Mercy-seat through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins. While Rom. 4. 24. to 25 says, Jesus our Lord was delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification. Therefore being justified by faith, we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Our chapter shows that the death of Christ is the basis of, not His priesthood only, but of all that which He takes up as Head; and for practical application by us in all the difficulties of the way. The value and efficacy of the blood compasses the whole scheme of glory.

Let us trace this. First we have:—

He entered upon His humiliation, made for a little while inferior to the angels for the suffering of death. This gives the reason for His humiliation. As the Lamb of God He came to take away the sin of the world. But the order of the words in the original show that this was not the final object of

His humiliation, it was but a means to an end. Thank God, all is not closed up in death for us. "Him, who was made a little lower than the angels, we see, Jesus, through the suffering of death crowned with glory and beauty." That is, He enters upon His Priesthood through death. The first seven chapters of Leviticus set forth the sacrifices in all their bearings; then the eighth the Priest is consecrated. This typifies priesthood based on sacrifice. Christ as the Antitype fulfilled this literally, being both Sacrifice and Priest. By the one sacrifice of Himself He fulfilled all the sacrifices as such, setting them aside for the will of God. Then entering heaven by His own blood for us, He took His seat at God's right hand, a Priest for ever. The marks of the Priesthood are seen in the garments of glory and beauty with which He is invested. It would surely be a wrong conclusion to draw from this that He was not personally Priest, or that He did not exercise priestly functions before then. Is it not recorded in type and fact that He did so during His life on earth? Many will presently witness to this. Who was the true Priest to the man who fell among thieves? All who have passed through like experience will join in the common reply—the Good Samaritan! In other words, the blessed Lord Jesus.

Further :—

HIS DEATH IS THE BASIS OF HIS UNIVERSAL DOMINION.

"He by the grace of God tasted death for everything." Jesus is now seen by faith CROWNED with glory and beauty. He is King as well as Priest, and in this is the Antitype of Melchisedec. Aaron reigned over nothing. He had no seat even, his work and sacrifice were never done. Christ has taken His seat upon the Throne of God and there He is crowned, having done for ever with sacrifice. The Mercy-seat of old becomes, by His session there, the Throne of Grace.

He shall reign over all that for which, by God's grace, He tasted death. On their behalf He has fulfilled the Scripture: "O death, I will be thy plague; O grave, I will be thy destruction" (Hos. 13. 14). He shall sit and rule upon His Throne, and He shall be a Priest upon His Throne; and He shall build the house of the Lord; and He shall bring in peace. In a spiritual way this too has been and is being fulfilled now.

In Gen. 14. this priesthood is not seen to be based upon death. Happy in one way, would it have been had death not been needed. But Psa. 110., with Matt. 22. 44, shows it cannot be entered upon officially apart from rejection and death. Who shall say He was not personally a Priest after this order before He entered officially upon the duties of this office? Was there no blessing before this? Surely there was! The hearts of men, the lower creation, the elements, all were controlled, and blessing for man and God ministered.

But if He is crowned with glory and beauty, we are to be crowned in like manner :—

HIS DEATH IS THE BASIS OF BRINGING MANY SONS TO GLORY.

In this case death is the end, the perfection of all sufferings; through these He is perfected in every way. Those for whom He suffered, as stated here, are to be His companions in the glory and the Priesthood. They shall be kings and priests with Him; the reigning not yet, the priesthood already theirs, if not yet in a full sense already entered on. This is typified in Aaron and his sons in Exod. 28. : "Thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother for glory and for beauty" (verse 2). "And for Aaron's sons thou shalt make coats . . . for glory and for beauty" (verse 40). As Aaron is clothed, so also his sons. If Christ reigns in glory, many sons must reign with Him there also.

For this a certain course of conduct was suitable to God, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, the Creator. It became Him! Marvellous thought! For this all the reserve of wisdom and knowledge was drawn upon. For this all the exceeding greatness of His power. He will accomplish His purpose of bringing many sons to glory consistently with Himself, in spite of sin and the devil. But for this it became Him to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering.

Salvation for these sons involves their being brought to glory. Hence all the sufferings of Christ are necessary, right on to death and without this ending none would be efficacious. He must save them every step of the way and right through to the end, which is glory. Through death, if by that means they reach it; or if He comes to take them there Himself He then saves them from it. His sufferings render Him a suitable Priest and Leader under all circumstances. From the time of His first introduction to these sons, His companions, to the end He is with them in all temptations; in the feeblest movements of Divine life in them also, till they reach the glory; into which He ushers them *upon the basis of His Sacrifice*.

We may therefore well sing:—

**OUR TITLE TO GLORY WE READ
IN THY BLOOD.**

God's purpose may mark out the special place assigned to each company and individual in His scheme of glory as it prepared a seat on Messiah's right hand and on His left in the earthly part of His kingdom. But whether for heavenly or earthly glory, the title or basis is redemption by blood.

"Title" means the chief thing or event by which anything becomes one's own. Whether for the all things over which Christ as Melchisedec will reign, or for the special place assigned the favoured sons, Christ's work is

presented as the basis or title. Wherever the glory is presented in Scripture, in connection with ourselves, the death of Christ is closely connected with it. Sinners such as we, could have no other title but the blood (see Eph. i. 3-7).

The above, in few words, gives a short epitome of the kingdom and glory of God. Messiah as Son of Man is King and Priest on the basis of redemption. All things in heaven and earth are component parts of His dominion, with the single exception of Him who put all things under Him. But a special class is brought as sons to glory, a kingdom of priests to God under the great Melchisedec Priest. All the praise that comes up to God through the Millennial age reaches Him through these sons in glory—the companions of Him who with, though above them, is anointed with the oil of gladness—the spirit of praise.

But this is not yet seen as established. Are we then to wait till we are there with Him, before we offer the sacrifice of praise? Far be the thought. No! God cannot wait till then for His praise, this must be continual, perpetual; we celebrate it now by His grace. Indeed there is no other praise ascending to God from earth to-day but that which is produced by His Spirit in the hearts of those who compose His assembly, the sons who are being brought to glory. Earth groans in its sorrow; it travaileth in pain together with the whole creation until now. It is groan, groan, groan on every hand. Not a single note of praise thence. We, too, are linked with the groaning creation, with the body, and groan with it, but in intelligent hope. On the other hand, we are linked by the Spirit with Christ in glory and can sing God's praise after Him even now. Wonderful praise as it comes up from the midst of a groaning creation, through hearts and lips which suffer and groan at the same time. What a contrast!

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

What is the portion of Children who die ?

"What is the present position and place of the spirit of a child who dies before reaching the age of discretion (perhaps twelve years), and when during the first resurrection, as 'they that are Christ's,' is the body raised? Scripture texts are required."—G. J. L.

CHILDREN belong to the Lord. He came to *save* them (Matt. 18. 11), and it is not the will of the Father in heaven that *one* of them should perish (verse 14). The well-known text, "Suffer little children, and forbid them not to come unto Me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 19. 14) shows the Lord's attitude towards them. He claims them as His own, and if they die before they refuse His claims and choose the self-willed way, they must surely go to Him. "Absent from the body to be present with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5. 8) and "with Christ" (Phil. 1. 23) would apply to them as well as to any others who are the Lord's. They will be raised when "the dead in Christ" are raised (1 Thess. 4. 16). Christ's own resurrection is the pledge of this, "Christ the firstfruits, afterwards they that are Christ's at His coming" (1 Cor. 15. 23). Not one of His own will remain in the grave one instant after He has spoken the resurrection word, they "shall hear His voice and come forth" (John 5. 28, 29). This will take place at His descent into the air to catch up His saints to Himself (1 Thess. 4. 15). There is no Scripture to show that infants will have part in the church, which is made up of those who are sealed by, and "baptized into one body" by the Holy Ghost (Ephes. 1. 13; 1 Cor. 12. 13), and

this could scarcely be said of those that die in infancy; but if not, they will still form one of the several families in heaven. Ephesians 3. 15 speaks of "every family in heaven and earth" (see New Translation). They will have their own special place before the Father in heaven even as now their angels do always behold His face.

"There do the lips of babes tell forth His ways.
His wonders deep;
And sweet their song and innocent their praise,
For they have known but heaven's unsullied days
And earth's short sleep
To wake in everlasting gladness there,
Where all is fair.

As to the age of responsibility, we judge that this would vary greatly. Ishmael was fourteen years old when the test came to him. King Josiah began definitely to "seek after the God of David his father" at sixteen. The fact that we get one glimpse of Jesus at the age of twelve is, however, instructive on this point, and experience shows us that it is about that age that children begin to choose one way or the other. Children, as all who are eternally saved, will be in heaven in virtue of the one sacrifice of Christ and on that ground alone.

The Meal Offering.

"What have we to learn from the fact that in Leviticus 2. Aaron and his sons were to eat the remnant of the meat or meal offering, whilst in chapter 6. they were not, as we read—it shall be wholly burnt? Also why in the latter case was half to be offered in the morning and half in the evening?"—W. S. BRADFORD.

IT will help us to see clearly the typical meaning of this offering, and for this we quote from the *Synopsis* of J. N. Darby. "This meal-offering of God, taken from the fruit of the earth, was the finest of the wheat; that which was pure, separate and lovely in human nature [not as we know it, sinful and debased, but as it was in God's own thought] was in Jesus under all its sorrows, but in all its excellence, and excellent in all its sorrows.

There was no unevenness in Jesus; no predominant quality to produce the effect of giving Him a distinctive character. He was, though despised and rejected of men, the perfection of human nature. . . . There was nothing salient in His character, because all was in perfect subjection to God and everything in Him did exactly its service. God was glorified in it, and all was in harmony. When meekness became Him He was meek;

when indignation, who could stand before His overwhelming rebuke? Tender to the chief of sinners in the time of grace; unmoved by the heartless superiority of a cold Pharisee. . . . Such was Christ's human nature." God found His full delight in the Lord Jesus in this character, and all this is revealed for us in the Gospels that we might share with God His delight in His *beloved Son*. He is the bread of God which cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world (John 6. 33). And Christ in this character is the food of the priests, i.e., of those who offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2. 5). This is the privilege of all Christians, but none has the spiritual strength for the privilege, or the spiritual sacrifices to offer who do not feed upon Christ as He is presented to us in the Gospels; in them we are permitted to share with God, as His redeemed saints, His joy in Christ.

In chapter 6. 19-23 we have this offering in its connection with the anointing of the High Priest, and this was special. Of this F. W. Grant in the *Numerical Bible* says, "If we go back to Christ's anointing, when at His baptism by John

the Father's voice proclaimed His delight in His beloved Son, the gift of the Spirit was the seal of the perfection so declared. But to what did it testify? To the preciousness of thirty years of human life which in the inspired history has, it may be said, no place. What it was to God He testifies; He had lived in it to God in the common toil of men—a life of which it is natural to ask, Why should it be hidden from us? . . . It remains, and for us will remain, until we hear it perhaps in the speech of heaven, absolutely hidden, *a meal offering for God alone*. If this be the true interpretation, then we can understand why it was *made with oil, but not anointed.*"

As to halt being offered in the morning and half at night, we may learn that He was the same at the end of the day as at its beginning. We start well, but tire long before we reach the evening often, so variable are we; but He in His life and dependence and obedience was ever the same. He began the morning with, "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business," and He closed His day with the triumphant cry, "It is finished." The morning and the evening were fully and altogether for God.

"Whether we Wake or Sleep."

In the October issue of "Scripture Truth," page 197, first column, there is obviously a misapplication of 1 Thess. 5. 10—the parenthetical observation by the writer giving an exposition by which the passage is made to teach what is contrary to its substance and the bearing of its context.

In 1 Thess. 5. 6-11 the word "sleep" is not that of chap. 4. 14, nor is the subject that of the PHYSICAL condition—dead or alive—in which saints will be found at the Rapture as in chap. 4., but that of the SPIRITUAL condition—state of watchfulness or lethargy—in which they might be found at the Lord's return. The word in 5. 10 is not "wake," but "Watch," as in 5. 6, and is so translated; everywhere else the original—*γρηγορέω*—is used, except that it is given "be vigilant" in 1 Peter 5. 8.

The believers are told in this passage—1 Thess. 5. 4-11—that God had NOT appointed them to wrath, i.e., to pass through the great tribulation, but to obtain salvation—as in Rom. 13. 11—by our Lord Jesus Christ, and this because He died for them, so that whatever their spiritual state might be—watchful, to which he (Paul) exhorts them, or in a state of lethargy, against which they are warned—when the Lord comes they will be taken to live together with Him. Thus will SALVATION BY GRACE, on the ground of Christ's death, be completed.

Perhaps no other passage gives more conclusive proof that ALL believers will be taken at the Rapture, and a true apprehension of this precious scripture is specially needed at the present time. Erroneous teaching that the STATE of soul in which a Christian is found will give title to be taken and to reign with Christ is widespread—thus saints are robbed of "the true grace of God" and turned in upon themselves.—SOMERSET.

WE do not agree at all with the interpretation that our esteemed correspondent puts upon the passage in question. It is not the way of the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures to say, "Whether you are vigilant or careless, whether you are sober or drunken (verses 6, 7), all will

be well, you shall live together with Him at His coming; be not alarmed, you may comfort one another as to this regardless of your spiritual condition." But that is what the passage would mean to us if we accepted our friend's interpretation of it.

It is true that the word translated "sleep" here is the same as in verse 6, and is not the word generally used for the death of a saint; only once is it used to describe death, and that in the Lord's words about the daughter of Jairus, "the damsel is not dead but *sleepeth*." But we should think that the condition of that damsel would aptly illustrate the condition of the dead in Christ in view of His imminent coming. But we would not build upon that; the whole passage is a fervent exhortation to watchfulness in view of the coming of the Lord, and the assurance is given that, whether we wake or sleep, whether we are watching for the Lord—the true Christian attitude, surely—or sleep through Jesus, the future is secure. This is for our encouragement and comfort in regard to those who sleep, as in chap. 4., and as to ourselves, in view of the wrath that is coming upon the world.

We fully agree with our correspondent that "God hath not appointed us to wrath, i.e., to pass through the great tribulation." That is not for the Church, which is heavenly as to its calling and nature, but for "the earth dwellers"

(Rev. 3. 10), and Jesus is our Saviour from this coming wrath which will fall upon them (1 Thess. 1. 10). And we would emphasize the fact that he states, that salvation is all of grace, and our being caught up to meet the Lord in the air is all grace, as will be our place in heaven when we are for ever with Him. We also hold it to be a vital truth that all believers will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and we would use this scripture as one of those that prove it, though not exactly as he does. It is the Christian "we" for which the Lord will come. We also agree with him that the teaching that the *state* of Christians will be their title to go with the Lord when He comes is erroneous and robs the saints of the "true grace of God." We would constantly affirm these things. But this true grace of God gives no licence to carelessness, nor gives anyone the right to say, "It matters not what my state may be at the coming of the Lord, and I may live as the world lives and fear nothing." That would be to turn the grace of God in lasciviousness and be an evidence of a reprobate state; and with this we are sure our friend will agree.

THE SERVANT OF THE LORD.

THE servant of the Lord who would be used by his Master must have:—

HOLINESS OF CHARACTER.

"A vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work" (2 Tim. 2. 21).

GENTLENESS OF CHARACTER.

"The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing" (2 Tim. 2. 24).

HUMBLENESS OF SPIRIT.

"He that is greatest among you let him be the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve . . . I am among you as he that serveth" (Luke 22. 26, 27).

LIVING, ACTIVE FAITH.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you . . . Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full" (John 16. 23, 24).

FERVENCY OF SPIRIT.

"Fervent in spirit, serving the Lord" (Rom. 12. 11).

"Thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot" (Rev. 3. 15).

"THERE AM I.

(J. T. MAWSON.

"For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them."—Matt. 18. 20.

TH**ERE** are times in one's Christian experience when some great truth of God comes home with irresistible power to the soul and leaves an impression there that can never be effaced. Such a time I recall in my experience in thinking afresh of these well-known words of the Lord in Matthew 18. 20. I was a youth of eighteen at the time and an interest in the Lord's work and things had begun to awaken in my life. With some other young Christians I was listening to a very gifted and well-instructed servant of the Lord who had had nearly sixty years' knowledge of and practice of the truth. Suddenly he turned to where we were sitting and asked, "Would you young converts like to meet your Saviour?" And as he paused for a moment my heart answered, "Yes, nothing could please me better than that." But he answered his own question for us and said, "I believe you would run fifty miles to meet your Saviour, but you have no need to do that, for He has said, 'Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.'" Pausing again to let this great saying have its full effect upon us, he proceeded, "When I go to the Lord's-day morning meeting I say to myself, '*I'm going to meet the Son of God.*'"

At that moment and for the first time the immensity of the privilege that lay within my reach broke upon me. I saw that our absent Lord had appointed a place where He could and would meet with those whose love to Him was enough to make them desire to meet Him, and to-day, as then, I feel that nothing on earth can surpass this in blessedness. Things took on a new complexion for me from that hour. I saw that there were two sides to my relationship with my Lord. There was first what He could do and be for

me in His all-sufficient and ever-available grace. I had been learning a little of this, for He had saved me and was keeping me, and I knew that He would hold me fast to the end, for so He had said, and He will never go back on His word; but now another side of things seized my attention. I saw that it was my privilege to be here for Him along with all who loved Him, and that I was to be gathered together with these unto His name. That the purpose of God was that those who love the Lord were to be His representatives during His absence, to carry on His interests and to do it together, and as such, and when so gathered, He would meet with them. His presence in the midst of them was to be their glory and to give character to their gatherings; in them He was to be supreme. This declaration of the Lord became to me a command, a command such as only love could give, yet a command kingly in its character that could not be ignored or neglected without great spiritual loss. Consider the meaning of His words: the now absent Lord declares that He will come to His disciples, to commune with them as His representatives on earth, for "in His name" means that; that He, the great and eternal Lover, will keep tryst with the objects of His affection, and delight Himself in their responsive love, and receive their adoration. The Lord here presents the fact of His presence with His own in its most elementary form, yet He so states it as to leave room for the fullest expansion that may be required by the truth that was afterwards to be revealed by the Holy Ghost whom the Father sent in the name of the Lord Jesus. Could anything be more blessed, more inspiring, more comforting to the heart or strengthening to the faith than His presence in the midst? And if it is so much to us, what must it be to Him who has made the appointment

because His love cannot be satisfied with anything less than the company of those He loves!

It is the Son of God who has said, "There am I." Us, whom He has redeemed by His blood, He has chosen as His companions! Unspeakable grace this is; and His love that passes all knowledge casts out all fear from our hearts before Him. Yet with what reverence we should greet Him! How the great fact of His presence should affect us! What manner of person ought we to be, who go to meet the Son of God! Now all who know anything about it will acknowledge that He must give character to any company into the midst of which He comes. He could not surely give His presence where this were impossible. Where Christ is, there He must be everything. Who would dare to say, Nay, to that? Then this means that not all who claim to have His presence have it because they claim to have it; nor are all who claim to be gathered unto His name necessarily gathered so in truth. There are certain indispensable conditions, and these His grace alone can produce; let us not forget that it must be all of grace, else there would be room for spiritual pride and boasting, which things are an abomination to Him.

In Matthew's Gospel the Lord is King, but the King rejected, and those who rejected Him were rejected by the Father. The haughty leaders of a proud people were not the material of which the kingdom of heaven could be built, the Lord could not gather them into His assembly, and from them were hid the blessed things that the Father had to reveal. They were wise and prudent in their own estimation and so remained in ignorance and death, and babes and sucklings were chosen in their stead. That is chapter 11.; in chapter 21. it is out of the mouths of babes and sucklings that praise is perfected. And these two great things are the joy and occupation of every assembly in which the Lord is—

Revelation and Response—God made known to us as Father, and praise and worship flowing forth as a result.

But only the babes and sucklings enter into this. So here the Lord opens His discourse with the words, "*Except ye be converted and become as little children ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.*" Those whom He gathers together have the character of little children. This is the first essential. But what does it mean? It means that they have turned their backs upon everything that will make much of man, everything in which naturally men boast and trust. They have a new life which does not boast in the flesh but in the Lord. It is the beginning of the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians: "Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world?" Not in the Christian assembly where the presence of the Lord is. These vaunt themselves in the assemblies of men and there they receive the admiration and applause of their fellows, or become the objects of their jealousy and envy. They understand not the things of God, and they are set aside. The cross of Christ which humbles their pride and which they despise and reject bars their way to the true assembly of God, and instead God chooses the foolish things and the weak things, and the base things and the things that are despised, that no flesh should glory in His presence.

These are the little children who delight in the Lord, who have nothing to glory in but the Lord. I repeat that this is the first essential, the first indispensable condition for securing the presence of the Lord. "Learn of Me," He said, "for I am meek and lowly in heart." The second essential comes out in connection with Peter's question, "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?" Peter had felt that the Lord was leading them into an entirely new condition of things, and teaching them what the law had never taught. And he asks

his question with evident surprise. But how he must have gasped with wonder at the Lord's reply: "I say not unto thee until seven times; but until seventy times seven." This is unlimited grace. It is Colossians 3.: "*Forgiving one another as Christ hath forgiven you, so also do ye.*" Peter was too astonished to reply, but we can understand him saying, "Lord, that is not possible to human nature." And we can understand the Lord's reply: "No, it is not possible in human nature, but it is possible in the Divine nature. It is the way I have and am treating you, do unto each other as I am doing unto you." In a word, this is the introduction of Christ.

1. Shut out man and all his pride.
 2. Bring in Christ and all His grace.
- Where saints are on this line they have

the presence of the Lord, and they will know it. Where a company of Christians are weak on this line the Lord's presence will be obscured. Where the pride of man has displaced the grace of Christ there the Lord's presence is not.

Are we impressed with the supreme blessedness of the presence of the Lord in the midst of His own? Is it anything to us that we may meet the Son of God who loved us and died for us? Then ought we not to put it first and make everything, even service for Him amongst men, secondary to it? May God greatly exercise every reader of *Scripture Truth* as to this great thing, so that we may seek and value the presence of the Lord in the midst above all things. We may return to the subject in another paper, if the Lord will.

THE HEAVENLY CALLING—*cont.*

(JAMES BOYD.)

The Book mentioned in these Papers is "The Judgment Seat of Christ," by D. M. Pantton.

THE CHASTENING OF THE LORD.

THREADING one's way through a thicket of error is tiresome work. And such is the book that lies before me, written by a well-known man who is spoken of as "a Gospel stalwart," and in it there is not one solitary truth of the Gospel in the setting in which it is found in Scripture. Had we not been well warned of the departure of professing Christians from the truth, we should certainly have been bewildered as we look abroad upon Christendom to-day. Yet is there a bright side to it all, for it is a witness of the near approach of our Lord and Saviour. This prospect, in the midst of sorrow, may well make our hearts rejoice.

It is asserted that the chastening of the Lord may in many cases continue after the Lord has come, and even throughout His millennial reign. It may even go the length of consigning some to the lake of fire for that period. Some, it is stated, return temporarily

to corruption until the resurrection from death to the great white throne judgment. To have to return to corruption after having been raised in incorruption, power, and glory, and in spiritual bodies, would be a humiliation indeed. But, thank God, there is not a particle of truth in it, nor do I think that many real believers are likely to mistake such falsehoods for the truth of the Gospel.

But perhaps if we inquire into Scripture as to why we are chastened at all, it will help us to understand whether the chastening of the Lord is needful when we are raised from the dead. What light does Scripture furnish as to this? We are told, at any rate, that "When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world" (I Cor. II. 32). Now if a believer got his portion with the hypocrites, or was cast into outer darkness, where there were weeping and gnashing of teeth, or if he were cast into the lake

of fire, would he be condemned with the world? Are outer darkness and lake of fire not the portion of impenitent sinners? Are these judgments punitive, or remedial? Chastening by God is always remedial, and there is not an element of punishment in it. The object of it is "For our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness." This is the object of it, and though "no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceful fruit of righteousness, unto them which are exercised thereby" (Heb. 12. 10, 11). Will a thousand years in "outer darkness," or in "Gehenna," yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness, or make a soul partaker of His holiness?

HOW DOES HE ADDRESS US?

Again, how does He speak to us when He takes up the rod? Is it "Thou wicked servant," or "Depart from Me: I never knew you"? Far from it. He says: "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" (Heb. 12. 5, 6). How different all this is from "Cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites"! It is difficult to imagine such God-dishonouring thoughts being allowed to germinate in any heart that knows the love of God. It is astonishing how far even a saint of God can go in error, if not watchful to keep in dependence upon God. May both reader and writer take warning by the fall of so many strong men, and walk in self-judgment, and heart-reference to God, that he may be kept from the error of the wicked one.

NO CHASTENING WHEN GLORIFIED.

Chastening shall not be required when we are glorified, for the flesh will not be in us. The change of body will have delivered us from that. As far as the work of God in us is concerned we are incapable of sinning. In the

one begotten of God His seed remains, and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God. At present sin has its seat in our members (Rom. 6. 12, 13), though we are not to allow it to reign there. We are to bring the cross to bear upon it: "Our old man has been crucified with Him," and it is our privilege to reckon ourselves to be dead to sin, and alive to God. And in this God helps us by chastening, using various means to this end (2 Cor. 4. 8-11; Heb. 12. 3, 4), for we might forget the *reckoning*, and that would be disastrous.

"Chastisement, but only in this life." For this statement proofs are demanded. Would it not be more consistent for men advancing theories to which most believers are unaccustomed, to give us proofs that in our glorified state chastisement might be needful and administered? But proofs abundant have been advanced for the statement. We are chastised that we should not be condemned with the world (1 Cor. 11. 32). If a believer gets his portion with the hypocrites (Matt. 24. 51), is that not being condemned with the world? If a believer be cast into the lake of fire, is that not being condemned with the world? (Rev. 21. 8). If a believer has to hear from the lips of his Saviour those terrible words: "*I never knew you*," is that not being condemned with the world? (John 10. 14, 15).

But I am informed that chastisement cannot "cancel unrepented offences during discipleship." True: nor can repentance cancel repented offences, either during discipleship or during any other time, either in this life or the next, either in time or in eternity. Not one thing in earth or heaven can do that but the blood of Christ (Heb. 9. 22). That chastening can and does purify the soul, is not to be denied. But when that is admitted another question has to be considered, and that is, What is the nature of the purification? It cannot improve the Divine nature, or the superstructure

that may be raised upon it by the word of truth; nor can it make the flesh any better, for the flesh is incorrigibly wicked. The one that is born of God cannot sin. Of this I have already spoken. He that is bathed is every whit clean (John 13. 10). He is born of water and the Spirit. And, as I have said, the flesh is unmendably bad (Rom. 8. 5-8). What is it, then, that is purified? If the workmanship of God is spotlessly pure, and the old and fallen nature is hopelessly evil, what then? By the chastisement we are subject to death. It is rolled in upon us in such a way that this scene in which the flesh has its home becomes less an object to us, and that world of glory to which we have been called, and He who gave Himself for us, and who is the sun and centre of that world, becomes more precious to our hearts. Thus are our thoughts and affections purified, and our practical lives become more descriptive of Christ. The life of Jesus is more manifested in our mortal flesh (2 Cor. 4. 7-11).

But supposing the old fleshly nature was not in us, and supposing we were that which we are by the work of God, where would the need of chastening come in? Will the Divine nature hanker after this world? The lust and pride that are in this world are both of the flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit cannot be contaminated with its evil. Our mortal bodies, in which only sin can reign, will be changed and fashioned like Christ's body of glory, and we shall be conformed to His image (Rom. 8. 29, 30). Chastening therefore would be unnecessary.

We are told by a propagator of this doctrine that only those in the first resurrection are incapable of dying again. Of believers unworthy of being in the first resurrection "no such assertion of incorruptibility is made." Who are these? I have not come across any hint of such in Scripture. I have already referred to this, and will therefore only remind the reader that the

Word is plain on the subject, and that we are distinctly told: "We shall not all sleep, but *we shall ALL be changed*" : "The dead shall be raised *incorruptible*, and WE shall be changed" (1 Cor. 15); and all at the same moment "*in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump.*" And in 1 Thess. 4.: "The dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive *and remain* shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." There is no other passage in God's holy Word that contradicts or modifies this blessed statement; "Wherefore comfort one another with these words." There is the resurrection of the wicked, who are subject to the second death, but these are not under consideration.

That chastisement will not end with the present life, the "many and plain proofs" given are proofs of nothing of the kind. Those denied by Christ, that are cast into hell fire, into outer darkness, cut asunder, have their portion with hypocrites, or to whom Christ says: "I never knew you," are lost for ever. Wicked servants, fornicators, adulterers, idolaters, effeminate, abusers of themselves with mankind, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners, shall find their eternal portion in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone (Rev. 21. 8). Let all who read these lines beware that they be not deceived with the soul-destroying falsehood, that only a few years, even in Gehenna, are all that they need fear, and in the end they shall come forth and reign for ever with the Son of God. These men may complain that they are assailed with hard words. No words that could be invented are hard enough to set forth the utter wickedness of such spiritual poison. I say to every soul, be he who he may, if any of these wickednesses characterize you, and you die as you have lived, not the loss of the kingdom only, but the loss of your soul for all eternity, shall be your unspeakably miserable reward. How good it is to know that even should you

find yourself in this catalogue of sinners, there is in this day of grace the assurance for the penitent that : " All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men." Such had been some of the Corinthians, but they were washed, sanctified, and justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God (1 Cor. 6. 11). Do not for one moment suppose you can forfeit reigning with Christ, and be blest in the eternal state. I see no way into the eternal state except through the kingdom.

TO WHOM ARE THE EPISTLES WRITTEN ?

The answer to the question is this : They are written to all in every locality who have been gathered out of this world to the name of Christ by the preaching of the Gospel. The effect of the preaching we find in Matthew 13. There we have three classes of hearers : those who hear, and pass on without any effect being produced. The devil takes the seed out of the heart, as the birds of the air pick up the seed that falls on the wayside. Then we have that which falls into stony hearts, in which there has been no ploughing up of the conscience ; the Word is received at once with joy, but taking no root, when the sun rises it is scorched. Tribulation or persecution makes such abandon Christ. That which is sown among thorns is choked by the cares and riches of this world, and is without fruit. But he that received the Word into good ground, is he that heareth the Word, and understandeth it ; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty. The last only are saved souls.

Now, people are received on their profession of faith in Christ, and as neither the apostles nor anyone else is omniscient, there cannot be but a mixture in the professing church. Hence all the warnings that are to be found in every epistle. I do not infer that these warnings are not really valuable

to the saints, for they certainly are. People brought out of the darkness and degradation of heathenism, and Jews also brought into the true light, require to have set before them the truth as given to us of God, and to be well warned as to the consequence of walking in the darkness out of which they had been gathered. Also from the beginning there were evil teachers who swarmed over the assemblies, seeking to turn them away from the faith and corrupt their morals. And these were in the profession of Christ. Among the Corinthians there were those who denied the resurrection of the dead (1 Cor. 15.). Then in 2 Corinthians we find those who sought to turn the saints away from the apostle (chap. 10. 10, 11). The apostle also refers to very wicked men, " false apostles, deceitful workers," servants of the devil, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ ; and says that their end shall be according to their works (chap. 11. 4-15). In all the epistles we have these warnings, to which we should take heed, for " By the Word of Thy lips have I kept me from the paths of the destroyer " (Psa. 17. 4).

To return to Matthew 13., it is not only that there is a mixture on account of the way in which the Gospel is received, but the devil himself introduces tares among the wheat. Then there is the mustard tree, a monstrosity ; the leaven, corruption. This is the external aspect of the kingdom at this present time. The treasure and the pearl ; all that is precious to Christ is in it, but not so manifested to the natural eye as to be distinguished from the lifeless profession. But in the net cast into the sea we have a picture of the whole effect of the preaching during the dispensation of grace ; and when the net is full the fishermen draw it to the shore, and the work of selection begins ; they put the good into vessels, and cast the bad away. Now we have come near to the close of the dispensation, and we see

that this work has begun. The Lord alone knows them that are His, but we can judge men by their fruit, not with absolute assurance as to His own, but we are to accept all that call on the Lord with a pure heart; and those who do not bear the characteristics of the children of God we reject. It does not seem that selection takes place until the net is full. If selection, which certainly is practised at the present time, is of God, then we rest assured that the end is near.

It is to the profession, viewed as the result of the sowing of the seed, that the epistles are written: "All that call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor. 1. 2), but viewed as the Assembly of God in the place, and addressed as saints; for this all are held to be, until otherwise manifested. Hence the warnings against the allowance of the flesh, the indulgence of the carnal appetite, the slipping away from the Word of salvation, and the possibility of apostasy from Christ. In 1 Corinthians they are warned against trusting to the ordinances of Christianity (chapter 10.); having fellowship with idolaters, and going on with filthiness of flesh and spirit (2 Cor. 6., 7.). In Galatians we find they were going back to law, and to circumcision, and they are told that if they do this Christ shall profit them nothing (chapter 5. 2). In Ephesians they are reminded that because of the allowance of the flesh the wrath of God comes upon the children of disobedience; also in Colossians we have the same thing, and a warning given them. Their presentation before the fulness of the Godhead, as holy and unblameable and unreprouvable, depended upon their continuing in the faith, and not being moved away from the hope of the Gospel (Eph. 5. 5, 6; Col. 1. 21-23;

3. 5, 6). But need I refer to more Scriptures? We get the same thing everywhere—2 Timothy, 2 Peter, and Jude. By all these Scriptures are we warned, and in them our path is clearly marked out for us, while they serve as an alarming voice to the consciences of those who may be found trusting in the ordinances that, however precious they may be, cannot save the soul.

But in all this there is not one single text of Scripture to cause the faithful heart the least fear that he may not be a companion of the Christ in the day of His reign. Even the Corinthians are assured that our Lord Jesus Christ "shall confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 1. 8). Of the purchased possession we have already got the earnest of that inheritance, in being "sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. 1. 13, 14). In Phil. 1. 6 Paul speaks of being confident of this very thing: "That He that hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." As to Colossians, he says: "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory" (chapter 3. 4). Of this blessed hope we have everywhere the most blessed assurance. "We have boldness in the day of judgment, because as He is, so are we in this world" (1 John 4. 17). "Whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified" (Rom. 8. 30). Our Lord prays for "Them that believe on Me through their word," and says, "The glory that Thou has given Me I have given them, that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me," etc. (John 17. 22, 23).

THE GRACE OF GOD.

Grace originates in the heart of the person who confers it. My want can never be the measure of the grace of God, though His grace covers all my want. Grace is the display of what God is to me and must ever be greater than my need. So it is written—"where sin abounded grace did much more abound."

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH. No. 1—Preliminary.

(A. J. POLLOCK.)

ONCE on a while the attack on the Christian faith came from the *outside*, from avowed enemies of the Bible, who refused to believe in the God of revelation. Their work was openly destructive and iconoclastic, leaving nothing behind but moral wreckage and the destruction of faith. Generally speaking, their attack on the Bible was couched in ribald and obscene language, and found acceptance among the dregs of society. Men of impure lives, and not too particular about *meum* and *tuum*, were attracted to a system which put no restraint on the conscience. The doctrine of no heaven, to which they were not attracted, was more than compensated in their minds by that of no hell—no responsibility to God and no punishment for their evil deeds.

That attack has failed. Tactics have changed. The assault now is from the *inside*. Where open onslaught has failed TREACHERY is succeeding.

It reminds us of the siege of ancient Troy. For ten long years the Greeks besieged the city without avail. In the end what they could not achieve by *outside* attack they secured by stratagem.

Picked warriors were secreted within a monstrous wooden horse. The Greek army retired from before the walls of Troy. The Trojans, believing that the horse was a miraculous gift from their gods, dragged it within their walls, treating it with the honour a gift from the gods should command.

At nightfall the Greeks again approached Troy, whilst their comrades, emerging from the horse, opened to them the gates of the town, and by this means Troy was captured.

In a similar way the enemy has sought to undermine and destroy the Christian faith.

Beginning with Higher Criticism, emanating in the main from German

scholars, who one and all disbelieved in the deity of Jesus and refused the inspiration of the Bible, the attack has been proceeding in an underground, insidious fashion, till scarcely a theological chair is sound in its teaching.

The teachings of the out-and-out infidel, Thomas Payne, once refused as blasphemous, are now being unblushingly proclaimed from many a pulpit under the heading of "the assured results of scholarship."

The attack is on Christ and the Scriptures—Christ, the *living* word, and the Scriptures, the *written* word. One thing is certain, a fallible Christ cannot be the Saviour of mankind, and a fallible Bible cannot be the foundation of anything. The success of the Higher Critics means, to be logical, the utter destruction of faith.

Tennyson was fond of saying: "It is hard to believe; it is harder not to believe." And certainly Higher Criticism or Modernism demands far more credulity on the part of their followers than the Bible demands faith on the part of the humble believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

In truth the conflicting forces are now in deadly grips. The believers in the infallible Bible and the infallible Christ are termed Fundamentalists and the rest are termed Modernists, and between the Modernists and Fundamentalists no quarter is asked and no quarter given.

Send an earnest Christian young man to a theological college to-day, and it will be a miracle if he comes out unscathed.

Said a young man, who had been to a celebrated university city: "I've attended the university preachers during my undergraduate days, and, thank God, in spite of that, I'm still a Christian."

Can anything be more pitiable than such a state of things as this reveals?

The Editor of *Scripture Truth*, feeling the seriousness of the trend of to-day, has kindly extended the hospitality of his magazine to the writer for a few articles on this burning theme.

In these articles the writer proposes to limit himself in the main to evidence that lies between the covers of the Bible itself.

A young man, imbued with infidel notions, and what often accompanies this—a fair conceit of his own powers of mind—asked his minister to recommend him books which would prove to him that the Bible was inspired.

His reply was: "*Read the Bible.*"

The young man answered, "You misunderstand me, sir. I want you to recommend me to books which will prove the Bible to be true."

The minister replied: "I made no mistake. *Read THE BIBLE.*"

So it is to the Bible itself we turn. The Bible is its own defence. The Bible itself prepares us for the situation in which we find ourselves to-day. Matthew 13, is an outstanding chapter, containing the parables of the kingdom of heaven, which were given by the Lord to His disciples. In them He outlines with prophetic vision the trend of the Christian profession, arriving finally at the condition of the present day.

First there is the parable of the wheat and tares, illustrating the first great device of Satan, seeking to corrupt and undermine the things of God. At first the Christian assemblies were only composed of true believers. By-and-by "while men slept"—while the Christian assemblies declined from "first love" and got careless—mere professors, answering to the tares, found an entrance into the circle of true Christians.

What a master move of Satan, and what bitter fruit it has borne! The point is too patent to be laboured. What condition can true believers be in when they can knowingly associate

in full church membership with unbelievers?

In full Christian fellowship—these words cannot be used in such connection, for no believer can receive another believer into that. That must be the act of a higher power than ours—even the act of God Himself by the Holy Ghost. Oh! the shame of seeing mere professors openly acknowledged as Christians, and occupying high positions, whether in the Romish or Protestant circles.

The next parable was that of the mustard seed—the smallest of seeds—growing into an abortion—the greatest among herbs, a tree, the birds of the air lodging in its branches. In this is delineated the next move of Satan in his scheme of corrupting, defiling, debasing, and, if possible, destroying Christianity.

With unconverted ambitious professors of Christianity carrying along with them sleepy, unspiritual Christians, Satan set out to make Christendom a great world power—such an idea contravening the whole spirit and essence of Christianity.

Did not our Lord say of His own, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John 17. 16); did not the Apostle Peter beseech the believer's as "strangers and pilgrims" (1 Peter 2. 11); did not the Apostle Paul say of the saints of God, that their "conversation [Greek *politeuma* = citizenship] is in heaven"? Yet we find the professing church of God clamouring for a place in this world; whether it be the church of Rome, whose chief bishop, the Pope, claims superiority and jurisdiction over emperors and kings; or the Establishment, which unblushingly is united to the State, and owns as its head the king of the realm; or other denominations, which each in its way strives for acknowledgement as great and influential bodies in this world. And yet their Lord and Master is rejected, whose followers' highest privilege is to

suffer with Him as they hope to reign with Him, when the hour of His supremacy arrives, as it surely will.

Then we have the parable of the woman hiding the leaven in the three measures of meal, thus prophesying that little by little the leaven of evil doctrine should permeate the profession of Christendom till the whole is leavened. Has this process not been going on since the apostolic age, till now we are face to face with an unthinkable state of affairs? Would it be believed that professors in theological chairs should be denying the inspiration of Scripture, the virgin birth, the deity of Jesus, and that in some cases even the resurrection of Christ is questioned?

Moreover, we have the presence of crank religions, mostly hailing from America, and whilst presenting strange and differing details betraying their Satanic origin in uniformly denying the deity of the Son of God and His true manhood and the atoning character of His work of suffering on the cross.

The Bible, too, prophesies the

approaching apostasy of Christendom, the complete abandonment of the Christian faith, which only needs the withdrawal of the true church to heaven at the second advent of Christ, to bring it within very measurable distance of fulfilment. We are told by the Apostle Paul: "The mystery of iniquity doth already work" (2 Thess. 2. 7), and the Apostle John tells us: "Even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know it is the last time" (1 John 2. 18).

The question is asked in Luke 18. 18, "When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?"

It says something for the inspiration of the Bible that many hundreds of years ago it delineated so accurately the trend of things and how they will culminate in the last days—these things on every hand shaping themselves with startling fidelity before our very eyes.

Is there any other book in the world of which this can be said?

(To be continued.)

FOR SATISFACTION OF HEART.

"IT is Christ in humiliation, suffering and death that wins our hearts, but it is Christ in glory that satisfies them." He is not in heart and nature any other than He was when here in suffering, but in considering Him in those sufferings we are looking back, and that is not enough. We need Him as a present reality, and by the Holy Ghost come down from heaven He may be that to us all. Some of us have tender and cherished memories of those we loved in the past, but as far as they are concerned the present is a blank, and the more precious the memories the greater the blank; it would be even so with Jesus did we not know Him as living and glorified. He abides, and the Holy Ghost has come to bear witness to us of Him, to make Him so real to us that He lives in our hearts. We have not

lost Him. Were this not so, we should be like the disciples between His death and resurrection, who might have remembered what He had been to them, but had no present realization of Him; or we might be as those who had merely heard and believed a report about Him, this would not be enough for present satisfaction of heart. We do not feed on memories, but we exult in His company and love, from which no power can separate us, if we know the true power of Christianity. All that He ever was He is, and we become the more attached to Him as we learn what He was in the all-attractiveness of His grace. And He abides, and as we know this by the Holy Ghost we prefer Him to all else; sin, the world, self, all fade from our view because of the treasure we have found in Him. And He is our life and we live in Him.

THE BEST ROBE.

(J. T. MAWSON)

WITH considerable pleasure we listened to an old French missionary as he spoke of his labours among Mohammedans in Northern Africa. One day in the market place of the town in which he was living, he told us, a crowd of men gathered round him with many questions. Eager to gain an advantage in argument over the solitary Christian, his questioners declared that in their religion they had 250 prophets and demanded to know how many prophets the stranger from across the sea could boast in. He replied that he could only boast in one, who was not only a prophet but the Saviour—the one and only Saviour—the Lord Jesus Christ. A burst of derisive laughter greeted this confession, for the crowd believed that the religion that could boast in an array of 250 prophets must be vastly superior to that which had only one.

Now, just at that crucial moment in the argument an old man spoke up, and wise were his words. He said: "Here are we with a religion that has 250 great prophets, and we are all clothed in rags; and there is the stranger with a religion that has only one prophet, and he wears a good suit of clothes; let us hear what he has to say."

It was a good point, and that weary and ragged old Mohammedan spoke truer than he knew, for the missionary wore a garment that he could not see, a garment spotless and without a flaw. No religion of works can supply such a garment, no matter how venerable its claims, or high its standard of ethics; the best that the best of these religions ever produced was filthy rags, for so Isaiah 64. 6 tells us. But grace is different. The law, and every other law, is weak through the flesh, but grace gives—it gives the best, and it gives it to the worst. It was so in the prodigal's case, in that story which has been rightly called the pearl of parables. There the rags gave place to the best robe that the father's house con-

tained. It was grace that did that, the sovereign unmerited grace of the father.

Nothing less than this will do for us if we are to dwell for ever in the presence of God, and nothing will please Him but this, we must have His best. Naked are all they who have not this robe that He gives, clothed for ever in garments imperishable and fair are all who have received this gift of righteousness from His hand. When the prodigal stood up in his father's house he stood erect, and there was nothing more splendid there than he, for he was clothed in the best that house contained, and he could boast in the garment that he wore for it was the gift of the father's grace to him.

Oh, glorious truth is this! The blood, the precious blood of Jesus wipes out for ever our countless sins, and we are clothed in Christ, our risen, glorified Lord, for He is made unto us righteousness, and in Him we become the very righteousness of God—and are holy and without blame before God the Father in love. Who would dare to say such things as these if God had not first said them? But He has said them, and we believe God.

It is this that God would have us understand and enjoy; in this, His own grace in Christ Jesus, He would have us to boast, and tell it out to others. Yes, to sinners everywhere, clothed in rags and by sin defiled—to all God proclaims the forgiveness of sins, and offers the wedding garment, a robe not wrought by the power or wit of men, but produced by God's own fingers.

And *one* Saviour has made this possible, without aid or helpers He accomplished the great work, and set God free to bring forth in perfect righteousness the riches of His grace. Only one Saviour, but able to save and clothe all. This is the message that the servants of the Lord may carry, and should carry, to the uttermost part of the earth.

CHRISTIAN CONFLICT.

(F. B. HOLB.)

THERE has been so much controversy and fighting amongst believers, carried on in a not very becoming spirit, that to many Christians the whole idea of conflict has become highly objectionable, and the natural swing of the pendulum has carried them into a mental attitude which comes perilously near to being that of "peace at any price." Others again there are, who though unwilling to definitely compromise with evil and therefore prepared to separate from it in the last resort, yet cannot bring themselves to resist it in any way that would involve conflict and fighting in the cause of truth.

There are of course some Christians of a combative spirit. Being naturally pugnacious they do not need to be urged to fight, they only need to be urged to fight a *good* fight, and to let it be the fight of *faith*. The rest of us, however, are more in danger of displaying the spirit of fear, rather than that of power and love and of a sound mind, and consequently of being ashamed of the testimony of our Lord; we need, as a result, to remember that we are each called to be "a good soldier of Jesus Christ."

There is no escaping conflict while we are in this world. The situation is such that in one way or another we are bound to meet it, even though we diligently avoid it. We may indeed borrow the figure which the prophet Amos used in connection with the day of the Lord and say that it is, "As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him." The more we scheme to escape fightings without, the more likely we are to fall victims to the conflict produced by uneasy misgivings and fears within.

One distinction must be clearly drawn at the outset; there is much conflict experienced by Christians which is by no means proper Christian

conflict. Proper Christian conflict is described in such Scriptures as Ephesians 6., and 2 Corinthians 10., with sundry allusions to it in other of Paul's epistles. What is described in Romans 7. and Galatians 5. is conflict truly, and of a sort that no Christian can well escape, yet it is of a preparatory nature, as being fitted to qualify the believer who goes through it and learns the lessons that it is designed to teach, to take up the wars of the Lord as a good soldier of Christ.

Romans 7. gives us the earliest experience that can be spoken of as conflict. It is an old saying that it takes two to make a quarrel, and what that chapter details for us is an experience that must be utterly unknown until the renewed mind, the "inward man" is possessed. As born of the flesh we are flesh and nothing else, and consequently the reign of flesh is absolute and undisputed; it is only when born again that we possess the "inward man" of which Romans 7. 22 speaks, and conflict becomes a possibility. True, the conflict described in that chapter is a very one-sided affair. The victory seems to lie wholly with the flesh, for the cry is, "The good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do," and consequently, "I am carnal, sold under sin." Had it been "The evil which I would not, that I *sometimes* do," or even, "that I *frequently* do," it would have left room for an occasional gleam of victory. As it is, the gloom of defeat is unrelieved. The "inward man" is there, but in practice is overwhelmed by the flesh. The "law of the mind" is subjugated and rendered impotent by "the law of sin which is in the members."

If we ask—what has produced this distressing experience? the answer is—the law. The chapter opens with a statement as to the law, and the relation to it of both the Jew and the Christian. It goes on to detail the

practical workings of the law upon the renewed mind, and one of its most significant features is the omission of all reference to the Spirit of God. Now it is not God's purpose or desire that anyone should remain permanently in this distressing condition of impotence and defeat. Hence chapter 8. follows, and this chapter begins with Christ and the Spirit of God. The law is only mentioned in verse 3. to be dismissed as supplanted by God's own act in and through the death of Christ, and the rest of that wonderful chapter is simply full of the Spirit of God, the varied capacities He fills, and His many activities.

The two chapters, then, are in sharpest contrast—chapter 7., the action of the law upon the renewed mind, only making it acutely conscious of impotence and defeat; chapter 8., the action of the Spirit of God, making it conscious of liberty, life, relationship, coming glory and present omnipotent love which leads to believers being not only victorious, but "more than conquerors."

Still, even so, the conflict described is in the main an internal one, preparatory to the believer being able and fit to enter into the conflict which is properly Christian. It is, so to speak, the clearing up of a condition of civil war and internal strife. Only when that is settled can the wars of the Lord be entered upon by any of us.

Galatians 5. has the same internal conflict in view, but approaches the subject from a different angle. If Romans 7. is the flesh versus the inward man instructed and enlightened by the law, Galatians 5. is the flesh versus the Spirit, and the position is exactly reversed. The renewed mind, directed and urged forward by the law, is no match for the flesh; but the flesh is no match for the Spirit. Still, by the possession of the Spirit the personality and individual responsibility of the believer is not suppressed. He has to walk in the Spirit, and then, and only then, he does not fulfil the

lusts of the flesh. Then it is that he does not do the things that otherwise he would.

When we turn to Ephesians 6. we have a conflict contemplated which is distinctively Christian. The Ephesian epistle sets forth the Christian calling and the church's place according to the splendour of the thoughts and purposes of God. All is made known to us that we may be in the power and strength of these great realities, and thus live our lives in this world, and fulfil our various earthly relationships and responsibility according to them. When the apostle reaches the final point in his epistle (6. 10), he assumes that his readers are standing in the full power and enjoyment of these realities, and instructs them as to the whole armour of God which they must take and wear if they are to stand.

The greatest possible testimony in this world is the saint standing in the full consciousness and enjoyment of the calling and the purposes of God. Hence the devil and his agents always make the most strenuous efforts to dislodge such an one from the spiritual *condition* which alone makes the *position* an effective testimony. His efforts consequently are directed against the truth, the righteousness, the peace, the faith, the practical salvation, the Word of God, and the prayers which are the preserving elements of Christian life; and to maintain these seven things, and wear them as the armour of the soul, needs no small measure of diligence and watchfulness.

Jude, in his epistle, exhorts us to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints," and he does not close his brief word without intimating in verses 20 and 21 that our spiritual condition must be sound if we are to earnestly contend aright. Our contention, however, and the conflict it may entail—which is obviously one branch of proper Christian conflict—is carried out in the world of men. The conflict of Ephesians 6. lies behind all that. It takes place

not in the visible world of men, but in the unseen realm of spirit. "Our struggle is not against blood and flesh, but against principalities, against authorities, against the universal lords of this darkness, against spiritual power of wickedness in the heavenlies. For this reason take to you the panoply of God . . ." (6. 12, 13, N.Tr.).

We know but little about these great spiritual forces of evil which are at the disposal of Satan. We are permitted to get an occasional glimpse of their activities in Scripture, as, for instance, in Daniel, where we see them engaged in endeavouring to thwart God's purposes in regard to Israel. It is probable, too—alas!—that we know still less as to any actual conflict with them, inasmuch as we are so little, if at all, in the spiritual condition, coupled with the knowledge of the full Christian position, which makes it worth while to them to attack us. Still they exist, and doubtless are the originators of many of those trying, yet obscure trials and testings, which can only be met by having on the whole armour of God.

If any of our readers find the contemplation of conflict such as this rather terrifying, we would like to reassure and encourage them by mentioning a fact which is not apparent in our authorized translation. The Greek word translated "rulers . . . of this world" ("universal lords," N.Tr.) is *kosmokrator*, world-ruler. These evil spiritual beings bear rule, but their power is restricted to the limits of the *kosmos* or world-order which has been affected by sin. In 2 Corinthians 6. 18 we have God assuring any of His saints, who may suffer by reason of faithfulness in separating from the world, of His Fatherly grace and protection, and He presents Himself as the Almighty, the *pantokrator* = the Ruler of all things. We shall not tremble before the rulers of the world-order if we realize that we are under the protection of the Ruler of all things.

Another phase of proper Christian

conflict comes before us in 2 Corinthians 10. 3-5. The conflict of Ephesians 6. is, as we have seen, mainly defensive: the only offensive weapon named being the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. Here the conflict is essentially of the aggressive, offensive order, and there are weapons: the word is plural, for there are more than one. These weapons are effectual to "the pulling down of strongholds; casting down imaginations [or, reasonings, margin] and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." Here is a task which involves conflict indeed! To pull down strongholds of stone or iron is easy compared with dismantling strongholds of unbelief and of the powers of darkness, and casting down the vain reasonings of darkened yet proud and self-satisfied minds, so that the whole soul and mind, and every thought in that mind, is in subjection to God with a glad and ready obedience like the obedience of Christ.

Is this the objective of Christian warfare? Does the servant of Christ go forth into the world with the Word of God with such a task before him? Then we instinctively and at once feel that nothing but superhuman and miraculous power can avail. To pit mere human eloquence, or learning, or skill, or intellect against such strongholds; to attempt to wheedle men round the corner of their rebellion and self-will by those arts and sciences which appeal solely to the sentiments and emotions, is worse folly than that of attacking Gibraltar with a peashooter. Nothing but the power of God will do.

Yet the power of God works *through His people* to this end, and through weapons which are not carnal but mighty *through God*. What are these weapons? Well, see the apostles in Acts 6.! Well clad in that spiritual armour which enabled them to turn aside the attempt of the "world rulers

of this darkness" to divert them from their true service to "serving tables," they address themselves to their proper business saying, "We will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the Word." The ministry of the Word, or as 1 Corinthians 1. 18-21 puts it, "the preaching"—"the preaching of the cross," is one great spiritual weapon. Prayer is another.

When it is a question of the Word as the link between our souls and God the order is, first the Word of God and then prayer. He must speak to us before we speak to Him. When it is the Word flowing as testimony from us to men, the order is, first prayer and then the ministry of the Word, for we must begin by recognizing our absolute dependence on God, and speak to Him before we speak for Him.

Neither prayer nor the ministry of the Word, if carried out after the apostolic pattern (see 1 Cor. 2. 1-5), would strike the man of the world as powerful weapons. As a man after the flesh he would only appreciate fleshly weapons, and if religiously inclined, he would wish to enlist, in the good cause of bettering humanity, all the usual agencies which experience has shown to exert an influence on men's minds. His human weapons will produce *human* results which doubtless often carry with them a certain amount of human benefit. Spiritual weapons alone produce *spiritual* results. If we use these which God has appointed, then they become "mighty through God" to accomplish *Divine* results. The spiritual weapons we have named are not of course the only ones. In Matthew 17. 20, 21, for instance, the Lord Himself mentions *faith* and *fasting*,

in addition to prayer, as spiritual weapons.

It is of course very much easier to use a carnal weapon, if we happen to possess it, than a spiritual one. If a man is naturally brilliant and consequently able to wield "excellency of speech or of wisdom," he will find it far easier to move people by an oration sparkling with gems of rhetoric or knowledge, than to be a vessel of God's power through faith and prayer and fasting; and he may even deceive himself into counting all the surface results of the former methods as genuine! Yet only that which is wrought by the power of God abides.

Many of our readers may entirely agree with us that it is very easy to pick up carnal weapons and use them in connection with the work of the Gospel, since they are so lavishly used in Christendom to-day, and heartily applaud our calling attention to it in these pages. Yet we would remind them—and, indeed, all of us—that it is just as important to use spiritual weapons only in seeking the edification and perfection of believers, and in the necessary conflicts for the maintenance of the truth. We have before now seen well-instructed Christians use very carnal weapons in the endeavour to stop their less-instructed brethren using carnal weapons in their Gospel work! This will not do.

We have been set free from servitude to sin that we may be servants of God. Then let us remember in the conflicts that His service engenders that not only must the power be that of His Spirit, but the weapons we use such as are in keeping with His Spirit and sanctioned by His Word.

HAVE FAITH IN GOD.

Go, tell Him all. The sigh thy bosom heaves
Is heard in heaven. Strength and grace He gives,
Who gave Himself for thee. Our Jesus lives,
Have faith in God!

READINGS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS.

(J. ALFRED TRENCH.)

CHAPTER 1.—*Contd.*

VERSE 24 is of deep interest in introducing his ministry of the Assembly, as expressing in a wonderful way how Paul's heart was bound up with the interests of Christ in it. He looks at the Assembly's sufferings as those of its Head, as he had learnt they were in the first words of Christ that reached him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou ME?" Then he regards its afflictions as a whole, taking in all that is appointed to it to go through till its suffering time is over. And in the largeness of His heart He would fill up that which yet remained or lacked of the afflictions of the Assembly, that is of Christ, as we have seen, in His own personal experience—"in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the Assembly"—leaving so much the less of what lacked of the whole sufferings for those who came after him. The sufferings or afflictions of Christ he speaks of are in no way those of His atoning death, but what His love to the Assembly involved Him in, as when of Israel it could be said "in all their afflictions He was afflicted." Then also it was given to Paul to fill up full, or complete the Word of God by putting in the last great subject of revelation, the mystery. It was not that John had not got to write his epistles and the Apocalypse, but these were but the full development of lines of truth with which Scripture had already made us familiar. But the mystery had been hid from ages and from generations, as verse 26 tells us—"hid in God from eternity" (Ephes. 3. 9)—and is now made manifest to His saints through the ministry of the Apostle.

The special aspect of the mystery in this epistle is Christ among and in Gentiles, the hope of glory, Christ among Jews, as it has been observed, would be the glory come, but God would make known the riches of the glory of the mystery in that Christ

was now to be known among Gentiles, and this in the fullest way as become in them their life. It is the complement of the mystery as presented in Ephesians; Jew and Gentile quickened, raised up and seated in Christ in the heavenlies. But if we are in Him before God, He is in us as life down here in the world, carrying with it the hope of glory.

CHAPTER 2.

Verse 2 is the moral atmosphere, so to speak, in which only the truth of the mystery can flourish—the state of soul needed for the full intelligence of it (compare chapter 1. 9).

In the great variety of readings, the translation "in which" for "in whom," referring to the mystery of God, is that which has most weight. It may be observed that the same loss of the truth of the mystery that doubtless led to the confusion of the copyists, affects many of their modern critics. Yet the solution was not far to seek; for the Apostle speaks of this great truth in the immediate connection of the close of chapter 1., as also in Ephesians 3. 3, 4, 9. It is the mystery of God, as having its source in His eternal counsels—of Christ, as the object of it. I do not know any other part of the revelation of God so calculated to act upon the hearts of saints, when we think of the grace that has made manifest to us what had been hid from all other ages, never breathed of in Scripture even, before, but hid from eternity in God. Surely it is meant mightily to affect the practical walk of the Christian. What else would account for the deep exercise the Apostle speaks of in verse 1 as to places where he had not been able orally to testify of it, though he rejoiced in their order and the steadfastness of their faith in Christ? As to all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge being found in the mystery (verse 3) compare Ephesians 3. 10,

where, in connection with the administration of it, all the varied resources of God's wisdom are known by the Assembly to the principalities and powers in the heavenlies.

Verse 6.—They had indeed received Jesus as Lord, but were not safe from the beguiling influences that were at work (verse 4), without the intelligent recognition of their union with Him in glory. The point, however, here is, that it was in Him all resources for Christian walk and condition were to be found; having been "rooted, and built up in Him and established in the faith," as they had been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. In verse 8 the warning is forcibly given as to the sources of their danger. There was philosophy, the reasoning of the human mind, which he characterizes as "vain deceit," and the religion of the flesh here, as in verse 20, represented as the "rudiments" or "elementary principles of the world," because by it as once instituted of God in Judaism He had proved man in his position in the world.

Then, in the wonderful statement of verses 9, 10, he sums up the whole truth of Christ and the position of the believer in Him.

The truth of verse 9 does not differ from that of chapter 1. 19, though expressed more fully. That the Fulness of God dwells in Christ as Man is as true of Him in resurrection and ascension as on earth, "bodily" emphasizing His veritable humanity against the myths of the gnostics. We must not miss the intimate connection of the verses by the change in English from "fulness" to "complete," the words having the same root. If God in His perfect fulness is in Christ and thus revealed in man, we are in Him before God, filled-full, complete, and this in One in whom all the Fulness dwells by the very truth of His Person, and who is, as to the position He has taken as Man, Head of all principality and power. If this is the Christian's place, what insensate folly to propose

to add anything to it; the glory of the Person, in whom we are, so fully brought out from chapter 1. 15 to these verses, precludes the possibility of it. The Apostle now turns to the work of Christ, and that in its whole range, to bring out the complete removal, in the judgment of the cross, of the man to whom alone philosophy and religion could apply, and thus of everything that would have enfeebled or hindered our enjoyment of the glorious position.

Verse 4.—"Of the sins" has no place in the text, and only obscures the truth. "We have been circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in the putting off of the body of the flesh in the circumcision of Christ." It is the true force of the typical act of circumcision, referring to the cross of Christ, as we possess it in Him. It is no question of our sins, and even goes beyond our old man having been crucified with Christ, or our reckoning ourselves dead to sin as Christ has died to it, in Romans 6. It is the same truth of death with Christ, but not here as to my former state; but the *man himself* is gone in the judgment of God. There has been the putting off of the body of the flesh, in submitting ourselves to the full force of that of which circumcision was a figure; namely, the end of the man himself in the judgment of God which took place for faith in the death of Christ.

Baptism is our profession of the truth, that henceforth we take the place of having been buried with Christ. The "wherein" or "in which" that follows and seems to connect resurrection with baptism, may be as correctly translated "in whom." If it is read "in which" it carries on the thought of the place we take to being risen with Christ. But as faith in the operation of God who raised Him from the dead follows, I prefer to read "in whom," and thus to connect the resurrection side of things with a work of Divine power in Christ, not merely our profession of it in baptism.

A STUDY OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

Chapter 2. verses 9-18.—*Continued.*

(G. J. STEWART.)

NOW if we are to be in the glory with Him, there are several ways in which He identifies Himself with us and brings us into association with Himself while here.

He speaks of us as :—

ALL OF ONE.

“For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren” (verse 11). The whole family, as it were, springs out of the death of Christ. This is more than company, it is source or origin. He is the corn of wheat that fell into the ground and died; we, the much fruit from it. But if we are all of one, yet is there no equality. He is the Sanctifier of the whole company; we, those who are sanctified. He says, “My Father and your Father,” never “our Father.” We say that together. Still we are a sanctified company in association with Him.

This sanctification is by blood (see 10. 10, 14, 29, and 13. 12), not by oil that is the Spirit. It is never by the Spirit in Hebrews save in Christ’s case (9. 14). This is shown in the type, where Aaron was sanctified by oil without blood, alone. Then Aaron and his sons together with the blood and oil. We could not have to do with God without blood, but Christ needed it not. He delights to make that company one with Himself and is not ashamed to call them brethren, having brought them into community of relationship with Himself. It is evident this can only be in resurrection when death is set aside.

Three notable expressions are used in these verses as to our association with Christ. Sons (verse 10); brethren (verse 11); children (verse 13). Sons links us with the glory in the full sense of the expression; brethren gives community of relationship and connects with the assembly; and children

brings into present priestly service, not simply the family; the idea is founded on that of the children of Aaron the priest.

Three Scriptures are now cited to show that God cannot wait for His praise until the universal chorus from heaven and earth shall greet His satisfied heart; He must have it now and from the assembly. They show the reality of Christ’s identification with the children and of theirs with Him, according to God’s present thoughts for us in making “all of one.”

The first is: “I will declare Thy name unto My brethren.” Blessed Lord, Thou art not ashamed of Thy brethren! May we never be ashamed of Thee! Yet it is one thing to be acknowledged by Him as brethren in resurrection, and quite another to call Him our elder Brother, as men down here. Let this be far from us!

He at once leads His brethren into the sphere of praise :—

IN THE MIDST OF THE ASSEMBLY WILL I HYMN THY PRAISE.

This verse (Psa. 22. 22) comes after the moment of crucial agony as transfixed on the horn of the unicorn. There is no identification with Him until the platform of resurrection is reached, whatever man may think. This is the basis of all God’s dealings with man, as also of praise.

The two parts of the verse are fulfilled separately in John 20. Never before the Lord was raised from the dead were the disciples ushered into this relationship with Him. He declares first the new name to Mary in the words, “I ascend to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God”; with the commission, “Go, tell My brethren.”

As the result of this message the disciples are gathered together, picture of the assembly; Christ appears in

their midst and their hearts are glad. The oil of gladness has reached them and gladness is the spring of praise. Singing is its highest expression, and is specially suited to the assembly. In the midst, here on earth, Jesus leads the praise.

There is nothing like our praise hymns yet in heaven, which has not heard the song of the Father's praise save from the lips of Christ. Passing sweet that song must be! But the vault of heaven awaits the full chorus of the heavenly redeemed. With what joy shall we sing after Him there. Yet blessed it is, as prepared in heart, to sing after Him in the assembly now.

How did Christ learn to sing? The Psalms give us a good deal of instruction as to this, of value to those who would sing after Him. The Hebrew word translated "Psalms" is "Te-helim." It means, literally, Praises, and occurs in its plural form only in the title of the book. It is used many times in the singular in the book itself and is there rendered Praise. Our English word Psalm comes to us from the Greek word Psallo, which means, I touch, specially the strings of a harp.

A study of the Psalms shows that they are chiefly experiences and difficult ones too; yet under the hand of God, the skilful player upon the human heart, that harp with a thousand strings, these experiences produce praise. How many of the Psalms are dedicated to the Chief Musician. Who is He? Is it not Christ? Surely so!

Take Psalm 22. "To the Chief Musician upon Aijeleth Shahar. A psalm of David." Here He passes through His sevenfold sorrows. Aijeleth Shahar means: the hind of the morning, the rays of the morning rising sun being compared to the divergent horns of the hind. Light springs from darkness; through death comes life. The agonizing cry of verse 1 leads to the joyous redemption song of verse 22. So the Chief Musician learned to sing—the true David, the Beloved! So must we! We learn in suffering what we teach in song. A song is the outcome of bitter experiences and of marvellous deliverances. Would we sing with the Spirit and with the understanding also? Let us not despise experiences which lead to it.

The great main redemption song is based upon the experiences of the Chief Musician; it is set to varied tunes and played upon different instruments. Nehiloth and Neginoth blend in harmony. The combinations and variations of our octave are almost infinite. Redemption's song reaches actual infinity from an instrument of a thousand strings under the hand of such a performer. This God delights in.

It is passing strange that they who were bondslaves should be so freed and endowed as to be able to give Him that in which He delights. But with shackles struck off and filled with the Holy Spirit, we can come consecrated, with filled hearts and joyous voices into His presence to praise Him.

THE LORD'S SERVICE.

WE often speak of the care that we should exercise so that there might be no breach in our communion with the Lord, but think of the care that He exercises. He girded Himself to wash His disciples' feet that they might have part with Him (John 13.), and He is still girded for this service. How great His love must be! It is affecting, entrancing, to think that all day long

John 13.

Christ's thought is, I desire that there should be no break between your soul and Me. It is not that He tells me to make it *my* business, but that He will make it *His* business. He does it by the ministry of the Word to our souls, detaching us and cleansing us from everything that would bring in a shade of distance between Him and us.

“YE THAT ARE SPIRITUAL.”

(ARTHUR F. POLLOCK.)

FOUR MARKS OF A SPIRITUAL MAN—

1. He is submissive to the Word of God.
2. He will seek the unity of the saints of God and not division.
3. He will be eager and able to restore the erring.
4. He will manifest the fruit of the Spirit.

EVERY true-hearted child of God, without doubt, desires to be spiritual, and yet it is evidently possible to be self-deceived in this matter, for the Apostle Paul, writing to the saints at Corinth, says, “If any man *think* himself to be . . . spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord” (1 Cor. 14. 37). That some were presumptuous enough to call in question the teaching of the apostle—doubtless claiming to be spiritual—is evident from the epistle.

Then there were those who made an outward show of piety, but lacked that which was inward, for James says: “If any man among you *seem* to be religious and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man’s religion is vain” (James 1. 26).

It may be both useful and profitable to see what Scripture has to say on the subject.

It is plain from our first quotation, that he who is spiritual will acknowledge the authority of the apostolic writings, so that if we meet one who sits in judgment on the Word of God, we may at once conclude that he cannot be spiritual, though he may claim greater light and intelligence than others.

Then if we turn to 1 Cor. 3. 1-3, we find the Apostle Paul has to speak in plain terms, saying: “I could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but unto carnal. For,” says he, “whereas there is among you envying and strife, and divisions, are you not carnal and walk as men?” Their sectarian spirit, party strife, and schools of opinions were the evidences of carnality.

How sad it is to find some, who have a good knowledge of the Word and a correct outline of the truth, who yet

are characterized by envy and strife, and who are ready to sacrifice the peace of God’s saints, and spoil and break up the work of God to maintain a party position. We have known some who have even so forgotten what should be the effect of the truth, that they have angrily contended for some point or line of doctrine, as to which they believed themselves to be correct (and perhaps were correct), denying by their conduct the very truth which they wished to affirm, and so have exposed to others if not to themselves, the sad fact that they are not spiritual.

Others, again, in matters of difficulty, have taken up a strong party attitude, showing themselves to be carnal, according to the Word already quoted, though in taking up such an attitude, they themselves assumed that they were spiritual. Is it not well to remember the word in Romans 8. 6, “to be spiritually minded is life and peace,” which surely means that the great concern of one spiritually minded is that he should manifest in his body the life of Jesus and should be known as one that seeks peace, remembering the exhortation of Romans 14. 19: “Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another”?

That we should “contend for the faith” is evident from Jude 3., but not in any spirit of strife, “for the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle . . . patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves” (1 Tim. 2. 24).

Thus peace and edification would be the great desire of those who are spiritual.

Is it not also instructive to note that the only exhortation addressed to

those who are spiritual, as such, in regard to the service of God, has respect to the work of restoration? The Apostle Paul in his letter to the Galatians (chap. 6. 1) writes: "If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself lest thou also be tempted." Some in their ardour have apparently thought that zeal in acts of discipline is an evident token of spirituality, but do we not get here that which indicates that restoration should rather be the happy work of one who is spiritual? Indeed, if the word of 1 Cor. 14. 37 is borne in mind, where Paul says, "If any many think himself to be . . . spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord," then the exhortation of Gal. 6. 1 becomes a positive command; consequently one who fails to addict himself to such ministry is not in submission to the Word of God and has good reason to doubt that he is of the number of the spiritual. Is it that there are so few spiritual men, or is it their failure to do the work to which the Word of God calls them, that the number of those restored is not greater?

Yet, of course, Scripture indicates that discipline must be exercised in certain circumstances when every possible effort to restore has failed, and then, of necessity, the spiritual man must sadly take his part; but, surely, he will always take up with greater alacrity the blessed work of seeking the restoration of those who have erred. And may we add, that a greater measure of spirituality is called for in converting one from the error of his way than in acts of discipline. On the other hand, apathy in that which is due to the honour of the Lord's name must always indicate a lack of spirituality. How well it will be if we, through grace, respond to the Master's loving invitation: "Take My

yoke upon you, and *learn of Me*: for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matt. 11. 29), for it is only in His blessed company that we shall catch His spirit and learn how to serve Him according to grace and truth.

Finally, will there not be produced in the lives of those who are spiritual, the blessed "fruit of the Spirit, which is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Gal. 5. 22). We do well to notice that it does not say "fruits" but "fruit," so that he who walks in the Spirit will manifest all these beautiful traits; which were perfectly displayed by our adorable Lord and Master in His life here below.

Then may we not say that those who are truly spiritual will be characterized by:—

1. Submission to the Word of God.
2. Efforts after unity and not division, which is carnal.
3. Eagerness to seek the restoration of the erring.
4. Manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit.

Surely, then, we have before us here that by which we can test ourselves as to whether we are truly spiritual, and let no one "think himself . . . to be spiritual" (one who is spiritual would never claim to be such) unless he has these aspirations, which the Scriptures that we have considered indicate that the Holy Spirit of God would produce in him.

Let us not be guided by our own treacherous hearts, but ever "let the Word of Christ dwell in us richly in all wisdom" (Col. 3. 16) knowing that the only infallible guide is the Holy Word of God, and by it, "the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto *all* good works" (2 Tim. 3. 17).

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

"Thou art My Son."

"With reference to Mr. Green's article 'The Son of God' in the December number of 'Scripture Truth,' the verse, 'Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee,' is quoted, apparently as referring to the INCARNATION of the Lord Jesus Christ. I should very much like your observations on this, as I had thought it to refer definitely to His RESURRECTION. This seems clear in Acts 13. 33, where the apostle advances the quotation to support what he had previously stated in regard to the resurrection."—WESTCLIFF.

THE chief point in Hebrews 1. is the glory of the Person of Christ. He is in every way superior to the very highest of created beings. This being conceded we may consider this point of secondary interest, at what period of His history do these quotations from the Psalms apply. "This day" of the first quotation, which is from Psalm 2., undoubtedly has a point of time in view, and it was surely true of Him as born of Mary. "*Thou . . . shalt call His Name Jesus. He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Highest*" (Luke 1. 31. 32). "*That Holy Thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God*" (verse 35). It was also true of Him as He entered His public ministry, "*Thou art My beloved Son; in Thee I am well pleased*" (Luke 3. 22); and it is true of Him as raised from the dead, "*Declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness,*

by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1. 4). We believe "this day" begins with incarnation, but goes on to resurrection. Of it J. N. Darby says: "It is His relationship with God IN TIME. It depends upon His glorious nature; but this position for man was acquired by the miraculous birth of Jesus here below, and demonstrated as true and determined in its true import by His resurrection" (*Synopsis*, vol. v, p. 244). In Acts 13. 33, where the same declaration is quoted, "again" should be omitted. The fact is there stated that God had fulfilled His promise by raising up Jesus, and there it is incarnation and His appearing to Israel. "Raised again" comes in verse 37. The promises were ineffectual, as indeed the raising up of Jesus of verse 33 would have been, apart from His death and resurrection. Everything is based on that sure foundation.

"Also, in the next verse, does not 'Firstbegotten' refer to the Lord in resurrection, He in this way bringing many sons unto glory? Is He not the Firstbegotten among many brethren?"

The title "Firstbegotten" or "Firstborn" does not mean always born first, though our Lord is indeed the Firstbegotten from the dead in that sense. But it means that He has the place of pre-eminence. Deuteronomy 21. 15-17 is an interesting passage in this connection. The firstborn had the place of pre-eminence in the family and a double portion. Joseph got this in Jacob's

family instead of Reuben, and Solomon had it in David's family, and that in God's ordering (Ps. 89. 27). For the Lord it means rule not over men, but also angels. "He must in all things have the pre-eminence." Romans 8. 29 tells us that He will be firstborn *among* many brethren; and this is the same thought. He will ever be the pre-eminent One amongst them.

The Fulness of the Gentiles.

"What does the expression 'Until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in' mean? (Rom. 11. 25). Does it refer to the church, and also those called previous to the kingdom reign?"

"Explain difference between fulness of the Gentiles and times of the Gentiles."—GLANTON.

THE fulness of the Gentiles is that which God is getting for Himself during this period in which Israel as the favoured people are set aside; it is the

church. It is what His sovereign grace, apart from all promises made to Israel, is producing now. We should confine it to the church—it is the great harvest

that shall be gathered in when the Lord comes to rapture His saints to heaven (1 Thess. 4). It is true that some among the Gentile nations will be martyred for the truth's sake during the great tribulation—the period between the Lord's coming for His saints and His appearing to reign; if they have part in this fulness it will only be in a secondary way, the thought in the passage is the church.

The expression "the times of the Gentiles" is used by the Lord in Luke 22. 24. This period commenced when God took authority and government from the house of David and put it into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, the times will be fulfilled when the Lord establishes His Kingdom in Zion. Nebuchadnezzar's

forgotten dream of the great image gives us the history of these times. He was the head of gold, the beginning of these times, for the God of heaven gave him dominion over men and beasts and birds, and these times run on until the stone cut out of the mountain without hands falls upon the toes and feet of the image and grinds it to powder. This stone is the Kingdom of the God of heaven in which Christ shall be supreme. He will be its great Head (see Daniel 2.). "The fulness of the Gentiles" is all good, the work of God's grace in men; "the times of the Gentiles" is the rule of the Gentiles upon the earth. It has degenerated, and will degenerate more and more until God shall bring it to an end by His judgment at the appearing of the Lord Jesus.

THE FATHER.

(H. J. VINE.)

OUR God and Father, we rejoice before Thee;
 In Christ made high, we bless Thy holy Name;
 He has disclosed Thy love, and we adore Thee
 Revealed by Him who from the glory came.

Ere worlds were framed in highest splendour dwelling
 The Spirit and the Son with Thee were one;
 Jesus came forth the heavenly glories telling,
 And now the Spirit shows what He has done.

Not by the world is known, O righteous Father,
 Thy Name, though all things have in Thee their Source;
 "Not of the world" are those who know Thy favour,
 'Tis through the Saviour's death they reap its stores.

Thy words were spoken and Thy work completed
 By Jesus for Thy glory here below;
 Upon Thy Throne as Man we see Him seated,
 And we the nearness of Thy loved One know.

Hallowed Thy Name in sanctity and blessing,
 In truth, compassion, majesty and grace;
 The robe, the ring, the shoes Thou giv'st expressing
 Thy joy to have us near in sonship's place.

And, oh! the life which was with Thee, the Father,—
 So richly manifest by Christ, the Son,—
 In Him with holy blessedness for ever
 Is ours, nor ends though endless ages run.

Oh, holy Father, grant that we, confiding
 In Thine eternal love, may glorify
 Thy Name, and prove the sweetness of abiding
 In Him who made Thee known and brought us nigh.

GOD'S WORK AND OUR PART IN IT.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

GOD'S work is being done in this world and a record is being kept in heaven as to all those who are taking part in it; what they are doing; how they are doing it; and what the motive is that lies behind their labour. This is at once a solemnizing and encouraging consideration. In ancient times God's eye watched His servants and noted the way they did His work, and He has given us His own account of it all. In Neh. 3. 5 we learn that the Tekoites repaired the wall, but they did it half-heartedly: "*Their nobles put not their necks to the work of their God.*" These were the leaders, and if the leaders were lukewarm, so would the people be, and to this day their shame stands upon record in the Word of God.

Shallum, the son of Halohesh, was a man of a different stamp; his enthusiasm for the work was such that it inspired his daughters and they helped him in building the wall; and he was no mean man, for we are told that he was ruler of half Jerusalem. His daughters might have argued that, as their father was a man in such a place of honour, their business was to maintain the dignity of the house and not soil their hands with labour; but no, their ambition was to have part in the Lord's work, and they had, and the dignity of their house has not suffered, for it is recorded that Shallum built—"he and his daughters" (verse 12).

The way that Baruch, the son of Zabbai, laboured was specially noted, for we read that he *earnestly repaired* that part of the wall that fell to his lot. What a contrast to the nobles of Tekoi was he!

The people *had a mind to work*, we are told (chapter 4. 6), and they laboured *from the rising of the sun until the stars appeared* (verse 21). Their hearts were in it; their own ease or time was a very minor matter with them, "*the work of their God*" was their first consideration. Nor did they labour by proxy; there were no shirkers; every man had his own work to do and did it and more. For those who had to watch and fight against a subtle foe still "*bare burdens*" and "*everyone with his own hands wrought in the work*" (verse 17). There were those who built *over against their own houses* (verse 28); wise men doing that which was near at hand, and doing it with a will, and not wasting their energies and time in dictating to others how and where they should build. And one man receives honourable mention who does not seem to have had a house to build against; he possessed no property, only a chamber, for Meshullam built *over against his chamber*. But that chamber in which he lived and where he held intercourse with his God was part of the city and needed the wall of protection from evil as any other part of it, and so he built, and though probably only a poor lodger in the city, his name is enrolled amongst those who did the work of God.

And the *fear of God* kept them from covetousness and love of gain. *The work of the wall—God's work—was more to them than their own enrichment* (chapter 5. 15, 16).

So they finished the work, but not in their own strength, but the God of heaven, He prospered them (chapter 2. 20); their confidence was in Him and He did not fail them. Nor will He fail any to-day who take His work in hand, constrained thereto by the love of Christ; but let us do it in His fear, for a record is being kept above of all we do, and how and why we do it, for "*every man's work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it . . . of what sort it is*" (1 Cor. 3. 13).

A GREAT CALM.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

"The Lord is always nearest when He is most needed. This may not always be realized but it is a great truth. He was beside the ship in which His disciples toiled and battled with the storm, unknown and unlooked for; no prayer from them brought Him to them, it was His own affection—they were precious to Him. Prayer arises when He is known to be there, but He is there by His own love. My necessity is the appeal to His love, my trouble leads Him to be beside me in the direst moment, and when I recognize Him in His anxious, tender interest in me, then I receive Him into the ship—into my circumstances; He enters into them Himself—and when He Himself is recognized, He enters into my circumstances with me and the effect is wonderful—THERE IS A GREAT CALM"—(J. B. S.).

CONSIDER the circumstances of the incident, so beautifully interpreted by the writer of the above paragraph. Mark 6. 46 tells us that the Lord had gone into a mountain to pray. Let that be the first great fact for our contemplation. We may be sure that those disciples had their place in that prayer of His that night. He was an intercessor on their behalf. They were left alone apparently, left alone to face tempestuous seas and rough winds, yet they were not forgotten. He was praying for them, and praying for them because He loved them. And has He ceased to be interested in His tried and troubled disciples who seem to be left to face seas of woe alone? No. He is what He ever was, and on the mountain of glory—the right hand of God—He prays for His own, for so says Romans 8.: "Who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." It has been said that, "so great is the Lord's love for us, that if it were necessary He would come from heaven and suffer Calvary's woe and death again for us"; and that is true, but it is not necessary, thank God, that He should do that, for "by one offering He has perfected for ever them that are sanctified." But it is necessary that He should live for us and serve us by His intercession, and this He does and will do to the end, He will do it because the love that fills His heart is unchanged, it is the same love that made Him sacrifice Himself for us upon the cross. We must realize more fully this living love, this living

service of our Lord for us, for it is necessary for our daily salvation. It is a ceaseless service and effectual; He ever liveth to make intercession for us.

Now while His heart and voice went out in prayer for His storm-tossed disciples He did not lose sight of them. Verse 48 tells us that "*He saw them toiling in rowing.*" And as then so now He looks upon His own. He prays and He sees. One He sees upon a bed of pain with no hope of relief while life lasts; another pressed and sorely tried by circumstances that threaten to crush all brightness from the soul and change the songs to continual sighs; another He sees groping and stumbling along a way both bleak and lonely, made bleak and lonely by the breath and hand of death. He sees these and all His saints who suffer and toil, and He lives to make intercession for them and to draw near to them in their troubles and to make them more than conquerors in them.

"He saw them toiling and . . . He cometh unto them." Their need and His love brought Him there. They would have seen Him long before they did had they not been so bent upon their own efforts to bring their boat to port; but when their sailor-skill was baffled and their strength was done, He was there; when they dropped their oars and ceased the struggle, He was there—there to enter their ship—to come into their circumstances and bring His own peace with Him and

share it with them; to steer them into a great calm. It is even so to-day. His love brings Him swiftly to our relief, not always to change the circumstances, some of them cannot be changed, but to change us, to calm us by His own presence, and to make us more than conquerors by His love. Yet many suffering saints miss all this, and why? Because they will continue to toil in rowing; they will persist in meeting their trials in their own strength; so bent are they on the endeavour to straighten out their tangles and steer their own frail vessel through the stormy seas that they do not see Him coming to them, walking on the water—the Master of its fiercest waves. But their extremity is His opportunity, and when they have no might He becomes their strength, and a sense of His nearness changes all.

He came to His disciples, saying, BE

OF GOOD CHEER: IT IS I; BE NOT AFRAID." And that was enough for them; it is enough for us. Our great Intercessor prays for us, sees us, comes to us, and in the sense of this we can be more than conquerors through Him, and that because we know that nothing can separate us from His love—neither tribulation, nor distress, nor persecution, nor famine, nor nakedness, nor peril, nor sword. These things bring Him near to us because He loves us, and because of this we who are saved by His blood shall be saved by His life. Yea, though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death we trust and murmur not, are undismayed and triumphant, for He is there, where the greatest trial is; and surely He will be to the end; it is the great High Priest, the Intercessor, and Leader of His own, who says, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee."

THE BEGINNING OF THE DAY.

THERE is nothing like reading the Scriptures before breakfast. It is a great thing to begin the day with God. There is a reason for it. The mind retains what engages it first. The level from which the mind starts lends it a character for a long time and period of the day, and even if it drops to a lower key, small supplies will easily restore it to its first and better key. The Word places me on a level above the carnal influences with which contact with things here must leaven

my mind unless I am garrisoned against it.

They say if you want to bear cold well go out warm, and surely the more braced and endued with spiritual caloric the soul is, before encountering the battle and breeze of this evil world, the better. In keeping with our illustration, it is easier to accumulate heat when there is no expenditure of it than when our greatest supply will soon be sorely taxed. The beginning of the battle is half the deed.

No man, save Jesus only.

"AM I not enough? enough, Mine own, for thee?"

Hath the world its palace towers,

Garden glades of magic flowers

Where thou fain would'st be?

Fair things and false are there,

False things but fair,

All shalt thou find at last

Only in Me.

Am I not enough, Mine own?

I, for ever and alone,

I, needing thee."

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH. No. II—The Bible: the Wonder of the Book.

(A. J. POLLOCK.)

THE theme is so profound—the ground to be covered so immense—the avenues of thought inviting exploration are so numerous, that the difficulty is to know where to begin. The difficulty does not arise from paucity of matter, but from a veritable *embarras des richesses*.

If you were to ask a hundred men and women to name an Eastern book, the majority would not be able to give you any answer. Very few might name the Koran, the Vedic literature of India, etc., and even if they gave an answer, scarcely one could tell you that they had even seen the books, let alone read them; but ask the same hundred men and women which was the best book in the world, the answer that would instantly leap to the lips of probably ninety-nine out of a hundred would be THE BIBLE. And yet the Bible is an Eastern book.

THE MARVEL OF THE BOOK

is, that though an Eastern book and written by Easterns it holds a place that no other book commands.

Couched in language that is true to the local colouring and customs of the gorgeous East, the book is emphatically *universal*, so much so that were one hundred men and women asked to name Eastern books very probably the Bible would not cross the minds save of very few. And yet it is an Eastern book. How does that fact become so secondary? It is just because its *universal* character is so dominant.

There have been great writers like Strauss or Goethe, the German authors. Their writings may be translated into three or four languages, have their vogue for a few years, and as the years go by the circle of their readers dwindles, and in time may disappear. The Bible is not so.

The explanation that the Bible is a *universal* book, a book for all time and

for all nations, is very simple and yet very profound. It is that

GOD is the Author of the Bible.

That is why it is a universal book. He may use Jewish pens—He may use a Moses, an Isaiah, a Paul, a John, but GOD is the author of the book.

Said the librarian of a famous medical library to his attendants: "Examine all the books in the library, and put in the cellar every book that is over ten years old—it is out-of-date."

But the Bible is not out-of-date. Its first words were written in cuneiform characters on tablets of brick, by Moses, over 3000 years ago. It is by far the oldest book in the world, and yet it is the world's best seller to-day—read, pondered, meditated upon, assimilated, practised by infinitely more readers than any other book in the world. And this is true spite of the widespread indifference to the things of God that is eating like a canker at the very vitals of stable government to-day.

It is only to state a bare fact, when we say that the Bible has made the very deepest mark upon the world, changing its history and altering its outlook. Every day millions of hands bear witness to the dynamic power of the Bible when they date their letters and documents *anno domini*—in the year of our Lord.

Though the most ancient book in the world, the Bible is the most up-to-date, and cannot be otherwise. Some years ago an officer in the army was lecturing to his brother officers on electricity. He explained Lord Kelvin's great discovery that rain is always caused by electrical discharge—a discovery that has deservedly made Kelvin's name famous. This officer was an earnest Christian man, and he carried a well-worn Bible under his red coat. He said, "Gentlemen, I happen to possess a very ancient volume that distinctly

anticipates Lord Kelvin's discovery." This announcement considerably piqued the curiosity of his hearers, and at the close of the lecture they swarmed round him, asking in incredulous amazement what ancient book he referred to.

He responded by pulling out his Bible, and reading,

"Who hath divided a watercourse for the overflowing of waters, or a way for the lightning of thunder; *to cause it to rain on the earth*" (Job 38. 25, 26).

* * * *

"He maketh lightnings for the rain" (Psalm 135. 7).

* * * *

"He maketh lightnings with rain [margin, *for rain*]" (Jer. 10. 13).

* * * *

Here we have Job, the Psalmist and the prophet Jeremiah—three witnesses to this scientific discovery, antedating it by over 2500 years.

This is only one of many things that proves the Bible to be up-to-date, and this can be said of no other book in the world. Why? *Because the book owes its authorship to GOD.*

We read in Heb. 4. 12,

"For the word of God is quick and powerful [living and operative—N.T.] and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

The Scriptures form the written word, but are also the *living* word. God Himself is connected with the Word in an extraordinarily intimate sense, for the passage runs on without a break or any expression of contrast:—

"Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight; but all things are naked and open unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do" (verse 13).

Its effects in the world proclaim it to be *living*. I remember preaching in the open air in a small Norfolk village;

at the close a man came up to me, and said, "Do you see that little chapel? Two years ago if you had offered me a five-pound note to induce me to attend the chapel I should have refused to darken the door. But now, if you were to offer me a five-pound note to keep away from the chapel I should refuse it. The fact is the things I loved two years ago I hate now, and the things I hated two years ago I love now."

A case like this, multiplied as it is by tens of thousands of cases of all nationalities, colours and social positions, testifies to the Bible's being what it claims to be, *living* and *operative*.

The Bible is living. It possesses within itself, through the agency of the Holy Ghost, the power of communicating life. Only life can beget life. That is a scientific axiom.

So we read,

"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, *by the word of God*, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Peter 1. 23).

The man, whose case we have just adduced, was evidently born again. Millions can testify to the truth of this great change; once they were "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2. 1), but somehow, mysteriously, quietly, a change came—in short, they were born again, in every case bearing out the truth of the Scripture, which says, "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" (John 3. 8).

How true this is in the spiritual world to the analogy that holds good in the natural world—life communicated only by life, and the new life produced having no will in the matter. So Peter tells us the new birth is produced by seed—the incorruptible word of God; whilst John tells us it comes about by the sovereign act of God's Holy Spirit.

The myriad hosts of the born again bear witness to the inexhaustible, vitalizing power of the Bible. Generation succeeds generation spiritually—the stream of testimony flows on in undiminished volume as the centuries grow hoary and the coming of the Lord draws nigh. If this Bible did not possess this vital force, Christianity would have perished long ago.

Eight times over does Gen. 1. repeat the formula in connection with the creation of natural life, “*after his kind.*” Like produces like whether in nature or grace. *The word of GOD* produces moral features reproducing God and pleasing to Him.

It is said that one of the great Kings of Sweden, a man of most kingly appearance and bearing, produced his son suddenly to his nobles, presenting him as his heir. The boy had been kept in strict seclusion, and the nobles had never seen him previously, but the moment they did they accepted him without a question, because he resembled his father so closely that they needed no further proof of his paternity.

So it is with God's children when walking in the Spirit. We read,

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance” (Gal. 5. 22).

Are these not the moral features of the Divine nature? Let us examine a few of them in brief detail.

(1) Love! “God is love” (1 John 4. 16).

(2) Joy! “In Thy presence is fulness of joy” (Psalm 16. 11).

(3) Peace! “The God of peace” (Heb. 13. 20).

(4) Longsuffering! “The longsuffering of God” (1 Peter 3. 20).

(5) Gentleness! “Thy [God's] gentleness has made me great” (2 Sam. 22. 36).

(6) Goodness! “The goodness of God” (Rom. 2. 4).

What a contrast to Kaiserism on the one hand and Bolshevism on the other, bitter extremes, yet uniting in their endeavour to subsist by means of the most ruthless tyranny, and each carrying within itself the elements of its own destruction. In happy contrast stands the fruit of the Spirit.

The Bible is a *living* Book. Existing only in manuscript form at first, think of the thousands of copies that were made—mark the meticulous care with which many a monk in secluded monastery would make it his life's work to produce a hand-written copy of the Holy Scriptures.

Held as the exclusive right of the clergy in the dark days of Popery it has broken the chains that immured it in the dark prison houses of superstition. See Martin Luther, son of a miner, driven by that inward work of God in his soul, the new birth, hungering for the Word of God. Furtively he reads that chained Bible in the monastery of Erfurt. The seed of the word sown in his heart germinated and bore fruit in the glorious Reformation. With that came the invention of printing, and the Word of God began to multiply.

It was a living book, for superstition tried to kill it. To possess a copy of the Scriptures was enough to condemn many a believer to the stake.

But the word of God could not be bound. Translation after translation was made. At the peril of their lives, colporteurs would smuggle it across frontiers. Secretly read, it exerted its wonderful influence upon lives and nations.

Coming down to the present time we have abundant testimony that the Bible is a living book. In our day we have seen most determined assaults made upon the Word of God. Crude evolutionary ideas have done their deadly work; the theological chairs in the main are captured by Modernism, and yet the demand for Bibles is increasing. A publisher gave it as his considered opinion, that revived interest in the Bible is “originating from

without, instead of within the churches." "The undoubted great increase in the sale of Bibles seems to me," he says, "to denote a determination on the part of the people to read for themselves instead of listening to sermons from the pulpit."

There is without doubt what can be described as a *boom in Bibles*.

The last annual report of the British and Foreign Bible Society announced that during the twelve months ending March 31, 1924, no less than 8,540,901 volumes of Scripture were sent out, including 941,297 Bibles, 907,415 New Testaments and 6,692,189 smaller portions. Nearly a million volumes went to India; 246,000 to Japan; 565,700 to Korea; 43,000 to Persia and Iraq; over three millions to China, besides many, many hundreds of thousands scattered throughout Europe, South and North America, Africa, etc., etc. Nearly a million copies circulated in England, Wales and Ireland.

The increase reported in the 1923 report following happily in the reports of 1921 and 1922, amounts to no less than 80 per cent in three years. And

yet this is only one Society out of many engaged in circulating the Scriptures.

Think of the Bible having been translated, either in whole or in part, into over 500 languages. Sit down and contemplate what this means. Think of the thousands of devoted missionaries, who have thought it worth while to devote their whole lives to such service as the acquiring of heathen languages, reducing them to writing, translating the Scriptures into these languages, and then see the results.

Think of all the toil and danger involved in the spread of the Scriptures. Romantic volumes could be written on this entrancing theme.

Suffice it to say the Bible is a *living word*, which can be well described as a tree of life, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations (see Rev. 22. 2).

Sit down and ponder the marvel of the Book. We shall have much to say in subsequent issues of *Scripture Truth* on this wonderful theme. Space forbids our enlarging on this happy theme. But touching upon it even in such a fragmentary way we are amazed at

THE WONDER OF THE BOOK.

"I will fear no Evil."

YOU will never be refreshed for the struggles of life, and be without fear in the presence of the greatest foe, and on the darkest day, unless you first lie down in green pastures and are led by still waters. Courage and endurance in our outward life are the result of what is secret and inward. So verses 1 and 2 of Psalm 23. describe

what the Lord is to us and can do for us in secret. He takes charge of us, satisfies our hearts, gives to us quietness of spirit in the knowledge of Himself, imparts His own peace to us, and then leads us forth in the paths of righteousness, to be more than conquerors through Him that loves us.

The Grace of God.

IF Adam in the garden had known the grace of God, he would not have hidden from God, he would have run to Him and confessed his sin and asked Him to clothe him, and had he done that he would not have been spurned, for grace does for us exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.

John xiii. We can trace this gracious work, this feet-washing, up to the very heart of Christ; and surely nothing should affect our hearts like that. Do we live in the sense of His thought that there should be no break between Him and us? He makes those helpers with Him whose feet are washed.

GRACE REIGNS.

(H. J. VINE.)

LET us not hide the glorious truth that grace reigns to-day! Let none silence or hinder the telling-forth of "the gospel of the grace of God!" and let it be known to all who believe on our Lord Jesus Christ, that they are "not under law but under grace!" Grace is on the throne!

Tell the timid and tearful Timothys to be "strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus!" Tell the suffering and sorely-tried saints that there is "the throne of grace" to which they may come boldly and find grace for seasonable help! Say to every gathering together of those who love the Lord with their varied needs, "Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ!" and to the exercised individual or the anxious servant of the Lord, "Grace, mercy and peace" be thine!—"grace be with thee!"

Let it be known to all that our Saviour and Lord sits upon the throne on high!—that the Holy One whose wonderful grace brought Him into the deepest depths of sorrow, is now anointed with the oil of gladness, and graces the throne of the greatness and majesty above. Downward He descended to the stable—to the manger—to the waters of Jordan—to the hunger and thirst of the wilderness—to the rejection, scorn, spitting, mocking and smiting—to the thorny crown, and to the darkness and abandonment of the cross of shame; but upward He has ascended as the risen Man to the pre-eminent place!—to the throne of God!—to the crown of glory and honour!—to exaltation above all the heavens! Having glorified God upon the earth He is glorified in God on high! Jesus the One who once died for our sins is now alive for evermore and sits enthroned, therefore grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life! Grace is triumphant!

The throne is now a "throne of grace," for the Saviour of sinners sits

upon it! Having fully maintained all the just and holy claims of that throne, one of Christ's first acts from that sovereign seat was to arrest Saul of Tarsus, who was endeavouring to exterminate all who believed on Christ; but he was saved to preach the very faith which he once destroyed! Grace converted Saul the persecutor of the assemblies to be Paul the preacher of the Gospel of God's grace! Writing of this to Timothy afterwards, he said, he was before a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent, overbearing man; but "the grace of our Lord surpassingly overabounded," and He appointed him to the ministry of the Word. About one hundred times Paul mentions grace, and he speaks of it seven times in his two letters to Timothy, beginning and ending each of them with his expressed desire that grace should be with him.

Grace taught our wandering feet
To tread the heavenly road:
And new supplies each hour we meet
While travelling home to God.

* * * *

When old age and infirmity were forcing King David from his throne, when he was about to go the way of all the earth, he deeply desired to see Solomon firmly established at the head of the kingdom of Israel; and he saw no other way of procuring the stability of the throne save by the administration of strict justice and judgment: law must prevail. Let not Joab's "hoar head go down to the grave in peace," said the dying monarch! Hold not Simei the son of Gera guiltless, but his hoar head bring thou down to the grave with blood, said the king! Adonijah by his disloyal scheming was a menace to the establishment of the throne as David desired, so Benaiah fell upon him that he died. Joab fled to the tabernacle of the Lord and caught hold on the horns of the altar, but there was no perfect sacrifice then, and no risen and glorified Saviour upon the throne of God, "so Benaiah the son of Jehoida

went up, and fell upon him, and slew him." And Solomon also gave commandment concerning Shimei, so Benaiah "went out, and fell upon him, that he died. And the kingdom was established"; yes, established for a time, but not for ever! Just judgment prevailed temporarily.

Grace justifies the believer to-day, and sets him in a kingdom which can never be moved. Great David's greater Son is crowned on high, and lives no more to die. A greater than Solomon is there to administer grace to the chief of sinners, and to the most needy of the saints. "Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead," said Paul to Timothy, in the same chapter where he exhorts him to be "strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 2. 1, 8). Having first made purgation of sins, the Son of God ascended to the throne: having laid down His life for us, He lives above: grace is ascendant, and righteously prevails to-day. God in grace, the Father, is now fully made known. This is the time of the activities of God's grace, and that in Divine consistency with all His glorious attributes of holiness, righteousness and truth, for all were conciliated with grace, mercy and peace in view of the blessing of the sinner by the atoning death of Jesus upon the cross.

The dictionary tells us that grace is unmerited favour; but God's grace to the sinner who believes is more: it is favour for the one who merited judgment; and further still, according to the riches of that grace, as well as to the praise of the glory of it, believers are taken into Divine favour as sons, through the redeeming work of Christ; they are "accepted in the Beloved" (Ephes. 1. 6, 7). Mephibosheth by royal favour dwelt at the palace of the king "as one of the king's sons," but to-day we "are all the sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus." The fact is, we are treated not according to our deserts, but according to what God's beloved Son deserves.

As the present principle of the actings of God on our behalf, grace is contrasted with both law and works. Neither of these latter could justify those who had sinned against Him; His grace, however, could do so consistently through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. We are therefore justified, saved as sons, and set in the favour of God by His grace (Rom. 3. 24; Ephes. 2. 8).

O to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be!
Let that grace, Lord, like a fetter,
Bind my wandering heart to Thee.

* * * *

In perfect harmony with these actings of Divine grace is the surpassing beauty of the manifestation of personal grace in our Lord Jesus Christ. This latter, however, must be clearly distinguished from the former. The one places us in fullest blessing, the other shows us what we are to delight in and take character from. That which was seen in Jesus as a Man amongst men—that which shone with such lowly lustre in Him in the days of His sojourn on earth—that which was personally exemplified in Himself as He walked the dusty roads of Palestine, and spake as never man spake before, that is the personal grace which we are to behold and rejoice in, as we discern the moral traits and the excellent delineations of its glories in our adorable Lord and Saviour. John, who contemplated His glory as an only One with a Father, saw Him full of grace and truth. He observed His walk and His ways, he heard His words, he saw His works, and he beheld the personal grace which characterized Him in all and under all circumstances.

He was the Creator Word who became flesh and dwelt among us. He testified of the truth to all, but with the gentle and meek and lowly He trod His humble pathway in obedience and love. His wonderful ways often astonished even His disciples, and, though past finding out, their rich results glorified the One who sent Him.

The sweet singer of Israel, whose singing reached such heavenly heights when his heart meditated the royal majesty and matchless meekness of the Son, sang thus of Jesus, "Thou art fairer than the children of men, grace is poured into Thy lips." As the hearers listened to His preaching in the Nazareth synagogue, they wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. One evening, as the light of day was still in the sky, they brought to Him the sick and infirm from the whole country around, and, before the sun was set, He healed them all. To the blind He gave sight, to the deaf hearing, and to the dumb speech, so that men "were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well: He maketh the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak." His works of power amazed the multitudes, but they were done in such a gracious manner that men glorified God when they saw Him do them with the personal grace which always marked our Lord Jesus Christ. Isaiah saw Him coming to take the government on His shoulder—coming first in lowly grace—a child born! a son given! Yet he gives us the incomparable greatness of His five-fold Name, "Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Father of Eternity, the Prince of Peace." Again, he saw His glory and spake of Him (John 12. 37-41), "the King, Jehovah of Hosts" (Isa. 6. 1-5): He was sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, and the seraphims cried one to another, and said, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts." Nevertheless, Isaiah further speaks of the grace of Him who is the high and lofty One: though He inhabits eternity, He dwells with the humble and contrite, to revive their spirit and their heart (57. 15). Yea, He Himself came into the path of poverty and humility, having this end in view, to bring us to dwell with Him in untold blessedness for ever.

Desiring to produce a practical result in the saints at Corinth, Paul wrote, "Ye know the grace of our Lord

Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich" (2 Cor. 8. 9). That is God's way of bringing about giving of such sort as is pleasing to Him—the ministry of the grace of Christ. As we appreciate this, practical response will be the outcome, and God will rejoice in a sweet savour of Him.

How bright and blessed is the prospect of dwelling eternally with such an One! The place of that dwelling will doubtless be surpassingly glorious; but oh! does it not move our hearts deeply when we remember the grace and love of the One with whom we are to spend eternity? And when universal intelligences behold the outshining of those thus blessed with Christ, we are told that through them will be displayed "the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus" (Ephes. 2. 7). Meanwhile the very last verse of the inspired volume breathes forth the desire of the Spirit for us all along our homeward journey, "*The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with all the saints*" (N.T.).

* * * *

The sovereign *mercy* of God saved Israel out of Egypt; the sovereign *grace* of God saved us. In the time of their full kingdom blessing, Israel will celebrate God's *mercy*, singing, "His mercy endureth for ever"; the assembly in her heavenly place with her glorious Bridegroom will celebrate the surpassing riches of Divine *grace*. *Mercy* is mentioned sixty times in the Psalms, *grace* but twice. For Israel a *mercy* seat was provided in the presence of Jehovah; for us there is the throne of *grace*. *Mercy* saved and secured approach to God for Israel representatively; *grace* has saved us and given us access to the Father through our Lord Jesus Christ by the Spirit. *Mercy* was to give character to Israel but *grace* to the assembly. We also have obtained *mercy*, but *grace* reigns today, as we have seen; *grace* and truth

subsist by Jesus Christ, and of His fulness "grace upon grace" comes to those who believe. Israel's high priest stood in the holiest of all on the ground of blood-shedding, but only once every year; Jesus is seated in heaven in virtue of His own perfect work in perpetuity.

There is the throne of grace,
The virtue of His blood;
There lives before Thy face
Our great High Priest, O God!
His Name our plea
When we draw near
In holy fear
To worship Thee.

It is the Apostle who designated himself "The least of the apostles," who writes so frequently of Divine grace, and of the royal abundance of its wealth. He also styles himself "the chief of sinners," and "less than the least of all saints," to whom "is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." It was grace which produced such a devoted and diligent servant of Christ, even as he himself said, "By the grace of God I am what I am: and His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: *yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.*" Paul gloried in it, speaking of its abounding, of its overabounding, and of its surpassing overabounding. He writes, too, of the praise of the glory of God's grace, of the riches of His grace, and of the

exceeding riches of His grace. Little wonder then that he commended the saints to God and to the word of His grace when leaving them after he had foretold the dangers which would beset the assembly; nor is it surprising that he should persuade those who had believed to continue in the grace of God. As regards himself, after having fully proved it in his abundant labours for his Lord and Saviour, he said, "Neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God."

What a living proof Paul was that grace reigns to-day—that Christ is on the throne—that the Saviour of sinners is supreme! "The grace of our Lord surpassingly overabounded" in saving him, and in making him His servant, as he tells us in 1 Timothy 1. 12-16. Grace made him the untiring labourer in that he was, and sustained him in great weaknesses—grace was sufficient for him. Right on to the end, until he had finished his course, till he had fought the fight, he proved this fully; and his last word was "to testify the Gospel of the grace of God." The same grace reigns for us now! It has saved us, keeps us, teaches us, and will soon display its surpassing riches through us, when, with Christ as the Centre, the splendours of redemption shall show its glories to the intelligences of the universe. Grace reigns.

PRAISE.

○ GOD our Father, we bring our praise to Thee. We rejoice that Thou hast been fully revealed, and that we know Thee, not only in Thy power and glory as by Thy works of old, but in Thy love—in the great love of Thy heart. The works of Thy hands declare Thy wisdom as Creator, but only the only-begotten Son who dwells in Thy bosom could reveal Thee as Father, only He could declare Thy love; and this He has done in all its fulness and perfection. He was great enough to do this, for He is co-equal with Thee in nature and glory, and the revelation that He has made is entirely suitable to us, for He became flesh and dwelt amongst us men, full of grace and truth. He brought all the blessedness and glory of what Thou art down to us in all our need, and we know Thee now, and this is life eternal for us. Redeemed by His precious blood, and indwelt by the Holy Ghost, we are Thy children and can now worship Thee in spirit and truth.

MARRIAGE IN THE LORD.

No relationship in this life affects the testimony and service of those who are in it as does the marriage relationship; not only the home life, but in service for the Lord in the world, and in the exercise of the privileges to which saints are called in their church [assembly] life, this relationship exercises its influence. Because this is so we venture to put before our readers this valuable letter by the late J. B. Stoney.

“**SHALL I** give you my idea of true married life in the Lord? It surpasses everything human in grace, as it did in nature before the fall. The trials are peculiar, but they are the trials of humanity; but then the married have this advantage, if they really reciprocate their feelings before the Lord, that as they are together in the trial, they are together in His deliverance and help. A trial becomes secondary if you have such sympathy in it as will feed the heart with affection, while the Lord’s deliverance from the trial will be enjoyed together. I admit that in married life you will meet with more trials, because you are more in the casualties of humanity; but when marriage is in the Lord—if you meet the trials as Christians united together in communion with His mind—I believe the trials will afford fresh occasions for binding you together, as well as for establishing you together in the sense of His mercy and love and discipline. What can be so grateful as to know the depth and power of a heart that loves you? Where can you know it better, or better prove your own love or another’s, than in passing through trials and difficulties together? Love does not like to see me in sorrow, but in sorrow it summons all its resources, and proves its strength, until I am relieved. I believe all this is within the compass of married life, if only both seek the Lord together, and have communion and interchange of spiritual exercises together.

“Seek communion with one another, your very failures will then, like Samson’s lion, be yielding honey; you will find what is of Christ in one another in spite of the failures, for nothing gives us such a sense that another is

having to do with God as the simple confession of faults, and this sense will invigorate and give deep reality to your mutual affection. The one who knows me best, and who seeks out of real affection to correct my nature, gains a place in my heart, in my Divine nature, that no flatterer could in any degree attain to. Be as two souls unreserved before God as to all that His Spirit is doing with you. Shrink not from communicating to one another every confession you make to Him, every praise you render to Him. If either of you feel that you cannot do this, the greatest bond between you, and the spring of it, is gone! You may retain a unity derived from identity of interests, but it is not one established and confirmed by union in the Spirit. If two Christians are by marriage closer in earthly things and not closer in spiritual things, they are like Nazarites who have lost their hair!

“My one word to you both is, cultivate spiritual intimacy, do not be satisfied with as much Christianity as will ease your consciences; seek to respect and wait for one another’s judgment and feeling as to things before the Lord; in a word, seek to maintain communion whether it be in humiliation or in praise.

“Believe me, if you cannot tell one another of your humblings you will never celebrate together your thanksgivings. What delight it will be to my heart to see you both in fervent love, honestly confiding in one another before the Lord, learning the grace of the Lord in your mutual trials, and deepening in affection as you draw on that grace for one another.”

J. B. S.

“LEAN BACK ON HIM, FROM MORN TILL SET OF SUN,
A ‘CHRISTIAN,’ REALLY MEANS, ‘CHRIST’S LITTLE ONE.’”

THE HEAVENLY CALLING—*contd.*

(JAMES BOYD.)

The Book mentioned in these Papers is "The Judgment Seat of Christ," by D. M. Panton.

THERE is a notion in the minds of those who come under the influence of these errors, that salvation and forgiveness may be taken as synonyms. Scripture, however, gives no support to such a thought. Forgiveness is simply that the Creditor no longer regards the debtor as liable for the debts he may have contracted. God releases the sinner from the consequences of his sins. But salvation is the emancipation of the sinner from every evil power that had captivated him, and held him as a slave. Reference is made to Israel in this book. At the Red Sea Israel was told to stand still and see the salvation of God. The people were delivered from the bondage under which they lay, and the dread power of the enemy was broken. If we should speak of the blood-sprinkled lintel as affording them salvation (I do not think it is ever called that), it would be salvation from God, for the blood was on the door-post to keep out His righteous judgment, which was abroad in the land. Through the shed blood we have forgiveness (Eph. 1. 7), and without shedding of blood is no remission (Heb. 9. 22). At the Red Sea we have the salvation of God. This is Christ delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification. Romans 3. 24-26 has reference to the blood in Egypt, and chapter 4. 24, 25 to the Red Sea divided. Chapter 3. : "Through faith in His blood." Chapter 4. : "We believe in Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead."

Israel's salvation was not the salvation of the soul, but temporal deliverance, not eternal. It delivered them from Pharaoh and his oppressions, but not from the oppressor, the devil, whom Pharaoh typified. It was a salvation openly revealed, then and there; not like the salvation of the soul, which is "ready to be revealed," but for its revelation awaits the appearing of Christ (1 Pet. 1. 5-13). Their baptism

was to Moses in the cloud and in the sea, ours to Christ and to His death. Their food was the manna for the sustenance of the body, ours is Christ for the sustenance of the spiritual life derived from Christ. The rock from which they drank poured forth its water, after being smitten with the rod of Moses, for the natural thirst of the congregation, our Rock is Christ who was smitten with the rod of Divine judgment on our behalf, and from whom risen and glorified, flow the refreshing streams of Divine grace for the weary pilgrim on his journey to heaven.

We must keep in mind that they were a people taken up in the flesh, and that their arrival at the purpose of God depended entirely on their obedience to the command of God. I speak of their history from Sinai onward. From their departure out of Egypt until Sinai they were under pure grace, but at Sinai they entered into a covenant with God, binding themselves to life and blessing on the ground of their fulfilling their responsibilities, and broke it the first day they got it. Then, through the intercession of Moses, they got the law once more, written upon the second two stony tablets, but with a little grace added (Exod. 34. 1-9). For the rest of their journey they were not under pure law. Under pure law they would have perished to a man at Sinai. It became now a question of their inheriting with the help of God; but in Numbers 14. we see that even with the help of God they could not inherit. Even those who eventually came into the land could not keep it, for they proved themselves to be worse than the nations that were in the land before them. They broke the law, stoned the prophets, and murdered the Son of God, and to-day they are a mighty witness to the great fact that "*the carnal mind is enmity against God*" (Rom. 8. 7).

Yet Israel shall enter into and enjoy the inheritance which God promised to them, but it will be on the ground of pure grace, and under a covenant that shall leave them nothing to do but submit to God's terms. They will inherit through the sovereignty of God. He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy, and He will feel compassion for whom He will feel compassion; and therefore blessing will not be of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy (Exod. 33. 19; Rom. 9. 15, 16). On the part of God it will not be, *I will, if you will*, but it will be all God's "*I will*." The new covenant will simply set forth the disposition of God towards the people; and what He says He will do, that He shall do (Heb. 8. 6-13).

And this will be their salvation. The ground of all blessing for them and for us is the work of the cross. That was a work done outside of us. But it is also necessary that a work should be done in us. The work done *for* us is set before us in 1 Cor. 15.: "Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried; and that He rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures." In the epistle to Titus we have the work done *in* us: "After that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness that we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by His grace we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." The first is the work done *for* you, the second is the work done *in* you; and both are necessary if we are to have the hope of eternal life. And being justified by His grace we are heirs, and cannot be robbed of our inheritance.

But not all that came out of Egypt entered the land. In connection with this we are told by the writer of this

book: "*God's sharp dilemma impales us on its one horn or on the other. Overthrown Israel are a type, either of the believer's eternal destruction, or of his forfeited reward.*" Overthrown Israel is a type of neither, and on neither horn need anyone be impaled. The things that happened to them are types of the profession of Christianity (1 Cor. 10.). Jude speaks of certain ungodly men who had crept into the profession, who turned the grace of God into lasciviousness, and denied the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ, and says: "I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterwards destroyed them that believed not." The things that happened to them are not types of true believers, but of those who profess faith in Christ, the great majority of whom in the present day are without faith in His sacred Word. And it is in this sense that we have the warnings of Scripture—"Afterward destroyed them that believed not": "They could not enter in because of unbelief" (Heb. 3. 18, 19). The unbelief manifests itself in unholy and unrighteous behaviour, and these things have to be taken up, but the root evil is unbelief. The mere profession of faith in Christ saves no one.

All the grace that was shown to Israel was powerless to produce in them anything for God. Man must be born of water and of the Spirit, if he is to enter into the kingdom of God. He must be renewed in the whole texture of his moral being. The flesh, which is man's nature as derived from fallen Adam, could not be mended, therefore is it ended judicially in the cross of Christ: "Our old man has been crucified with Him" (Rom. 6. 6): "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live: yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2. 20). The believer—every true believer, whoever he may

be—is the workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus, and in Him is new creation. There the old things have passed away, and all things have become new, and all these new things are of God (2 Cor. 5. 17, 18). There is not an element of the flesh, or of old creation, recognized in our relations with God; nothing of the old order forms part of us viewed as in Christ. In the work that has been done *for* us, and in the work that has been done *in* us, is salvation and eternal life; and these blessings we have in Him, by the way in which He has intervened for us when we were utterly lost; and we possess them by the power of the Spirit in the knowledge of the Father and of Jesus Christ His sent One, though in their fulness both are future (1 Thess. 5. 8; Titus 1. 2).

“*God gives us,*” we are told, “*not only facts backward to believe, but facts forward: never to believe the facts backward is to be lost; not to believe the facts forward is for a child of God to drift into sin at once, and to incur the peril of the oath of exclusion.*” That there are facts brought before the hearer by the preaching of the Gospel no believer will be disposed to question; but these facts are concerning the work of God on our behalf: facts which set Him before us in His true character, in grace and love, so that the faith of our souls centres on Himself: He becomes the object of our faith. “*Abraham believed God.*” The facts are believed because we have faith in the Person who speaks them; and yet this faith is begotten in our hearts by the very word that is addressed to us in the Gospel. Still it is God that is believed, and not merely facts.

In the book that lies before me I cannot say that I find God brought before us as the object of faith. He has revealed Himself in the Son of His love, and in Christ have we got to know Him. We know Him, as I have said, by what He has done; but it is Himself we know and trust. I do not find anything of this in the book I have in

review. It is all the kingdom, and our efforts to get a good position in it, and that, not for the love of Christ, nor to be near Him in the day of His glory, but only for our own advantage. It is something akin to the desire of the wife of Zebedee for her two sons. She wanted them to have the best and most honourable place in the kingdom (Matt. 20. 21), or like Peter: “*Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed Thee; what shall we have therefore?*” (Matt. 19. 27). But what is it that gives true energy and direction to the Christian life? “*The love of Christ constraineth us,*” and to be with Him, to be like Him, to be His companions, and to be for ever to the satisfaction of His heart; this is better than any glory that could be given to us. If it were possible to miss reigning with Him, it would be the consequence of putting into practice the teachings of this book. It is self that is placed before the soul and not Christ. No one will question that a reward given by His pierced hand, as a mark of His approval of the little service we may by His grace be able to render to Him, will be exceedingly precious to His own; but this does not come much into evidence in this book. Rewards are set before us to encourage us in our tribulation through this evil world, and the warnings that are given are to keep us from forgetting that if God is our Father, our Father is also God. We must remember that the One whom we invoke as Father is the One who without respect of persons judges according to every man’s work (1 Pet. 1. 17), and the judgments that He exercises in His family are sometimes made to fall with heavy hand. But they will deprive no true believer of a share in the reign of His Son, for the kingdom is “*promised to them that love Him*” (James 2. 5), and it is our Father’s good pleasure to give it to us (Luke 12. 32). If a man does not love God, he is not begotten of God; but if he does love God, he is a child of God, and the kingdom is assured to him by the God that cannot lie.

READINGS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS—*continued.*

(J. ALFRED TRENCH.

CHAPTER 2.—*contd.*

VERSE 13.—The Apostle now brings us to another aspect of the work. Death with Christ was needed to close the life we lived in sin (chapter 3. 17). But when the full truth of our condition came out, by the last test God had to apply to it, we were found all alike to be dead in sins and the uncircumcision of the flesh; into that scene of death God came and quickened us together with Christ, having forgiven us all that belonged to that state of death. If the first aspect of the work was found in Romans, this last is developed in Ephesians. “Quickened together” is the actual work of God in bringing us out of death into the life with which Christ rose from the dead, the “together” involving union with Him by the Holy Ghost. It does not refer to the time at which we were quickened together, so much as to the wonderful character, as to the association and relationship, of the life with which we were quickened. It does not speak of the resurrection of the saints, for this would involve their bodies. Nor is “quickened together” experimental, but a mighty act of Divine power, as fully opened out in Ephesians 1. 19 to 2. 6, though being the subjects of it we cannot but experience it.

Q. What is the meaning of “hand-writing of [or rather “in”] ordinances”?

It is the next aspect of the work; the hand-writing refers to the legal bond which those under the law had entered into, and that was outstanding against them. He changes from “you” to “us,” only in this case as I suppose making the distinction between Jew and Gentile which we have so constantly in Ephesians 1. and 2., for Scripture never puts the Gentile under law, though we may put ourselves; in which case it applies to us as to them, that Christ has blotted out or effaced and cancelled the bond which was

contrary to us. He has taken it also out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. And, last of all, He has triumphed over the whole power of the enemy; the cross where His heel was bruised by the serpent was the scene of that public triumph wherein He bruised the serpent’s head, and all his power (“principalities and powers”) was laid low.

Verse 17.—I believe that the things of which the Apostle makes their feasts, new moons, and sabbaths but a shadow, were yet to come; but the reality that produced the shadow was of Christ. In having Him, therefore, we have the substance, which is clearly the force of “body” here. To say it is “of Christ” is a familiar construction as characterizing what is spoken of by its origin (see verse 11).

Q. Please explain the various references to the “body” and their different meanings in the following passages:—
 (1) Chapter 1. 22, “body of His flesh”;
 (2) Verse 24, “His body’s sake”;
 (3) Chapter 2. 11, “the body of the flesh”; (4) Verse 23, “neglecting of the body”; (5) Chapter 3. 15, “called in one body.”

1. Chapter 1. 22 recalls a “body hast Thou prepared Me.” Only that, as His presence here in the flesh effected nothing as to reconciliation, but drew out all the enmity of the mind of the flesh against Him, it is added “through death,” where the flesh in us having met its end under the judgment of God.

2. “His body’s sake” (verse 24) is defined by the following words to be the Assembly.

3. “The body of the flesh” (2. 11). What has been said before on the verse may make this plain; “body being here the whole force and system of the flesh looked at in its totality.”

4. The idea in “neglecting of the body” (verse 23) is illustrated in the following words, “not in any honour.”

It refers to the (more positive than "neglecting") harsh treatment of asceticism or monkery which fails to give the body—this natural body of ours—the due place of honour it has, when the will is broken out of it, as a vessel for the manifestation of the treasure God has put in it (see 2 Cor. 4. 6-11).

5. "Called in one body" is of course the body of Christ, the Assembly.

In verse 18 the Apostle speaks strongly of the influences that were at work among them, all tending to depreciate Christ and set up the first man again; in verse 4 there was the seduction of persuasive speech, in verse 8 the making a prey of them, and here "Let no man fraudulently deprive you of your prize" (N. Tr.). If the almost inconceivable vagaries of the human mind, mixed up with Jewish tradition and the distorted place of angels, characteristic of Satan's first assault on Christianity in gnosticism, were known, the warning would be better understood. It was the mind of the flesh, that while pretending to humility, occupied itself with angels as a higher order of beings, and was puffed up, prying into what was not revealed. But we are to be "wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil." The sufficient answer to the whole system is that it did not hold fast the Head.

Holding the Head is individual faith finding its deliverance from all this wandering of the mind of the flesh in lower spheres even where there was

any truth in it, in holding fast Him who is the exalted Head of all principality and power (verse 10), and to whom we are united as His body, the Assembly, and from whom it derives continually all its supplies to make increase according to God.

Reading with N. Tr., "From whom all the body ministered to and united together by the joints and bands," we see that in the body every member, according to the grace given it, has its place in contributing to the practical unity of the whole, and through whom the unfailing ministry of the Head may be realized.

We now come to the practical application of the great truths of Christ's death and resurrection to a walk that flows from them. We have been identified with Christ in death, and have thus lost our whole living status as men alive in this world and subject to ordinances.

As illustrative of the ordinances he refers to verse 20, "after the commandments and doctrines of men"; they presume the man to be alive after the flesh, and to need to be kept in order by such measures, who to faith has died with Christ. They had an appearance of wisdom, and even of the recognition of God, and humility; but it was all of man's will, and in the face of God's judgment, while it refused the body the place God gave it as that in which the life of Christ was to be manifested—the whole system being "to the satisfying of the flesh."

Confidence.

WHAT if I cannot tell
 The cares the day may bring?
 I know that I shall dwell
 Beneath Thy sheltering wing.
 And there the load is light,
 And there the dark is bright,
 And weakness turns to might,
 And so I trust and sing.

NOTES ON MATTHEW 24.

(C. N. SNOW.)

THE first fourteen verses of chapter 24. refer to the remnant of Israel, as scattered amongst the Nations. It is a time of trouble as to the Nations, and of persecution of the Remnant; false Christs and prophets, lawlessness and giving up, but of testimony in the preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom among all the Nations; and then the end: he who endured thereto being saved.

Verses 15-28 have the land—Judea—as their sphere, and the abomination of desolation; the Remnant there fleeing to the mountains; great tribulation; false Christs; but going right on to the end in the lightning-like coming of the Son of Man in judgment. “Where the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.”

Verse 29 goes back again to the tribulation referred to, and (up to verse 31) traces the subject up to the coming of the Son of Man in deliverance of His people, not so much in judgment, but in gathering His elect from the four winds and extremities of heaven. The order is, after the tribulation, a darkening of the ruling powers and a general subversion of the power which holds things stable upon earth. Then, in the darkened political sky, will appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven; then the mourning of the tribes of the land, and the coming of the Son of Man on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

Verses 32-44 (indeed, to the end of the chapter) apply these things morally, showing that this generation* would not pass away until all was fulfilled; that in the subversion of everything in heaven and earth, His Word would abide as surely to be fulfilled; precious truth! that the coming of the Son of Man would be as the waters of the flood, but in a discriminating judgment, as indeed with Noe (the issue of which was a savour of rest in the sacrifice, and

an ordered earth, Gen. 8. and 9.). They were to watch therefore: the coming of the Son of Man would be as a thief. But in verse 45 et seq. there is another thing.

Here there is a faithful and wise servant brought before us, set in his work over his lord's household, to give them their meat in due season; who, doing this, would be set over all his substance. And, on the other hand, that evil servant who, saying, “My lord delayeth his coming,” oppresses his fellow servants, and indulges himself, and is cut in two, and his portion appointed with the hypocrites: “There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

The “Then” of chapter 25. 1 is not in point of time, or consecutive order of event; but of character, giving a special and particular view of the kingdom of heaven; developing the “prudence,” as does verse 14, etc., the “faithfulness” already referred to in verse 45 of chapter 24.

The evident application of this “likening of the kingdom of heaven” (chap. 25. 1-13) to the present period is enhanced by the fact that the words given in verse 13, “wherein the Son of Man cometh,” have practically no textual authority, and the verse should simply read, “Watch, therefore, for ye know not the day nor the hour,” i.e., of the coming of the Son of Man. It is for Him we wait. Blessed hope for our hearts, as it will be of the remnant of the Jews who will look for Him in that day. The full and actual relationship of the bride is not developed here indeed, as the subject is the kingdom of heaven, and carries events on to the coming of the Lord to His Kingdom; hence the use of the figure of the “virgins.” But if we know a nearer relationship (and we do), *this* aspect of things also is of the utmost importance.

* “This generation” refers to the Jewish nation in its unbelief and rejection of Jesus as the Messiah; it will be still in that condition when these things come to pass.

A STUDY OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

Chapter 2.—Continued.

(G. J. STEWART.)

THE next citation is from Isaiah 8. 17.

I WILL PUT MY TRUST IN HIM.

Messiah here accepts the place of waiting Jehovah's time for the Kingdom and identifies Himself with a waiting people. We, too, are now associated with Him thus, and well may wait with Him. In this attitude we shall sanctify the Lord God in our hearts and find Him to be a Sanctuary for us where we may pass the time in praising, not in wondering and murmuring. The time of glory will come for us as surely as He is there in it.

Ps. 16. shows this same attitude of soul permeating all the details of the life of Messiah. Good to be in association with Him practically in every circumstance while awaiting the glory. The millennial reign cannot be brought in until we are with Him there as the court of the kingdom. When sorely tried and stricken, when prop after prop has been knocked from under us, and our distress is great, it is well to do as He did, and say—I will put My trust in Him. Then we are right! There is no other trust that is right this side of heaven.

But blessed as all this is and spite of the example and sympathy of the blessed Lord, it is just this waiting attitude that tests our hearts and brings out where the affections are. How sadly has the assembly failed here! How little has she been content to await the time of reigning with Christ! She has, indeed, reigned without Him, as the Corinthians so early did without the apostle. The saints have despised their heavenly inheritance, that pleasant land, and settled down into the world from which they originally came out, the place where Satan's throne is. Even among those in whom the hope of the Lord's coming and kingdom was revived, how few there are to say, How long?

Although consciences are not quite at ease in this state of things and the heart demands a cessation of it, the influence of the state asserts itself and with the best intention to be ready soon—a little more sleep and a little more slumber, a little more folding of the hands to sleep, and ere we are aware the Lord will be here; and we!—May the Lord arouse us yet again, so that the difficulties of the pathway may be honestly accepted with an "I will put my trust in Him."

The next quotation is from the same chapter:—

BEHOLD I AND THE CHILDREN
WHOM GOD HATH GIVEN ME.

This runs on in Isaiah thus,—“Are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord,” but this is omitted here. In the future the Jews will see the Gentile dogs—the Christians whom they had despised—in nearer relationship with Him whom they then recognize as Messiah than themselves, and will wonder that so marvellous a position had been reserved for them. Now, however, the language is used of those who, having been given to Christ as comforting Him for the loss of the nation, have learnt by faith the reality of unseen things and are then in glory. These fulfil in a higher way the type in Shear-jashub—the remnant shall return; Christ presents these children in association with Himself, as a priestly family, to praise and serve Him in the assembly, as typified in Aaron and his sons.

Have we faith to follow Him as children hanging on His skirts? We are all priests,—Do we know the power of our consecration? We should have no timidity in presenting to God the fruits of accomplished redemption, the calves of our lips giving thanks to His Name. The first breath of real life is praise. Deliverance appreciated, draws forth praise. The children of Israel sang on the wilderness bank of the Red

Sea, but, alas! in Scripture they are not represented as singing again for thirty-eight years. A solemn consideration! Many a saint praises God at his conversion and not again till his death-bed. All is completed on God's side, why not then gather around Christ continually as belonging to the sanctified company? It seems almost as though we were satisfied to serve only two weeks in the fifty-two, as each course in Israel did of old. Alas! that so few are in the abiding power of their consecration. Consecration means hands filled and that by another. For us it is rather heart and voice filled: "with heart and voice in Thee rejoice Thou God of our salvation." How little idea have thousands of God's priests of gathering around Him who says: Behold I and the children whom God hath given Me.

The remaining portion of the chapter applies the death of Christ in three other ways, with a view to delivering His saints from the disabilities which hinder them coming into the Holy places as priests. That they might have these lifted off their hearts, He came down into their circumstances, going right through them unto death. In Israel of old there were certain physical disabilities which hindered the sons of Aaron from offering the bread of their God; while they might all by His grace eat of it. Anything abnormal, whether superfluous or lacking, formed such a disability. With us, the whole thing is spiritual, it needs a perfect spiritual man to exercise this spiritual priesthood.

The first disability presented is the fear of death; the second, sins—imputation; the third, weakness. To each His death is applied as a means of deliverance from it.

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.**

His death is the only thing that will deliver His people from the power of death, by which in olden times they were all their lifetime kept in bondage by the devil. The whole passage is beautiful; guarding, as the Spirit ever does, the glory of the Person of the incarnate Son, yet showing how His voluntary humiliation in grace has destroyed the devil's power and brought believers into full liberty in the power of life.

The children whom He presents to God as a company of priests, had *inherited* by birth, apart from their own will, flesh and blood in its sinful condition, with all that it involved. They were in mortal bodies *subject* to death as the wages of sin. On the other hand, He, Jesus the Sanctifier, of His own voluntary will *took part* in flesh and blood. It was Jesus Christ *come* in flesh. But the body He inhabited was prepared specially of God—"That holy Thing born of the virgin." In the likeness of sinful flesh, and with a true human nature, yet in an unfallen *condition*; He feared not death as subject to it and was not in bondage to it. He came to die though death had no power over Him, and His own power was superior to it. On the other hand, His very holiness made Him fear death in a way none other did; sweating as it were great drops of blood in anticipation of it, and in the article of death crying out in bitterness of soul—Why? yet straitened until it was accomplished.

He gives Himself over voluntarily into the hands of God that He might go into death, being made sin, to accomplish God's will. In this act He annulled him that had the power of death. He met the foe in his last stronghold and overcame him. Only so could He deliver those who were all their lifetime kept in bondage through the fear of death. Jesus risen, dispels all fear.

Had the Lord taken part in flesh and blood in the same sinful condition as we inherit it, His death would have been of no avail for us, He must die for

Himself. But He took flesh and blood that He might die for others—the children; therefore death must have no claim upon Himself. Nothing but death could deliver them, therefore He must be capable of dying, and had He not taken a human body of flesh and blood, He could not have died. So He partook of flesh and blood, which they inherited, that He might accomplish His blessed purpose of love.

Now the deliverance of the children meant the destruction of the power of the foe, who delighted in executing the sentence of death righteously passed upon sinners, but who overreached himself when he involved in death the Holy Jesus, and all his power was broken for ever. The keys of death and hades are now in the hand of the Conqueror "who was dead, and behold He is alive again for evermore." Who can involve His people now in death? Who can intimidate the children with that conquered monster? Yet death has real terrors, and the fear of it even now hinders many believers from worship. It needs a living faith in Christ's victory to rise above it. If not above it, the soul is still held in bondage.

God must have His praise, He lives in it. But how can they who are in bondage praise Him? The devil says: Curse God and die! The risen Christ delivers from the power of death and opens up the way of the living (chap. 10. 20), so that, freed by faith in His resurrection, from fear, we may in the superiority of His risen life, tread the way into the holy places with a song.

This deliverance is not merely from the personal fear of the article of death, but from its effects here, personal or relative. One may not fear to die oneself—may even desire to depart and be with Christ which is far better; but if one we love is taken away, it may so affect us as to disable us for praise, and even hinder our presence in the assembly. Aaron, when death seized his sons, was so under the power of the fear of death as to be unable to perform his priestly functions. It is true,

when he pleaded—"such things have befallen me," that Moses was content, but death had power over him and hindered him (Lev. 10.). It is ever thus; human sorrow and human joy both hinder what is spiritual, they *never* help it. Reality is, however, to be cultivated, and it is better not to assume to be superior to the fear of death, if in reality we are under it.

Death tests how far our hopes and joys are connected with another scene in the power of a new life. The way into the holy places is the way of the living. All in connection with it is living. The living God; a living, risen Christ; a living people in the power of His risen life. May the Lord lift His people into practical superiority to death, so that it may never hinder them from entering the holiest and praising Him there! Death, when met in power, brings life into such activity as largely to accelerate praise. So may it ever be! A lowly walk with the power of death practically on all things here, will enable us to recognize His hand amid scenes of actual death, and to praise Him the more.

Thus the application of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ delivers us by faith from this first disability. So David declared of the sword of Goliath that there was none like it, and took it for his own use. Life and death; light and darkness; bondage and liberty; Christ and the devil are all in antithesis here.

For verily He taketh not hold on angels, but:—

HE TAKETH HOLD OF THE SEED OF ABRAHAM.

Angels are now again brought into contrast with man. Not this time with the Son, nor with the Son of Man, nor with man generally as such. But with man as set forth by the seed of Abraham, the man of faith. He had laid hold of the fathers by the hand to lead them out of Egyptian bondage (see chap. 8. 9, where the same word 'epi-lambanomai' is used). In that case

also it was not all mankind He appropriated to Himself, but that family which descended from Abraham, the man of faith. Yet not all the seed of Abraham are children, only they who are of faith. To-day, the true seed of Abraham is found among the men of faith, whether from Jew or Gentile; upon these He lays hold as a peculiar treasure to Himself, delivering them from the power of Satan unto God.

Angels, fallen or unfallen, are not laid hold of by the Sanctifier, to be made all of one with Him—a dignity even the unfallen angels might covet and rejoice in with all the capacity of their superior being. Neither are fallen angels laid hold of for deliverance from the fear of the judgment of God. "Art Thou come to torment us before the time?" did not show deliverance, but fear. The devils believe and tremble.

Had He taken upon Him the nature of angels, He could not have died. Spiritual beings do not die, even the spiritual part of man cannot die. Dying thou shalt die, was not written of the spirit. Dust thou art and to dust shalt thou return, refers to the body.

But upon the seed of Abraham He laid hold, appropriating them for Himself. He became Man, though in an unfallen condition. Christ's holy human body was capable of death, but being incorruptible could not turn to dust. He rose from the dead redolent of incorruptibility; bearing the stigmata of His passion and of His love to the children. It is never again thrown aside, but is an abiding and eternal memento of what He is and has done. Inseparable henceforth from the Son.

THE RAPTURE AND THE APPEARING.

The "rapture" is the word used for the catching away of the saints as given in 1 Thess. 4. 16, 17. The "appearing" describes the Lord's return in power and glory to stablish His kingdom. These are the two parts of His coming again as revealed to us in the Scriptures.

THE consolation for the heart that loves the Lord is to see the Lord Himself. Nothing can surpass, "I will come again and receive you unto Myself" (John 14.) or "so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4. 17), or, "We shall see Him as He is (1 John 3. 2). But before there was any revelation of the rapture, the saints were waiting for God's son from heaven. [They were looking for the appearing, when the mystery of the rapture was divulged to them for their comfort. This was done by the word of the Lord that they might not be ignorant concerning those that slept through Jesus.]

Now there are two lines of teaching fraught with much damage to souls: one is that there is no rapture at all, that the church has to pass through the "great tribulation" and must be looking for the coming of the King. The other is that the rapture is everything. Neither of these is correct. I do not comment on the first, it is so

palpably erroneous. But as to the latter, the rapture has been put out of its place: that is to say, a part has been taken for the whole. The Morning Star is before the dawn. It is the harbinger of day—the moment of delight for every true heart. We shall see Him, but though that is the first thought, it is not all. Hence in Rev. 22. 16 you will find that the Lord does not only present Himself as the "bright Morning Star" but also as the Root and Offspring of David—the coming King, and sure I am that if the bride longs to see Him for her own joy, the more she is in concert with Him the more she will long for Him to have His rights and rejoice that the Lord reigneth. I believe that to the true heart the rapture—the Morning Star, would not be enough; we look for the day, when the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings. Scripture is plain that the Lord thinks of those who wait for Him and watch for Him, *who love His appearing*.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Delivered unto Satan.

“Were Hymenæus and Alexander (1 Timothy 1. 19-20) saved or lost?”—TORQUAY.

WE should gather from the fact that these men were to be taught not to blaspheme that they were really children of God, who through carelessness as to “holding faith, and a good conscience” had been caught in a snare of the devil and deceived by him. They were to learn in this life the misery that results from losing sight of Christ, the true object of faith, and of being indifferent to their own personal moral condition; and thus they would be recovered to the truth and holiness from which they had strayed; God using Satan who had deceived them for their ultimate good.

Only an apostle could “deliver unto Satan” (see also 1 Cor. 5. 5 and the result of this action in 2 Cor. 2. 6-8); but it is essential that those who would be true to Christ and not make shipwreck of faith, should have no fellowship or company with such as are described in these passages of Scripture. “Know ye not that a little leaven leavens the whole lump” (1 Cor. 5. 6; Gal. 5. 9). “If any come unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds” (2 John 10. 11).

The Judgment Seat of Christ.

A letter from STAFFORD complains of a statement in “The Heavenly Calling,” December No., page 276, in which speaking of the Judgment Seat of Christ, the writer says “That judgment can be looked forward to with the utmost tranquillity.” Our correspondent thinks that even Paul had questions in his mind as to how he would fare there, and as to what the Lord’s judgment would be as to his life and works. He quotes several Scriptures to show how searching and solemn that Judgment Seat will be.

WE are sure that the writer of the paper in question would not reduce the solemnity of the Judgment Seat of Christ in the smallest degree, but rather emphasize it. It will be a solemn hour for us all when we are manifested there; that is not in question, but whether we are to view it with fear, and with uncertainty as to the issue of it. As to judgment in general the word is plain. “We have boldness in the day of judgment: because as He is, so are we in this world.” The love of God has given us this place before Him of boldness and rest, all fear cast out by the knowledge of His love. And this love wrought for us when we were at our worst: knowing all that we were and would be. “Herein is love not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” God has settled the question of our sins in His own way and for His own glory and satisfaction, so that as to the judgment, to use the words of the writer in question, “it can be looked forward to with the utmost tranquillity.” The judgment seat of Christ for us is not, cannot be, a place of judgment in this sense; it is not a penal judgment at all, for into that the believer

can never come at all (John 5. 24). It will be an hour of manifestation, a solemn hour surely, but one in view of *which* the apostle says “we”—the Christian “we” of 2 Cor. 5. 1, “are always confident.” And in this confidence we labour to be acceptable to Him. But what moves us to labour? Not the fear of punishment, or of being excluded from the kingdom, but the desire to be acceptable to Him, and it is “the love of Christ that constrains” us to this. Christ is the motive, and not the rewards or the loss of them, though they may be an encouragement; but what are they when compared with the approval of Christ to those who know His love? There will be the suffering loss, works burnt up, the possibility of shame for faulty work, for all this is plainly stated in Scripture, yet we fully endorse what our contributor writes as to it all, and so will all who have learnt anything of the grace of God, for there as never before shall we know how full and blessed are the riches of that grace. Here are his words. “The judgment can be looked forward to with the utmost tranquillity. Indeed no true heart would wish to be without this manifestation, for there has been much in all our lives that

we have little understood. Then we shall know as we are known. We shall see our failures in the light of infinite holiness and righteousness; and along with all the provocation with which we have vexed His Holy Spirit, we shall see the patient grace and boundless love that

bore with us in our wanderings, and which kept us for Himself in spite of the evil nature that could be so easily wrought upon by the devil, and which we so sadly failed to keep in the place of death. Instead of being a terror to us, it is a real comfort and joy to contemplate."

Christ and His members are one.

"Just a line to draw your attention to a remark in 'Scripture Truth,' Sept., 1924 issue. On page 194 you say, speaking of Christians, 'We are Himself.' Is this a printer's error? If so, would it not be wise to correct it in a future issue?"—SYDNEY.

THE quotation is from a paragraph on the Lord's words to Saul of Tarsus, "Why persecutest thou Me?" and runs as follows. "The youngest Christian as well as the oldest—of each and all the Lord says, 'that is Me.' He has redeemed us by His blood, sealed us by the Holy Ghost, and gathered us into this blessed unity; we are members of His body, we are Himself." This is not a printer's error; and we are glad that our correspondent has given us the opportunity of calling special attention to this great truth. The Lord did not say to Saul, "Why persecutest thou Mine?" but "ME"—Not Himself, of course, in the distinctness of His blessed Person, yet nevertheless Himself. There has been formed, and it will abide for ever, an indissoluble unity between Christ the Head and the members of His body. This unity has been formed by the One Spirit; and the life and nature of Christ—Christ Himself, morally and characteristi-

cally, is in the saints on earth, as the Colossian Epistle teaches. So that to persecute or injure a saint of God on earth is to persecute Christ; and to wound the conscience of even the weakest Christian is to "sin against Christ" (1 Cor. 8. 12). The more this great truth enters into our hearts the more careful we shall be in our ways and communications with our fellow members of the body of Christ. In Ephesians 5. 25-33 the church, which is the body of Christ, is presented in its preciousness to Him under the figure of the marriage relationship, and there we read: "So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: for we are members of His body; of His flesh, and of His bones. . . . This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church."

The Coming of the Lord.

"Some of the statements in the article on page 7 (Jan. No.), entitled 'The Assembling Shout,' by J. C. Trench, are without Scripture proof, and therefore unconvincing. May I point out a few?"

(1) "Where does Scripture assert that 'we shall be caught up in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, to meet the Lord in the air'? It is not found in the reference cited (1 Thess. 4.), while the only passage which does use the phrase 'in a moment' connects it with our being transformed, not translated. The Scripture does not say we are 'caught up' in a moment, but 'changed.' The rapture is not said to be simultaneous with the changing. Nor is there any word in 1 Cor. 15. which would lead us to assume that the rapture follows immediately upon the resurrection. In grouping these two Scriptures in the way the writer has done, there is surely an ignoring of the important word 'then' in 1 Thess. 4. 17, i.e., 'thereafter.'"—N. W. 5.

IT is true as our correspondent points out that two Scriptures are put together in the paper he criticizes as though they both referred to the "catching up" of the saints, while one of them, 1 Corinthians 15. 52, 53, does not mention

this. The subject of the chapter is resurrection and not the rapture. But while this is so the resurrection will take place when the Lord comes (verse 23), and 1 Thess. 4. tells us how He will come. When 1 Thess. 4. 16 states, "the dead in

Christ shall rise first," it surely refers to the same event and time as "the dead shall be raised incorruptible" of 1 Cor. 15., and "then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air" corresponds with "and we shall be changed." They are the same event, but Thessalonians carries us a step further

than 1 Corinthians and shows us how we are to be with the Lord, in order to come with Him when He comes to reign. There is no force in the inference our correspondent draws from the word "then." It is simply that the dead answer the Lord's shout first, they are the first subjects of His power, and then "we . . . together with them."

(2) "The article states that 'our gathering together unto Christ must first take place' (and credits Paul with this assertion), i.e., before the Day of the Lord. The reference given (2 Thess. 2. 1-2) affirms no such thing. The apostle is writing 'touching' or 'in respect of' the Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together unto Him. What he does say is, that 'that day (the Day of the Lord) shall not come except there come the falling away first' (not our gathering together unto Him 'first'). On what Scripture grounds, and by what evidence, is 'the day of Christ' dissociated from 'the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together unto Him'?"

THE Apostle appeals to the truth which he had taught them as to the coming of the Lord and our gathering together unto Him to quieten their minds and to deliver them from the snare and delusion that the day of judgment—the day of the Lord—was already come. It could not come until they were gathered to the Lord—for His coming for them would be the way in which He would save them from the wrath to come, which is here in view (1 Thess. 1. 10). What other force could the introduction of the

Lord's coming have here? Before the day of the Lord comes "the man of sin" and Anti-Christ must be revealed, and he cannot be revealed until He that hindereth is taken out of the way (verse 7). He that hindereth is the Holy Ghost who will be taken out of the way when the church is caught up. There will be no check then to the full development of the mystery of iniquity, which when it reaches its consummation will bring in at once the day of the Lord, with the wrath of God.

(3) "In face of the predictive warnings of our Lord and His Apostles that 'evil things' must come to pass ere He returns (as e.g., Matt. 24. ; Luke 21. ; 2 Thess. 2. ; 2 Tim. 3.-4., etc.) ; that in these words (i.e., Matt. 24. etc.) He instructed His disciples—the same disciples to whom He spake the promise in John 14. 1-3—to watch for the 'evil happenings' as 'signs' of His near approach ; and that He would not come until these predictions were fulfilled, is it Scriptural (not to say charitable !) to class such obedient disciples with the 'evil servant' of Luke 12., and to charge such with saying, 'My Lord delayeth His coming,' and its accompanying evil practices? Moreover, does not the very context of this warning (Luke 12.) associate the Return of the Lord there referred to with His coming as a thief, i.e., after the reign of Antichrist, as parallel Scriptures show? (see verses 39 and 40 of Luke 12., and comp. with 1 Thess. 5., etc.)."

IN the Synoptic Gospels the Lord speaks of His Coming to earth in judgment and glory. There is no hint in any of His sayings in these Gospels of the catching up of His church to heaven. It is always His coming back to earth, which will be after the Man of sin and Anti-Christ have been revealed, His coming will be their destruction and of all their dupes, and it is this coming that will be sudden and unexpected—as a thief in the night. The rapture of the church and the way it was to take place was a secret reserved until the truth of the church and its heavenly destiny were revealed. Though it is clear that it was in the Lord's mind when He uttered those words of comfort

to His disciples in John 14. 1-3. When He comes back again in His power and glory His saints will come *with* Him. for this is the meaning of "them also which sleep through Jesus *shall God bring with Him*" (1 Thess. 4. 14 and Rev. 19. 14). He must come *for them* before they can come *with Him*. He comes for them before the great tribulation with all its horrors bursts upon the earth ; they come with Him to bring that reign of terror to a close in judgment, and to establish His kingdom of righteousness and peace. It is the failure to see these two parts of the Lord's Coming which leads to the confusion in which so many are as to this subject.

“THE SABBATH OF THE LORD IN YOUR DWELLINGS.”

Notes of an Address. (J. T. MAWSON.)

“And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, Concerning the feasts of the Lord, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are my feasts. Six days shall work be done : but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, an holy convocation ; ye shall do no work therein : it is the sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings ” (Lev. 23. 1-3).

THE Feasts of the Lord, as they were given to Israel in this chapter, begin with the Sabbath and end with the Feast of Tabernacles, the eighth day of which was a Sabbath.

In the Sabbath with which these feasts begin, we have set before us in type the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom and through whom God will carry out all His purposes of blessing for men. In the *eighth day* of the Feast of Tabernacles with which they end, we have foreshadowed God's eternal rest, Eternity. So that this chapter spans that whole period of time from the moment when God's purposes were set in course until that moment when they shall be fulfilled without any fear of being overthrown in the eternal rest of God. I think it helps and encourages us to see that before any of these purposes began to be effected by the coming of Christ, God had them all sketched out in the Sacred Scriptures.

But my purpose is to speak of Christ, who is God's Sabbath, the One in whom He rests, and the One in whom we may also rest.

The Lord Jesus Christ is God's rest and His resource. When sin came into the world, when Adam and Eve turned their backs upon God and listened to the enemy's lie, the first prophetic words spoken in the hearing of fallen humanity were addressed to the devil, the old Serpent. To him God said, “I will put enmity between thee and the woman and between thy seed and her seed ; it shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel”—the Seed of the woman shall bruise the Serpent's head.

Thus early in the history of sinful man God made known the fact that He had a Person upon whom He could rely, through whom He would accomplish all His will, One who would undo the works of the devil ; a Person who would not fail Him as Adam had done. The eternal God was not disturbed by man's rebellion and sin—it grieved His heart, but He was not disturbed by it. Sin brought disquiet and apprehension in the lives of men, but God was not restless and apprehensive, for He had One who was to meet the disaster and settle every question in connection with it, and in doing so glorify God and be an everlasting blessing to men. In due time Christ appeared, a Man upon the earth—a Man whose whole life was centred in God Himself, a Man who did not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeded out of the mouth of God, a Man whose first recorded words were, “Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business ?”—a Man in whom God the Father rested with perfect delight.

When the Lord Jesus Christ was baptized of John, after thirty years of hidden life—hidden as far as we are concerned, but not hidden from God's eye—the Father opened the heavens and said, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Then towards the close of His ministry upon earth He went up into a high mountain, and there was transfigured before His disciples. In that mountain the glory claimed Him, enfolded Him, distinguished Him as altogether suited to it, and again the Father spoke, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” But He went from

that mountain down into the very depths and darkness of death for the glory of God and our blessing, for God's sake and for ours. His obedience unto death proved that God made no mistake when He rested in Him, and in those depths the Father's glory greeted Him and raised Him up and set Him in the highest place in heaven. There we see how complete and everlasting is the Father's rest in Jesus His beloved Son—He is the One who will carry out all God's will and work.

Think of those words, John 3. 35, "The Father loveth the Son and hath given all things into His hands," and again in John 13. 3, "And Jesus, knowing that the Father had committed all things into His hands." The "all things" cannot be computed by a creature mind. They embrace the whole range of God's counsel and will—the subjugation of all evil, the blessing of men, the establishment of Divine justice, the revelation of God's nature, and the introduction of eternal rest. All this the Father had given into the hands of His beloved Son, the lowly Man whom men despised and slew. And He did so without misgiving or fear. The Father had perfect confidence in Him; He would not fail the Father; the Father trusted Him with an absolute trust. Think of the Lord Jesus Christ in this character, and you will understand that He is indeed the Sabbath of God.

If the Father rests in Him, we may rest in Him too. We may rest in Him first as to the salvation of our souls. I have not a doubt in my mind that I shall be there in the eternal glory of God, before the Father's face for ever, and for that confidence I have many reasons, but the chiefest, the greatest of them all is the reliability of the One who came to be the Saviour.

The greatness of the Saviour forbids all question of doubt. He came into the world to save. "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins" was the command from heaven at His birth.

Jehovah's name had been linked up with many things in Old Testament days, and all of them blessed things. He was JEHOVAH-JIREH to Abraham, the great Provider for his greatest need; He was JEHOVAH-NISI to Moses, his banner and leader against an implacable foe; He was JEHOVAH-SHALOM to Gideon, the One to whom he looked for peace. But the New Testament opens with a greater glory. He is there JEHOVAH-SAVIOUR, for that is the meaning of His precious name. It is right that that name JESUS should appear in capital letters for the first time upon the first page of the New Testament. It is the title of the Book upon its title-page. JEHOVAH SAVIOUR—"Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." If He has undertaken the work, it will be carried through according to the will of God; we may depend upon that, and rest quietly in Him. Thus does He become our Sabbath as well as God's.

Having come as the Saviour, He spake as the Saviour; stretching out His hands to men He cried, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest!" He offered Himself to men as the greatest Giver, but what an offer! Who but Jehovah could have made it? He beheld men as they were, restless, burdened, sinful; He knew their sorrows, saw their tears, heard their sighs; He knew how labours wearied them and fears beset them; nothing of all their boundless need was hidden from Him, and knowing all He cried to all, "Come unto Me." And His word stands for us to this day, and millions can bear witness to the fact that His deed is as good as His word.

Notice how it is put in the third verse of our chapter: "Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of rest, an holy convocation, ye shall do no work therein, *it is the Sabbath of the Lord* IN YOUR DWELLINGS." The days of labour for blessing and rest were those Old

Testament days ; if men could have kept the law that God gave them they would have entered into rest, but they could not, they would not keep it. They toiled, but they toiled in vain ; they were like the troubled sea that cannot rest ; their surge cast up nothing but mire and dirt, and of their best God had to say, " All your righteousnesses are as filthy rags." But when Jesus lay in the manger, the great change had come, a new day had dawned ; men had now to stand still and see the salvation of the Lord. God brought His Sabbath near to men, for His heart yearned for them in their miseries ; in His infinite pity He said, I want you to have rest in all your dwellings. I want you to share My rest in Christ.

There could be no rest for us until the great questions of our sins and sinfulness were taken up and settled righteously, and Christ took up these questions on the cross when He " suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God " (1 Peter 3. 18). He gives to us *rest of conscience* when we come to Him as the One who was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities ; and doubts and fears depart when we know that He is raised again for our justification. And we could have no rest until our hearts were satisfied. He, the living Christ, is able to satisfy the heart, and we get *rest of heart* when we discover that He can do for us what the world cannot do ; that He can fill every void and satisfy every longing. The greater a man's sincerity is, the more laden will his conscience be with his guilt ; the greater the eagerness with which a man searches for good in the world, the greater will his labour and disappointment be ; but in Christ every question is settled, every need met, every desire satisfied, and conscience and heart are set at rest.

It is rest that men need to-day : it is the one thing above all others that all need. We live in a restless world ; unrest is everywhere, and in every

circle—political unrest, industrial unrest, social unrest, domestic unrest ; unrest at home, unrest abroad, unrest in religious circles, unrest, alas, in the hearts and lives of Christians. Yes, the majority of Christians are uneasy, unsatisfied, restless. What is the cause ? Sin and selfishness. God is forgotten, Christ is rejected or neglected. What is the remedy ? Christ—simply and only Christ, the Son of the living God. Every man who puts his all into the hands of Christ, as the Father has committed all to Him, finds rest, even as the Father rests in Him.

And it is into our dwellings that God would have this rest to come ; it is into our homes that the Lord would bring the rest of His presence. He did not bless Zacchæus in the tree or leave him in the street. He said, " Make haste . . . to-day I must abide at thy house." Are we prepared for that ? Don't say, " I shall have to put a lot of things right before I can admit Him to my house." *Make haste*, let Him in ; let Him put them right, for they never will be put right until they are put into His hands. Was it not so in the house of Simon Peter ? Restlessly, in a great fever, there tossed upon her bed his wife's mother, and anon they tell Him of her. That was all, and it was enough ; and she who had been a burden, a cause of disquiet and sorrow, arose and ministered unto them. Ah, it is the presence of the Lord that delivers, tranquillizes, and transfigures ; that turns evil to good ; that brings in quietness and rest.

Yes, " like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord "—He knows the trials and sufferings of His saints and He delights to give them rest, but there is more than this—note the words : " *A Sabbath of the Lord* in your dwellings " ; it is His own Sabbath, His own rest in Christ that He would share with us. Not merely burdens lifted and weary hearts rested—but fellowship with Him about His beloved Son. When we are free for this the Father is

delighted, and in this the peace and joy of heaven begin on earth. Let us link this up with John 14. 23. "If a man love Me, he will keep My words : and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him." If those words had come from any lips but the lips of Jesus we would not have believed them ; but, blessed be His Name, He spoke them, and He waits for us to know the blessedness of them, not only to believe them but prove them true.

* * * * *

"And the eighth day shall be a Sabbath" (verse 39). The eighth day carries us on to Eternity, when there shall be a new heaven and a new earth, in which God shall be all and in all, and where He shall dwell in everlasting complacency in the midst of men, "and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes ; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying,

neither shall there be any more pain ; for the former things are passed away." One word characterizes that blessed scene, it is REST—the Sabbath of the Lord—and lest we should have any doubt as to the effectuation of it, "He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And He said unto me, Write : for THESE WORDS ARE THE TRUE SAYINGS OF GOD" (Rev. 1.-5.). Then it will not be the Lord bringing His rest into our dwellings in a tempestuous world, but our being brought into His rest, where nothing can disturb for ever. This is the great end for which Christ became a Man ; then shall the whole question of good and evil be settled ; then shall sin and Satan and death be for ever banished into the lake of fire, and God shall be *all* as the object of His people's love and worship and *in all* as life and power and joy. Then will it be true :

"Joyful now the new creation,
Rests in undisturbed repose,
Blest in Jesus' full salvation,
Sorrow now nor thralldom knows."

The eighth day shall be a Sabbath.

BIBLE STUDY.

WHAT ought to be the Aim and End, the real disposition of the Bible Student? *God's Word is food* ; the first need for Bible Study is A GREAT HUNGER AFTER RIGHTEOUSNESS—a great desire to do all God's will. The Bible is light : the first condition to its enjoyment is—A HEARTY LONGING TO WALK IN GOD'S WAYS. "Blessed are they that hear the Word of God AND KEEP IT." There is no blessedness in hearing or knowing God's word apart from keeping "it." The word is nothing to us if not kept, obeyed, done. I must read my Bible with one purpose—"Whatsoever He said unto you do it."

God's Word is the only authentic revelation of God's will. All human statements of Divine truth, however correct, are defective and carry a measure of human authority. In the Word the voice of God speaks to us directly. Every child of God is called to direct intercourse with the Father, through the Word.

The words in which God has chosen to clothe His own Divine thoughts are God breathed, and the life of God dwells in them. The Word of God is quick and powerful. God is not the God of the dead but of the living. The Word was not only inspired when first given : the Spirit of God still breathes in it. God is still in and with His Word.

COINCIDENCE, OR THE HAND OF GOD ?

(F. B. HOLE.)

THERE is with many a Christian the habit of looking at second causes, or even at third causes, in connection with the many events which go to make up their lives, and thus they miss the joy of tracing the moving of the hand of God behind all the scenes. When this habit becomes confirmed and inveterate the whole of one's life becomes a meaningless jumble of odds and ends, and the spirit becomes sorely tried. When, on the other hand, we look away from all secondary causes to God Himself, light and order begin to appear; though doubtless the full explanation of all circumstances contrary or otherwise, awaits that day when all the hidden things shall come to light.

Of this the book of Job furnishes a striking example, as we all know. It was one of the earliest books of the Bible to be written, and from this we may learn the kindness of God. Knowing the fearful perplexity that would be engendered by adverse circumstances in the minds of men, and particularly in the hearts of His saints, He caused this book to be written, which should make manifest "the end of the Lord" (James v. 11). It is possible that never again in the history of the world has such a combination of crushing blows fallen upon any one mortal man, and yet all was proved to be from the hand of God, and ordered by perfect wisdom and perfect love. And all this was put on record as soon as ever the written revelation of God began.

The book of Esther furnishes us with another example of how God moves behind the scenes of man's little world, and though the subject is approached from a different angle and many of the chief actors are godless potentates dealing with matters of high policy, yet the proof of it is not one bit the less striking. It is perhaps more striking when we remember that Esther is one of the two books in the Bible in

which God is not mentioned. Just where God is not seen and events move on apparently without Him, there most clearly He is at work behind the scenes.

The story unfolded in Esther is well known to all our readers. It concerns itself with the fortunes of the Jews who remained behind in the lands of their captivity after a remnant had returned to the land of their fathers under Zerubabel, Ezra and Nehemiah. These latter were evidently the pick of the people, for the idea of returning to Jerusalem, and facing the privations and troubles and reproach which that entailed, would only appeal to those who feared the Lord and thought upon His Name and purposes. Those of a more worldly-minded type, who had comfortably settled down and acquired possessions and wealth in the lands of their dispersion during the seventy years, would be much less likely to face the sacrifices involved in such an uprooting.

Now whilst God worked openly amongst the remnant who returned, raising up His prophets, who directed them by inspired utterances, He did not manifest Himself at all amongst the mass who remained. As they had declined from His ways so did He hide Himself from their perceptions, so much so that the whole story of their wonderful deliverance from a great impending catastrophe can be related without God being mentioned at all, and Mordecai, who was chief amongst them, and personally, as far as we can judge, a pious man, could only say to Esther, "If thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place." A certain measure of confidence he evidently possessed, but "another place" is a very poor substitute for GOD. The book ends with "Mordecai the Jew next unto king Ahasuerus," so that he was a kind of second Daniel, yet how greatly inferior! The one a successful viceroy,

“seeking the wealth of his people and speaking peace to all his seed”; yet without any direct touch with the living God. The other no less great and successful as a viceroy, but also a prophet of God, instructed himself in the mind of God and the communicator of it for the instruction of others.

The writer of the book of Esther tells us the story of the great deliverance granted to the Jews throughout the extensive dominions of Ahasuerus, from the spiritual standpoint of the Jews of the dispersion. He puts on record a true story which is almost stranger than fiction. The story abounds in what men would call dramatic situations and the most remarkable coincidences.

Fancifulness is a thing much to be shunned in handling the Holy Scriptures. We shall seek to avoid it by not claiming as coincidences various details which many might be disposed to regard as such. We do not think that any would be disposed to deny as remarkable coincidences, the following :

1. That, when, according to the corrupt customs of those days, large numbers of fair young maidens were assembled at Shushan for the king, Esther out of them all obtained *universal* favour. That one maiden would obtain the king's favour was pretty certain, but Esther obtained not only that, but also the favour of the king's chamberlain and indeed “of all them that looked upon her.” (See verses 9, 15, 17 of chapter 2.) Thus was she lifted suddenly into a position of extraordinary influence.

2. That, when amongst the many intrigues of that Eastern court a plot was set afoot to assassinate the king, news of it leaked out to Mordecai, of all people in the world, and thus he was able to establish a claim upon the king's favour.

3. That Ahasuerus promoted Haman, the Agagite (or, the Amalekite) “after these things” (iii. 1). Thus the sworn foe of the Jew did not obtain his

exalted position with its vast potentialities of mischief until after the lines were laid for checkmating his evil designs.

4. That, when Haman, invested with power and full of wrath at Mordecai's lack of reverence, determined to destroy, not Mordecai alone, but all his people, he resorted to the practice of casting lots to determine “the lucky day”; and further that the lots when cast in the first month of the year indicated so late a day as the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, thus allowing ample time for the various steps that brought about the downfall both of his design and of himself (3. 7 and 13).

5. That the necessary measures for the defence of the Jews having been taken by Mordecai and Esther, the success of which so largely depended upon the king being in a favourable frame of mind on the day of the second banquet, “on that night [the night before] could not the king sleep” (6. 1). Unaccountably his sleep departed from him.

6. That, having lost his sleep, the king did not, like Nebuchadnezzar, lose his temper (Dan. 2.). Nor did he, as was customary in those days, send for instruments of music to while away the tedious hours (see Dan. 6. 18), but bethought himself of the book of records of the chronicles and commanded it to be read before him (6. 1).

7. That the officials who obeyed his orders lighted upon that part of the records where was related the treachery of the two chamberlains and the timely intervention of Mordecai (6. 2).

8. That the king's memory thus stirred on the point, his curiosity was awakened as to what reward had been given to Mordecai; and, learning that his notable services had so far been totally ignored, that his sense of gratitude, which had been hitherto unaccountably quiescent, sprang into ardent activity, and he determined to reward him in a handsome and striking fashion (6. 3-6).

9. That just at that early hour of the morning Haman, intoxicated with pride and full of the imagined success of his schemes, was standing in the court, seeking an audience of the king that he might get his permission to hang Mordecai on the gallows that he had prepared (6. 4).

10. That Ahasuerus forestalled his petition by a question as to what should be done to the man whom the king should delight to honour, and that assuming in his pride that the man to be thus honoured could be none other than himself, Haman answered suggesting that he should be elevated into almost regal dignity and that in the most public way imaginable, and that he should be thereupon deputed by the king to carry out his own suggestions in regard not to himself but to Mordecai (6. 6-11).

The rest of the story proceeds quite simply. As the fruit of this remarkable series of coincidences Haman is hanged on the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai, the Jews are empowered to resist any acts of aggression against them, and consequently the thirteenth day of the twelfth month only witnessed the destruction of the enemies of the Jews, the Jews being not only preserved but prospered.

But were all these remarkable happenings just a series of coincidences? By no means: they were the movings of the hand of God, though He Himself remained hidden. God was behind the scenes of man's busy little world; but then, as has very well been observed, He moves all the scenes that He is behind. Moreover He moves them in favour of His people, if not always for their temporal preservation and advancement always for their spiritual good and the advancement of His own purposes.

Dispensations vary, but the ways of God both in providence and government do not vary, but proceed upon principles which remain the same whatever the dispensation. We are

assured, therefore, that God is still at work behind the scenes in a similar way to-day. And our assurance of this is fortified by a further consideration: viz., that while His people are marked by faithfulness, power and brightness, He is pleased to make His presence amongst them very manifest; and on the other hand, when there is defection, weakness and failure, it suits Him to withdraw the manifestations of His presence in large measure, and perhaps altogether, as in the book of Esther. Defection, weakness and failure certainly mark the professing church to-day.

Are you grieved and tried in spirit by the absence of visible signs of a genuine sort in connection with the testimony of Christ, and the Church's pilgrim pathway through this world? Well, at any rate do not fail to look for these more hidden workings of His hand. They exist on all sides in abundance. Look for them also in the much smaller and humbler circumstances of your own individual pathway.

If you feel inclined to ask, But may I do so? May I look for the moving of the hand of God amidst such very insignificant affairs as mine? The answer is, that you certainly may. God does not forget *one* sparrow out of the five which are sold for two farthings (see Luke 12. 6), not even the odd one unceremoniously thrown in by the seller, since two farthings and not one are spent. He bids you draw near to Him in prayer and supplication concerning simply *everything* (see Phil. 4. 6). You may be perfectly sure then that He takes the deepest interest in all your concerns and in all your pathway here. You may confidently expect His direction and control. And if perchance you feel yourself to be weak and feeble and not equal to discerning and receiving His guidance in more direct and manifest fashion, you may the more confidently rest assured that His hand is at work behind the scenes, and you may look to see it.

JESUS—SON OF GOD.

O THOU, beloved and lovely One of God,
 Whom I have learned to love, from whom so long
 I wandered in the night of misery
 And sin, but to whose dear and bleeding feet,
 Drawn by the cords of love, my soul has come
 To stay and rest for ever; fain would I
 Lift up to Thee the voice of gratitude,
 And sing Thy matchless worth, whose glorious praise
 Sounds from the lips and harps of heavenly choirs,
 And fills the unmeasured universe of God
 With solemn, sweet and ceaseless harmony.
 Thy name is "WONDERFUL"—Thy Person is
 The Mystery of Mysteries! The Word
 Of God incarnate—the Eternal One
 In time's low tabernacle—He who is
 The Infinite, revealed in finite frame—
 The Unchangeable, inhabiting a form
 That grew from feeble infancy to strength,
 And stooped from life to death, and then arose
 From death to life eternal! God and man
 United in one Person evermore,
 World without end.

Within Thee, treasured up,
 Lie hidden all the riches of all grace,
 And light, and life, and love, and joy, and peace,
 Wisdom and beauty, power and righteousness,
 And glory, mingling in a sea of infinite
 And everlasting fulness. From Thee flow,
 As from a fountain inexhaustible,
 All streams of blessing and of sweetness, that
 Make glad the Holy City of our God
 And fill the heavens with eternal praise! There's none
 To be compared with Thee, the chiefest of
 Ten thousand, and the altogether fair.

All glories find their meeting-place in Thee!
 Thou art the great Creator of all seen
 And unseen things; the myriad worlds of light,
 Upheld by Thine omnipotence, revolve
 And safely travel in their trackless course.
 Creation's starry empire is Thine own,
 Thou heir of all things, the First Born, First Risen,
 First Glorified art Thou! redeemed by Thee
 Is that vast multitude before the Throne,
 Gathered from every age and clime and tongue;
 And of that blood-bought host Thou art the Head;
 A name hast Thou, above all other names;
 A crown above all other crowns; a throne
 Above all other thrones, that shall endure
 Throughout the ages of eternity.

Thou of the great invisible " I AM "
 Art the full revelation—in Thee shines
 The brightness of the glory of His face,
 The image of His person. Yet, O Christ,
 Thou art all meek and lowly—like a lamb
 In gentleness, and like a little child
 In Thy humility—the meek and lowly One
 Who never broke a bruised reed, nor quenched
 The smoking flax, nor turned away from pain
 Or poverty, from feebleness or woe,
 When such have sought Thee ; no ! but to Thine arms
 Hast bid them welcome ; with Thy tender hands
 Hast healed their sore diseases, and bound up
 Their broken hearts and wiped their tears away.

And Thou art still the same, no shadows come
 Across the light of Thy pure holiness,
 No storms disturb the calm of Thy deep peace,
 No age exhausts the ocean of Thy love,
 The same for ever ! Yes ! the same to me
 To-day as when at first my wondering eyes
 Beheld by faith Thy glory ; and the same
 This day to all who seek Thee, as Thou wast
 To the poor outcast woman who of old
 Embraced Thy feet, and washed them with her tears,
 And loved Thee much, for she was much forgiven.

O Thou, beloved and lovely One ! what words
 Can speak Thy worth ? What words can ever tell
 All that Thou art, since Thou art all in all ?
 Dear bleeding Lamb ! blest fountain where I cleanse
 My sin-stained soul ! O river of my peace,
 Rock of my rest, shelter from every storm,
 Light of my darkness, joy of my distress,
 Balm of my wounded spirit ! morning star
 Of all my future ! crown of all my hopes !
 O day-spring from on high, whose early light
 Has beamed upon me, banishing my night
 With dawn of glory ! Sun of righteousness !
 Rise, O for ever rise ! for ever shine
 Brighter and brighter ! From all weeping eyes
 Remove all tears, and over all Thy saints,
 And over earth and heaven, and o'er the bounds
 Of utmost time, and o'er the boundless depths
 Of all eternity, pour out the light,
 The flood, the sea of glory—the full sea
 Of all Thy glory inexhaustible,
 Pour out for ever and for evermore !
 And o'er the earth renewed, and azure heaven
 Unshadowed, and the realms of endless peace,
 Spread the high noontide of the hallowed day
 Of God—the Sabbath of eternity !

H. G. G.

THE THREEFOLD LOVE OF GOD.

WHEN the sinner returns to God he finds himself surrounded by divine love. As a new-born child, he opens his eyes on a world of love. He sees the love of JESUS, the Shepherd, the Son of God, who sought and saved him, who laid down His life to bring him to God. He understands the love of the SPIRIT, who, by the enlightening and searching power of the Word, rescued him out of darkness when he lay helpless and lost, and brought him as a precious jewel into the treasury of heaven. He feels the joyous love of the FATHER, who adorns him with Christ as his robe and righteousness, giving him the ring of adoption and inheritance, instead of the fetters of sin and fear; endowing him with the power of a new obedience, and filling him with response to the love that has blest him. They begin to make merry and to be glad, and the feast lasts throughout time and eternity.

God is love, not became love. The cross of Christ is the great manifestation of this :—

“ Incribed upon the Cross we see,
In shining letters, ‘ God is love.’ ”

The manifestation of it, its shining forth,

but not its beginning. Above all creation, above every beginning and end, from everlasting to everlasting in Himself, God is love; Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—God is love. This could not have been manifested to men if the Son had not become man; it could never have reached us in our dead and lost condition if He had not died. Only by His blood could we be relieved of the load of our sins and all our terrible debt cancelled; and love has accomplished this. Only by His resurrection could we have a life that could enjoy the love of God and live unto Him; and now the Holy Ghost who has been given to us sheds His love abroad in our hearts. He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God. Father, Son and Holy Ghost have all been active in our redemption, for love must be active where need is, and we have been sought and saved, kissed and welcomed, because we were necessary to that everlasting love.

We are saved by faith, but faith is never alone, it is the beginning of love in us. We have known and believed that God is love and we love Him because He first loved us.

THE LOVE OF CHRIST.

HE loves us with the most compassionate and unwearied love of the SAVIOUR, who came to seek and save lost sinners. He loves us with a love surpassing the most faithful and fervent affection of a FRIEND. He loves us with the most tender, ardent, and lavish love of the BRIDEGROOM.

We were SINNERS, all of us; we had fallen from light, love, friendship, and fellowship with God, unto the depths of misery, wretchedness and guilt. We were no longer worthy of being loved; we were foes and not friends, hateful and worthy of wrath. Yet God had compassion on our

unspeakable misery, and gave the Son of His bosom for us, and He, our Saviour, the great Redeemer, came and gave Himself for us (Gal. i. 4).

He would raise us to the intimacy of FRIENDS, but must first rescue us from all peril and bondage and enmity and death and judgment, and this He has done by His own death. He could not do more, and less would not suffice (John 15. 13).

His church is His BRIDE, the Lamb's wife. How ardently and with what strength He loved her when He gave Himself for her! How tender is His love as He now nourishes and

cherishes her, and cleanses and sanctifies her by the washing of water by the Word! And how that love of His will glow in its unquenchable fervour when He presents her to Himself a glorious church on the great marriage day! (Ephesians 5. 26, 27). He found her destitute and in beggarly clothing, but He takes away the filthy and tattered garments, and clothes her with Divine righteousness, and sheds His love in her heart, imparts His own image, develops within her His own meekness, purity, grace, simplicity and love, until at last with Divine rapture He will cry, "Thou are all fair, my beloved!" and so she shall be for ever even "as a bride adorned for her husband."

His love is a particular love; it is personal to every one whom He calls His own. In view of this Paul exclaimed, "The Son of God loved *me* and gave Himself for *me*." Ah, Paul! what is that thou sayest? Did Christ die for thee solely? "Oh, yes, *solely for me, and solely for thee*."

Then again we may rise out of our individuality and be caught up in the joyous corporate consciousness of the bride, and sing: "He loved the church and gave Himself for it," and then will break forth from our hearts the cry, the deep longing, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." The Spirit and the bride say, COME!

"IF WE LOVE ONE ANOTHER . . . !"

[I]t is narrated that the aged Apostle John was carried into the assembly of the saints, and that the only words he addressed to them were. "Children, love one another." To him it was the comprehensive summary, the highest point Christian experience can reach. If God is love, then, wherever He is there must be the presence, the power, the blessing of love. If God is in us, then, wherever we are, there must be love going forth as light, consolation, help; forgiving, restoring, healing. But why does he not say: If we love *God* He dwelleth in us? Why is his exhortation, Love one another? Because we may easily deceive ourselves. We may imagine we love God when we only love His gifts or are enamoured of our own thoughts of Him. We may say we love God and even talk of His love to us, and yet think only of self, and be easily offended and provoked and unforgiving if we are slighted, which Divine love never is, but which a sinful love of self always is. If we do not dwell in an atmosphere of love we do not dwell in God. If affection and tenderness, and a spirit of helpfulness and kindness, do not animate us towards the brethren whom we see, how can we possess the loving mind towards God, whom we do not see?

The Apostle John has been compared to the eagle that soars high above the mountains and gazes into the bright sun. It was given unto him to testify of the glory of the only Begotten. And yet, although in the writings of the beloved apostle we are instructed in the deepest mysteries, we find there also the simplest and most practical aspect of truth. He who lived in the contemplation of God, and whose fellowship was with the Father and the Son, beheld most clearly that reality of love which is the source and strength of all obedience.

The beloved disciple emphasizes love to our brethren. He presents it as the evidence of regeneration, of our having passed from death unto life, and not merely as an evidence and symptom of our condition, but as the condition itself.

If we look into our hearts, and if we find there clouds of darkness, envy, jealousy, apathy, uncharitableness; if there is a lack of sympathy and brotherly kindness, or if we cherish unforgiving thoughts, if we withhold sympathy and help from our brother; these clouds are not merely between us and our fellows, but between us and God.

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH. No. III.—The Bible: A Unique Feature.

(A. J. POLLOCK.)

UNLESS the Bible were the Word of God, inspired and infallible, it would be perfectly inexplicable that it should command a title of the power that it does. From a merely human standpoint it is the most tactless book in existence. It flatters no one. It draws the picture as it really is. It plumbs the depths of man's depravity.

Was there ever such a plain, unvarnished story of man's failure and wickedness as is contained in the Word of God? It is the greatest condemnation of the human race and particularly of the Jewish nation. From an ordinary point of view we should expect that that nation would be glad to bury in oblivion, with no hope of resurrection, such a story, which holds their race up to such condemnation.

And yet the Jewish nation revered the Old Testament and has preserved it with jealous vigilance and meticulous care all down the centuries. There is no question about that. To this very day the Jewish nation is the jealous guardian of Scriptures which are their greatest condemnation.

There can be no possible explanation of this save that it is God's revelation to man, and that God's protecting hand is held over His own Word: His Holy Spirit lending to the miraculous preservation of the Scriptures.

Let us go into some details. We begin with the story of man's fall in the Garden of Eden. The Bible is the only book in the world to give us the origin of evil. We are faced with this fact. No explanation is given why God allowed it. An ordinary book, written by men, would have attempted some explanation to have satisfied the mind of man and to have enabled him to receive it with some show of consistency. But God does not essay to explain anything. There is no defence of God attempted. The bare facts are given.

Nor are the widespread results of the fall foreshadowed to any great extent. Beyond the sentence of death being passed upon Adam, the prophecy as to the enmity between the seed of the serpent and the seed of *the woman* (prophetic of Christ and the Virgin Birth and the effect of His atoning death), and the particular and immediate way in which the fall would affect our first parents, and again, the atonement prefigured in the coats of skin with which God *covered* (Hebrew word for atonement, *kaphar*, to cover) our first parents, and their expulsion from the Garden of Eden, we have no foreshadowing of the tremendous consequences of sin. God patiently unrolls them bit by bit down the centuries.

Take the first family—Cain and Abel. Cain murdered Abel. The *first* child that was born into this world grew up to be a murderer. Could anything be less flattering to the human race?

Next we have Lamech, the bigamist, and then a big jump on is made, and we meet the frightful description of the antediluvian world. The account of the unholy alliances of the sons of God with the daughters of men, and the frightful consequences resulting therefrom, are here given to us in graphic, terse language. Could anything be more sweeping than "Every imagination of the thoughts of [man's] heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6. 5)?

Then we have the flood, the testimony to which unconverted scientists are never tired of attempting to weaken. A whole world, save eight persons, refused the warning of coming judgment. Could one conceive a less flattering picture?

The new world begins with Noah, into whose hand is put the magisterial sword, and lo! the first action recorded of him is planting a vineyard *and getting drunk*.

A great step forward is taken again, only to bring us to the story of the tower of Babel, when men attempted a vast imperial union which would make them independent of God. The confounding of their language is emphasized to this very day.

We leave now what is general and come to what is particular to the Jewish nation. That nation was taken as a sample, God's dealing with which served to test the whole human race, as is seen in the law being given, that "every mouth may be stopped, and all the world . . . become guilty before God" (Rom. 3. 19).

Just as the mighty river begins as a bubbling spring high up in the mountains, so God began the Jewish nation in the call of Abraham. One verse (Gen. 1. 1) is given to tell of the creation of the universe; one chapter (Gen. 1. 2-31) suffices to tell us of its reconstruction in six days. And yet we have more than thirteen chapters taken up with Abraham. Man, a mere speck in size compared to the mighty mountains, puny in bodily strength as contrasted with the lion or the ox, is yet of great moral import. Creation with all its glorious setting compared to man, is as the scaffolding to the building. Man is the only creation* capable of communion with God.

A study of what God would teach in Abraham is well worth the closest attention.

He is the head of promise. He was called the Friend of God. In him all nations of the earth were to be blessed. What do we find in his history? Were an uninspired penman to write down his history we are assured he would have produced something that would have glorified Abraham rather than God.

Gen. 12. tells us in such matter-of-fact language of Abram starting for Canaan at the divine bidding, and being stopped half way at Haran by

natural ties, that it is only by close reading that this failure on his part is grasped. The next chapter tells us how Abram instructed Sarai, his wife, to say she was his sister, the truth indeed to hide the truth, for she was his half-sister, but the worst of lies. Chapter 16. tells how Abram sought to get the promised seed through Hagar, a sad story fraught with unhappy consequences in Ishmael.

Again Abraham himself tells Abimelech, King of Gerar, that Sarah is his sister, a lie blacker than the first—it was intended to hide the marital relationship—for he should have learned the lesson of his former failure on this line.

Of course there shines out in the life of Abraham wonderful traits of faith—grand episodes of true moral greatness—but would any uninspired writer have given these blots on his history? God's word describes man as he is. All that was grand and noble in Abraham was the product of the work of God in his soul; all that was sinful and sad, the result of what the flesh is.

Take the history of Jacob. Without going into details, how well he deserved his name! Jacob—meaning the intriguer, the supplanter, the cheat, the robber of his brother's birthright, the man who bested Laban in the matter of the cattle—and yet out of such material God could produce an Israel, "a prince . . . power with God and with men" (Gen. 32. 28).

We get the story of the ravishing of Dinah, and the awful punishment Simeon and Levi meted out to the Hivites, followed by the genealogy of the proud, unconverted descendants of Esau, whilst in chapter 38. we get the story of Judah and his daughter-in-law, playing the harlot; Tamar by this very act coming into the genealogy of our blessed Lord (Matt. 1. 3).

Thus rapidly and partially we run over the Genesis record. Is it flattering to the human race? Would an uninspired penman have put things on record as we find them in Genesis?

* Angelic creation is not within the scope of our enquiry in this article.

Next we come to Moses, a truly grand figure, the law-giver, the man who spoke face to face with God on the holy mount. And yet after his grand record we have the incident of this meekest of men speaking inadvisedly with his lips, and not allowed to go into the promised land.

Would not an uninspired penman have suppressed such matters? How the recital of them would lower the law-giver in the eyes of surrounding nations! And yet there is the truth told in all its naked simplicity.

Next we have the sad story unfolded in the Judges of a nation continually lapsing into idolatry, yet the story of the ever faithful God, who gave them repentance and sent them deliverers. Take one of the great characters—Samson: a story of a giant and a baby, a man of God and a man of lust—not at all flattering to the race. Take Eli's sons and Samuel's sons—how sad a record!

Next look at the kingdom. Saul chosen king, mainly because of his height. Read of his jealousy of David and how ignominiously his life ended amid the shades of spiritism and utter despair, falling upon his own sword, committing the terrible crime of self-murder.

Next we have David, adulterer and murderer; Solomon, with his plurality of wives and worshipping of strange heathen gods, spite of the wonderful God-given wisdom; Rehoboam, an utter fool, whose folly caused the ten tribes to separate from the two, and the beginning of the separate histories of Judah and Israel, where previously there had been one kingdom; the history of these kingdoms moving on till God first allowed Israel to be carried away captive into a foreign land and afterward Judah and Benjamin.

To look back with rapid bird's-eye survey of the history of Israel, could there be a more disgraceful history of what man is, even when surrounded by the best environment, as Israel was?

How it enhances the wonderful grace, forbearance, and love of God, which love is still set upon Israel for the fathers' sake, and will be seen in all the wisdom of its working in the coming day of glory, when the prophecy will be fulfilled that in Abraham's seed, even Christ, all the nations of the earth shall be blessed.

And when we come to the New Testament things are no better. When the Lord Jesus came out in public testimony, who were His greatest enemies? Not "the common people," for they heard Him gladly; not the officers of the chief priests, who were chided for not making the Lord their prisoner, for they replied, "Never man spake like this man." His greatest enemies were the chief priests and rulers of the nations.

And among His friends. See Peter denying Him with oaths and curses; see all forsaking and fleeing from Him.

And above all, Jew and Gentile banded together in crucifying the Lord of glory. Was there ever such a crime? Was there ever such a declaration of the evil of men's hearts? And they did it with their eyes open. "They have both seen and hated both Me and My Father," and their law had spoken of this, for this came to pass that that which was written in their law might be fulfilled, "They hated Me without a cause." Aye, was there ever such a shining forth of God's love against the dark background of man's guilt?

And when we come to the epistles what do we find? On the side of doctrine the wholesale condemnation of man in Rom. 3.—a veritable summing-up of the whole human race. Corinthians was written to take up matters of the gravest moral and doctrinal delinquency; Galatians, to combat Judaising teachings, calculated to subvert Christianity; Ephesians, after the unfolding of the very highest truth, turns round, and bids the believers not to tell lies, not to steal, to put away bitterness and wrath, etc., and be kind

one to another ; Philipians tells us of preachers actually preaching out of contention ; Colossians, like Ephesians, bringing out truth of the highest order, says some sharp things about fornication, uncleanness, covetousness, etc. ; and so we go on till Revelation is reached with all its terrible prophecies of man's lawlessness and rebellion, and of the church's decline from her " first love " as seen in the Ephesian assembly to Laodicea to be spued out of Christ's mouth because of her lukewarmness.

Yet running through the whole Book from Genesis to Revelation we see the hand of God—patient, gracious, powerful—carrying out His own purpose step by step.

It does not do to dwell upon evil, but on the other hand we lose immensely if we fail to grasp what is recorded for our learning. For the writer's part, the utter failure of man to answer to God, whether in innocence, or under law, or under judges, or under kings, or by the supreme test of Christ coming into the world, or in the church, being met by the way God pursues His Divine purpose, spite of it all, only tends greatly to strengthen one's faith. It only brings out into greater relief the wisdom of God in dealing with

men, producing a brand new beginning for us altogether in Christ. He shines out the only perfect One amid imperfection. His Person, His work, His place are indisputable for every true Christian.

In the light of all we have so rapidly reviewed, how full of deeper significance for us are the words of Christ to Nicodemus, " Ye must be born again." What a moral basis God works on !

Was ever a book written with such a stand, unpopular and inexplicable, as is contained in the following words, " The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God : for they are foolishness unto him ; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned " (1 Cor. 2. 14) ; or again, " We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness " (1 Cor. 1. 23) ?

And yet the Book lives—lives in the lives of multitudes of men and women : thus the Word of God is multiplied. There can be only one explanation, viz., that it is the inspired Word of God.

We can surely call the honesty of the Book, the telling a plain, unvarnished tale, the plumbing of human darkness and guilt, a unique feature.

REDEEMING LOVE.

ADORE, admire, and stand amazed, O my soul, at the infinite, almost incredible love of God ! He gave His Son for me ! For me, who was neither righteous nor good ; for me, who am nothing but a sinner, and exceeding sinful ! I behold Him who knew no sin standing at the bar of Divine justice for me, charged with my sins, my debts, which He took upon Himself until the dread sentence against them was executed to the last letter of it. I behold Him on the cross blotting out the hand-writing that was against me, and securing for me a full and valid discharge. I behold Him come forth in resurrection, having obtained an eternal redemption for me, and a fulness of grace and salvation that shall carry me on and bear me up until I reach His glory, where His love will have me without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. Praise Him, O heart of mine, who loved me and gave Himself for me, and who lives and is able to keep me from falling and to present me spotless in the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. Let glory be His for ever and ever ! Amen.

" In cloudless light and glory bright,
We soon with joy shall greet Him,
And in the air shall meet Him."

THE HEAVENLY CALLING—*contd.*

(JAMES BOYD.)

The Book mentioned in these Papers is "The Judgment Seat of Christ," by D. M. Panton.

I COME back to the question of faith. Faith, in every instance, whether in natural or spiritual things, comes by report; and in Divine things report is by the Word of God (Rom. 10. 16, 17). To believe the report with the heart—that is, with a heart interested in it—is to come under the power of it. To believe the word of a man without being able to verify it, is to believe the man; and to believe the Gospel of God, which we have no means of verifying, apart from the inward assurance that it is He who has spoken, is to believe God; not to believe His Word is to say He is not worthy to be trusted. Abraham came under the power of the Word addressed to him by God, though he well knew that, as far as nature was concerned, the promise God made to him could never be fulfilled. But he knew that what he had promised He was able also to bring to pass (Rom. 4. 21). A large number of the children of Israel had no faith in God. They are spoken of as children in whom is no faith (Deut. 32. 20), and they could not enter into the purpose of God because of this.

Scripture reveals no way into the eternal enjoyment of the favour of God in the new heaven and the new earth except through the kingdom. It is to the kingdom we are called by the Gospel (1 Thess. 2. 12), and it is the first thing placed before the believer. It is promised to them that love God; and a man who does not love Him has not passed out of death into life (James 2. 5; 1 John 4. 7, 8); he is in no vital relationship with God. If it were possible that a soul that loved God would be rejected from the kingdom, it would prove a breach of promise on the part of God; but His gifts and calling are without repentance (Rom. 11. 29). To those rejected from the kingdom He says: "I never knew you"; and such are cast into outer darkness, among hypocrites, and into the fire of Gehenna,

the second death (Matt. 25. 39, 41; 24. 51, and many other texts). If a man is prepared to argue that such a punishment may be meted out to children of God, it would be very unwise to waste precious time in any discussion with him.

But the coming kingdom has a heavenly side to it as well as an earthly. It is more a sphere than a plain. When the Son of Man shall have sent forth His angels and gathered out of His kingdom every evil thing that it has accumulated in its present aspect and shall have cast them that do iniquity into a furnace of fire, "then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." This I do not doubt is the heavenly side of the kingdom, which, in its administrative character, is set before us in the holy city (Rev. 21., 22.). In this city are the throne of God and of the Lamb, and in it the saints of this dispensation shall reign with Christ over the kingdom under the whole heaven (Dan. 7. 27). All on the heavenly side are in their ultimate and glorified condition. The city is the whole assembly of the glorified saints of this dispensation. Taking the tabernacle in the wilderness as typical of the order of the world to come, the heavenly city is "*The Holiest*," the earthly Jerusalem "*The Holy Place*," and the court, the court of the Gentiles. The heavenly city has *the Shekinah*, "The glory of God," and the sphere where His face is seen (Rev. 21. 11; 22. 4), and in the light of this the nations walk. The glory of the earthly Jerusalem owes its brightness and wealth of blessing to the heavenly. It will minister both light and nourishment to the nations.

When we are caught up to meet the Lord in the air our state and condition are changeless: "So (Thus) shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4. 17). And John tells us: "We shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3. 2). This is a way

in which the world shall never see Him. The world shall see Him in His judicial character only; but we shall see Him in His and our Father's house, in that place He has prepared for us (John 14.). And we shall *all* be caught up: "The dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and thus shall we ever be with the Lord." Let us give heed to the injunction, then, to "Comfort one another with these words."

Yet after such plain and encouraging words, we are asked in this pamphlet to believe that many of those who have been caught up to "be for ever with the Lord," and whose bodies of humiliation have been fashioned like unto the Lord's own glorious body, will be excluded from His kingdom and (1) *Some, perhaps, . . . may behold . . . without entering,* (2) *Some return temporarily to corruption . . . until Hades, together with death, are emptied at the final judgment, . . .* (3) *Some are in the mysterious region known as "outer darkness,"* (4) *Some, guilty of the very gravest offences, are temporarily in Gehenna.* To suppose that a man who is fit to be the companion of Christ throughout the eternal ages is not fit to reign with Christ over a rebellious world, is not only contrary to Scripture, but obnoxious to every spiritual mind. What could be more unworthy of all that we have learned of God, than to speak of Him as returning some to corruption who had been glorified, and in the likeness of Christ, and in spiritual bodies.

However unspeakable the joy of having to do with a God of all grace and love, there is a solemnity connected with it that shuts out completely all levity of the flesh. But it is another thing when one is told of "The awful vision of the judgment-seat of Christ," a judgment that has not the slightest terror for the believer. A saint and servant of God, seeing the effect of that judgment upon himself, may well be

aroused to increased earnestness for the Christless soul who may have to stand before it. But for himself it has no terrors. We have boldness in that day.

But in connection with this subject I read in the pamphlet that I have before me: "*If on the ground of 1 Thess. 5. 4, it should be said that the Parousia cannot overtake a believer as a thief, this word of our Lord at once negatives the inference, for the threat of a thief-like descent, accompanied with total ignorance of the arrival, is addressed to a Christian pastor*" (Rev. 3. 3). But the Lord is here speaking of "the times and seasons," which refer to His restoring again the kingdom unto Israel (Acts 1. 6, 7), and that will be at His appearing to the world; and Israel cannot be taken up for blessing until the church has gone from this scene. The rapture of the church will make way for Israel to come in. The Gentile branches must be broken off out of the Olive Tree, before the natural branches can be grafted in again (Rom. 11. 16-25). No true believer is in darkness; for He "has called us out of darkness into His marvellous light" (1 Pet. 2. 9). "Delivered us from the power of darkness" (Col. 1. 13). Indeed believers are themselves light, though they were once darkness (Eph. 5. 8). "He that hateth his brother is in darkness" (1 John 2. 11); and to such "is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever" (Jude 13.). Therefore, if the day of which the Lord speaks in 1 Thess. 5. 1-4 overtakes any one it must be as a thief, for all in darkness are without the knowledge of God, and utterly unprepared for that day. This is what light is, the knowledge of God (2 Cor. 4. 3-6).

We are told that the threat that "*Is addressed to a Christian pastor*" (the Angel of the church in Sardis), "*Decisively proves that Thessalonian disciples (1 Thess. 4. 15) stand, not for the whole church but for the watchful only; even as the promise of escape is addressed to the Philadelphian Angel, and only indirectly to all in Philadelphia*

who also had kept 'the word of My patience.' To Thessalonian disciples there will be no thief-like suddenness; therefore the Thessalonians stand for souls never surprised (1 Thess. 5. 4) because never unready." It is nice to have things proven "decisively"; and surely it would be a pity to have things that have been *decisively* proven disturbed. Still, one may ask a question, and turn to Scripture for a *decisive* answer.

Why was it that that day would not overtake the Thessalonians as a thief? Does not the very Scripture (1 Thess. 5. 4) quoted give the reason? The reason was because they were not in darkness. I have spoken of this, and shown from the Word that all believers are in the light, and are light in the Lord. This was not at all peculiar to the Thessalonians; indeed, many believers were a great deal more in the light than they, for they had been converted only a few weeks, and had no time to learn anything but the simplest elements of the Gospel, nor does the apostle put forth anything advanced in either of his two epistles which are written to them. In verse 5 the apostle says directly to the Thessalonians: "Ye are the children of light, and the children of the day," and then, as if to show that this was true of all believers, he says: "We are not of the night, nor of the darkness." And again, "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him" (verses 9, 10).

And whether we fall asleep, or whether we wait here until He come, when He comes and establishes His kingdom, we shall "*live together with Him.*" The Lord shall make no mistake in His dealings with either His saints or with the world. He knows them that are His (2 Tim. 19), and they know Him (John 10. 14), and they are beloved of God, for they love Jesus (John 16. 27; 1 Peter 1. 8); and for them God has the kingdom in view

(James 2. 5). And speaking of such as should believe through the word of the apostles, He says: "The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are one; I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me." The world to which we have manifested little of the unity of life and nature, and for that reason goes on in its blind unbelief, shall yet see us in the same glory as Christ, and then it shall, not *believe*, but *know*, that the Father sent the Son, and also that He has loved us as He has loved Him (John 17. 22, 23).

CONCLUSION.

I must bring this paper to an end. I have said that the immediate prospect placed before us in Scripture is the kingdom. To this we are called by the Gospel (2 Thess. 2. 13, 14); and we have the assurance given to us by the God who cannot lie that we shall be confirmed unto the end: "Blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 1. 8). But from the beginning good and bad have been found together in the profession of Christianity. The enemy sowed tares among the wheat, and the net gathered both good and bad fish (Matt. 13. 25, 47). Therefore we require to be attentive to the Scriptures, in order that we may have light for our path through this confusion.

In Matt. 5-7. we have the characteristics of those who have title to enter the kingdom and to reign with Christ. How they come to be able to exhibit those beautiful moral features of the King comes not to light in this discourse. This is to be learned from other parts of the Word of God. Those who exhibit the qualities necessary for entrance into the kingdom are those who share in the life of the risen and glorified Saviour, and who are indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God. They are the qualities of the only life in which

we live in our relationship with the Father and the Son (1 John). Being alive in that life we are able to "walk worthy of God, who hath called us unto His kingdom and glory" (1 Thess. 2. 12).

We are called to glory, but there is a way there, and to that way the Holy Spirit by means of the Word directs our attention. Should we see others who bear the name of Christ, and who may seem to occupy a high position in the house of God, acting in a way contrary to the Divine will, we are warned against going with them or imitating, and their eternal condemnation is plainly declared. To all these warnings we are exhorted to take heed. On God's side we are kept by His almighty power, but on our side it is: "By the word of Thy lips have I kept me from the paths of the destroyer." Our God has no intention of allowing us to slide away from Himself, and therefore are all His wholesome, solemn, and gracious warnings. If there is one saint who is more devoted to the interests of Christ than another, he can only say, "By the grace of God I am what I am."

If what these men, who misread the Word of God and fill unestablished souls with dismay, affirm were true, is there a single believer upon earth who would have a place in the coming kingdom of Christ and of God? Certainly if what they teach were true, no one could know whether or not the fires of Gehenna would not be his

millennial portion, for they tell us: "*The escape is no privilege attached to faith, but a reward attached to a standard of holiness known only to God.*"

I see around me a great baptized Christian profession, because they have no heart for Christ, turning to fables, Modernism, Spiritism, Russellism, Christadelphianism, evolution, and every other soul-destroying error invented by the human mind broken loose from God, and under the domination of the devil. And I see sects and parties with their priestly hierarchy and lay hearers, part of them treading the highway to Rome and part to rank infidelity. Religious pride, politics, covetousness, pleasure-loving Christlessness, God-forgetfulness, and apostasy, characterizing the whole restless, seething, corrupt mass, out of which the Lord who knows them that are His will shortly call away His own to Himself, and spew the nauseous dregs out of His mouth. Then Rome with her illicit traffic with this evil world shall carry on her hellish plotting and scheming unrestrained, while Protestantism, without even its name to live, and Laodicea with her proud boasting louder than ever, shall go on in their fancied security, until He shall come upon all as a thief in the night, and bring their sinful career on earth to an end in unsparing judgment. But not one soul who has been begotten of God shall be denied entrance into the kingdom over which Christ shall reign.

Break, Day of God.

BREAK, day of God, O break!
 The night has lingered long.
 Our hearts with sighing wake
 We weep for sin and wrong.
 O Bright and Morning Star, draw near!
 O Sun of Righteousness, appear!

H. BURTON. From "Mosaics," Morgan & Scott, London.

PURITY OF PURPOSE.

"For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile" (1 Thess. 2. 3).

SINGLENESS OF EYE.

"Wherefore we labour that . . . we may be acceptable to Him" (2 Cor. 5. 9). "Study to show thyself approved unto God" (2 Tim. 15.).

READINGS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS—*continued.*

(J. ALFRED TRENCH.)

CHAPTER 3.

"THINGS THAT ARE ABOVE."

Q. VERSE 1.—"If ye then be risen with Christ." Does the "if" imply doubt?

[I]t is strange that such a familiar construction in English, as well as Greek, seems constantly to raise the same question. The "if" implies no doubt of the fact supposed, but lays it down as the ground of the inference that follows: so that instead of weakening, it really strengthens the probability of the truth of the supposition, as in Matthew 12. 27, 28, and other Scriptures.

We do not find Paul attempts to enumerate the "things that are above." We have been blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ. Our association with Him in all He has entered into before God, and in sonship with the Father, and that in all the favour that rests on Him, is no mean part of them. How vast the sphere of them we learn from John 16. 14, 15; all things that the Father hath are the Son's, and these the Spirit takes and shows unto us. They involve the whole truth of eternal life, revealed in the Son's relationship with the Father, and now made ours by the Father's gift in Him; also the very place He had in His Father's love, made known to us by the revelation of the Father's name, as our place in that love. This, too, gives us our home in the Father's house (John 14. 17).

Again, in Heb. 12. 22-24, the wonderful circle of things we are connected with by Christ, in contrast to Sinai, shows how things above enlarge out beyond our own blessing into the wide scope of His interests. Then there is an eternal inheritance that is now reserved in heaven for us as pilgrims here below, as in 1 Peter 1., and the illimitable one of all things in heaven and on earth, to be headed up in Him who is already Head over all things to

the church, which is His body, in whom, as such, we enter into all that inheritance of glory. Then there is the bridal relationship, too, in which we stand to Him, known by the Spirit already, before the bright day of our espousals in heavenly glory. And what shall be said of the tree of life, the crown of life, the hidden manna, and the white stone, presented to the overcomers in Rev. 2. ? But returning to Colossians, they may be summed up as the things "*where Christ is, sitting on the right hand of God.*" By attraction to Him there, we may best grow in the knowledge of them.

Q. Verse 2.—"Set your affections." Is that an advance upon seeking things which are above?

The thoughts are distinct. Only we must translate—"Mind the things that are above." The Spirit of God assumes the affections will be there, for "*where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*" But my mind is a different matter. A man's affections may be in his family, and yet his mind be occupied with his business all the day long. Our minds should be absorbed with things above and not with things on the earth. We do well to allow our hearts to be challenged as to what we have been seeking through the day, for it is vain to deny that we have been seeking something; the heart is not a vacuum. Have heavenly objects had power over me, or the poor things of earth? But the question serves to bring out just where the truth of the epistle places us, as *risen with Christ but still on earth.* With heart and mind directed to heaven, where Christ is, so that heavenly objects become the formative power of the Christian's life on earth; the effect will be seen later on in the chapter. The epistle to the Ephesians does not deal with this, since identification with Christ is carried out to the full height of Jew and Gentile believers being alike *seated in Him in the heavenlies.*

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

To make a Brother perish.

In view of what the Lord says about His sheep in John 10. 27, 18, how can there be a possibility of one who is a "brother" perishing (1 Corinthians 8. 11)?—T. S. M., MARYLEBONE.

THE eternal security of every sheep of Christ is declared by the Lord Himself in John 10. 27, 28. Words mean nothing if these do not mean that. He is able to preserve and will preserve for ever all those whom He calls "My sheep." None can ever snatch them out of His omnipotent, victorious hand.

1 Corinthians 8. 11 does not contradict that statement; if it did we should be justified in rejecting it as the Word of God. What then does it mean? The subject of the chapter is the consideration that should be shown by those who are strong and have knowledge for those who are weak in the faith and who have unenlightened and legal consciences. It is the "brother" and not the "sheep" character of the Christian that is in question. As a "sheep" he stands in relation to the Lord—the good Shepherd—and he shall never perish for the Lord will take care of him and hold him in everlasting security; as a "brother" he stands in relation to his brethren, and they have to watch and beware that they do nothing that would *as far as they are concerned* cause him to stumble and perish. *That is their responsibility.* They have to exercise towards him the same character and love and care that the Good Shepherd shows. We have to do this towards each other. If "the Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep," we ought to lay down our lives for our brethren, and be ready, at the very least, to deny ourselves those things which we might be quite free to enjoy and give thanks for, if we are liable by them to stumble our brethren who have less light and liberty than we have.

The subject is of great importance. Let us consider the extraordinary contrast presented to us in the passage. For his (the brother's) sake, Christ died. He did all He could—His utmost, His best—such was His love, His care, His determination to save him from perishing. How precious is the weakest brother to Christ! But an enlightened brother may be so proud of his liberty, so puffed up by his knowledge (verse 1), so selfish and regardless of his brothers' good, that he may do a thing which his brother seeing him do may be emboldened to do also, with the result that his weak conscience would become a bad conscience, and so he would lose his communion with God, and as far as his responsibility in regard to being faithful to God in the light that he has goes, he would be ruined; because he had sinned against his conscience. We know that when failure comes in on the side of responsibility, grace comes in to pardon and restore, and that we stand in grace. But it is not that side of things that is presented here, but rather a warning to those who have knowledge that they may become by it a "fall trap" (see New Translation—J. N. D.) to a weak brother, and so put him on a road the end of which is to perish, and indeed in a secondary and temporary sense he does perish as a brother, for he is lost to the communion that as a brother he should enjoy with his brethren until he is restored again by grace. We have not now the extreme case of sitting at meat in an idol's temple, but the principle of considerate and self-denying love is an enduring one about which all should be exercised.

The Lord's Body in Resurrection.

Would you kindly say in "Scripture Truth" whether the Lord rose from the dead with precisely the same body (without blood) as that in which He fulfilled His ministry before His death?—J. M., HORWICH.

YES. He came forth in the same body. There would have been no resurrection at all if that body had been left in the grave and another substituted for it. The Scripture, "Thou wilt not

suffer Thy holy one to see corruption," has the body in view. The evidence as to this is beyond question. Two disciples entered the tomb and found it empty except for the graveclothes that had been

left behind ; and He was seen and handled by His disciples after He rose. He showed them the wounds that He had borne that they might have no doubt at all that it was Himself ; and when they saw the wounded body they saw the Lord.

His blood had been poured out, as the question indicates, so that His life in resurrection could not be spoken of as the life of *flesh and blood*, and His own words make this clear. "A spirit hath not *flesh and bone* as ye see Me have." The life that they saw in Him when He appeared to them in resurrection was resurrection life, life that could come into death no more, and His body was suited to it. While it was the same body, it was now a spiritual body, that had come out of the graveclothes without the help of any hand, and out of the tomb before the stone was rolled away, and could pass into the upper room while still the

doors were closed and could ascend into heaven in their sight. So that it was the same body and yet changed, suited now to new and heavenly conditions, as before death it was suited to earthly conditions. Yet it was a material, or substantial body, or it would not have been a body at all. The "*spiritual body*" does not stand in contrast to a material body but to the *natural* body—the one is a body, the life of which is the spirit, the other the blood. This change will take place in our bodies at His coming, "for *flesh and blood* cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 15. 50). This difference, of course, we must never lose sight of, the Lord was sinless and His body incorruptible, and we are sinful and our bodies corruptible ; so that in our case the change will be from corruptibility and mortality to incorruption and immortality ; mortality shall be swallowed up of life.

The Scape Goat.—(Leviticus 16.).

On the day of Atonement there were two goats for a sin offering—one for the Lord, and the other a scape goat for the people. Why was there not a scape bullock for Aaron ? Was it because he was a figure of Christ ?—W. E. V.

THE offerings on the day of atonement were in two distinct groups : the first group, a young bullock for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering, was for Aaron and his house ; the second group, the two goats and a burnt offering, was for Israel. Aaron and his house are typical of the church in its character of a priestly family, the Epistle to the Hebrews brings out this side of the truth. The offerings made for Israel are typical of atonement as it will yet be applied specially to their own case as a nation. Aaron cannot be said to be a type of Christ here, for the sin offering was for *himself* and his house, and of course the Lord needed no sin offering for Himself, but afterwards *his service* in going into the Holiest with the blood of the victim was typical of what Christ has done. By His own blood He has entered into the holy place, having obtained redemption for us (Heb. 9. 12). The young bullock offered as a sin offering for Aaron and his house was typical of the fact that Christ who knew no sin was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. 5. 21). By that "one offering He has perfected for ever them that are sanctified" ;

their sins and iniquities are remembered no more ; and they have boldness to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus (Heb. 10.). This is our place and portion and nothing else is required to make it ours. All was effected for us in the death of Christ and we enter into immediate blessing in association with our great High Priest. There is no need for us of a second, or scape bullock.

Israel's case is different. You will notice a gap between the slaying of the goat which was the Lord's lot and the sending away of the goat which was the people's lot. That gap was filled by the service of the high priest in the tabernacle, and they had to wait until he came out before they could go to their homes with the knowledge that their iniquities and sins and transgressions had been carried away from them. It represents the long period that has intervened between the death of Christ and their coming into the blessing foretold for them in the Old Testament Scriptures. This is full of instruction. Jesus the great High Priest has gone in, but He has not yet come out, and until He does there can be no blessing or relief from sorrow for Israel

as a nation. The goat which was the Lord's lot was slain before the priest went in, teaching us that Israel's blessing depends entirely upon the blood of Jesus even as ours does, but their sins have not yet been carried away, and they will yet feel the weight and the bitterness of them when they pass through the great tribulation—Jacob's trouble. But the Lord will appear for their deliverance at His coming in glory "Unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time," and "they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced," saith the Lord. Then they will understand that He suffered for them when they crucified Him, and as

they mourn and sorrow and repent for their great sin Isaiah 53. will be their language. Then He will remove their transgression from them "as far as the east is from the west." "I will be merciful to their unrighteousnesses, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" (Heb. 8. 12) saith the Lord; they will be borne away from them into a land of forgetfulness. That will be the completion of the type. We know that the scape goat is often used to illustrate the Gospel now, and we do not doubt that it can be so used rightly and effectively, but we believe that its true interpretation is as here given.

ISAIAH 53. Is it the Gospel for To-day?

Would you kindly in "Scripture Truth" give a little light as to Isaiah 53. the whole chapter, but SPECIALLY THAT OFT-QUOTED VERSE 6. WHO are the "all" of which the prophet speaks? Surely the first "all" and the last "all" are NOT identical? If so, it warrants the Gospel preacher telling a mixed audience that God had laid everyone's sins on Jesus? If the prophet is (which I should think is the case) speaking on behalf of Israel in whom there is real faith Godward—well, then, it surely is the believer's wonderful substitutionary chapter and the rejoicing language of the child of God all through.

It has been often said, "you go into one 'ALL' a lost sinner, and come out of the other 'ALL' a saint, or saved sinner." Is not this somewhat misleading and to a certain extent playing upon words? (verse 6). The rejoicing believer can say, "Who Himself bare our sins in His own body on the tree." But surely we must not say to the unconverted, "The Lord laid YOUR iniquities upon Christ." THAT is for the individual personal realization in his own soul by faith, surely? This may lead to a word as to the difference between propitiation and substitution.—J. A. E.

ISAIAH 53. is the language that Israel will use when they look upon Him whom they pierced. They will then realize that when they despised and rejected Him and saw no beauty in Him, He suffered all for their sins. It is specially Israel's chapter, but when they use it they will be a deeply repentant and believing nation. And yet how precious it is to us, for its theme is Jesus, His sorrows and death; and if Philip, an evangelist full of the Holy Ghost, made it his text when he preached to the eunuch, who was earnestly seeking the truth (Acts 8.), so may we when we meet souls in that state.

Yet it was not from that standpoint exactly that the apostles preached the Gospel to men publicly. They were commissioned to offer repentance and remission of sins in the Lord's Name to all (Luke 24.); and this Paul did, notably in Acts 13. 38-41, when he proclaimed forgiveness of sins, and declared that in Christ all who believe are justified. And this is a free, bona fide offer to all, it can be carried to every creature under heaven,

without any reservation; and if men reject it there is no hope for them, for Paul warned his hearers in this same sermon that if they despised it they would perish.

Now the question that will arise in every exercised heart is, How can God make this offer to all and be still a just God? and the answer is, that God has set forth Christ Jesus to be a propitiation through faith in His blood (Rom. 3. 25). The blood meets all the claims of divine justice and atones for the sins of all who approach God in faith, and so becomes the place of meeting between God and the sinner. Through that blood God can be just and yet justify those who believe in Jesus. This is propitiation, but substitution is not divorced from it as though the Lord did two works on the cross, for "Christ died for the ungodly," and "while we were yet sinners Christ died for us" (Rom. 5. 6, 8). "He gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time" (1 Tim. 2. 6). And this is substitution:—"a ransom"—propitiation, "for all"—substitution.

But the question remains that our correspondent raises. Is it right to say to all, "Christ bore your sins"? Our answer is No! for that is not given as a public proclamation in Scripture. The truth of substitution from that point of view is for those souls who feel the burden of their guilt, and who with a very feeble faith are seeking the Saviour; to those who enquire what about my sins? To such Isaiah 53. 5 comes as healing balm. They learn that for their sins He suffered, and that by His stripes they are healed, and the truth of substitution.

—His suffering for them becomes a blessed thing and an essential truth to them. In speaking to a mixed audience, i.e., an audience in which there are souls in every state, from advanced Christians to careless sinners, a preacher may feel that he must present the Gospel from every side of it that there may be truth set forth to meet every condition. But really when these distinctions are made, which are most helpful in establishing souls, it is teaching for those who have believed, as in the Roman Epistle, and not the simple preaching of the Gospel to men,

Salvation and Redemption.

"Will you give me the Scriptural distinction between salvation and redemption?"—
HALLSIDE.

THESE terms in Scripture which describe our blessing often overlap each other, consequently it is not always easy definitely to distinguish one from the other. But in this case we should say that redemption describes God's act in taking for Himself that which belongs to Him which had been in bondage, and it involves a price being paid by Him. Salvation describes the deliverance from enemies that threaten the destruction of those whom God would redeem, and this involves the exercise of power on His part. Israel's case is typical of these two aspects of our blessing. They were *redeemed* out of the bondage of Egypt by blood, they were *saved* from their pursuers at the Red Sea by God's power. Redemption is connected with the blood of Jesus in the New Testament (Ephes. 1. 7 and 1 Pet. 1. 18, 19). We await, of course, the day of redemption (Eph. 4. 30) when redemption will be completed in the

deliverance of our *bodies* from the bondage of corruption and death at the coming of the Lord. Salvation in its present aspect in the New Testament is chiefly connected with the grace of God, and the name of the Lord—and this title of "Lord" belongs to Jesus now as being the Administrator of the grace of God, consequent upon His being raised from the dead by the power of God. He has defeated our foes and is now raised up above them all, whoever and whatever they are, and believing in Him and being subject to Him as Lord we come under His gracious sway and are saved from Satan's power and sin's penalty; and also preserved from sin's power and Satan's snares, for salvation has a very definite present force. Whether redemption or salvation, they are both in Christ Jesus, and are enjoyed as we enter by faith and the Spirit into our place in Him.

"Come unto Me."

SEARCH no longer in the depths of your own hearts for the goodness that satisfies. *Come unto Me.* Cease to look to men for help. *Come unto Me.* Abandon for ever your hopes in the power and amiability of democracy. *Come unto Me.* Turn not to churches or religious ceremonies. *Come unto Me.* Depend not on famous evangelists, pastors and teachers. *Come unto Me.*

Rest not in Bible conferences, hearty meetings, or sound Scriptural

literature. *Come unto Me. Come unto Me—UNTO ME—ME.*

Are we tired of self-efforts? Are we sick at heart as "change and decay in all around we see"? Are our eyes weary with seeking good beneath the sun? Have our hopes been blighted and our best aspirations withered? Have we come to our wit's end, and, weary and broken, feel that we must perish where we stand? "*Come unto Me,*" the Saviour cries, "*and I will give you rest.*"

“BLESSED BE GOD.”

(J. T. MAWSON.)

A MAN with an experience has something to say, and what he says is worth listening to. Such a man as this was Paul. What a life was his! He tells us about it in his second Epistle to the Church at Corinth. He speaks of his tribulation, of being pressed out of measure, of despairing even of life (chap. 1.), of being troubled on every side, distressed, perplexed and persecuted (chap. 4); of patience, afflictions, necessities, stripes, imprisonment, tumults, labours, of dishonour, of evil reports, of sorrows, and poverty (chap. 6.); of deaths, shipwrecks, perils, weariness, pains, hunger, thirst, cold and nakedness (chap. 11.). Did ever a man suffer more than he? and what volumes he could have written about it all if he had been a self-centred man and anxious to make a name for himself!

Let us hear what he has to say; this man, whose life cannot be measured by years but by what was crowded into it, by his labours and losses, his sufferings, experience and knowledge. When his opportunity comes he says, “BLESSED BE GOD.” The benediction breaks out from a full heart; we feel it; it bursts upon us as the relief of pent-up feelings. This man who, unlike others, had neither pleasures nor possessions, whom we should have thought would have cried, “*Woe is me*,”—from whom we should have expected a bitter lament, is full of God and His goodness, and when he speaks he says, *Blessed be God*. He cannot help it; his words are not studied words, they are spontaneous; and in the power of the Holy Ghost they well up out of his heart for God’s glory; and they live for us to-day.

But why should he bless God? He had served God, no man had ever done it with greater zeal; and yet he had suffered more than any; and God, being God, could have shielded him from it all, but He did not. On this score he has some cause for complaint,

surely? No, he has none, when he speaks it is all praise and benediction. He has lost all, but he regrets nothing, suffered all and yet he rejoices, and cries, *Blessed be God!* We must consider this, and give patient heed to Paul while he unfolds for us this grand secret of his life, for here is something that is not taught in the schools of philosophy, that seems indeed to be superhuman.

The God whom he blesses is “the Father of all consolation and the God of all encouragement” (N.T.). And thus Paul knew Him. This was not theology, cold, pulseless theology, correct and orthodox; it was not mental knowledge learned by rote to be repeated again, parrot like. No, Paul had learnt what he knew by experience; he knew God in the very depths of his soul and had proved the greatness of His consolations in his darkest hours. He had got to the Source, to the Originator of every bit of true comfort that ever came to any suffering man or woman on earth, for God is the Father of all compassions. Many and varied are the channels through which His comforts flow, but His heart is the spring of them all, and Paul knew Him, and knew Him as greater than the greatest calamity that could befall a man on earth. God was his resource and his reward and he wanted nothing more.

It was this story of the comfort of God that Paul would tell to the world if it would listen, but most of all to tried and suffering saints. Said he, I was in great tribulation and in it God sustained and comforted me; I was involved in so great a death, and despaired even of life, but God delivered me; I was troubled on every side yet not distressed; perplexed but not in despair; persecuted but not forsaken; cast down but not destroyed. No human power could have upheld me in these vicissitudes and brought me through them, but God has done it;

the excellency of the power is His. He has led me to this hour. And not me alone, but those also who labour with me for Christ's sake. Blessed be God.

There is authority behind that story, the authority that only experience can give, and this experience was not a thing of the past that required an effort of the memory to recall, it was living, present and continuous; to be his as long as life should last, for he says, "He has delivered, He does deliver, and He will deliver." And then, Paul, when death brings the story to a close, what then? Then I will trust in God which raiseth the dead, even as I do now. How restful and confident, how blessed and triumphant is the man who has the knowledge of God!

Now this experience and the way God had revealed Himself to him in it, was not for Paul and his co-sufferers alone, he turns his experience and knowledge into testimony, and the Spirit of God breathes His own power into it. He bears witness to the fact that what God was for him He is for all, and all who are in any tribulation may experience in it the excellency of the power of God and be comforted by His all-sufficient grace.

* * * * *

This knowledge of God, that was Paul's greatest treasure, had shone into his heart from the face of Jesus Christ. He had lived in Stygian darkness until the day that that glorious light shone into him. And every man is in that same darkness into whose heart that light has not shone. Alas, many refuse the light; the god of this world hath blinded their minds, and in their pride they imagine that they can find out God apart from Jesus Christ; fatal, soul-destroying delusion! All who refuse that light are lost, but to those into whose heart it shines it is a treasure beyond all computation, it is salvation and the knowledge of God.

Now Paul started his Christian

career with this treasure—the knowledge of God in His infinite grace. He learnt, when he turned his wondering eyes to Jesus, enthroned in glory, and owned Him as his Lord, that God's face was not averted from him because of his sinfulness and rebellion, but that Jesus Christ, exalted and glorified, was now the perfect manifestation of the grace of God which reigns through righteousness. And this is where every believer starts. We have this treasure—greater than any and all the prizes that the world can give—in earthen vessels. But Paul put God to the proof, and made use of this knowledge. He did not harbour God-dishonouring doubts, but went forth to let the light that had shone into him shine out again, assured that no matter what opposition he might encounter God was greater than all and would carry him through. And God did not fail him, His grace and comfort and encouragement were poured into the soul, so that he was not a preacher only but a witness, and the knowledge of God was so worked into and blended with his experience and life that he was a sweet savour of Christ to God. He was bound a willing captive in the chains of love to the triumphal car of Christ victorious; and wherever he was led the reality of the knowledge of God was manifested in him (chap. 2.). It was clear to all who would see that a power more excellent than any human power sustained him, that he possessed a portion surpassing in glory the best that the earth could give, and that a peace of heart and mind was his that no vicissitudes could destroy. This made nothing of him, but it made everything of Christ and God, and for this he gives thanks; this conquered captive cries: "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort."

"In the desert God shall teach thee
What a God that thou hast found.
Patient, gracious, powerful, holy,
All His grace shall thou abound."

This rough way that Paul travelled was only a way; it was not the end for which God had saved him. He had a goal in view, a glorious destiny, and he never lost sight of it. "We know," he says, "that if this earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens," and in view of this, and of being present with the Lord, he calls his afflictions light. It is good to hear him; his words show us the view of things that a man takes, into whose heart the knowledge of God has shone.

The circumstances do not overwhelm him, they are temporal, light and swiftly passing, while the glory is substantial and eternal. "We look," he says, "not on things temporal but on things eternal." Here was a man who feared no change in his earthly career, for God does not change and God was his present and everlasting portion. And to him the greatest change of all would be the best of all, and this change he earnestly desired. And why should not he desire it? Was it not right that he should desire to reach the One the knowledge of whom was his greatest treasure? Was it not right that he should long to be present with the Lord, whose love meant so much to him? Was it

not right that he should thirst for the unfettered capacity and harmonious conditions that are necessary for the full enjoyment of the glory that was his hope?

For this self-same thing God had wrought him, as He has wrought all those into whose hearts His light has shone. The light that has shone from the glory attracts to the glory all into whom it has shone, and no heart that knows its blessedness will ever be satisfied with anything else. This is the work of God; it was demonstrated in its fullest measure in Paul, but it is developing in all His own, to each of whom He has given the earnest of His Spirit.

Thus "tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope," and soon the hope will be fulfilled, for God will not fail to bring us to that great destiny for which He has wrought us. Then—

"When to Canaan's long-loved dwelling
Love divine thy foot shall bring;
There with shouts of triumph swelling,
Zion's songs in rest to sing,
There no stranger God shall meet thee,
Stranger thou in courts above;
He who to His rest shall greet thee,
Greets thee with a well-known love."

Then shall we say in the fulness of the knowledge of His wisdom, work and ways—Blessed be God!

KNOWING AND DOING THE WORD.

IT is the will of God that we should hear His Word and DO it. We may seek to know His words and admire their beauty and wisdom, but if we do not DO them we delude ourselves. They are meant TO BE DONE. It is only as there is the readiness to do them that their real meaning and blessing are unfolded to us. *And the measure in which we do them is the true measure of our growth in the divine life.* Let there be no mistake about this; it is a great point with practical James. The man who hears the word and is not a doer of it deceives himself.

He deceives himself as to his knowledge, usefulness, growth, and a deceived man is a pitiable object, he lives in a vain show, and lives in vain.

Mark the order in which things are put in Colossians I. 10. "WALK worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in EVERY GOOD WORK, and increasing in the KNOWLEDGE OF GOD"; if we are not fruitful in good works we are not increasing in the knowledge of God, and if these two great things are not going on in our lives we are not walking worthy of the Lord.

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH. No. IV.—The Bible : Its Unity.

(A. J. POLLOCK.)

THE facts we are seeking to bring before our readers are so obvious that they cannot be denied. They are like the mighty snow-capped peaks of a well-known mountain range—they are there, they cannot be explained away, they cannot be mistaken, unless people deny what is.

To begin with, there are sixty-six books in the Bible, yet they form an organic whole. Bind together sixty-six medical works, or political works, or theological works, and you will find one writer denouncing what is affirmed by another; one writer praising loudly what another as loudly says is folly; one writer stating as exalted truth what is considered gross folly by another.

And this would be more than ever so if you bound recent medical works with those of the writings of the ancients such as Æsculapius, Hippocrates (400 B.C.), Galen (A.D. 140), Paracelsus (A.D. 1490), etc. You would find that you had bound together a mass of contradictions.

But when we come to the Bible and find some forty writers, extending over a space of some 1500 years, who, in some cases, describe scenes and operations they could never have witnessed, and prophesy events, which are beyond the power of the subtlest intellect to have foreseen; when we find, we repeat, some forty writers encompassing this feat without confusion or contradiction, there is only one conclusion to come to, and that is, one intelligence inspired the whole of their writings, and this is what the Bible claims for itself.

To pick out some of the writers, and describe them, is to deepen the sense of the marvellous character of the Bible in our minds. For instance, there is Moses, brought up in the court of Pharaoh, learned in all the knowledge of the Egyptians, law giver,

and leader of God's people through the wilderness; David, the shepherd lad, called to shepherd the people of God, the sweet singer of Israel, a brilliant military captain; Daniel, a youth of noble birth, carried into exile at a tender age; Amos, the humble herdsman of Pekoa; Matthew, a tax-gatherer; Luke, the beloved physician; John and Peter, fishermen, "ignorant and unlearned men"; Paul, trained at the feet of Gamaliel, to mention but a handful of them—writing often in different centuries—belonging to various social ranks—writing in different countries: Moses in the desert of Sinai, Daniel in exile in Babylon, Paul in the cities of Asia, Greece and Italy; John exiled in the island of Patmos, etc.—and yet producing, not only sixty-six books, but actually *one* book—one organic whole.

This is the marvel that places the Bible in a category of *one*—it stands by itself, supreme, inimitable and sublime. Indeed its very name—Bible—is unique, derived from *Biblia* (Greek=*THE Books*), as if there were no other books in the world.

It reminds us of the story told of Sir Walter Scott. A dying man, he asked his son-in-law—Lockhart—to read to him. On the enquiry being made what book should be read, Sir Walter, the writer of many books, replied, "There is only one book—the Bible; read that."

It might well be called the only book—what book should we need on a deathbed but that; the book that tells us of life, and light, and love, and the way to heaven, of Christ, who wrought atonement at the cross, and a Father God, who welcomes repentant sinners, who put their faith in the Saviour He offers?

There are many good and helpful books in the world, but they get all their goodness and help from the two

books of God—the book of creation and the book of redemption, and pre-eminently in the latter, which reveals His very nature.

But let us look at the unity of the book. Suppose some man came and deposited five chiselled stones in a certain order; another came years after and deposited another stone, and so they went on till from vastly separate localities and stretching over centuries, stone after stone was brought and placed on the same spot.

And further suppose, when this is complete, behold a definite building is the result—stone has fitted to stone till there arose a building of rare beauty, perfect and complete in all its details, you could only come to the conclusion that a master mind had directed each workman, who, not knowing what other workmen would contribute, had each contributed his share. And if one workman has died before another took his place, separated often by long centuries, then one could only come to one conclusion, that the master mind must be God—the Divine Architect.

This is but a feeble illustration of the way in which the Bible was put together.

Let us look at some details as to the unity of the book. What made Moses write the name of God in Genesis 1., not in the singular number, nor in the dual, but in the plural, followed by a singular verb, if not to enshrine the thought of the three Persons of the Trinity, yet one God? Why did Isaiah write, "Come ye near unto me, hear ye this: I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was there am I [evidently a Divine Person]: *and now THE LORD GOD, and HIS SPIRIT have sent ME*" (Isa. 48. 16)? Here we have the three Persons of the Trinity again.

† Matthew tells us disciples are to be baptized "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 28. 19).

Luke gives us the tripartite parable of the Shepherd seeking the wandering sheep, setting forth the Lord seeking the sinner; of the woman seeking the lost piece of silver, setting forth the Holy Spirit's secret work in regenerating the sinner dead in trespasses and sins; of the father welcoming the prodigal, setting forth the Father receiving us sons, all these who come to Him through His blessed Son.

The Apostle John hastens to present us with the picture of the eternal Word, the Son of God, the Lamb of God, who was as "the only begotten of the Father," and who baptizes with the Holy Ghost—the three persons of the Trinity again (see chap. 1.).

Again and again Paul brings out the same truth. One or two instances will suffice: "No man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed"; and "no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost" (1 Cor. 12. 3). Again, "One Spirit . . . one Lord . . . one God and Father of all" (Eph. 4. 4-6).

Peter says, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus" (1 Pet. 1. 2).

How comes it that there is this unity—like stone fitting to stone? And we have only given a tithe of the instances that occur, merely like a swallow skimming the lawn. A master mind has stamped the book with the undoubted hall mark of inspiration.

The writers left to themselves would have contradicted each other, and no binding could have held together the sixty-six books of the Bible. Nor does one writer refer to another in the Scriptures we have quoted; they each assert what is positive, each in his own way, yet there is perfect harmony.

Take another instance of the unity of Scripture. Take the thought of redemption. There is not a scrap of

Unitarianism in the Bible. The refrain, "Without the shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. 9. 22), is heard in one form or another from Genesis to Revelation.

"It is the *blood* that maketh an atonement of the soul," wrote Moses in Lev. 17. 11. "When I see the *blood* I will pass over you" (Ex. 12. 13), was Jehovah's message to the downtrodden Israelites on the Passover night in Egypt.

What meant all the Jewish sacrifices, but to illustrate this great truth—burnt offerings, peace offerings, sin offerings, trespass offerings, following on and on in unceasing succession down the centuries?

What meant the blood sprinkled once on and seven times before the mercy-seat in the holiest of all?

But these were at best but types, waiting for the antitype; shadows waiting for the substance; promises pointing to a wonderful fulfilment.

Let us turn to the New Testament, and see how it answers to the Old, as stone answers to stone in a building.

The Saviour Himself says, "This is the *blood* of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matt. 26. 28). "God hath set forth [Christ Jesus] to be a propitiation [mercy-seat and propitiation, the same word in the original] through faith in His *blood*" (Rom. 3. 25).

Thus the Apostle Paul links up type with the antitype—without which the type would be meaningless.

Ephesians and Colossians both say, "We have redemption through His *blood*."

The Epistle to the Hebrews, which so largely is taken up with the fulfilment in Christ and His death of the shadows and types of Judaism, speaks often of the blood of Jesus, culminating in the verses, "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the *blood* of Jesus" (chap.

10. 19), and "*the blood* of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than that of Abel" (chap. 12. 24).

The Apostle Peter writes of "*the precious blood* of Christ" (1 Pet. 1. 19); whilst the Apostle John says, "This is He [Christ] that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; *not by water only, but by water and—BLOOD*" (1 John 5. 6); whilst Revelation begins with the triumphant ascription, "Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own *blood*" (chap. 1. 5).

This again is but a tithe of the evidence that can be furnished.

Line after line in this fashion could be pursued. As an old divine prettily puts it, the inspired authors wrote "without collusion or contradiction."

And see how the end of the Bible answers to the beginning—Revelation to Genesis.

In Genesis 1. we read of the creation of "heaven and the earth"; Revelation 21. tells us of the creation of a brand new heaven and earth.

In Genesis 2. we have a river going out of Eden to water the garden. In Revelation 22. 1 we get "a pure river of water of life as clear as crystal"—the former an actual river with a symbolical meaning; the latter a symbolical river more than fulfilling the symbolical meaning of the actual river.

In Genesis 1. we get "the tree of life also in the midst of the garden"; in Revelation 22. we have "the tree of life" bearing twelve manner of fruits, and whose leaves are for the healing of the nations.

In Genesis 2. we get Adam and Eve, Eve of Adam, taken from his side when in a deep sleep, clearly a type of Christ and the church, the product of His love in death, as Ephesians 5. 25-33 clearly teaches, and in Revelation 21. we get the "New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" (verse 2).

In Genesis 2. 2 we get God resting on the seventh day, no evening and morning predicated of it, type of that fixed eternal state, seen in Rev. 21. 1-7.

These correspondences, along with their differences, are in beautiful harmony with the whole tenor of the Bible; that is to say, everything in the first creation is "very good," yet alas! marred irrecoverably by man's fall (Gen. 3.), and everything in the new creation more than answering to what was lost in the old.

The first creation is characteristically material, save man, who is spirit and soul as well as body; the second creation is characteristically moral, though there will be a new body for the believer, "a house from heaven," and a new heaven and earth wherein righteousness shall dwell.

All this is utterly beyond the power and wit of man, and the Book that unfolds it is indubitably the Word of God, inspired and inspiring to a degree and in a manner that is above and beyond anything of man's production.

EFFECTIVE SERVICE.

ALL power for real effective service will be found to spring from entire submission to God. No testimony, no preaching, no teaching, even if the matter of it be all right, is right teaching when the soul is not filled for itself first from God. We must *drink* for ourselves that rivers may flow. Indeed all else dries up the soul.

He that is nearest to Christ will best serve Him, and there is no serving Him without it.

A time of retirement is a very good thing in our service; it puts us before God instead of our work before us, and makes us feel, too, that our work is in His hands and not our own.

When God works we look for full results. I have constantly found that to bring things to God is the way of having them done.

If the Lord Himself were not the workman, how hopeless would be the thought of reaching all the souls that are in need. It is a comfort to be able to look to Him, that His eye and grace may reach them.

Love does not grow weary of serving, though service may be often a trial . . . indeed, save for rare encouragement, always in the general run of it, is. "I endure all things for the elects' sake," said Paul, and "I can do all things through Christ, who gives me strength."
J. N. D.

THE PILGRIM.

(JOHN BUNYAN.)

HE who would valiant be
'Gainst all disaster,
Let him in constancy
Follow the Master.
There's no discouragement
Shall make him once relent
His first avowed intent
To be a pilgrim.

Who so beset him round
With dismal stories,
Do but themselves confound,
His strength the more is.
No foes can stay his might,
Though he with giants fight,
He will make good his right
To be a pilgrim.

“RECONCILIATION.”

(JAMES C. TRENCH.)

WHAT a beautiful word is that which heads this paper—however true it may be that reconciliation suggests a prior alienation between the persons concerned, brought about by faults perhaps on both sides, and needing mutual genuine conviction and confession before restoration of friendship can be brought about.

But this is not the case when the question of man's relation to God is in view—for between God and man the fact must be admitted that the alienation sprang from man alone.

God had in Eden done everything that wisdom, power, and love could devise for His creatures—requiring only dependence upon, and obedience to Him in return, with the clearly announced penalty that would result upon default. We know the sad history. Man preferred Satan's word to the word of God, and disobeyed and thereupon lost his “innocence”—and became the possessor of a conscience—or in other words, the knowledge of good and evil. Enmity against God has characterized the human race from that day until now (Rom. 8. 7) involving misery, death, and judgment.

In view of this dreadful state of things, God has wrought for His own glory in the work of redemption to bring about man's reconciliation to God.

But the general idea in people's minds to-day seems to be that it is necessary for God to be reconciled to the sinner if he is to be saved—and that to this end he must seek by prayers, good works, and religious endeavour to cause God to relent His anger and forgive.

Will it be believed by those so minded, that there is not one Scripture to support such an idea—but that all Scripture bearing on the subject teaches the exact opposite?

Look at 2 Cor. 5. 19 as to the ministry of Christ in Palestine: “God was in

Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” For “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” (1 Tim. 1. 15). What was the result? The world, after a perfect display of God's love, compassion and mercy in a thousand ways in the lifetime down here of the Lord Jesus, deliberately and with every accompaniment of hatred, insult, and cruelty nailed Him to a cross of wood with cries of “Crucify Him, Crucify Him,” “We will not have this man,” and cast Him out of the world. Jew and Gentile, priest and people, judge and convict, learned and ignorant, religious and profane—all for once combined to slay Him without even a protest, save that of a dying robber!

Would it have been extraordinary if God at this awful crisis had instantly changed His gracious attitude, and instead thereof have closed the heavens and destroyed the rebellious race of man?

But not so. God having raised Him from the dead, and glorified Him in heaven, has made the death of His Son the basis for a fresh appeal. God “hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ [the murdered—risen glorious One], as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in God's stead, *be ye reconciled to God*. For God hath made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor. 5. 19–21).

But before proceeding further it is necessary to say that although it be not true that Scripture teaches the necessity of God's being reconciled—it is true that before He could plead with sinners to be reconciled, He must have a righteous basis upon which to found the appeal—and so we find in Romans 3. 25 that God has set forth His Son as “a propitiatory [or mercy-seat] through faith in His blood to

declare His righteousness for the passing over of the sins that had taken place before [i.e., the Cross] through the forbearance of God. To declare at this time [i.e., after the Cross] His righteousness that He might be *just*, and the *justifier* of him which believeth in Jesus."

Thus God's holy nature of necessity requires a righteous ground for offering pardon to the sinner. Love could only flow down to him through a *righteous* channel. Sin must be judged, and the penalty inflicted—if not on the culprit, on the spotless Victim—Jehovah's fellow—and so "it became Him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through suffering." "Wherefore it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make *propitiation* [not reconciliation, as in A.V.] for the sins of the people" (Heb. 2. 17).

Therefore, Christ having met by His atoning death every claim of Divine justice under the judgment of God for sin, He is able to come out now beseechingly through His ambassadors, and *pray men* to be reconciled to God. How amazing is this grace!

We shall return to the context of this passage in 2 Cor. 5., but before doing so let us examine a prior Scripture in Romans 5. "God commendeth His love towards us in that *while we were yet sinners*, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. *For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life*" (i.e., as risen).

"*Justified by His Blood.*"

"*Reconciled by His Death.*"

"*Saved by His Life.*"

Here, notice, reconciliation is effected by the Lord Jesus bearing our SINS.

Let us turn now to another Scripture in the epistle of Paul to the Colossians where a further stage in the reconciliation is set forth.

"And having made peace through the blood of His cross by Him to *reconcile all things* unto Himself, by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven. And you that were once alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, *yet now hath He reconciled* in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable in His sight" (Col. 1. 20-22).

Here it would seem that the *root* of the enmity was dealt with. Our very *nature* being evil and enmity against God, God has condemned *sin in the flesh*, in the person of His Son "in the *body of His flesh through death.*" He having been made sin for us on the cross—so that not only our *sins* have been put away, but *sin in us*—the root from which sins sprang has been judicially ended at Calvary—and thus the *reconciliation has been further effected.*

But for the full completion of the reconciliation we must return to 2 Cor. 5. and note the 17th verse, where in introducing the subject the apostle states: "If any man be in Christ—a *new creation*—old things are passed away; behold all things are become new, and all things are of God who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation. . . . For He hath made Him who knew no sin, to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."

So that there are three steps to this blessed work of reconciliation, all of them effected by God Himself, and all of them based upon the propitiation made by the Lord Jesus when on the Cross making it righteous for Him to let Divine love have its blessed way.

To recapitulate:—

1. He has borne our sins, so that they shall be remembered no more for ever.

2. God has condemned sin in the flesh—the evil nature we possess, and ended it judicially at the Cross in the body of Christ's flesh through death, so that our standing in Adam has gone.

3. We have been made *the righteousness of God in Christ* risen and glorified, and have become already part of the new creation, the full display of which will be in the new heavens and new earth—old things having passed away and all things become new—for Christ has "made peace, by the blood of His

Cross by Him to *reconcile all things* unto Himself, whether they be things on earth or things in heaven."

"What shall we say then to these things. If God be for us, who can be against us?"

"Oh, 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 of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things to whom be glory for ever. Amen."

DOING THE WILL OF GOD.

WHAT a terrible delusion to be content with hearing the word, and yet not to do it. And yet there are multitudes of Christians listening to the word of God, regularly and earnestly, who are not doing it. If their own servant were to do so, **HEARING BUT NOT DOING**, how summary would be the judgment! And yet so complete is the delusion that these same people think that they are living good Christian lives.

One reason for this is that there is the notion that the word cannot be done—beautiful ideals it sets before us, and a wonderful standard of life, but we are unable to do anything but admire, and God knows we cannot perform the word. This is one of the great delusions. There is not a word of exhortation given to us in Scripture that God cannot enable us to do. There is grace enough in Christ for us to make us exponents of His word, and an exponent is greater than an expositor. Our own impotence should only drive us to Him, but this delusion that the word cannot be done, and the feeling that it was not meant to be done,

though nobody puts it into words exactly, keeps many a Christian in a carnal way of living; it gives a sort of self-contentment in the midst of sin.

"If any man **WILL DO HIS WILL**"—there must be first the ready mind, the mind brought into subjection to God—then "he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." The word will open up then in its spiritual power and blessing; the word becomes known as it is indeed, the Word of God, quick and operative—life and power.

In life, in science and art, in business, the only way of truly knowing, is doing. What a man cannot do he does not thoroughly know. A child knows how to walk by walking; a swimmer knows how to swim by swimming; and no amount of theory will help him until he swims. To do the will of God is to prove its blessedness, and in doing His will we show that God is not something in my imagination or a mere sentiment, but the true and living God who rules and works all. It is in doing His will that I make myself one with it.

What does your anxiety do? It does not empty to-morrow of its sorrow; but ah! it empties to-day of its strength. It does not make you escape the evil; it makes you unfit to cope with it when it comes.

Prayer is the wing wherewith the soul flies to heaven, and meditation the eye wherewith we see God.

THE MYSTERY OF GOD'S WILL.

(H. J. VINE.)

WE live in the day when this has been made known to those who are the subjects of God's redeeming grace, who have heard and believed the Gospel, and who are saved and are sealed by the Spirit.

It centres in Christ, but it concerns us. It is according to God's good pleasure, but it for us to find pleasure in it also. It is for the blessing of all in heaven and on earth eventually, but it will be through Christ and the assembly in the unction and power of the Spirit. It is according to eternal purpose purposed before times began, but it will be seen in resultant splendour when "the fulness of times" shall have come.

"Then all shall see with wondering gaze,
And fill the heavens with endless praise."

GOD'S WILL.

Much is said about man's will, and the sad results of it are in flagrant evidence on every side. It is the will of God, however, that the redeemed need to understand better, and the Holy Spirit enables them to do so, for it is desired that "the full knowledge of His will" should be theirs, and that they should "stand perfect and complete in all the will of God" (Col. 1. 9; 4. 12). The former is necessary if the latter is to characterize us.

Whatever God would have to be—whatever is His good pleasure—is His will. We find this abundantly expressed in the inspired writings. "*Thy good pleasure*" (Psa. 40. 8, N.T.) is cited by the Spirit as "*Thy will*" in Heb. 10. 7. More often than otherwise *will* is spoken of in ordinary parlance as something which wills—something in a person similar to his spirit or soul which is called a will—but Scripture speaks of it more as that which the person himself would have come to pass; and when we have the definite expression, "*This is the will of God,*" we are immediately told what

He Himself would have. Two verses may suffice to show this fact: (1) "This is the will of God even your sanctification" (1 Thess. 4. 3); (2) "This is the will of Him that sent Me, that everyone which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life" (John 6. 40). When this is grasped we shall better understand the Scriptures which speak of God's will in different ways, in different times, and in different relations, for no one thing can be said to be the will of God to the exclusion of all others, whatever may be said as to the mystery of that will.

When the day is reached for the manifestation of the supremacy of Christ, and all things in heaven and on earth are headed up in Him, as we said before—the mystery of God's will being consummated—we can readily perceive that His will in every part of that glorious administration will be done by all. Meanwhile the elect are being called out to obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and also the glory of which we speak, but this calling out takes place now, when, on the other hand, God is allowing man's will—during the period which is called "man's day"—to expose its folly. This, pursued without subjection to God's will, eventually culminates in the "wilful king"; and a trinity of evil—Satan, the false prophet, and the imperial beast of Revelation—will plunge the nations—out of which the elect have been called in grace, and also by power from earth to heaven—into a vortex of strife, darkness, and blasphemy, bringing swift judgment upon both the deceivers and the deceived to make way for God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven.

The Gospel by which God calls out the assembly to-day is shown in the parenthetical chapters of Romans (9, 10, and 11) to be quite in accord with the calling out of Israel and the promises specially given to that nation.

The will of God is recognized as the basis of that consistency. His "*I will*" of Exodus 33., made known to Moses at Horeb, is quoted to prove this. Showing mercy and feeling compassion towards sinners of the Gentiles as well as those of Israel is His way (Rom. 9. 14-24); and, because all have sinned, "God hath shut up together (Jews and Gentiles) all in unbelief, in order that He might show mercy to all" (11. 32). This was necessary if His will was to be given effect to. Moreover, not only had we all sinned in practice, but we are all sinners by nature; therefore a work in us was also necessary, and so we read, "According to His own will begat He us by the word of truth, that we should be a certain firstfruits of His creatures" (Jas. 1. 18). This sovereign work of God is not said to be *by* His will, but *according to* it; the end in view being that He should have us as a kind of firstfruits. In John 1. we are told that those who are born of God are those who receive Christ. They are the children of God. The right is given to them to take that place. How great the honour to be of the family of God! They "were born not of blood"—as those of the priestly family or the royal family of Israel must be to have their place of privileged nearness to God—"nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God" (13). According to His will He has so wrought to have them as His children.

It is said of this family, They are not of the world even as Christ is not of the world. They are in the world, however, and need to be kept from the evil of it. The Son prayed to the Father in regard to this (John 17.); and one reason why He gave Himself for our sins was, "so that He should deliver us out of the present evil world according to the will of our God and Father" (Gal. 1. 4). Note again, it does not say that this is the will of God, but "according to" it. When, however, apartness to God in well-

pleasing and in honour is viewed on its positive side, we read, "*This is the will of God even your sanctification*"; and it is the same in regard to our having eternal life through seeing and believing on the Son—"This is the will of Him that sent Me," the Lord Jesus said. There is, we may say, that which is pre-eminently the will of God, just as there is His will in relation to certain persons and things; and there is also that which is according to His will.

"TO DO THY WILL."

The very first writing of which we have any knowledge records these words. In that most ancient roll of Divine counsel in the past eternity they are inscribed concerning our Lord Jesus Christ and the will or good pleasure of God. That which is written therein are words which express the devotedness of the Son to the will of God—"Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God."

How sublime! How divinely becoming! God's will and the doer of it are pre-eminent in that first record! Here was One able to estimate the infinite value of the good pleasure of God, and notwithstanding all the toil and suffering involved in bringing it to pass, His wisdom, love and power are abundantly sufficient to enable Him to undertake the tremendous task, and though days and weeks and months and years and even ages may roll by before its full accomplishment be manifested in redemption splendour, yet He could speak in the consciousness of the infinite resources that were His, in the unquestionable assurance of the perfect result which should crown His labour, and with the deep joy of knowing that His work would eventually bring praise and honour and glory to God; and, having so spoken, He came forth to do His will.

Moreover, none of the redeemed who know who He is that has thus spoken—whose words are indelibly recorded in the heavenly roll—who has come out

to accomplish God's will—can entertain even a shade of doubt as to the final issue—the establishment in abiding blessing and glory of the good pleasure of God. Let each redeemed one, however, settle this in his own mind once and for ever, not one of us, not even all of us together, could accomplish it; none but an infinite Person could secure such an infinite and glorious result. The Son is this—He is an infinite Person—therefore He can bring it to pass, all is safe with Him. Centuries before He came, the prophet wrote, "The pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in His hand" (Isa. 53. 10). Glory be to God! this is true beyond all question.

He came! He entered upon the path for the accomplishment of God's good pleasure! He is seen in incarnation—a Man upon earth! "Mine ears hast Thou opened" or "prepared," He said (Psa. 40. 6). "A body hast Thou prepared Me" is the beautiful and arresting citation of this by the Spirit (Heb. 10. 5)! The prepared ears involved a prepared body, the ears being designated because He took the place of subjection and obedience to carry out the will of Another. It was in this He found pleasure!—"I delight to do Thy will, O My God"! He said, again, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me." This was the meat which the disciples knew not of! Yet, in this lowly path He was Himself "the Bread of Life." To appropriate Him thus is to appropriate life, for He said, "As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth Me even he shall live by Me." Of course His death was necessary for this. He died that we might have life eternal, and that is God's will concerning us. His own words we again quote, "This is the will of Him that sent Me, that everyone which seeth the Son and believeth on Him may have everlasting life: and I will raise Him up at the last day" (John 6. 40). This speaks of persons, verse 39 refers to distinctions of glory.

"This is the Father's will which hath sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." These two verses amplify the important statement of the verse before, "I came down from heaven not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." Glory and life in resurrection are the result, and that according to the mystery of God's will.

The new eternal covenant with all its glorious system of blessing was to be brought in, and the first covenant, thus made old, was to be set aside; therefore we read in Heb. 10. 9—which speaks of our Lord Jesus Christ coming forth for the doing of God's will—"He taketh away the first that He may establish the second." Believers were to be sanctified in view of this; those of Israel were to be set apart from the old system and established in the new, and this was by God's will. The means could not be through the offering of the "burnt-offerings and sacrifices" in which God found no pleasure, but through the offering of the prepared body of which we have spoken. The others were but types which found their perfect fulfilment in this one offering; so it could be written, By God's "will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus once for all" (10, N.T.). His death became the means of our being sanctified by the will of God. The sanctification is "through" the one and "by" the other.

All this is sound and healthful teaching for us—Behold, however, the cost! Behold the depths of sorrow and anguish into which the Doer of that will went! Behold the garden of Gethsemane bedewed with His sweat as blood! Behold the tree of Calvary crimsoned with the sacrifice and the offering of the body of Jesus! He knew all that was involved in undertaking to do God's will: the price to be paid was fully estimated by Him. As He knelt in prayer upon the soil of Olivet, being withdrawn about a

stone's throw from His disciples, He looked into the dreadful cup which he must drink, and the very perfection of His holy sensibilities deprecated it; nevertheless, though His soul was very sorrowful even unto death, though a deep depression came upon His spirit, though the sweat became as great drops of blood and fell upon the earth, He was in conflict and prayed more earnestly; yea, though amazement, oppression, and inexpressible grief were then His, yet, in all the strength of His holy devotedness to His Father's will, and in a depth of communion which is beyond measure, He said, "My Father, if this cup cannot pass from Me unless I drink it, *Thy will be done.*" He alone could do it! He had come to do it! and there was no other way! The awful depth to which He must go had in anticipation been fathomed! "THY WILL BE DONE," He says to His Father! In the past eternity, in the roll of the book, His words had been recorded—"Lo, I come to do Thy will"; and now, from the most dreadful deeps of suffering in spirit that had ever been known His devoted language is,

"THY WILL BE DONE."

He rises up in the calm of unbroken communion. He tells His disciples that the betrayer is at hand, that the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners, and that the hour has drawn nigh. A rabble band with officers, lanterns, swords and staves come and take Him. False witnesses before the chief priests and scribes testify against Him, but nothing takes Him unawares or moves Him from the place of dependence and peace. Mocked and stricken before Herod and Pilate, bearing the heavy cross as they lead Him to Calvary, hanging between two malefactors with pierced hands and feet, His communion with His Father remained full and complete. Yea, the love of the Father was called forth to Him as never before, and the Son knew it, and quietly rested in it when all else was adverse. In holy confi-

dence and peace He could say, "FATHER."

Nevertheless, the depths of the three hours of darkness were known by Him, when His soul was made an offering for sin, when He bore our sins in His own body on the tree, when the judgment that we deserved was His portion, when He suffered that we might be saved, when He resolved the question of good and evil for God's glory, when, toward the close of those dark three hours, He cried out with a loud voice, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Mark, He did not say, "*My Father*" then; but the depth to which sin had taken man from GOD had to be known by Him, to bring man near to God according to His will. He knew the darkness and the distance that we might have the sunshine of God's favour in Him risen and ascended in the nearness that is His. The redemption that He secured is an "eternal redemption," and it is ours now in Him where He is.

He has gone up to the throne! He is no longer on the cross! He is glorified as Man in heaven! The offering has been made! The Offerer is exalted! No longer crowned with thorns and dishonour, He wears the crown of glory and splendour. The work is done that the mystery of the will of God might be fully consummated in the appointed Head and Centre of all in heaven and on earth—in Christ Jesus, Hallelujah!

Notice the results of the work of Calvary in relation to the will of God:

1. *Deliverance*: "According to the will of our God and Father" (Gal. 1. 4).
2. *Sanctification*: "By which will we have been sanctified" (Heb. 10. 10).
3. *Eternal life*: "This is the will of My Father, that every one who sees the Son and believes on Him should have life eternal" (John 6. 40, 54).
4. *Glory*: (Eph. 1. 7, 9, 10). Eternal praise to God.

THE CHRIST—COULD HE SIN ?

(JAMES BOYD.)

The following paper has been written in response to an appeal from a correspondent for help as to this question concerning the adorable person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Anticipating such question the Holy Spirit in the Word has been careful to record :

HE "KNEW NO SIN" (2 Cor. 5. 21).

"WITHOUT SIN" (Heb. 4. 15).

HE "DID NO SIN" (1 Pet. 2. 22).

"IN HIM WAS NO SIN" (1 John 3. 5). [Ed.]

CHRIST is our light. He is the One in whom the invisible God has shown Himself to men. No one but the One who is God could declare God. No light could show the sun to us, because the sun is itself the light. If God is to be known He must declare Himself; man cannot by searching discover Him (Job xi. 7). A creature might carry a message, if given him by God to do so. This has been done in many instances, both by men and angels. But what creature could be the manifestation of God in such a way that he could truthfully say: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father"? (John 14.). But this is definitely affirmed by Christ: "He that believeth on Me, believeth not on Me, but on Him that sent Me. And he that seeth Me seeth Him that sent Me" (John 12. 44, 45). Therefore to be defective in testimony for Him is to be defective in the knowledge of Himself. The question at the head of this paper is proof of that which I say. If we have right thoughts as to Christ we are not likely to have wrong thoughts about anything else relating to the will of God.

Let us turn to Phil. 2. 5-11. The first thing here said of Him is that He was "in the form of God"; that is, exercising all the despotic authority, power, will and prerogatives of the Almighty Godhead. This form of God, which was outward, He emptied Himself of, taking the form of a servant, becoming in the likeness of men. Godhead He could not give up, nor is He said to give it up, the form of it He did lay aside. But He could not lay aside that which He was in His own essential being. Therefore, when we find Him in Manhood the fulness

of the Godhead is said to dwell in Him bodily (Col. 1. 19; 2. 9). He was, is, and ever shall be, "God blessed for ever" (Rom. 9. 5). "The Word was with God, and the Word was God," and this before He became man. "Thou shalt call His name Jesus." Why was this name given to Him? Because He was to "save His people from their sins" (Matt. 1. 21). Whose people? God's surely. They are Jehovah's sheep in Ps. 95., but Christ's own in John 10. Therefore I see in Jesus, God come into His own world, the world that was made by Him, yet the Creator unknown by it. He was here in manhood, but at no time less than God. He is still Man, still the subject servant of the Father, ever submissive to the will of the Father.

From His childhood He increased in wisdom and in stature (Luke 2. 52); His life was the revelation of the Father, yet was it the perfect expression of that which He Himself was. Hence He could say: "They have seen and hated both Me and My Father" (John 15. 24). He quickens whom He will; He is the judge of living and dead (John 5. 21, 27); He baptizes with the Holy Spirit (John 1. 33), and raises up His dead body (John 2. 19-21). He is "I Am" (chap. 8.); He is "The resurrection and the life" (chap. 11.). But I need not quote more Scripture. He is God, though having put off the form of God, and having taken the form of a bondman, a position less than God, the exercise of His almighty power is necessarily subservient to the will of God. It was so when here and shall for ever be so.

How could such a Being fall into sin? What temptation could be offered? Take the temptation in the

garden : "Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." But Jesus is God, and knows good and evil perfectly. Take His own conflict with the devil : "If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." But did not He who was infinite in wisdom, who Himself was the wisdom of God, not know that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God ? Or as to casting Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple, or giving worship to Satan, did He who was God not know what was due to God ? To Him the bare suggestions to put forth His own power, apart from the declared will of the Father, was painful in the extreme. There was nothing in Him that Satan could work upon, nothing that would respond to His temptations. His holy nature shrank from the presentation of sin. He had taken the place of a servant to do the will of the Father, was He now going to leave that path, and do His Own will ? Referring to Satan's coming to Him when the cross was in view, He says : "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me" ; no other man could have used such words, for there is a great deal in us that Satan can act on—the flesh is in us to be influenced.

But if Christ could have sinned when here below, He can sin now, and where then is the security of the believer ? Adam fell, and we all fell in him. The believer is now under the headship of Christ, and if He fell, what then ? If Christ could sin we have no Saviour that is worthy of our trust. He is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. He is unchangeable ; what He was He is, and what He is He was ; in Him there is no alteration. We are to be in the glory with Him, and all on the ground of His work and worth, but are we sure we are ever to be there ? and if we were there, what guarantee have we that we shall abide there ? Our eternal position depends altogether on Him, if there is the possibility of

change in Him we have no security at all.

But we are born of God, and we are told that the one who has been begotten of God does not practise sin, for His seed remains in him, and HE CANNOT SIN, because he is begotten of God (1 John 3. 9) ; and in 1 John 5. 18 we read : "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not ; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one TOUCHETH HIM NOT." Would it not be strange, and I might say *past belief*, that the Son of the living God could sin, and yet the soul born of God cannot ? Of course the *believer* may sin, because he has still the flesh in him, which can do nothing else but sin ; but viewed as begotten of God, nothing of the old nature is contemplated, and therefore it can be said, "*He cannot sin.*" When we are glorified we shall be incapable of sinning, for there shall be nothing of the old nature in us : the life and nature of Christ, and that only, shall be our life and nature, and we shall no more sin than He. But if we cannot sin because we have His life and nature, how would it be possible for Him to sin ?

But we are told that the temptation would have been a farce had He been incapable of giving way under it. I fail to see any absurdity in a person putting himself to a powerful test, in order that he might display his ability to answer to the test, and to do it in such a way as would let all see that for a man of his power the test was practically no test at all. The temptation of Christ only brought to light the perfection of His glorious person, and has furnished for us an example worthy of following. We are tempted when we are drawn away of our own lust and enticed (James 1. 14, 15). Our Lord was never tempted in this way. "*He knew no sin*" (2 Cor. 5. 21) ; "AND IN HIM WAS NO SIN" (1 John 3. 5). He was tempted in all points as we are, apart from sin (Heb. 4. 15). His temptations came

from without, and all the suggestions were loathsome to Him. "*He did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth*" (1 Pet. 2. 22). We have such temptations also, but we have others that come from the lusts of our own hearts, and these He never had.

But I must close. May we get better acquainted with Himself, and

the things that may now seem difficult to us shall all disappear before the bright beams of His moral glory. On our knees before Him God will teach us the beauty and glory of the blessed person of our Lord, and we shall then judge with sorrow the wrong and unworthy thoughts we have had of the ever blessed Son of the living God.

THE HOME COMING.

(L. R.)

"*I will arise and go to my father.*"—Luke 15. 18.

I WHO am far away, by sin beguiled,
I in my low estate, starved and defiled,
I who am no more fit to be a child,
Yet will I go.

For servants at his bounteous board are fed,
More than enough have they of daily bread,
But I shall soon be numbered with the dead,
Unless I go.

"*And he arose and came to his father.*"—Luke 15. 20.

Love sought him in the famine-stricken land,
Light shone to sweep the house with skilful hand,
A Father's heart a Father's welcome planned,
Thus he came home.

"*But the father said to his servants.*"—Luke 15. 22.

Bring forth for him the robe surpassing fair,
The ring, the shoes, meet for a son to wear,
For all my house affords my son must share.
Bring in the fatted calf, the table spread,
The lost is found, he liveth who was dead,
Eternal joy hath come and grief is fled.

"*And they began to be merry.*"—Luke 15. 24.

Sins put away as far as east from west,
Upon my brow the Father's kiss is pressed,
Now in my home I dwell, so richly blest,
Here to abide.

Yet I must turn and tread the pilgrim way,
The cross is near, the crown still far away,
What shall I do? how bear me through each day?
Still will I go

Unto my Father and to Him will say,
Father, the way is very long and sore,
Supply my need from Thine exhaustless store,
And grant Thy grace to triumph more and more.
Amen. Amen.

READINGS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS—*continued.*

(J. ALFRED TRENCH.)

“MORTIFY YOUR MEMBERS.”

MMORTIFY is, put to death. It is the active putting to death of our members which are upon earth in the power of the good into which we have been brought in Christ; or with the more decisive force of the Greek tense, “be as those who have put to death.” Our members on the earth are then found to be the two forms of human evil, *corruption* and *violence*, in which once we walked when we lived in them, and to these is added the Satanic one of *lying*. It is not here exactly as in Romans 6., that the members of our bodies that were the instruments of the will of the flesh are now to be yielded to God to be the instruments of His will; but the man himself, being looked at as dead, and having lost his whole place as a man alive in this world to have it in a new way with Christ as risen, regards these forms of evil as his members on earth, only to put them to death; but this depends on “having put off the old man with his deeds”—that is what he was as characterized by them—and having put on the new.

The “new man” is what the Christian is as characterized by Christ. In order to this, he is received into full knowledge according to Christ, who (as we have seen in chapter 1. 15) is the image of God, who has created the new man. It is as fully the fruit of a new creation as in the “new man” in Ephesians 4. 24, but there it is according to God, in righteousness and holiness—the *likeness* of God in that which is true of His nature. Here the new man is according to the *image* of God, that is Christ. Thus God has made good *in a new creation* the image and likeness of God in which man was created at the first. No thought of God falls to the ground or fails of its accomplishment, though it is only *in Christ* and *in a new creation* that it is realized. In order to the representa-

tion—for that is the thought of “image”—of Christ in us, there is then, the renewal—a present thing—into full knowledge of Him who is the perfect representation of God in man, that He may be ever before our souls to form us like Him.

All these distinctions in verse 11 belonged to man after the flesh. They are absolutely lost in a new creation in Christ, where Christ has become all things as object to those in whom He has become life (verse 3). For this is the way as I understand, He is “all and in all.”

Verses 12-17 are just the rescript of Christ, whom we have been left here to represent, as He was the perfect representation of God. These things are what the Christian is to put on practically. He has Christ as his life, and the object of that life, which is the power to enable him to do so—the formative power of “Christ in you” (chap. 1. 27) which, as we have seen, is the aspect of the mystery in Colossians. The putting on must be individual, that but for the development and expressions of these traits of Christ; all are needed, under *the uniting bond of love*, to form the Christian character in each one of us according to Christ, the image of God.

His words were ever the expression of Himself. But it is the “word” here (verse 16)—His whole mind, not so much the detailed words. The Word that was the perfect expression of the life in Him (see John 8. 35) (more truly read, “essentially I am what I speak unto you”) is given to form and direct that same life in us.

Verses 17-22. It is of great interest to see, that here, as in Ephesians, these responsibilities depend upon and are formed by the truth of each epistle. The natural relationships in which we have been placed with one another, and that of slavery which came in by sin, are not in Romans. They need the

full light of divine and heavenly relationships to be brought to bear upon them, that we may walk in them according to the nature of God, as in Ephesians, or that Christ may be lived out in them according to Colossians. The subject side comes first in every case, and the bond-servant is encouraged, as he would specially need it, in performing his often cheerless service to men in the fear of the Lord and heartily, by the thought of the Lord accepting it as service to Himself and the reward of the inheritance.

Q. How can a Christian receive for the wrong which he hath done (verse 25) ?

It is hardly thus that Scripture speaks. The passage says, "But he that doeth wrong shall receive [not for the wrong exactly, but] the wrong that he hath done." It is too sadly possible that the Christian may so act, and in that case, the principle applies to him. Nothing of what we do passes away with time, and the Lord will make this felt in the case of a Christian's wrongdoing, in the loss of reward in the

kingdom. It is a general principle of God's righteous government, and applies to all.

CHAPTER 4. 3, "THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST" is the great subject of the *gospel* as committed to Paul, the taking out of the Jew and Gentile—the last especially, for which Paul was in bonds—a people for His Name, to be united to Christ, their Head, in glory, as His body, the Assembly. And in the general need of continuance in prayer, watching in it with thanksgiving, the apostle seeks that a door of utterance for him to speak of it and make it manifest, may be a subject of the prayer of the saints.

Q. Verse 5. Grace and salt in speech. What would you give as a scriptural illustration of this ?

It is found in the gracious words that proceeded out of the mouth of the Lord Jesus, which never lacked the salt of holy separation to God. Only under such a Master shall we learn how we ought to answer every man.

A STUDY OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

Chapter 2. verses 17, 18.

(G. I. STEWART.)

HAVING humbled Himself in taking part in flesh and blood and becoming Man :—

IT BEHOVED HIM IN ALL THINGS TO BE MADE LIKE UNTO HIS BRETHREN.

In turning to consider the all things in which it behoved our Lord to be made like unto His brethren and the object of it, we must bear continually in mind the careful guard the Spirit has placed upon the glory of His Person, as to the condition in which He partook of flesh and blood :—As to His nature, He was Holy and not sinful ; as to His body, incontaminate, not subject to though capable of death ; incorruptible. This will preserve us from many mistakes into which other-

wise it is so easy to fall if we keep it not in mind.

"Behoved," implies obligation ; He ought to be made like unto them. It is a stronger word than "became" in verse 10. That is what was suitable to God as Creator, in bringing many sons unto glory. This is what He who was a Man down here, *ought* to do in order to become a merciful and faithful High Priest.

He voluntarily partook of flesh and blood, which they inherit by birth, that they may partake of that which He inherits,—glory and gladness. On the way to that glory they need a Priest. All that which sin has brought upon them, all the circumstances, exigencies, sorrows, trials, temptations,

cares, up to and including death, He ought to know that He may succour them when they are feeling the pressure of them. This path He willingly entered upon, and having put His hand to the plough He may not turn back. If He spare Himself here, how can He be a merciful High Priest? If not faithful in things here as a Man, how be faithful as Priest? Blessed be His Name, He cannot be other than He is—He spared not Himself. Witness His agony and bloody sweat in Gethsemane. He was the faithful witness to the truth. Hear His dying cry on Calvary. Every obligation laid upon Him was fulfilled. He learned obedience by the things that He suffered; He was made perfect through suffering. Jehovah opened His ear and He was not rebellious, neither turned away back; He gave His back to the smiters and His cheek to them which plucked off the hair; He hid not His face from shame and spitting.

In this way He obtained the tongue of the instructed, that He should know how to succour by a word him that is weary; in this way He became a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God.

Proved and tested thus in every way; sinless and perfect in everything, He is able also to:—

MAKE PROPITIATION FOR THE SINS OF THE PEOPLE.

This is a reference to the great Day of Atonement (Lev. 16.) where the High Priest killed the sin offerings and made atonement for the sin of the people. It involves the work of the two goats, and sets forth both propitiation and substitution; the great deep foundation work which holds the people to God. What though His death had destroyed the power of Satan and delivered the people from his grasp, if that work does not clear them from all the demands of God against them, establishing His Throne in righteousness and putting away all their sins? But this it does, blessed be His Name.

The goat upon which the Lord's lot fell is slain and the claims of God's Throne are met by the blood in propitiation. The sins of the people have been confessed upon the head of the scapegoat and borne away to a land of forgetfulness. The two goats set forth the work of the one Christ who did both for us.

He was made in all things like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, with a view to (*eis*) making propitiation for us as well as succouring us under temptation. This work of propitiation, though exceptional, is distinctly the act of the Priest, that is, Christ.

"Things pertaining to God" occurs twice in Hebrews; here and in chapter 5. 1. Twice also in Lev. 7. in the law of the Thankoffering. These things include the satisfying of the claims of God and meeting the need of man according to God. God would have us draw nigh to Him to enjoy all that He has provided to His praise. The claims of the Throne having been met by the blood, Christ now lives as Priest to assure us that our sins were included in the propitiation He made, and were confessed upon the head of Him who bore them all away where God will remember them no more; delivering us from the disability of an accusing conscience under the imputation of sin.

Propitiation has its application toward the whole world doubtless, but here it has its application to His people, to hold them free to worship,—free from the sense of the imputation of sins which is a very real hindrance to worship, and would deter one from entering the holy places. Deliverance from this is only to be had by the full grip of faith upon the efficacy of the propitiation made by Christ. One cannot really believe the guilt of the sin has been judged upon Christ on Calvary, and yet have the sense of it upon the conscience. That is an impossibility. But there is a very loose way of talking about Christ and His blood.

shedding, where the awful reality to Him of propitiation and its divine efficacy to us, is not at all apprehended. God seeks worship, but if the devil succeeds in putting a single sin upon the conscience, then good-bye to it for the time being.

But it may be asked—May I then sin recklessly, without any conscience about it? God forbid! If the guilt of the sin cannot be put again upon a perfected conscience, the sorrow of it will fall deeply upon a tender heart; but God has made provision for this in another way. Here it is stated that Christ has made propitiation for the sins of the people. This, if apprehended by faith, will deliver from all fear of imputation, and so remove this disability to approach God.

Propitiation was the special act of the priest on the great Day of Atonement; he did not at other times slay the victim except for his own sin (see also Lev. i. 15). This shows that none but Christ, who is for us both Sacrifice and Priest, could make atonement. Therefore in our verse it is shown to be His own act. Upon the basis of that act He enters officially upon His Priesthood, and then, that is now, He applies, as Priest, the abiding efficacy of this His own work to keep the conscience clear of all imputation.

But He endured all the sufferings His people pass through also, that He may be :—

ABLE TO SUCCOUR THEM THAT ARE TEMPTED.

How much we need this, each heart knows. Able to succour, refers not to strength alone, but to experimental knowledge of the oppositions, difficulties and trials we meet with on the road, so that the Succourer can understand

and be touched with them. One may be above the fear of death and clear of the sense of imputation, yet we are still but weak men here, subject to trials of every kind. This also becomes a very real disability, and unless we had a High Priest who could help and succour, we should still not approach God.

To this end our Priest was made in all things like unto His brethren and suffered being tempted; never as the effect of yielding to temptation. It is impossible but that we suffer in a scene like this, and with so wily an enemy to contend with. Either we suffer being tempted; or, although for the moment we escape suffering by yielding to the temptation, yet finally we must suffer as the result of yielding. Our Lord suffered always being tempted, that is, in resisting the temptation. It was so in the wilderness. He would not make the stones bread; He did not display God's care of Him by casting Himself down from the pinnacle of the Temple; nor would He take up His rightful dominion apart from the bidding of God Himself. Death were preferable to this; but this was real suffering.

His sympathy, obtained here, teaches Him how to apply His power and wisdom to His own, who may be enduring temptation. He has a word in season for such; He succours them. If we are but weak men, we have a strong, a merciful and faithful High Priest. Blessed be His Name, He hears the cry of the soul in suffering under temptation and *runs to the rescue*. This is the meaning of the word rendered succour, which word itself means in English to feed, support, sustain. This also He does to those who are in weakness and temptation. If we suffer, having failed, it is still Himself to whom we must have recourse, though not then as Priest, but as Advocate.

Divine truth needs a Divine Teacher. Spiritual apprehension of spiritual things can only come by the Holy Spirit. The deeper the conviction of the unique character of the Word, essentially different from and infinitely exalted above all merely human apprehension, the more urgently will the need be felt of a supernatural and directly Divine teaching.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

Romans 4. 4.

Would you be kind enough to say in "Scripture Truth" what the meaning of Romans 4. 4 is? It is the reference to the debt that is not clear.—COWDENBEATH.

THE contrast is between faith and works. If a man could secure God's blessing by his works, it would be unrighteousness on God's part to withhold it from him, it would be owing to him, a debt to him to be discharged in simple justice, just as a man receives his wages when his work is done. But since there is none righteous and none that doeth good, none have a right to the blessing, it has been utterly forfeited by all, and if any get it, it will be a gift to them on God's part, it will be all of grace. This is what God offers in the Gospel, and all

who believe on Him, who believe that He is as good as His word, that He means what He says, are blest at once. It comes to this, that the sinner ceases to rely upon himself and his own efforts and relies wholly upon God for the blessing; he does not trust himself, he believes in God; he acknowledges his own ruin and delights in God's redemption which is in Christ Jesus. Then it is no longer a question of what he is or can do, but what God is in the grace of His heart and what Christ has done.

Must the Gospel be preached to all Nations before the Coming of the Lord?

I would like you to answer the following question in your correspondence columns. I have heard some outgoing missionaries saying that every country must have the Gospel preached to, and be evangelized before the Lord comes. Will you give Scriptures for or against this and comments on same? This idea, whether the truth or not, seems to give them impetus to go and preach abroad.—GLASGOW.

IT is plain that the servants of the Lord must have the whole world as the sphere for their activities in the Gospel. The commission in Luke's Gospel, which is the Gospel of grace and for Gentiles, has this comprehensive outlook, "repentance and remission of sins" are to be preached in the Name of the Lord unto all nations. And the last words that the disciples heard from the lips of their ascending Lord, as recorded for us by the same writer, were, "Ye shall be witnesses to Me . . . unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1.). Further, the Gospel that they carried and which is still to be carried to all nations had the coming of the Lord in view, i.e., *His coming to earth* to judge and to reign. It was this that Peter preached in the house of Cornelius, the first congregation of Gentiles to hear the Gospel (Acts 10. 42). Paul also pressed it at Athens, when he said, "God . . . now commandeth all men everywhere to repent, because He hath appointed a day when He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained" (Acts 17. 31); and the effect in those that believed the Gospel was not only that they turned to God, but they waited

"for His Son from heaven" (1 Thess. 1. 10).

Thus far Scripture is clear. The Gospel is for the world, and it has in view the coming again of the Lord in power and glory. But here another line of truth comes in for consideration. When the Lord comes again from heaven His saints will come with Him; when He reigns in power His church will reign with Him. They must be with Him first in order to come with Him. How is this to come about? Here we learn the unique place that the church occupies in the thoughts and ways of God. Those who are reached by the Gospel in this present period are being *gathered out of the world* (Acts 15. 15). This was Paul's great testimony. While the Gospel is for the whole world, it is certainly not converting the world or evangelizing the nations, but is gathering out of them those who will form the church, a company for heaven. There is no Scripture that we know of that says all nations must hear the Gospel before *the church is completed*. When it is completed it will surely be raptured from the earth at once, so that it may come with the Lord when He

comes in glory. He must come *for* His saints before He can come *with* them.

This coming for His saints, what we may call the first part of His second advent, is presented in Scriptures as an immediate hope. It could scarcely be so presented if its fulfilment depended upon the evangelization of all nations. Then how shall we interpret the Lord's words in Matthew 24. 14: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations and then shall the end come"? This is *the gospel of the kingdom*; and its theme will be the coming of the Lord, as "Son of Man in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (verse 30). It will be preached during the days of great tribulation that are described in this chapter. The centre of that tribulation will be Judea, and that will be the centre from which this preaching will go forth. It will be a post-church testimony, carried to the ends of the earth by those of Israel in whom God will work with this end in view. They will be the successors of the twelve (Matthew 10.) and the seventy (Luke 10.), and their testimony will have a similar character. The church will be gone from the earth before that tribulation bursts upon it, so that it cannot be a church testimony. This witness to all nations will leave all without excuse, and the result of it is seen in Matthew 25. 31-46, when the *living nations* are judged by the Son of Man from the throne of His glory. Those who received His messengers will be the sheep on his right hand and will enter into the blessings of the kingdom on earth prepared for them from the foundation of

the world. Those who rejected the messengers will be the goats on His left hand who will depart into everlasting punishment.

So that the Gospel will be preached to *all* before the second coming of the Lord to the earth, but it will be the Gospel of the Kingdom, and will be preached by Jewish missionaries, and we must not confound this period with that.

The present period which really commenced when Stephen was stoned (Acts 7.) is a parenthesis in the ways of God. Up to that time the testimony was that God would send Jesus Christ, whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began (Acts 3. 20, 21). It is that testimony that will be taken up again, for that is really the Gospel of the kingdom. Should the knowledge of this make us less zealous in carrying the Gospel world-wide now? Surely not, for the Lord's servants now have a more glorious offer to make. Their testimony is to Christ enthroned in glory, and conformity to His image there as the destiny of all who bow to Him: and this does not invalidate the Gospel of the kingdom, for the lesser is included in the greater. None who hear and reject this testimony will have any hope of the lesser or earthly blessing, as some preach. Of this Scripture is clear. "For this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thess. 2. 11, 12).

"Raised up at the last day."

I have heard it said recently, that John 6. 29, refers to the material world as distinct from the world of humanity because it speaks of "it" instead of "him" as in the next verse. It was said that this material world will constitute the new heavens and new earth when it is raised up. Is this so? Can you tell me who will inhabit the new heaven and new earth?—J. S., DORSET.

THE material earth is not the subject of the Lord's words in this passage. Resurrection does not apply to inanimate things but to that which has lived and died. Verses 39 and 40 must be read together, in them the Lord presents two sides of the truth. In verse 39 it is the Father's sovereign choice and grace, in verse 40 the response on the part of

those who are the subjects of His grace. They are the Father's gift to the Son in verse 39; they see and believe in verse 40. But they are one and the same, and whether it is the Father's grace or their faith the full result is seen in resurrection, for such was the Father's will, and to carry this out the Lord had come from heaven.

But those whom the Father gave to the Son were dead in trespasses and sins! Yes, but He gives them eternal life (verse 40) and their souls thereby are for ever freed from death; but their bodies are part of themselves and death claims their bodies! Yes, but these, too, must be quickened, for death cannot hold what belongs to the Lord and it may well be that it was this the Lord had in view in verse 39. He will raise up in the last day that which has fallen under the power of death. It is resurrection, the complete overthrow of death.

The last day does not refer to the time when the present heavens and earth shall give place to the new heavens and earth, but to the end of this present age, when man's day shall give place to the day of the Lord. The Lord will exercise the power given unto Him in that day first in raising up His own. Revelation 20. 4-6 clearly shews that the resurrection of the redeemed takes place before the millennium; the destruction of the earth is at the end of it (verse 11).

All who have died in faith from Abel's

day will be raised up for a heavenly inheritance and that inheritance will be eternal, hence they with the church will be the inhabitants of heaven (Heb. 11. 13-11). Those who live on the earth during the millennium and are born again and redeemed will be translated to the new earth. But in the eternal state heaven and earth will be in full accord, the tabernacle of God will be with men, and He will dwell with them and He shall be all in all. There will be no distance between heaven and earth then (Rev. 21.).

We read of this earth and the works that are therein being burned up (2 Peter 3.), of the earth fleeing away (Rev. 20.), of a new heaven and new earth; of former things passing away and of all things becoming new (Rev. 21.). God's power will create this new heaven and earth, for it is a new creation. When this present creation has served its purpose it will be set aside as a worn out and disused garment, and all shall be changed by the Creator who changes not. Hebrews 1. 11, 12.

“Baptized for the Dead.”

What is the meaning of 1 Corinthians 15. 29: “Else what shall they do that are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?”—**ABERDARE.**

THE 29th verse links on with verse 19, verses 20-28 being a parenthesis. The argument is that if Christ be not raised those who have fallen asleep in Jesus have perished, and those Christians who are still alive are of all men most miserable; for while suffering for Christ's sake and in constant danger of martyrdom they have no hope of any other life. Then continues the Apostle, why should anyone take up the Christian position at all,—which all do who are baptized, it is the meaning of baptism—if the dead don't rise? Why should anyone step forward to fill the gap caused by the death of a Christian if the only prospect was death and no resurrection beyond?

It would be the utmost folly to do so.

We do not suffer death for our faith as they did in the days of the Apostle, and as they still do in some lands. Yet if we have been baptized we have been baptized unto the *death* of Jesus Christ. We are committed to His death, identified with Him who died. Baptism does not speak of life but of death, but it would all be very useless if we had not got resurrection in view. There is no thought in the passage of being baptized for one who may have died without baptism. “The word translated ‘for,’” says J. N. D., “is frequently used in these Epistles for ‘in view of,’ or ‘with reference to.’”

Simplicity is a great trait of walking in the presence of God.

Liberty of will is just slavery to the devil.

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

If Christ is not your portion, you have either a disappointed heart or you are seeking something that will disappoint it.

WAITING, WATCHING, WORKING.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

"Like unto men that WAIT for their Lord."

"Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when He cometh shall find WATCHING."

"Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when He cometh, shall find so doing [WORKING]." Luke 12.

TO be waiting indicates *readiness*.

To be watching shows *expectation*.

To be working is a sign of *faithfulness* to a charge. And the servants of the Lord are to be ready, expectant, and faithful in view of His coming again.

But is He really coming again? Long has He been expected; will He fulfil that expectation? May it not be a vain hope? "Behold the Bridegroom cometh" (Matt. 25.), was a great text with earnest men nigh upon a century ago, and the hope of His coming spread amongst those who loved His Name, until many were saying: "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." It became a theme of ordinary conversation. I heard of it as a child. My father and mother talked about it in our home, and I remember that one of the first teachers I ever had asked me: "What do they preach at the meetings you go to?" I answered: "They preach that the Lord Jesus is coming again." "What!" she exclaimed, evidently startled. "Yes," I said, "and we believe it because the Bible says so." It was a child's answer, but it shows that whether true or false this teaching had made a deep impression on my mind.

But that was many years ago, and He has not come yet, and those who looked for Him so earnestly in those years that are past have fallen asleep without realizing their hope. Were they deceived in their belief? And are we? Will He really come? The scoffers are saying: "Where is the promise of His coming?" and we must give an answer to their challenge. What shall that answer be?

Our answer is: "Yes, He will surely come," and the basis of our confidence is that He has said so. We do not build our hope on signs and portents, they may easily and often deceive us,

but we rest in His own Word, for that cannot fail. Other prophecies have been fulfilled, and so shall this be. God declared in the Garden of Eden that the woman's Seed should bruise the Serpent's head. It was the first word that was ever uttered as to the coming of the great Deliverer, and that word was fulfilled when the due time came. Four thousand years passed between the prediction and its fulfilment, and throughout those long, long years men of faith waited and watched. They carried the torch of faith and hope in the darkness for a while, each in his own day, and then handed it on to their successors, until at last He for whom they looked appeared; the Daystar from on high visited them, and faith and hope gave place to sight as they gave thanks to God and cried, Our eyes have seen Thy salvation.

God's prophets had spoken of the sufferings of Christ and of the glory that should follow. When He did appear His disciples thought only of the glory. But the glory was not yet to be, it awaited *His second coming*. It behoved Him first to suffer that the Scriptures might be fulfilled. His first coming was for shame and spitting, for suffering and death; His second coming will be for honour and glory, for the crown and the throne. He told His disciples in the plainest language that He had come to suffer, that He would be delivered to the Gentiles and be mocked and crucified. It seemed much more likely that He would be stoned, indeed the Jews in their frenzied hatred of Him attempted this more than once, but they could not do it, a power they did not understand restrained them, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. But why should He be crucified? This was a Roman mode of execution, and He did not come into conflict with Rome. He offered no resistance to its

authority, but on the contrary He taught that what was due to it must be rendered to it, and for that saying the Jews hated Him the more, but the Romans had no cause to condemn Him for such teaching, He was no criminal according to their laws. Yet they crucified Him? Why? Because the Scripture had said that thus He would die, and they cannot fail. More than one thousand years before it happened it was all foretold in the most graphic detail (Ps. 22.). Long before the Roman power had any existence the very way they would treat Him was revealed, and the ancient word was fulfilled to the last letter of it. And by His own words He confirmed what was written of Him. *He said He would die and He did, HE SAID HE WOULD RISE THE THIRD DAY AND HE DID, HE SAID HE WOULD COME AGAIN IN GLORY AND HE WILL.*

Every word of Scripture that foretold His first coming and His sufferings when He came has been fulfilled, and just as surely shall every word that has been spoken about His second coming in glory be fulfilled. If He does not come again His own word and the Scripture will be broken, and this cannot be: Heaven and earth shall pass away but not one jot or tittle of His word can fail. Our first and greatest reason then for holding this as a sure and blessed hope is His own word, and the word of Holy Scripture.

Our second reason is that the Divine plan and purpose would be incomplete if He did not come. If Sir Christopher Wren had built St. Paul's without its dome, we should have said that it was not finished, that the crown of it was wanting. And if the Lord Jesus does not come again there will be a great want in the ways of God. To come in humiliation and not return in power, to suffer and die for sin and not come again in glory to establish righteousness in the world where wickedness has so long held sway; to bear the cross and not wear the crown, would be to

leave unfinished God's great scheme of blessing for men and glory for His Son. The crown of His purpose would be lacking and the universe would say that God was not wise, or He had not the power to make His wisdom effectual. Yes. The once suffering Saviour must come in glory; where He was dishonoured He must be exalted; He loved righteousness and hated iniquity, therefore His throne must be established for ever. He must come again.

Our third reason for His coming again, is that His love demands it. He cannot leave even the bodies of His blood-redeemed saints under the power of death. He must raise them up again, and He will do this at His coming again: then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor. 1. 4). And then will He present to Himself His church, His bride, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. Jacob would not have been satisfied to have laboured and waited for Rachel and not have possessed her, neither can the Lord be satisfied without His bride, complete and glorious. He gave Himself for her and He must have her, and this cannot be apart from His coming again (Eph. 5.). And because His love demands it, we read: "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4. 16, 17). "And then shall be 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, Alleluiah, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb to come" (Rev. 19. 6, 7).

The first message that the ascended Lord sent from the glory to His disciples

upon earth was that He would come back again (Acts 1.), and His last message from the glory to His church on earth is "Surely I come quickly" (Rev. 22.). Truly His coming again lies very near to His heart. It is as though a mother leaving her children for a while, said to them as she puts her good-bye kiss upon their lips: "I'll come back soon," and if she has the opportunity of sending a message to them during her absence, the burden of it is, "I'll come back soon." She knows well that nothing will please them better than that. Yes, but in the message her own desire breaks out. It is because she longs for them, yearns to see and embrace them again that she sends such a message to them. Her desire is greater than theirs. Even so it is with our Lord. Yet surely His love to us has awakened desires to see Him in our hearts, and if so, we shall respond to His message to us with the church's cry. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

And if this is so, we shall be waiting and watching and working; we shall be ready, expectant and faithful. Think of the absent mother and her children again. Mary has been left in charge of her brothers and sisters, and the day has arrived for the return of the mother. They do not know the hour, but they are up early and they work with a will until everything is ready. The home is clean, the children are dressed, and they are ready. Mother can come now, she will find them *waiting*. But how often they go to the door and peer out of the window, they cannot sit still, mother will soon be here, and they are eager for a sight of her, and as the day wears on they become more eager and expectant. They are *watching*, and it is their love for their mother that makes them so.

But Mary is in charge of the home, and she feels her responsibility. Between her journeys to the door and window she slips first into this room and then into that, to make sure that nothing is out of place, and most of all she keeps her eye on the younger children. Not a speck must be on them when the mother returns. She must feed them, and wash them, and keep them out of mischief until her mother comes; and so she waits and watches like the rest, but she *works* also. She is faithful to her trust. Blessed is Mary when her mother comes. She has a twofold happiness. Not only is her mother back again but she has said "Well done" to her faithful little daughter. She has the joy of her mother's presence and the satisfaction of her mother's approbation. And now the mother's turn has come, and she serves Mary, she makes her sit down at the table and brings forth the good things that she has brought, and while all join in the feast, it is a reward for Mary. She has this as a secret understanding between herself and her mother. Has our Lord's love to us *affected* us as the mother's love affected her daughter? Are we ready, expectant and faithful? Blessed will it be for us if it is so. But this is the way we show our love to Him and not by talking of His coming only. We shall be anxious to keep our charge, anxious that all His own shall be such as will please Him when He does come. We shall feed them, encourage them, wash their feet if need be. In this our responsibility lies, here shall be proved our faithfulness to our trust. It will not be enough that we are waiting ourselves, we shall desire all His saints to be waiting too, yes, *all His saints*, for He is coming for all, and all should be looking for Him.

"That in all things He might have the pre-eminence."—Colossians 1. 18.

"If you do not crown Him Lord of all,
You do not crown Him Lord at all."

MAY Christ be in the forefront of our desires and supreme Lord of our lives! Let us lift up the crown of our

love, of our trust, of our obedience, and put it on the head where the thorns once were, and crown Him Lord of all. And those who do this know that His commandments are not grievous.

LIGHT AND LIFE.

(JAMES BOYD.)

Meditations on the Gospel and Epistles of John. No. 1.

THE first epistle of John is the sequel to the Gospel, and shows us the believer walking in the light that came into this world in the person of the Son, who is the subject of the Gospel. In the Son we see the Father declared, and this revelation brings eternal life into the midst of a fallen race, as free for every human being as is the light of the sun in the heaven above. In the epistle the believer is contemplated as partaking of that life. The Word was the Word of that life which was the eternal thought of God for man (Titus 1. 2). It was the *old* commandment in the Gospel, for it was ever in the Son; it is the *new* commandment in the epistle, for it is now in the believer.

The Gospel opens with a beginning beyond which no human mind can travel. We are so constituted that without some stepping-stone upon which our mental foot may find support, we cannot move in any direction from the present moment. We can move forward in thought to the consummation of all things, for the sure word of prophecy has laid a highway upon which we may securely travel; and we can go back in thought to days long passed away, for incidents connected with those days are indelibly written upon the table of the heart. We may also travel along the highway of profane history, and journey back upon the page of inspiration, until we come to the hour in which God created the heavens and the earth, but beyond that there is no resting-place for the mind, only we are allowed just to touch that which is eternal, for "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by Him."

The Word had been spoken by prophets from the earliest ages, who called upon men to obey it, lest they should incur the displeasure of God.

But those prophets were not the Word themselves. They spoke it, but they were no more it than were the people to whom it was addressed. Here, however, was One in the midst of men, who not only spoke the Word, but who was Himself the Word. He Himself was all that God had to say to men, and all that God is in His approach to men. Prophets had said, "Thus saith the Lord," but Jesus said, "I say unto you." They could only pronounce blessing upon those who believed in God, but Jesus said, "He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life." He was the expression of the essential being of the Godhead. He says, "He that seeth Me seeth Him that sent Me." Not, surely needless to say, as to outward form, for He was in the form of a servant, and in the likeness of men; but as to the inward distinctive qualities that manifested themselves in His practical life down here, it was God declared.

In Him the Creator was here, having taken part in that which was the work of His own hands. No longer does He make the prophets the media of His communications to men, but comes personally into their midst; and He comes in a form not in the least calculated to strike terror into the human heart; He is a Man amongst men. He could well have said, like Elihu the daysman between God and Job, "Behold, my terror shall not make thee afraid, neither shall my hand be heavy upon thee" (Job 33. 7). Meekness and lowliness, tenderness and goodness, grace and truth, were in the most perfect harmony and infinite equipoise with the holiness and righteousness that characterized His whole deportment in this evil world.

"And the Word became flesh." No other way could God have been made known. The creature cannot by searching come to the knowledge of his Creator. The gap between the Creator

and the creature is infinite. Only God could make God manifest. If He was to be known by the creature, He must find a way by which He shall make Himself known. His eternal power and divinity may, and do, come to light by means of creation, but His essential being, His nature, and not merely His attributes, cannot be declared by the works of His hands. To manifest the inherent principle of life and nature, from which the activities of a being proceed, requires something more than an exhibition of wisdom and power. To bring the nature to light requires a circumstance that shall test to the very centre of the soul the secret springs and depths that by their activities alone can be shown the being as he is.

And this occasion for the setting forth of all that God is in His very nature was furnished by the fall of the creature on whom He had set His heart before the world's foundation. Nothing now was open to God but a choice between two alternatives: the judgment and utter destruction of the whole human race, or His most merciful intervention in power in His erring creature's behalf, and that by means which shall touch to the very quick His sensitive and holy soul, and bring His only-begotten Son, the well-beloved Object of His heart, into unspeakable depths of sorrow. His righteousness demanded the condemnation of the sinner. His holiness could do nothing but put man, the unclean creature, at an immeasurable distance from His presence. Satisfaction must be rendered to His outraged majesty. His word, that pronounced sentence of death on the sinner, must be honoured. Yet His love, that had been set upon the sons of men cannot be disregarded. What is to be done?

Here the deepest depths of His being are sounded; the fountains of that unfathomable ocean are in activity against the destruction of the creature made in His image and likeness; but His wisdom and His power come to

the service of His unspeakable love. His holiness, His righteousness, His truth, His majesty, must be glorified; but His love, His nature, cannot be made to suffer through the maintenance of the claims of His attributes. His counsels, eternal counsels, counsels of love, counsels that had man as their object, cannot be allowed to perish; every thought must be established; in short, all that God is in nature and attribute must be glorified in manifestation. How was all this to be accomplished?

The answer is found in the eternal Word, who becomes flesh, declares the Father, and in His person as Son is indicated an entirely new order of life and relationship for men. He goes to the cross, where the depths of the evil that characterized the old order are discovered, and where in His holy flesh God condemns sin, which had its seat in our unholy flesh; and thus is the nature and character of God declared, the infinite perfections of the eternal Son in manhood brought to light, and a basis laid in the blood of that cross, on which every thought and counsel of eternal love shall unshakably be established.

The special aspect of the death of Christ found in John's writings is that of the brazen serpent; and the reason of this is, that the subject of life and nature, rather than the putting away of our sins, occupies his mind. The types in which the death of Christ is in its various aspects set forth are exceedingly interesting. We have types that are connected with the redemption of the people from the hard bondage under which they suffered from the power of Pharaoh, there are those that refer to their passage through the wilderness, and there are others that refer to their coming into the land. The blood sprinkled on the door-posts and lintels of their houses sheltered them from the sword of the destroying angel. It is the blood of Christ as His justification in justifying the ungodly sinner who believes in

Jesus (Rom. 3.). The Red Sea divided is Christ delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification (Rom. 4.). This brings us out of the devil's kingdom (Egypt) into the wilderness with God. Then in the song of Moses we get the warfare of God with the powers of evil, His triumph over them on behalf of His people, and the boast of the people, that He having brought them out would be sure not to fail to bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of His inheritance. This song should have been sung throughout their whole wilderness journey, but, alas, the rest of the way was given, not to singing but to murmuring (Heb. 3. 14 ; 10. 23). Next we come to the bitter water which, though not in itself a type of the death of Christ, is our application of that death to the will of the flesh throughout our wilderness journey. It is indeed bitter to the soul, for it is the result of sin and abhorrent to our human nature ; but if we have been saved by His death, it is not that we may henceforth live to ourselves and to the will of the flesh, but to Him who died for us, and rose again ; and because of this we must bring His death to bear upon all that we are as in the flesh. But His cross has made death sweet to us, for His love has been by means of it expressed, and by means of it have we been brought to God, our sins and our sore bondage to sin and Satan left behind for ever.

After this, when their wilderness journey had practically come to an end, and when it was seen that the flesh was unmendably evil, and however faithfully and tenderly God had cared for all their wants during their forty years, while they lived on His bounty, and when apart from His continual interest and ceaseless care on their behalf they would have perished

to a man, they were found as disobedient and gainsaying as they had been at the very first, we come to the fiery serpents and the remedy against their poisonous bite. The brazen serpent lifted up on the pole was the unfailing remedy. The Son of Man upon the cross is the antitype of this serpent of brass. The serpent on the pole was exactly like the serpents that had brought death into the camp ; the Son of Man came in the likeness of sinful flesh. The serpent on the pole was sinless ; the Son of Man was also sinless. The serpent on the pole was a serpent of brass, and brass is the symbol of the judgment of God according to the responsibility of man ; the Son of Man lifted up on the cross bore the judgment that lay on the responsible man, and in that judgment that man was ended before God, and now the believer righteously partakes of the life and nature of Him who died for us and rose again ; and this is the life of Canaan.

Our words and our ways with our fellow men set forth what we are in our nature, the spring and fountain of our spiritual being. The Word who was God set forth God in His ways here among men, for the life that shone forth in Him was Divine, and therefore was it the light of men. Moreover it had a quickening power with it ; it was the light of life. True, it shone in the midst of the darkness of this world, and the darkness apprehended it not ; but this was because man was by nature blind, blind morally. He was blind, because he had no desire to see ; he hated the light. "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light lest his deeds should be reproved" (John 3. 19, 20).

"Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the Lord." (Psa. 107. 43.)

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH. No. V. The Bible : Its Prophecies. (A. J. POLLOCK.)

ONE of the most striking proofs of the inspiration of the Bible is the way its prophecies have been fulfilled. No mind, however farseeing, can penetrate the future centuries, and say what they contain. The *only* book in the world that sets out to prophesy, and whose prophecies have been fulfilled to the letter is the Bible, and this clearly proves that it was not written merely and only by men like ourselves, but that there was a Divine Mind that inspired it all.

Prophecy is the anticipation of history. When the history is unrolled, and it answers to prophecy like the obverse of a seal, the prophecy is proved to be true.

As a very young Christian, the writer remembers with gratitude that it was the fulfilment of prophecy that convinced him of the inspiration of the Scriptures, and held him from the infidel tendency of his mind.

It was the prophecy of Jewish history that convinced him in an overwhelming manner of the inspiration of Scripture. In Luke 21. the Lord Himself prophesies the destruction of the Temple, the siege of Jerusalem, and the dispersion of Israel till the times of the Gentiles should be fulfilled. Some forty years after this prophecy, Titus attacked Jerusalem with an immense army, and subjected it to a most sanguinary siege. He, however, gave strict orders that the Temple, that magnificent building, imposing in its situation, venerable in its associations, should be preserved. Which should stand—the prophecy of the lowly Jesus or the commands of the imperious Titus, one no longer on earth to enforce His wishes as men would say, the other on the very spot with all the power of a victorious army behind him? Which should stand? Surely the former.

It is recorded that one soldier mounted on the back of another soldier, and threw a lighted torch into

the sacred edifice. A strong wind fanned the conflagration, and not one stone was left upon another of the wondrous Temple, according to the word of Jesus.

But some one may foolishly say that this prophecy might have been a lucky guess. Jerusalem was a turbulent place and was likely to have just such an end. But there is a part of the prophecy that certainly could not have been a lucky guess. The Lord said the Jewish nation was to “be led away captive into all nations” (Luke 21. 24). This prophecy has been slowly fulfilled from about A.D. 70 to A.D. 1925—a very long stretch of time indeed. The scattering of a nation among all nations is perfectly unique in history. By all the ordinary laws governing such an event, the Jewish nation should have been tracelessly absorbed by this time. Who, for instance, can trace the Saxons and the Normans and the Danes and the ancient Britons in London to-day? These nations have all been tracelessly absorbed long ago. But if you see the ancient Jew in London you know him to-day. He is unmistakable. The Jew is a living testimony to the miraculous.

One can understand how the waters of the mighty Amazon refuse to mix with the salt water of the ocean till seventy miles away from its mouth. Thousands of miles inland, over the highlands of a mighty continent, springs and brooks and rivulets grow into streams and streams into rivers, and tributary joins tributary, and again and again the process is renewed, till at last the mighty Amazon, draining the waters of a huge continent, two hundred miles broad at its mouth, the distance between London and York, pours this tremendous body of water into the ocean. No wonder it refuses to mix with the salt water till the distance of seventy miles out to sea has been reached.

But one cannot understand, on mere natural grounds, how a small nation, decimated by sword, famine and pestilence, scattered in mere driblets among hostile nations, without a leader, without visible unity, in days when the Jews in one country did not know what was happening to their compatriots in another, subjected for centuries to the most horrible persecutions, and attempts at extermination—one cannot understand on mere natural grounds how it is possible for the Jew to retain his ground, yet where younger nations have completely and tracelessly disappeared the Jews, distinct and separate, are found in every nation, their number to-day more than in the palmy days of King Solomon.

This then is a prophecy that cannot be explained away. It is the finger of God. It is an external proof of the inspiration of the Bible. It saved the writer at the beginning of his Christian profession from making shipwreck of faith.

The Lord in Luke 21. 24 gives a time limit for the dispersal of the Jewish nation—"until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

This allusion brings us to another great prophecy which was given to Daniel, the prophet. The end of 2 Kings tells how Nebuchadnezzar's captain of the guard destroyed Solomon's temple, rased Jerusalem to the ground, broke down its walls and burned its palaces and houses and deported all the Jews, save leaving a few of "the poor of the land to be vine-dressers and husbandmen" (2 Kings 25. 12). It was then the Times of the Gentiles began—the time when the Jewish nation came under Gentile domination.

This prophecy was all contained in a dream that Nebuchadnezzar had, given him by God. Deeply impressed by it, yet the dream went from him, only that he might be more deeply impressed that God had given the dream, seeing his servant Daniel could remind Nebuchadnezzar what his dream

was, and give the interpretation, though receiving not a single clue, and that when the pagan magicians and soothsayers were unable to do so.

The dream was that of a mighty image, whose head was "of fine gold, his breast and arms of silver, his belly and thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay" (Dan. 2. 31). This was supplemented by a vision given to Daniel himself of four beasts rising from the sea, viz., a lion, a bear, a leopard and "a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly" (Dan. 7. 7).

In these two visions were outlined in prophecy the Times of the Gentiles, consisting of four great empires, viz. :—the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian and Roman. Slowly down the centuries fulfilled prophecy is found on the pages of history. The eye of God looked down the coming ages and indicated what was to happen.

We might ask, Who will be in power in this country a short ten years hence, or what will happen to the League of Nations within a similar period, and the longest-headed politician must shake his head and reply, "Nobody remotely knows, or can even hazard a guess."

And yet Daniel the prophet could prophesy the happenings of centuries. Does this not prove Divine inspiration without a doubt? To refuse to believe this is to believe more, very much more. It would mean that prejudice blinded men to reason and fact, and forced them to explain away the obvious by substituting wild hare-brained theories, demanding a credulity that one would expect only an idiot could stretch to. Such are the lengths that men of intelligence and scholarship are driven to, rather than bow to the plain teaching of Scripture. No wonder the Apostle Paul could scathingly denounce "the oppositions of science falsely so called," and among these sciences is that of theological science, alias Higher Criticism, alias Modernism—religious infidelity.

But now we must come to the greatest prophecy of all, viz., that relating to the Person and mission of the Lord Jesus Christ in this world. Many prophecies are made regarding Him, and all concerning His birth and life and death have been fulfilled. Canon Lidden in his monumental Bampton lectures, *The Divinity of our Lord*, states that there are 333 prophecies, which centre in the life of the Lord, and every one of them, relating to His life on earth, have been fulfilled.

When a prophecy is confined to one item, it is just possible for it to be a lucky guess, a fortunate hit. But when the items spread over the manner of birth, the place of birth, the life, the place and manner of death and burial, the resurrection and ascension, and run into hundreds in number, we are clean beyond the possibility of a guess, the mathematical chances are against fulfilment by millions. Moreover, this is heightened when one considers the miraculous nature of the whole life of our Lord, its perfectly unique character, until it becomes perfectly impossible for anything but God's Divine inspiration to account for these wonderful prophecies.

We must content ourselves with very few of them, but quite sufficient for our purpose.

The manner of Christ's birth. "Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and thou shalt call His name *Immanuel*" (Isa. 7. 14). Read Matt. 1. 18-25 and Luke 1. 26-35 and see how beautiful and modest are the wonderful accounts of the fulfilment of Isaiah over seven long centuries before.

The place of Christ's birth. Micah, a contemporary of Isaiah, tells us that Bethlehem was to be the place of Christ's birth (chap. 5. 2). Luke 2. tells us how the whole world was taxed by Cæsar Augustus, making it necessary for Joseph to go up to Bethlehem, the city of David, because he was of David's house and lineage. And there in the stable of the inn the blessed

Saviour of mankind was born, fulfilling Micah's prophecy in a wonderful way.

The activities of Christ's life. Isaiah prophesies, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me: because the Lord hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord" (chap. 61. 1, 2). The Lord in the synagogue of Nazareth took the book of the prophet Esaias, and read that particular passage, saying, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears" (Luke 4. 21). Did He not gloriously fulfil this Messianic prophecy in that wonderful three and a half years of His public ministry? The four Gospels bear abundant testimony to this.

Isaiah again testifies as to the effect upon the people of all the miracles the Lord performed. He asks, "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" (Isa. 53. 1) and then goes on to tell how He would be despised and rejected of men. John 12. 37-41 shows how all this was fulfilled.

The place of Christ's death. The Lord Himself affirms that "it cannot be that a prophet perish outside Jerusalem" (Luke 13. 33), and His suffering "without the gate" (Heb. 13. 12) is distinctly set forth as the fulfilment of the Levitical type of the sin-offering which was burned "without the camp" (Lev. 29. 14).

The manner of Christ's death. We are told in Matt. 27. 9, that the betrayal of Christ by Judas for thirty pieces of silver was the fulfilment of the prophecy of Jeremy the prophet, when we turn to Zechariah 11. 12, 13, five centuries before the event, we find it prophesied.

Infidels have sought to make great capital out of the fact that Matthew says that Jeremy prophesied in this particular instance, whilst we read that

it was Zechariah who actually wrote the prophecy. The answer is that Jeremy, a major prophet, covered the minor prophets, just as an order given by a junior master in a school might be attributed to the head master, or by a junior officer to his colonel or general. So we get the expression in Matt. 16. 14, "Jeremias, or one of the prophets." The Jews have a saying "The spirit of Jeremiah was upon Zechariah," and many students believe that Zechariah put down in writing what had been *spoken* by Jeremiah.*

Then when we turn to Psalm 22. we get it beginning with the cry on the cross, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" and ending with another, "He hath done this," equivalent to, "It is finished."

We get the expression, "they pierced My hands and My feet" (verse 16), most evidently fulfilled in the crucifixion; whilst we read, "They part My garments among them, and cast lots upon My vesture" (verse 18), fulfilled to the very letter by the soldiers who gambled for Christ's clothing at the foot of the cross.

Isaiah 53. 5 tells us prophetically that the death of Christ was substitu-

* We have an undoubted instance of this, for Jude 14 records the prophecy of Enoch, the seventh from Adam, evidently a spoken prophecy for Enoch has left no inspired writing.

tionary, and this is amply stated in the New Testament.

The resurrection of Christ. No fact is more attested by full and competent witness than the resurrection, and on it depends the whole structure of Christianity. Peter on the great day of Pentecost quotes Psalm 16. 10 as prophetic of the resurrection. The Apostle Paul claims in 1 Cor. 15. 5 that Christ "Rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." Isaiah 53. certainly states the resurrection, for when he prophetically outlines the rejection and death of the Messiah he goes on to say, "He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hands" (Isa. 53. 10), and that could be only accomplished by resurrection.

It is only possible in a short article to give but a small tithe of the evidence that can be adduced as to the prophecies concerning the coming of Christ into this world. In truth, volumes could be written on the subject, and the evidence in its directness, in its coincidences, in its artlessness, and verisimilitude, is truly overwhelming and convincing.

The Bible has done this, and has been triumphantly vindicated by history in it, and it proves beyond any question its inspiration by God. How blessed to have a volume in our hands.

Eternal Life.

ETERNAL life is the knowledge of the Father, the only true God, and of Jesus Christ, whom He sent. The knowledge of God as **ALMIGHTY** gave the assurance of **FAITH** to Abraham, the pilgrim; the knowledge of God as **JEHOVAH** gave a certain **HOPE** to Israel that all the promises He had made would be fulfilled, but the knowledge of God as **FATHER**, who sent His Son, Jesus Christ, is **LIFE**

ETERNAL. It is not now outward protection merely, though God is our shield as He was Abraham's shield; nor a future hope of promises to be fulfilled only, though we have the hope of eternal glory with Christ; but the present communication and enjoyment of life, of communion with God Himself revealed to us as Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ, whom He hath sent. (John 17.).

CONVICTION AND GRACE AND COMMUNION

IT is in the path of obedience that the manifestations of the Father's love and the love of Christ are found. A father loves but does not caress a naughty child. If we grieve the Spirit, He will not be in us the power of the manifestation to our souls of the Father and the Son in communion, but will act on our consciences in conviction, though at the same time will bring a sense of grace into the heart—CONVICTION TO THE CONSCIENCE BUT GRACE TO THE HEART. The former makes us repent of the disobedience, the latter shows us more

than ever before the blessedness of the Lord whose word we disobeyed, and together they conspire to make us hate the one with a deeper hatred, and cleave to the Lord with a fuller devotion.

Our love to Him is shown by our obedience to His Word, and if we act thus with regard to Jesus, the Father who delights in all that honours His Son, will love us, and the Father and the Lord Jesus will make Their abode with us. This is communion indeed. (John 14.)

Faith and Works.

"Thy faith hath saved thee."—Luke 7. 50.
"Faith without works is dead."—James 2. 20.

RELIGION is equally unsound, whether it is all creed or no creed. It begins in right believing and goes on to right doing, and right believing must, through the whole of the Christian life, be the guide of right doing. Faith is the root, out of which grows the whole tree of our godliness—

its trunk, its branches, its leaves, and its fruit. It is this which, striking its fibres into the Word of God as its proper soil, draws up the moisture which nourishes it, and which has first come down from heaven, and pure religion and undefiled is the result, showing itself in a gracious and holy life.

From God to Us.

"Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning."—Rom. 15. 4.

TO say or to think that there is so much as a single clause or a single expression from cover to cover of the inspired volume unworthy of our prayerful meditation is to imply that God the Holy Ghost has thought it worth His while to write what we do not think it worth our while to study. "All Scripture is given by inspiration

of God" (2 Tim. 3. 16). This commands our reverence. "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning" (Rom. 15. 4). This awakens our personal interest. The former of these quotations proves that Scripture comes from God; the latter proves that it comes to us.

A New Object.

"Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."—Colossians 3. 2.

THE soul being spiritually illumined turns away from the poor, meagre, unsatisfying things of the earth and sense to the more precious things of God, Christ, heaven, and eternity. And faith produces a new affection, as well as recognizes a new object. What-

soever is born of God overcometh the world. There is a new life, love, taste, brought into the soul by faith. One love is supplanted by another love. Time must be redeemed from things seen and temporal, to meditate upon things unseen and eternal.

UNITY.

(JAMES GREEN.)

THE desire that all Christians should be found walking in practical unity, is a wish that springs up in every regenerate heart. It was indeed the great desire of our Lord Jesus Christ evidenced in His prayer recorded in John 17. That prayer was most surely answered in a unity of life and nature in all saints, but how sadly marred in practice by those to whom His infinite grace has vouchsafed such blessings. In view of the sorrow of heart occasioned by the divided state of those who love the same Lord and have the same destiny, it will surely be to profit to consider the things by which Christian unity is formed.

1. *The foundation of this unity is the Cross.*

In the Lord's death the whole state and standing of man in the flesh has been brought to an end, and every distinction abolished in a common judgment. Barbarian and Scythian, bond and free, high and low, rich and poor, from the cedar that is in Lebanon to the hyssop which springeth out of the wall, the world and all that men glory in of self-exaltation, have been cast into the burning judgment of God at the cross. As the schools of opinion, the variance and strife which exist amongst Christians are all works of the flesh (Gal. 5. 20), it must needs follow that if the end of the flesh and its works in the cross is acknowledged, the ground is cleared of the great hindrance to unity. In Eph. 2. 15 we see the enmity between Jew and Gentile abolished by the cross, and amongst the carnal Corinthians who were glorying in men, and forming parties, Paul would know nothing save Jesus Christ and Him crucified (1 Cor. 2. 2). He did not seek to adjust their differences, but showed them the end of all such things in the cross. This is the foundation on which God builds, and it standeth sure, in unchangeable righteousness.

2. *The power of unity is the Holy Spirit.*

“For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.” Consequent upon the cross, the Holy Spirit has formed a unity which requires no making on our part, and which our failure to keep cannot break. It is a unity which flows from the living union of members on earth with Christ their exalted Head in heaven, by the power of the Holy Spirit. The outward order of the Church in her responsible place on earth is broken to pieces, and as a light-bearer in the world she is rejected as a whole. But no counsel of God can fail, and with this the unity of the Spirit is connected, and therefore abides. Happy indeed are they who, turning away from the failure and sin which have marked the Church as the responsible witness for God in the world, are found “holding the head from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.” (Col. 2. 19).

3. *The bond of unity is love and peace* (Col. 3. 14; Eph. 4. 3).

It is in this that the failure is found, for it involves the practical keeping of the Lord's command, “A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another as I have loved you” (John 13. 34). It is in doing this that the character of Christ is manifested in His disciples, for He adds, “By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another” (5. 35). But what shall be said when this is lacking? and in its place only the love of self is seen, where self finds its home in sect and party. Moral condition is necessary if the bond of love and peace is to be kept, for it depends upon the practice of every Christian grace, that marked our Lord, lowliness, meekness, longsuffering, forbearance, love; and without these it is vain to talk of practical unity amongst saints, whether they be few or many.

4. *The character of unity is holiness.*

Being formed by the Holy Spirit, anything contrary to holiness would be a contradiction and would show that the so-called unity was not of God, nor the fellowship of His Son. Holiness involves separation from the world, its lusts and ways. Into the unity that is according to God, these things cannot enter; they are not of the Father, who forms in His children that which belongs to His new creation. Precious and pleasant to Him are those beauties of holiness which come forth in them from the womb of the morning, the resurrection of His Son.

5. *The centre of unity is His name* (Matt. 18. 20).

To this the Spirit gathers during His absence. The name speaks of His person and work, His glorious exaltation, His absolute Lordship. No other Name can be put alongside of this one, it is unique, supreme, all-sufficient. Unity must result from such a gathering, for each one being drawn to the same glorious object, all are necessarily one, in thought, in fellowship, in worship and praise.

6. *The object of unity is the knowledge of the Son of God.*

To this end apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers have been given, "Till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Sectarianism is a great hindrance to the communication of this knowledge, for it prevents the practical joining together of the saints, keeps them apart and hinders the flow of life amongst them. It shuts up in narrow compartments, the gifts which are given for the edifying of the body of Christ (Eph. 4. 12).

7. *The consummation of unity will be the city of God* (Rev. 21).

One in its cubic perfection, height, length, breadth, are all equal. One in its resplendent light, for it shines with the glory of God. However approached, its gates give witness of the one pearl for which the Seeker sold all. Its administration is one. Its worship is one, for no separate temple is there, and in it shall be fulfilled (John 17. 22, 23), "Perfect in one."

Beloved reader, may these things produce in us the result set forth in Eph. 4. 14-16. Before you lay aside this paper, open your Bible and read the verses once more.

THE SERVANT'S PRAYER.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

GOD and Father, grant me power
When I speak to men,
Let the unction of the Spirit
Rest upon me then.

In the secret of Thy presence
Mould my thoughts and speech—
Only words the Spirit giveth
Can lost sinners reach.

Let the love that sought and saved me,
Pardoned all my sin,
Moved me now to live and labour,
Other souls to win.

May my ways with Christ be fragrant,
Grant me grace and zeal;
May the message that I carry
To myself be real.

From the fear of men that perish,
Saviour, keep me free,
Careless of their praise or censure,
Serving only Thee.

God and Father, bless the Gospel,
Both on land and sea,
And to Thee the power and glory
Shall for ever be.

THE MYSTERY OF GOD'S WILL. No. 2. (H. J. VINEZ)

PROVING AND PRACTISING IT.

OUR Lord Jesus Christ alone could bring to pass the good pleasure of God in its fulness, but we are to prove the will of God in relation to ourselves, and also to practise it according to what is written.

This can only be done by those who are "in Christ," as we see in Romans 8. There is "no condemnation" in Him (1); "the love of God" is in Him (39); all true believers are in Him; and God has called them "according to His purpose" (28). Chapter 12. of Epistle, which gives us the teaching of the gospel, shows that believers are not "in Christ" simply as individuals, but are "one body in Christ" (5). This truth prepares us, and puts us on the line of the will of God at the present time.

Mark the way the Spirit speaks in this chapter, for we do not jump into it all at once. We passed out of darkness into light, out of death into life, from the power of Satan to God, from unbelief to faith, at our conversion, swifter than words can express; but we are told to "think so as to be wise" (3) now that we are saved. In response to God's compassion toward us therefore we are to render the intelligent service of presenting our bodies to Him as a living sacrifice. Through the offering of the prepared body of Jesus, as we have seen, we are sanctified by God's will, and our bodies are to be for His will. To this end three things must mark us:—

1. *Nonconformity.*
2. *Transformity.*
3. *Conformity.*
 1. "Not conformed to this world."
 2. "Be transformed by the renewing of your mind."
 3. "That ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God"—being thus conformed to it. These three things are necessary to

the proving of what that will is in relation to each one of us, so that we may carry it out as being "one body in Christ."

We have seen from Romans 8. 28 that God called us (when we heard the gospel of His saving grace) "according to His purpose," and the "one body," the assembly, is formed now in accordance with that. We "*prove*,"—we make sure to ourselves,—the particular place and function which we are to fulfil,—which is not only "good" but "acceptable and perfect,"—that which each is fitted for, and that which is fitted for each one in the "one body," for which grace is given, and the proportion of faith too; and then, having made proof of this, we are to make it our business henceforth, occupying ourselves in it as the good pleasure of God concerning us, each filling his own place in well-doing; for spiritual health, happiness and holiness, too, are the portion of the members that thus do. One may be able to teach, another to exhort, another to give, or to lead, or to show mercy with cheerfulness. All are to love and honour one another, walking in lowliness, so as to express the excellencies of Christ.

There may be testings and trials in the daily pathway of such, but these are not to be allowed to divert us from the other. Rather should they cause us to value and pursue with increasing zeal the revealed mind of God concerning us. Paul again and again tells us he was an apostle "by God's will" (1 and 2 Cor. 1. 1; Eph. 1. 1, etc.). Yet in the pursuance of his service, he found obstacle after obstacle in his path, but with purpose of heart he pressed onward. Peril, hunger, nakedness, persecution, misrepresentation, imprisonment and many other things only called into greater activity his unswerving faith in Christ, and showed him to be more than a conqueror. As

the end is kept steadily in view by the grace of God, we shall be found treading the right road in the right way, be it rough or smooth, stormy or pleasant, till the goal is attained; and, as we have said, details will be understood aright.

Look at that purposeful man! He wills to reach the distant goldfield, amass a fortune, and return to dwell in a mansion! He attains his object. Others had perished on the way. The mountains to be scaled, the ravines to be traversed, the gorges and torrents met with on the way, the frosts and deep snows, had proved too much for them; but with purposefulness, strength and wisdom, he overcame every difficulty and accomplished his will,—he attained the end in view. With the way to it he experienced many and great discomforts and difficulties; on the other hand, beautiful weather and magnificent sights at times attended his way. Chilled to the bone, crouching to shelter from the bitter blasts on a lonely, wild moorland, hungry and thirsty, he might say, "I never expected such dreadful experiences!—*this is not my will!*" Again, refreshed, and full of healthful energy, he enjoys the pleasant sunshine, the blue sky, the bright atmosphere, and the grandeur of the scenery with views of towering heights, mighty forests, shining rivers and lakes, and then he might say, "I just wished for this!—*this is my will!*" Neither conclusion is correct. His will was the fortune and the mansion, the rest came in by the way, according to it. In willing the one the other was involved.

The difference with ourselves is this. There is no question that the end will be reached by everyone, and it is the will of God (not our own) which is to be known and pursued by us; and on the way to the full fruition of it, we "know" that all work together for our good, in view of that, which is before the mind of God,—the mystery of His will, to head up all things in Christ for the coming glory. We are

therefore not to be downcast by difficulties, nor become slack when the path is smooth, but dominated by the will of God, press forward with divine joy filling our hearts, having the double assurance that the end is secure and all is for good on the way. There is a great danger, however, and that is, having an end short of God's end; a present earthly ambition short of the glory of God. Sure disappointment awaits this. Being justified by faith, and standing in the favour of God, it is characteristic of even the youngest believer to rejoice "in hope of the glory of God." As this joy in hope is bright, and becomes deeper and not shallower, we shall be enabled in faith to surmount all difficulties and all snares.

We see, then, the importance of proving what is that "good and acceptable and perfect will of God," so that being "filled with the full knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding," we may "walk worthily of the Lord unto all well-pleasing" (Col. 1. 9). It was the setting aside of this latter which brought condemnation on the religious boaster of Romans 2. 18: Thou "makest thy boast in God and knowest His will, . . . thou who boastest in law, dost thou by transgression of the law dishonour God" (23)? He was connected with Israel and law, we are connected with Christ and grace. There is the "one body in Christ" as we have seen, and we are each one set in that body to fulfil our function. When complete, when glorified with Christ, all will be perfect. But we are to know even now and answer to the will of God concerning us. "If any one desire to practise His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine," said the Lord (John 7. 17). We are told not to be foolish but to "understand what the will of the Lord is" (Eph. 5. 17). The day is coming when the earthly disciples' prayer will be answered and the Father's will shall "be done on earth as it is in heaven." There will not be "*one body in Christ*" on earth in that day, however, for

Israel and the nations will be ordered in blessing in relation to Jerusalem according to the earthly promises. The one body, the assembly, will have been taken to heaven before that time. We shall have been glorified with Christ in view of the culmination of the mystery of God's will.

Meanwhile, the doing of His will is of the last importance. Let it, however, be *His* will, and not some imaginary service of our own devising. As we have seen, we must know and understand it first, and then put it into practice. "He that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (1 John 2. 17); and God hears the petitions of such: "If any one be God-fearing and do His will, him He hears" (John 9. 31): "If we ask Him anything according to His will He hears us" (1 John 5. 14). Even in our demeanour toward the king as supreme, and rulers, we are to behave becomingly, "Because so is the will of God, that by well doing ye put to silence the ignorance of senseless men" (1 Pet. 2. 15); and if suffering come upon us for our "good conversation in Christ, it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing" (1 Pet. 3. 17). Again, it is said, "ye have need of endurance in order that, having done the will of God, ye may receive the promise. For yet a very little while He that comes will come, and will not delay." As His coming is thus before us we have a powerful incentive to do His will. Moreover, the Lord Jesus claims such as being in the most intimate relationship with Himself: "Who-soever shall do the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother" (Mark 3. 35). "He is not ashamed to call them brethren" for they are born of God.

HIS GOOD PLEASURE.

It is important for us to know also that even the desire to be well-doers does not originate with ourselves. Both the willing and the working according to God's good pleasure are the result of His working in us as

Philippians 2. 13 tells us. If Paul praises the brethren of Macedonia to those at Corinth, and speaks of the grace of God seen in their free-hearted liberality in helping others, he says their willingness and their giving were "by God's will" (2 Cor. 8. 1-5). James shows us that even in the affairs of this life, instead of saying, "I will do this or that," we should say, "If the Lord will." In all things that should be pre-eminent with us.

If we think of the great matter of salvation, we are told He has *no pleasure* in the death of the wicked; neither is it His will than any little children should perish (Matt. 18. 14), for the Son of Man came to save them. Indeed, it is said, He is "not willing that any should perish" (2 Pet. 3. 9); and, again, He "desires that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2. 4). This salvation is in Christ Jesus, and is according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself before time began; and if it be written, "By grace ye are saved" (Eph. 2. 8), we are also told in 2 Timothy 1. 9, He "has saved us, and has called us with a holy calling, *not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace.*" It is the same in regard to the wonderful relationship of sons into which the saved are brought by redemption,—He "marked us out beforehand for adoption (or sonship) through Jesus Christ to Himself, *according to the good pleasure of His will*" (Eph. 1. 5, N.T.); and verse 9 tells us that the mystery of His will to centre up all things in Christ is also "*according to His good pleasure.*" From the start to the finish,—from the first moment when this was purposed right on to the moment of its full accomplishment in glory,—this has been kept always in view; and between the time when the design was divinely conceived and the time when its glorious attainment shall be universally seen, God has been ordering all after the counsel of His own will for the praise of His glory.

A STUDY OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

Chapter 3.

(G. I. STEWART.)

IN the first two chapters a full-drawn picture of the blessed Lord is presented, in the two characters of Apostle and High Priest. The other chapters enter more into detail in a way consistent with the design of the Spirit.

Broadly speaking, these two offices give the New Testament elucidation of the mystery of the Urim and Thummim in the dress of the High Priest of old. All that was known of these then, except their use, was that the words mean Lights and Perfections. Now in the Antitype is unfolded the fact that the Light of God is set forth among men in the Person of the Son as Apostle; and that man in Him is presented in all His perfections before God. These two chapters present also the display God has made of Himself in His approach to man; and the provision thus made for man's approach to God.

The three golden vessels of Exod. 25, together with Moses, show God's approach to man, and these are all referred to in chap. 1. First, God displays Himself in Christ alone, and this is set forth in the ark and the mercy-seat. It is referred to in verses 1-4 in the constellation of glories surrounding the Person of the Eternal Son.

The display of God in Man in Christ is next set forth in the table and the candlestick. The table shows man in Christ sustained before God in the unleavened perfectness of Christ. This is noticed generally in verses 5-14, where we have the Son, born in time, seated upon His own Throne, and having companions with Him in glory, anointed with the oil of gladness, He above them all.

The candlestick is the testimony as to what God is as thus displayed, maintained by man in Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. This is touched upon in chap. 2. 1-4, where the

testimony begins with the Lord, is continued by them that heard Him, and sustained to the end by man in Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit—the Witness.

Beside this, Moses comes from communion with God in the sanctuary to tell Israel all about God's thoughts for them, which he had learnt there. So Christ the Son came from heaven as the Light of God bringing a full revelation of God's thoughts for His glory in Christ and His people to-day. He is in this way the Apostle or Sent One from God.

Chap. 2. takes up the Priest; showing how Christ was robed in flesh as Son of Man, that He might suffer death, and that He is now "crowned with glory and beauty." This sentence sets Him forth in His Priestly character, fulfilling both types of Melchisedec and Aaron; presenting His people in all His perfections to God.

The order of the truth as presented in the next two chapters is as follows, viz.: Jesus, Apostle and Priest. The Apostle faithful in God's house—"Whose house are we." The wilderness under Moses. Failure through unbelief to enter into His rest, under Joshua. The rest of God that remaineth and who enter it. The Word of God—the Voice of the Apostle. The High Priest. The Throne of Grace. The last two begin the grand central theme of the epistle, which is continued on through chap. 10.

Chap. 3. calls attention to "Jesus" in the two offices of Apostle and High Priest. It presents also the added thought of the House of God in the wilderness, in connection with which He exercises His Apostolate and Priesthood to-day. This is continued in chap. 4. Then the epistle develops the varied offices, functions and glories of Jesus as Priest after Melchisedec's order.

The Hebrew Christians are addressed as "Holy brethren :

PARTAKERS OF THE HEAVENLY CALLING."

They had been brethren before in a national, fleshly sense, but had not been able to maintain even a righteousness according to the law ; now by their very calling they are, not righteous only, but holy brethren. Not, indeed, inherently holy as Christ was, but having a holy nature communicated to them at and in the power of their call. They are for this reason to be holy in practice, and are chastened if need be for their profit that they may be partakers of God's holiness.

They had by birth also inherited a sphere of earthly blessing promised of old to their fathers, but theirs provisionally upon obedience under the law ; but the flesh and blood which they inherited with it made this impossible. Now they were partakers of a heavenly calling, with a holy nature, which ended in glory for all who were true men.

It was an entirely new thing that men should be called for heavenly glory, yet not more new in the fact than in its origin and the way it was to be brought about. Heaven was beyond man's vision and his aspirations, as it certainly was beyond his power of attainment ; he was altogether unfitted for it morally. Indeed, he could not live upon earth for which he was created, but must die ; how, then, could he attain to heaven ? But the calling and hope being new and of God, God alone carries it out, in grace displaying Himself in man. God the Son and the Holy Spirit are all interested in and pledged to its success. This only the more brings out man's inability to accomplish it of himself, though he ever accredits himself with ability to accomplish what God proposes. The way of the earthly calling was strewn with the bodies of those who attempted it in their own strength ; will not the future expose an equally

death-strewn pathway to glory ? This at least the apostle fears if we may judge from the warnings given.

Still the companions of Christ in the heavenly glory come from among those who are companions in the heavenly calling here. Of this they had made confession, but it was needful to hold it fast under all circumstances to the end. Christ had witnessed a good confession and had held fast the truth under every test before Pontius Pilate. When challenged, " Art Thou a King then ? " He replied, " Thou sayest that I am a King ! " This meant death according to Roman law. Satan tries hard at times to make these companions in the heavenly calling give up their confession. Alas, he too often succeeds !

That they may hold fast, God has displayed Himself in One who has the rods of both government and priesthood in His hands, and they are invited to consider :

JESUS : THE APOSTLE AND HIGH PRIEST OF THEIR CONFESSION.

Both these offices are filled by the one blessed Person—Jesus. At first Israel was to have been a kingdom of priests and a holy nation ; Moses would also have been both apostle and high priest but for his natural humility and timidity. He pleaded his inability to speak, and so obtained the help of Aaron his brother, who thereafter became the high priest ; had this not been so, the type would have been complete in Moses.

In one solitary instance after this, Moses appears with the rod of priesthood in his hand, together with that of government, and although faithful in all God's house, in that crucial moment he failed. He took the rod from before the Lord, as He commanded him, but he had evidently his own rod also ; for instead of using the priestly rod and speaking to the rock as God had told him, he in anger with the people said, " Hear, now, ye rebels,

must we fetch you water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand and with his rod he smote the rock twice" (Num. 20. 8-11). God in mercy to His people's need caused the waters to come out abundantly, so that the congregation drank and their cattle also, yet both he and Aaron, who was with him and responsible, were for this prohibited from going into the land. Figuratively they had abandoned priesthood for government, and government can never alone bring the people into the land.

These Christian Jews are called upon to consider the Apostle and High Priest of their confession. Here is One who has both rods in His blessed hands, the only One who could sustain the weight of both; His Name is given in all its solitary grandeur—"JESUS." There is nothing in that Name that would make them fear to consider Him; nor need they be afraid He will sacrifice priesthood to government. He will sustain both offices with equal glory; who but He can sustain them in such a calling? Who but He can bring them safely through?

How different the Name with which Moses had to do, blessed as that was! When he drew near to consider the

burning bush, he heard the voice of God saying, "I am the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." Then he trembled and durst not further consider; the very ground was holy and he and his people were not so. God, however, encourages him in accents of pity and compassion; He had seen and heard their affliction and had come down to deliver them. This again arrested his attention, and he heard further, "And now come, I will send thee into Egypt" (Acts 7. 31-35).

Both Moses and Aaron were but servants and weak men who could not of themselves meet the need of the people. He who fills their places is Jesus, God the Son. He knows the need before it occurs, and has the remedy at hand when appealed to, so that it is at once without any delay administered. It is an immense relief to know this and to fall into the hands of Jesus, so genuinely able to sympathize and so promptly ready to help. Marvellous as is the calling, all the provision for its success seems even more marvellous, bringing out as it does the nature and character of God Himself in His Personal intercourse with His people in the Son, all along the road.

Our Leader.

"He leadeth me beside the still waters . . . He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness."—Psalm 23. 2, 3.

THE movement in the first sentence (verse 2) is like walking on the banks of a river on some quiet Saturday night, when the work of the week is over, and the very beasts of the field seem to have begun their Sabbath rest. In the next sentence (verse 3) the sur-

roundings are altogether changed. Rest becomes action. Relaxation becomes strenuousness. Life becomes militant. But the same Guide who leads by the waters of rest also leads into the exacting and exhausting ways of righteousness.

"He that hath My Word, let him speak My Word faithfully."—Jeremiah 23. 28.

DAVID HUME, the sceptic, said of John Brown, of Haddington: "He preaches as if he were conscious that the Son of God stood at his elbow." Thomas Shepard, the great soul winner,

remarked: "Before I preach a sermon I get good from it myself, and I always go into the pulpit as if I were to give up my account to my Master."

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Christians in Sorrow.

I have met a brother who thought that we ought to have no other feeling but of joy and triumph when a loved one passed away in death. Does not 1 Thess. 4. 16, disprove this? We do sorrow, but not as others who have no hope.—S., BRAZIL.

GOD as Creator made our human nature capable of both joy and sorrow, and grace does not change this, for the living God "giveth us (who are saved by His grace) richly all things to ENJOY" (1 Tim. 6. 17). Among the all things are surely the ties of love that bind hearts together in human relationships, and these exceed in preciousness all earthly gifts. Now if the possession of them yields joy, the loss of them must of necessity produce sorrow. Christians are not called to be Stoics, nor does grace make them superhuman; they are subject to the same passions—we do not use the word in its evil sense—as others. Indeed, we may safely say that the Christian becomes more tender and sensitive in his affections as his knowledge of God increases.

Legality would make us refuse the joy and *pride* would make us restrain the tears, but legality is of the flesh and pride is of the devil; we must beware of both. We must learn of our Lord, for all was perfect in Him. How blessedly He entered into the circumstances of those who sought Him. He rejoiced with those that rejoiced (John 2.), and He wept with those that wept (John 11.); and the joy and the sorrow were both sanctified by His presence. He rebuked neither, but was sympathetic with both. He used His power to enhance the joy when a new relationship was formed, and shed His tears to soothe the sorrow when a precious tie was dissolved.

Surely, then, it is not right to say that a Christian must have no sorrow at all; but it is right that we should insist that our sorrow should be of a different sort from that of the world. How dull and hopeless is the world's sorrow! Death is absolutely final for them, no light relieves the gloom, save when they turn to the *ignis fatuus* of Spiritism, which can only add the bitterness of disappointment and the soulless cruelty of the devil to their sorrow. But the Christian has hope in his sorrow. He knows that death has been defeated and that the grave has lost its power, for Jesus died and rose,

and he looks with confidence to the moment when "the dead in Christ shall rise first and we . . . shall be caught up TOGETHER WITH THEM in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air." Death is not the end for faith, it is but temporary; it is only for a little while and by the way. This great hope brings into view what is ultimate, it can rejoice in the thought of a blessed re-union in the presence of the Lord, and it can triumph in the fact that the Lord has triumphed over death and will triumph. Not at first may this triumph be enjoyed, for death is a great desolater of hearts, and is bitter to the taste as the waters of Marah. Things must be learnt experimentally in the secret of the Lord's presence, or they are not really known, and it is here that the comfort of God wherewith He comforts *those that are cast down* comes in. He knows our frame, and if we were never *cast down* His comfort that such get would not be known by us, nor could we appreciate it. His comfort purifies the sorrow, it cleanses it from every element of bitterness and rebellion, and brings in quiet submission and thankful acceptance of the will of God. The tears and the song mingle harmoniously for His glory, and His saints are more than conquerors, not because they have no sorrow but because they are sustained in their sorrows through Him that loved them, and can give God the glory in them. And this is connected with the succour that our great Intercessor gives. He fills the blank and sustains the spirit.

But now to take up the passage in question. Were the Thessalonian saints grieving because they had suffered the loss of those who were dear to them, or was it because they thought that those who had died would suffer loss? Were they thinking of themselves or their friends? The point in the passage is surely the latter. Their sorrow was not for themselves, but for their dead friends. They were ignorant as to what part those who slept through Jesus would have in the glory of His kingdom, and they grieved because they thought that they

were to miss this, which was a great hope to them. So the Apostle informs them that they had no need to grieve as to that, for God would bring those who slept through Jesus with Him when the

time of His glory came; and then he shows them how it would come about. So that on that side of the subject they would have no sorrow any more; instead the truth would make them rejoice.

Prayer for the Unsaved.

Is it Scriptural to pray for the salvation of the unsaved? What are the Bible references?
—M. B. I., CHICAGO.

PAUL prayed that Israel might be saved (Romans 10. 1). He craved the prayers of his brethren as a herald of the Gospel and the mystery of it, that he might tell it out boldly, and the end in view was, surely, that many might believe (Ephesians 6. 18, 21). And he exhorts the saint to pray for the Gospel itself—for the word of the Lord is the Gospel of the grace of God—that it might have free course and be glorified, i.e., that it might be used to the salvation of souls for which purpose it was sent (2 Thess. 3. 1). In these three passages we have prayer for the people to whom the Gospel was sent; for the preacher who carried the message, and for the message itself.

From 1 Timothy 2. we learn that it is the will of God that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth; and as our prayers are to be according to God's will we must, on this ground, pray for the salvation of men; indeed, we are not left merely to infer this, but the same Scripture definitely exhorts to supplications, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving for all men. It is a blessed thing to know and be in communication with a God whose heart goes out in compassion and blessing to all, and the nearer we get to Him the more we shall pray on the line of His desires.

The conversion of a sinner from the error of his way is no small thing, as we learn from James 5. 19-20, but how is this to be done? Ought we not to connect the accomplishment of it with what immediately goes before in the passage, "the fervent, effectual prayer of a righteous man"? That is how we view the matter.

Satan's chief efforts are directed against

the salvation of souls, he is determined if he can to keep them in ignorance of God. "He taketh away the word out of the hearts of men, lest they should believe and be saved" (Luke 8. 12), and he blinds the minds of them that believe not lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them (2 Cor. 4. 4). It is evident then that the Gospel is in conflict with the devil, all his enmity and subtlety and power are opposed to it, and how is he to be met? By the continual preaching of the word truly, he cannot stand against that, but the Word of God and prayer go together (Acts 4. 23-30), for prayer is the acknowledgment of our helplessness in the conflict and of our confidence in God. Prayer brings in the power of God; it is in response to and along with the prayers of His people that He works. Fellowship in the Gospel (Phil. 1. 5) would certainly include earnest and continuous prayer in sympathy with those who preach it, and when prayer rises up to intercession we pass from entreaty to communion with God, and the fellowship is not only with those who carry the Gospel to a needy world but with the God who sends it. The first instance of prayer recorded in the Bible is, we believe, that of Abraham's intercession on behalf of the cities of the plain (Genesis 18.), and there we are definitely told that this was communion with the Lord (verse 33).

In prayer for the unsaved then, when we pray intelligently and in the Spirit, we show our love to men; we are in conflict with the devil's power, and we have communion with God. Prayer is not only one of the responsibilities, but it is one of the highest privileges of the Christian life.

Women in the Assemblies.

I am writing you in reference to a subject on which we need help—the position of women in the church, according to 1 Cor. 14. 34, and 1 Tim. 2. 11. . . . Will you kindly give some instruction on the subject? I take these Scriptures to mean what they say, but shall appreciate help.—W., SHEFFIELD.

THE things that are written in 1 Corinthians 14. are *the commandments of the Lord* (verse 37). Hence those who ignore and discard these things are guilty of disobeying His commandments; a very serious thing for any person or company of people professing to be Christian to do. It should need no argument to convince us that if the Lord's commandments are disobeyed His Lordship and rights are refused and His presence and blessing cannot be enjoyed, for these depend upon obedience to Him as John 14. 21–24 teaches.

Now one of these commands is given with great emphasis in verses 34, 35. "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but to be in obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church." Whatever they do elsewhere—and it is evident that they did pray and prophesy somewhere and were not rebuked for it, but instructed how to do it in a comely way (chap. 11.)—they are to be silent in the church, or assembly, i.e., when the saints of God are gathered together in that character.

In 1 Timothy instruction is given as to right behaviour in the house of God (chap. 3. 15), and there we read: "Let the women learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence" (chap. 2. 11, 12). The language used here seems to be stronger even than that of 1 Corinthians and the passage would have a wider bearing. It is the conduct "which becometh women professing godliness" (verse 10), not when the assembly is convened only, but wherever they may be, for being a part of the house of God they are never out of it.

These two passages will be conclusive for all who desire to do the will of God, but it is right that we should enquire why this very definite restriction should be

put upon women. Let it not be supposed that inferiority is implied by their subjection to the man and silence in the assembly. There are many members in the human body that are silent and unseen, but no one would contend that they are inferior to or of less use and value than those that are more prominent. So also is the body of Christ, and the condition of soul and devotion to Christ or otherwise of each member of the body whether men or women raises or lowers the tone of any church or assembly in which they may be; each one is either a help or a hindrance.

In God's wise ordering in creation the woman was put in the subject and dependent place, for Adam was before Eve; this was confirmed by the law, and it has not been changed now that God has been fully revealed in Christ by the Gospel, but now we know the reason for it. God's purpose was that the woman should be the complement of the man, his fulness and glory; and that he should support her, guide her, love and cherish her, and in this the blessedness of the church's relationship to Christ is typified. In the assembly the woman is to be in subjection and not the head, she is to be taught and not the teacher, she is to be in dependence and not the source of supply or leader; and thus has the church to be to Christ. Her dependence upon Him or subjection to Him draw out His constant and tender love and care that nourishes and cherishes her. All this is beautifully presented in Ephesians 5. 22–33. And He will yet acknowledge her as His fulness, and share His glory with her. Just in the measure in which the church has got out of this position has she missed the blessedness of it, and as the woman revolts from her God-appointed place does she miss the blessedness that belongs to that place and God's support in it, and only confusion and discontent can result.

God's order in creation has been all spoiled by sin, but grace and the power of the Spirit restore this in the assembly, and as all who are in it are subject to the Lord who is the Head of it the blessing of

God's order will be known, and the angels will be instructed in the manifold wisdom of God (see Ephesians 3. 10 and 1 Corinthians 11. 10).

The reason given in 1 Timothy 2. why the woman was not to be a teacher is that she was deceived by the devil. She was and is more liable to the seductions of the enemy, not only because it is her nature so to be, but because when she gets out of her place of subjection she has not God's support and protection which she will have in keeping her place, and fulfilling the purpose for which God formed her. All kinds of heresies have sprung up of late years through women taking the

place of authority and leadership and formulating doctrines and systems of teaching.

This does not exclude women from blessedly serving the Lord in their own sphere, and in the assembly they are indispensable, for they bring to it the affection and devotedness that is so precious to the Lord and so accessory to the well-being and life of the assembly. It is well to see, that while the Lord did not send out the women to preach, none of the men whom He did send out ministered to Him of their substance, and not one of them anointed Him with ointment as the women did.

The Lord's Heel Bruised.

I would like you to give some help on Genesis 3. 15. I can understand a little of what the first part of the verse means, but it is the last clause "thou shalt bruise His heel" that I should like to have explained.—W. E. V., NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.

THE first clause in the verse is the declaration by God's own mouth of the overthrow of the devil by the Seed of the woman, i.e., by the Lord as a man. It tells of God glorified, evil destroyed and man delivered. But this great victory was not gained without suffering and loss. Satan could not hurt the Lord in His eternal Deity, but he could and did attack Him as Man, the Seed of the woman; he could and did bruise His heel. This speaks of His death: and the reality of the dread conflict and what it meant to Him can in some measure be read in Psalm 22. 7-21. Now the bruising of the head tells of the absolute defeat of Satan, it is fatal and final. Satan's power has been annulled and he

is to be eventually confined for ever in the lake of fire (Revelation 20. 10). The bruising of heel is not fatal, for though our Lord was "slain in His victory" He arose from the dead in triumph, having by dying annulled him that had the power of death which is the devil.

The figure is an inspiring one. It is that of a great and malignant foe, defeated and prostrate, and the heel of the conqueror on his head, but that conqueror has suffered in the fight, *He is the Lamb that was slain*. The saints of God are to be associated with the Lord in His victory for "the God of peace shall shortly bruise Satan under your feet" (Romans 16. 20).

Falling in the Wilderness.

Referring to "The Heavenly Calling," by James Boyd. In the January issue he seems to imply that the 600,000 who came out of Egypt, sheltered by the blood of the Lamb and delivered by power at the Red Sea, but whose carcasses fell in the wilderness, were lost, and then carries the type to the present day, linking it with apostasy. I should like to ask you the question, Were all these who sang the song of redemption and yet fell in the wilderness lost eternally?—R. M. D., NEW ZEALAND.

THE point in regard to Israel in the wilderness is not their eternal blessing or condemnation, that does not come into view at all; but that they did not reach God's purpose for them on earth, which was the land of Canaan, an earthly inheritance. Nothing beyond that was set before them, as far as is

recorded for us; nor does the paper in question carry the thought as to them beyond that. Yet some very strong things are said about them. They "hardened their hearts." God "was grieved with that generation." They "always erred in their hearts"; they sinned; they could not enter in because

of unbelief. God swore in His wrath that they should not enter into His rest (Hebrews 3. and 4.). These sayings would not give us to suppose that they had any spiritual link with God. Their deliverance from Egypt, we must remember, was but a temporal deliverance in which they were able to exult for an hour, but the unbelief of their hearts soon silenced the song.

We have to leave the question of their eternal destiny and learn the lesson that their unbelief and overthrow in the wilderness would teach us, and that is, that it is possible to be in *outward* association with the Lord Jesus, as they were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and sea (1 Cor. 10.); and share *outwardly* in the

blessings of God's grace; and be *ostensibly* on the way to heaven as redeemed pilgrims, and yet because of an evil heart of unbelief fall short of God's purpose, turn back to Egypt, i.e., the world, and not reach heaven and His rest at all. That would mean, of course, being lost eternally. Thence we are urged to give earnest heed to His word and not harden our hearts against it, and so show that we are not of them that draw back to perdition, but of **THEM THAT BELIEVE** to the saving of the soul (Hebrews 10. 39). This is the way that we prove that our faith is real faith and not profession only. It is impossible, of course, that any who has real faith should apostatize and be lost; as to this, Scripture bears abundant testimony.

"NOT I, BUT CHRIST."

I HAVE just made a grand discovery. All this time while I have been worrying and wearying myself about *my* failings, *my* sins, and *my* shortcomings, I see that what I have been unconsciously longing for is to get, *somehow*, into a state in which I shall not be utterly dissatisfied with *myself*, but shall be—well, *pretty good*, at least; and in which I shall, at least, not hate myself as I do now, sometimes. I have been all wrong and have just got to *look away* to Jesus and keep my eyes fixed on HIM.

I have heard and read and said that hundreds of times before, and yet it has

come to me so vividly, and freshly, and clearly to-day, that it must have come straight from Him; and the very thought of it is resting *me* already.

"Jesus, I am resting, resting
In the joy of what THOU ART."

For I was getting very weary at heart in trying to get, somehow, into some state where I could find rest in what I was! Of course, I was getting weary! Oh, how stupid I have been about it, not to see it before. It has put a new side to that many-sided gem—"Not I, but Christ that liveth in me."

From "The Master's Touch," by E. G. Cherry.

"Jesus, the Son of God."

A correspondent has kindly sent us a published letter by the late W. H. GRATTAN GUINNESS in which the poem which appeared in our April issue under the above title was first given. The following is his account of how he came to write it.

"I was travelling by rail to Pittsburgh (U.S.A.): while on my way I saw a most lovely day-break. The night clouds slowly floated away from the east in two dark heavy curtains, lifted and parted by the soft flowing air of the morning; and as they floated asunder revealed, I think, the clearest, purest, sweetest sky I ever looked upon; and there

high in that serene and almost hallowed sky, shone the morning star. As I gazed upon that scene of exceeding loveliness and peacefulness, I thought of HIM, who as the day spring from on high, hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide their feet into the way of peace: that Glorious One, who has said of Himself: 'I am the bright and morning star.' Under the influence of these thoughts I took out my pencil and wrote the following lines. I give them to you, not from the idea that they possess any poetical merit, but because they aim at exalting the Lord Jesus."

"Little children, keep yourselves from idols."—1 John 5. 21.

“A GREAT WHILE BEFORE DAY.”

(J. T. MAWSON.)

“And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.”—Mark 1. 35.

I GOT a great lift recently in reading the first chapter of Mark's Gospel. When I came to verse 35, I had to stop and give thanks to God, for as by a flash of light from heaven I was made to realize that I could never be up too early for the Lord. My troubles may begin with my first conscious moment, but He has risen up before them, and is always ready for them. He is always ahead of them and of me. And with Him there is the needed grace to carry me through every trouble, whenever and wherever they may arise.

The statement I have quoted is a most beautiful one. The Lord had many towns to visit, had much service to do in them, had many needs to meet and sorrows to sooth; the miseries of the multitudes would surge about Him when the day awoke, but they would not take Him by surprise or overwhelm Him, for He had risen up before them all, and was prepared for every one of them; the supplies in Him were equal to the day's demands. He viewed the whole range of those demands in communion with His Father. Each individual case passed before Him, and was the subject of His intercession in that solitary place into which *He went to pray*. Isaiah 50. 4 comes forcibly and blessedly to the mind at this point. “The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned [disciple] that I should know how to speak a word in season to [succour by a word] him that is weary: He wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned” [learner, or disciple]. Wonderful description of our Lord's life of service on earth! But not less wonderful than His life now, *for He ever liveth to make intercession for us*; and intercession is communion (see Genesis 18. 33); communion between the Intercessor and God with whom He intercedes about the subjects of His intercession. And the intercession is made and heard before the need arises

in its strength. “I have prayed for thee,” He said to Peter while yet He was all unconscious—fast asleep as to having any need at all.

Great is the encouragement that the contemplation of Him in His life of service while on earth yields for us, for in that service HE SHOWED HIMSELF, and He does not change; His readiness to meet all need is the same now as then and the grace with which He does it is unabated. If the thousands of God's saints who are burdened and groaning, whose light for God is almost extinguished under a load of care, are to be raised up and revived, if they are to lift their heads as overcomers and sing instead of sigh they must realize this great fact. The Lord rose up before their need, He knew it all before it awoke to perplex and worry them; this must not be a mere article of their faith to which they give an indifferent and perhaps a reluctant assent, but a deep conviction in their souls which will make them yield themselves and the day's burdens to Him at the beginning of it, which will make them cast all their care upon Him.

I am in no sort of doubt that I am on the right line here, and I urge this great fact, this blessed, encouraging, peace-giving fact, upon my readers, your needs are never ahead of the Lord; they may have surprised you, but they have not taken Him by surprise. I preach in this paper an all-sufficient Christ—ever ready, ever able, ever willing; who rose up a great while before the day of your troubles awoke. And I further urge each reader to read what I write for himself, and without reference to another, to read as though this paper were a particular and private message addressed to himself alone; and to say, “This burden that has grown so heavy and presses upon me so sorely was all known to the Lord before I felt it at all, and

He rose up before it, if not to remove it, to carry me through it. I will go to Him about it, and lay it all from my side at His feet, for I and it have been and are the objects of His particular interest and thought."

It is a marvellous thing to draw near to Him with a sense of this in the soul; to know that before I awoke in the morning He had risen up and was thinking of me, and was waiting and prepared to hear and answer my waking cry. It fills the soul with awe

and with gratitude, with awe because of what He is, with gratitude because He is all that He is for me. Is this a selfish view of things? It is only as we view things in this way that we shall be delivered from self and selfishness—for it is help from the Lord that delivers—the grace that is in Him, that stoops from the height of His glory to the depth of our need. It is Himself and His abundant sufficiency that lifts us out of our selfishness and sets us free to praise Him and live the day's life without murmuring and disputing.

In Time of Trouble.

"For Thy righteousness' sake bring my soul out of trouble."—Psa. 143. 11.

FIRST: He brought me here. It is by His will I am in this strait place; in that will I rest.

Second: He will keep me in His love, and give me grace in this trial to behave as His child.

Third: He will make the trial a blessing, teaching me the lessons He wants me to learn, and working in me the grace He intends for me.

Fourth: In His good time He can bring me out again, how and when He knows.

The Trying of Your Faith.

"Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience."—James 1. 2.

AMONG some skaters was a boy so small and so evidently a beginner that his frequent mishaps awakened the pity of a tenderhearted spectator. "Why, sonny, you are getting all bumped up," she said. "I wouldn't stay on the ice and keep falling down so; I'd just come off and watch the others." The tears of the last downfall were still rolling over the rosy

cheeks, but the child looked to the shining steel on his feet, and answered half indignantly, "I didn't get new skates to give up with; I got 'em to learn how with." The whole philosophy of earthly discipline was in the reply. Life's hard tasks are never sent for us "to give up with;" they are always intended to "perfect, stablish, strengthen and settle" us.

Our Resources.

"My God shall supply all your need, according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."—Phil. 4. 19.

WHAT a source—"God!" What a standard—"His riches in glory!" What a channel—"Christ Jesus!" It is your sweet privilege to place "all your need" over against "His riches," and lose sight of the former in the presence of the latter.

His exhaustless treasury is thrown open to you in all the love of His heart; go and draw upon it in the artless simplicity of faith, and you will never have occasion to look to a creature stream, or lean on a creature prop.

C. H. M.

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH. No. VI. The Bible : Its Inspiration

(A. J. POLLOCK.)

THERE is a cry to-day, "Back to Christ," the meaning of which is, Don't trouble about the Bible—that has been proved to be full of legends and myths, and it is unreliable, and you can afford to drop it, and fix your attention on Christ.

This sounds like honouring Christ, but it is anything but that, for He testified to an inerrant word of God, and, if the Bible is, as the Modernist affirms, full of mistakes, then we have Christ affirming as free from error, that which is full of error. In that case we have a fallible Christ, and the Modernists' slogan, "Back to Christ," is meaningless, and in the end reduces Him to the level of a *mere* man, and leads to the complete undermining of the Christian Faith.

In short, if we give up an inerrant Book, we give up a perfect Christ. What do we know of Christ outside the Bible? A line or two from Josephus, little more than acknowledging His wonderful personality and power, an account of His personal appearance, written by a Roman Governor, and that is about all.

"Back to Christ," meaning a knowledge of Christ apart from the Bible, is as senseless and foolish as it is ignorant and wicked. It is no credit to the mental calibre of the men who make it.

In previous articles we have pointed out the wonder of the Bible; its unity and prophecies—all proving its unique character and its inspiration of God. We now come to the Bible's own definite claim to inspiration.

There are several theories of inspiration abroad, but *Scripture Truth* stands for the full complete verbal inspiration of the original Scriptures. This is what the Bible claims for itself.

We read, "All scripture is given by inspiration [God-breathed] of God" (2 Tim. 3. 16).

Take the headings of eight consecutive chapters—Exod. 7.-14. We get the words, "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying," or "And the Lord said unto Moses." Is this not claiming divine inspiration? And this formula is repeated over forty times in the headings of chapters in the Pentateuch, besides very numerous instances in the chapters themselves.

In truth, the difficulty does not lie so much with the head as with the *heart*. How true it is, that "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked" (Jer. 17. 9).

That the Bible claims verbal inspiration of the original Scriptures is very manifest.

In 2 Pet. 1. 21, we get the claim in definite terms: "Prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter 1. 21).

In John 10. 34-36, the argument depends on a single word—*gods*. The Lord Himself appeals to that word as settling the point—an appeal to a single word in the Old Testament as authoritative and final. "If He called them *gods*, unto whom the word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken; say ye of Him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?" (verses 35, 36).

Gal. 3. 16, argues its point by proving that the word "seed" is in the singular and not in the plural. "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." Here the argument hinges on a single letter.

Gal. 4. 9. draws attention to the particular mood of the verb employed as being of vital importance. "But

now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements? ”

And lastly, we have seen how the Lord appealed to the very jot and tittle as being necessary.

Gal. 3. 22 states the power, authority and inspiration of Scripture in unmistakable terms. “ For the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promises by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.” Here Scripture is put into the place of the Universal Judge. But who can arrogate that place but God? If the Scriptures conclude all under sin, then it is perfectly obvious that the Scriptures are of God’s authorship.

Suppose I see a proclamation posted up, dealing with a matter that lies only and altogether in the royal prerogative, as, for instance, Queen Victoria’s Jubilee Proclamation, offering a free pardon to all deserters from the Army, who should report themselves within a given date.

I can say the Proclamation offers a free pardon to deserters, but that is equivalent to saying that Her Majesty made the offer. So with this verse.

Then, it is often urged, how can God allow the writers of the Scriptures to maintain their individuality, yet their writings be free from human defects and errors? Some have affirmed the mechanical theory of inspiration, that is, the writers wrote down the very words given them, and had no opportunity of expressing themselves in a style natural to them. We believe the mechanical theory is not upheld by Scripture, and yet, whilst the personality of the writers is expressed in their writings, the truth so expressed is God-breathed, and inerrant, and free from human imperfections.

Let an illustration help out our meaning. Suppose a royal palace is being erected. All about it has to be

in keeping. For instance, magnificent gates have to be made for the chief entrance, less elaborate ones for other entrances, whilst the railings are made in different designs, those in the front of the palace more ornate than those at the rear and so forth.

And yet all—the magnificent gates, the less ornate ones, the railings, ornate and plain—is made of the same material. The form, size, ornamentation, design—are determined by the mould, but the mould does not change the material run into the mould, but the mould gives form and design.

So we have one material running through the Scriptures, viz., God’s revelation to us, pure and faultless; yet we have the individuality of the writer expressed. For instance, Isaiah’s style is grand, ornate, poetical; Amos’s plain and severe; David wrote stately psalms, giving us the experience of the soul, whilst Solomon gives us wise proverbs; Daniel gives us prophecy, whilst the writers of Kings and Chronicles give us history—yet all from God, and perfect in all its details.

But how it may be pointed out that we have the Lord’s own affirmation again and again, expressed and implied by the inspiration of the Old Testament, but how can the inspiration of the *New Testament* be proved?

The answer is very interesting. The Old Testament would have been incomplete without the New. God would never give us what is incomplete. The Old Testament prophesies the Coming of Christ in a very full and remarkable way, we need a book to show us the fulfilment of all these Scriptures, and this we get in the *New Testament*.

An illustration may help. Suppose an elaborate seal in existence, let us say in Egypt, in far back Biblical days. Suppose the two parts of the seal get lost, and for centuries rest in the dry sand of Egypt, at length the spade of the archæologist turns up one part of the seal—the obverse. It is obvious

that there is the other part somewhere. No one in his senses would make an incomplete seal for royal uses.

Years after, let us suppose the reverse side of the seal is found. What proves it to be part of a complete whole? The answer is, **BECAUSE IT FITS EXACTLY.**

And if the seal is quite unique in design and elaboration—if it is known to be the only seal of its kind ever made—the matter of the second half being equally designed as the first half is proved beyond a question.

Let this illustration be applied. The Old Testament is perfectly unique. Its prophecies are numerous. Its types are abundant, and when we come to the New Testament, we find the prophecies are fulfilled, the types are met by antitype, that it fits in all its parts, in a way that is absolutely beyond the wit of man to bring about. There is only one book in the world that sets out to answer to the Old Testament, and that is the New Testament. There is no other rival in the field.

In the Old Testament we have—

The figures of Christ (*Pentateuch*).

The feelings of Christ (*Psalms*).

The foretellings of Christ (*Prophets*).

In the New Testament we have—

The facts of Christ's birth, life, death and ascension (*Gospels*).

The fruits of Christ (*Epistles*).

The one answers to the other in a thousand ways, as the obverse of the seal answers to the reverse.

We cannot understand the Old Testament without the New; nor can we understand the New without the Old. There are over 300 quotations in the Old Testament and New Testament, quotations covering a vast amount of ground—creation, Adam and Eve, the fall, Cain and Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, Solomon, Isaiah, Jonah. The whole of the Old Testament is treated as verbally inspired in all its details.

As to the New it answers to the Old. In the Old we have the types, for instance, of the sin offering burned "without the camp" (*Exod. 29. 14*); in the New we have Christ suffering "without the gate" (*Heb. 13. 12*), and this is distinctly linked up with "without the camp" (*verses 11, 13*).

The range of information, the scope of revelation, the vitalizing power of the Scriptures, their unfolding of God's nature and character, their sublimity, their effect upon civilization and countless lives, stamp the Bible as being something infinitely more than the product of man's mind.

If I received a treatise dealing of highly intellectual mathematical problems in the handwriting of my little son of six years old, I should know that whilst the handwriting was his, the matter could not be.

So if you contrast all the accounts of creation written by men, and compare them with *Gen. 1.*, you may know that though Moses may have written that account on bricks in cuneiform characters, he could no more have originated that chapter than the boy of six could have originated a mathematical problem dealing with the integral calculus.

Take the first verse in *Gen. 1.*—"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Why did Moses write the name of God in the plural. The Hebrew language has singular, dual and plural numbers, so that the plural must designate three at least. In the word God, being in the plural, we have undoubtedly a reference to the Holy Trinity—three persons, yet one God—the blessed Triune God, far beyond our comprehension, yet not beyond our faith and adoration.

Further, the word—God—in the plural is followed by a singular verb—created. Why singular? Should not a plural noun be followed by a plural verb to be good grammar? Yet in the very first verse in the Bible we get

bad grammar in order to give us good theology. Though the word God is in the plural, indicating as we have said, the Trinity, yet there is but *one* God—a plural unity, if we may use the phrase with reverence.

And still further, the word "heaven" is in the dual. Now, in 2 Cor. 12. 2 we read of the third heaven, evidently the immediate presence of God. Heaven (Gen. 1. 1) in the dual would set forth (1) the atmospheric heaven, the atmosphere that belts the earth where clouds are formed, and (2) the stellar heavens, those vast spaces in which the myriads of stars are set. Gen. 1. 1 speaks of the creation of these, but not of the third heaven. How marvellously exact.

Now Moses, the writer of Genesis, was not present when creation took place, and could have no more the wit to write the very first verse of the Bible than he could have the power to create that which he described. The first verse of the Bible certainly bears most fully the hall mark of inspiration. Only God could have inspired it.

We have seen how Moses indicated the thought of the Trinity in Gen. 1. 1. Isaiah 49. 16 presents the same idea in striking language, not enfolding the idea in one word, as in Gen. 1. 1, but bringing out the thought in detail. "Come ye near unto Me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I: and now the Lord God and His Spirit hath sent Me."

One is irresistibly reminded of John 1. 1: "In the beginning was the Word," when Isaiah says, "From the time [the beginning] that it was there am I." The thought in both passages is identical. Left to themselves, neither Isaiah nor John would have penned such a sentence, and certainly would never have stumbled

upon such similarity of thought. Most evidently, the Person who could claim an antecedent existence to the beginning must be none other than the eternal Word made flesh—our blessed Lord Jesus Christ. Isaiah then speaks of three Persons—"The Lord God"—"His Spirit"—"Me"—the blessed Holy Trinity.

Take another presentation by Isaiah of the blessed Person of our Lord Jesus Christ. He writes seven centuries and more before the birth of Christ, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." Here we get a wonderful contrast—a child of days and the Father of eternity—both expressions describing the same Person. Was not the Lord Jesus a Child of days, born as He was in Bethlehem's inn? Was not He equally the Father of eternity—the omnipotent Originator of all things?

Does not Micah bring out the same thoughts, when he tells us that out of little Bethlehem should come the Ruler of Israel, and that His "goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (Chap. 5. 3).

We ask again, would the wit of Isaiah and Micah have sufficed for such thoughts? Assuredly not.

Time and space fail to say more. Volumes upon volumes could be written on this entrancing theme. We have scarcely touched the fringe of the subject. The evidence as to the inspiration of the Bible is overwhelming.

The very spade of the archæologist in Bible lands discovers long-hidden treasures, which, when they throw light on Bible subjects, always, and in every case prove the Bible to be right in every detail.

"The Lord searcheth the heart, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts."—*i Chronicles* 28. 9.

THE RIBBAND OF BLUE.

(A. E. WALKER.)

THERE is a remarkable injunction given in Num. 15. ver. 38, the significance of which is very important. The children of Israel were told to make fringes in the four quarters of their garments "on the borders" and "upon the fringes" a "Ribband of blue." This was not to be the custom of *some*, but of *all*, and to extend to all their generations. It must have been a very striking thing to a stranger as well as enlightening, to come into the gates of a city and to see everywhere this heavenly blue, for this it was, on the garments of men or women young or old, all showing it forth as they went about doing their business.

We also find in the wilderness that when Israel removed from one place to encamp at another, and the Tabernacle was taken down, and formed the central part of that huge company of probably a million or more persons, the Ark which was a type of Christ, and which formed the central piece of furniture in the holy procession, was enrobed in a covering of blue. It was the only article so draped—other vessels were encased in an inner cloth of blue, but it was not apparent—the only thing which conspicuously was covered with blue was the Ark! What then can this blue signify? The blue or heavenly colour which is one of the three primary colours of light, sets forth the heavenly grace which came by Jesus Christ and which He showed throughout His wonderful life. There was no variation of this in His life; He was "out of heaven, and in all His

ways and words heavenly grace, holy and beautiful, was displayed." The Heart of God was fully shown, and His character declared, as it is written, "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1. 17). This is the cloth of blue that covered the Ark in the type. We are told in 1 John 11. 6 that if a Christian "*say*" he abideth in Him, "he ought also to walk even as He walked," and we are told also that He hath left us an example that we should "follow His steps." This is the ribband of blue in our lives. The garment signifies the character we wear. Is this heavenly blue in it? Are our lives and walk fashioned after the pattern of the heavens, of the "Heavenly One"?

The secret power for this in us is the cross accepted, and the pathway that it opens for us trodden and its reproach welcomed. Paul said, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world" (Gal. 6. 14). As the world and self is put off and Christ is put on, the ribband of blue will prevail in our lives. The blue ribband is a type and a type only.—To wear conspicuous clothing *now* would be to draw attention to our own shortcomings—but let us see that our work and conduct answers to that of which the type speaks, so that our testimony may glorify Him of whom it was said "and the common people heard Him gladly."

"In All Thy Ways."

"*In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths.*"—Prov. 3. 6.

"ALL our ways." He is willing to be our Guide in the smallest things of life. Before writing an article, answering a letter, having an interview, or dealing with any problem, we need to look up to Him who is the Fountain of all wisdom. Look at the promise annexed: "He shall direct thy paths."

You cannot direct your own path. The Lord promises to guide His people continually. By day and by night He went before His people in the wilderness. He will do no less for those who to-day acknowledge Him in all their ways.

THE SON.

(JAMES BOYD.)

LET us praise the Son eternal, who when in the form of God
 Laid aside that form, and took upon Himself the form of man ;
 As a servant, not a sovran, He His earthly pathway trod
 That the grace of the Invisible the human soul might scan.
 Never finite mind could fathom such a mystery Divine
 As this wondrous myst'ry mantled in the Person of the Son ;
 Here on earth in infant weakness, yet His holy flesh the shrine
 Of the Godhead come to seek and save the soul by sin undone.
 Let us contemplate with reverence this mystery profound !
 Let us dwell upon His weakness, let us muse upon His might,
 Let accursèd curiosity with brazen bonds be bound,
 Lest His wrath should such irreverence in righteous judgment smite.

It was for the Father's pleasure that a servant He became,
 That where He had been discredited He might be glorified ;
 This was why He suffered ignominy, cross and curse and shame,
 Brutal blows and vile invective, yea, for this He bled and died.
 But His blood has been the basis of the blessing of His own
 Whom He loves with love surpassing far above all human thought,
 Blood that has been sprinkled both before and on the eternal throne,
 Blood that has complete redemption for repentant sinners wrought.
 In the presence of His people praise Him ! Own Him Lord alone !
 Speak to others of the greatness and the glory of His grace,
 Him commend to souls despairing, who have not His mercy known,
 Tell of His unfathomed pity for this ruined human race.

Never less than the Creator tho' in human fashion made,
 Like the feeble, fallen creature, whom in grace He came to save ;
 Never less than the Almighty even when in manger laid,
 Yea, or when on gibbet nailed for us His life He gave.
 Never other than the One by whom the universe subsists,
 Never other than the One whom holy seraphim adore,
 Never less than the Omnipotent who gathers in His fists
 Raving hurricanes and tempests rude that thro' the welkin roar.
 Let us worship at His footstool ! Let us sing His praise aloud !
 Let us falling on our faces the eternal Son adore,
 Let us hail Him as the mighty God, low in His presence bowed,
 Let us celebrate His worthiness now and for evermore.

Yet as truly Man as Maker ! this our spirits shall content,
 Yea, as certainly the Servant as the Sovran on the throne,
 As the Sent One of the Father, yet the mighty One who sent
 God the Holy Ghost to tabernacle in and with His own.
 Bondman verily, tho' Despot ; clothed with all the might of God
 Yet in absolute submission to His holy Father's will,
 Godhead veiled, yet Godhead shining thro' His veil of flesh and blood,
 Giving up His life the counsels of the Father to fulfil.
 Let us bless Him as the Man who fills the boundless heart of God,
 Let us bless Him as the God who fills the finite hearts of Men,
 Let us bless Him as the Man who once this weary desert trod
 That the wanderer might righteously be brought to God again.

Light in Him, the light lifegiving, in surpassing splendour shone,
 Light above the blinding brightness of the blazing sun at noon,
 Light of God unseen by eye of creature in the ages gone,
 Light that shall this world envelope in its warm embraces soon,
 Light now shining thro' this darkness from the living Father's heart,
 Light that wins the wandering creature from the haunts of sin and shame,
 Light that wakes the guilty conscience, and doth perfect peace impart
 To the spirit of the penitent who pleads the Saviour's name.
 Let us bend the knee before Him, let us with our lips confess
 Him as Lord of earth and heaven, worthy of the highest place,
 Our Redeemer, our Deliverer, our life and Righteousness,
 Omnipotent Revealer of eternal love and grace.

He is bringing sons to glory, He is leader of the band,
 He will bring them to the blessing of the Father's house on high;
 He will keep their feet from falling by His never failing hand,
 And all grace upon the journey He will lavishly supply.
 He will bring them to His Father, in His presence He will place
 Every one with chalice full of endless pleasures to the brim,
 Every soul that can be numbered with the God-begotten race,
 Every soul that by the Father has been given unto Him.
 Let us praise Him! Let us eulogize our Saviour and our God!
 Sing aloud, ye mighty myriads of righteous, ransomed men!
 Hallelujah! Send His praises thro' the universe abroad!
 Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Yea, Amen!

NOTES ON SUBJECTS OF PROPHECY. (J. T. MAWSON,

The League of Nations, Antichrist and Christ.

VISCOUNT CECIL said some time ago that if the League of Nations failed to maintain the peace of the world and make the nations of the earth dwell together in harmony he would lose all hope in humanity: the League of Nations was his last hope. He is not alone in this view of things, he shares it with those idealists and sentimentalists who have not yet learnt that Romans 3. 10-18 is the only true estimate of man—man as God sees him, and that he cannot rise above himself. If the League of Nations is the only hope, then the case is indeed hopeless, for men can do nothing better for themselves than they have done; worse they will do, for the trend of things is not from good to better as the evolutionists teach, but from bad to worse, as the Word of God teaches.

We do not deny that the League of Nations did promise and still promises

much, and that earnest and sincere men look for its final success; in this respect it is like the *rider on the white horse* of Revelation 6., which it possibly is.—Crowned with the hopes of the people, and issuing its mandates for the rule of nations afar off, and so bringing them under its authority, for a while. This latter idea seems to lie in the bow in the hand of the rider, with which he goes forth conquering and to conquer. But that white horse soon disappears from view to be succeeded in the field of vision by a *red horse and his rider*, who will take peace, which the League of Nations exists to maintain, from the earth. It is anarchy and destruction. It will be a successful "international" which will largely obliterate national distinction for the time, a Bolshevich flood that will overwhelm Europe at least. And when the existing order of things is overturned by this madness,

what shall take its place? Not a millennium for the proletariat, but the *black horse and its rider*, a widespread famine, which will fall with great severity upon the people, and then *the pale horse and its rider*—Death. And death will not sweep across the field alone, for **Hell** will ride victoriously with him to claim the souls of the slain. Revelation 6. shatters all hope in the League of Nations which gives neither God nor Christ any place.

But out of all this awful carnage and destruction a real League of Nations will emerge, whose one purpose will be to fight against the Lamb, who is the King of kings. This League will be composed of ten kingdoms, not yet defined, whose kings when they do appear shall have one mind and shall give their power to the Beast (Rev. 17. 12, 13): a tyrannical autocrat, who will revive the Roman empire, claim to be God, laugh at the rights of men and impose his will upon the world. He will be inspired and empowered by the devil, and supported in his claim to deity and universal power by Antichrist, who is the false prophet (Rev. 13.).

These three—the dragon, which is the devil, the beast, and the false prophet—will form a terrible trinity of evil; they are brought together in the unity of their purpose in Rev. 16. 13, 14, and that purpose is war. The present League of Nations, which is a mere shadow, is for peace, the real League of Nations when it appears will be for war. The evil spirits that go out of the *mouths* of the diabolical trinity are deceptive and inflammatory words and doctrines. And in the conception and broadcasting of these, Antichrist will take the lead. He will be the great deceiver and will probably tell men that the only road to the goal of their ambitions is to blot out God and Christ and that they are able to do it, and aroused by his arrogant and lying words (2 Thess. 2.), the cry will be: "Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let the men of war draw near,

let them come up. *Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears*" (Joel 3. 9, 10). That is the only end to which man under his chosen leader and seduced by Antichrist will bring his world, a world blinded and dominated by the devil, and in which every evil principle of *falsehood* and *murder*, *corruption* and *violence*, will be fully developed, for the devil is the father of these, and he is the god of the world. What a world it will be in that coming day of wrath! Blessed indeed are all those who believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, know Him as the One who will deliver them from that wrath to come by taking them out of it before Antichrist is manifested (1 Thess. 4.; 2 Thess. 2.).

But the devil will not have the last word about the world, for the Lamb, who is the King of kings, shall speak; *out of His mouth* shall go a sharp sword, with which He shall smite the devil-deceived nations (Rev. 19. 15). This will be the word of judgment, for He alone is Judge. Then the word of peace shall go forth: for the word of the Lord shall go forth from Jerusalem, "*And they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks, and they shall learn war no more*" (Isaiah 2. 3, 4). What a contrast between the word and work of Antichrist who speaks for the devil, and the word and work of Christ who speaks for God!

It is to bring out this contrast that we call attention to the subject. Christ came in lowliness and grace, not to exalt Himself at the expense of others as Antichrist will, but to sacrifice Himself for the good of men, to give His life a ransom for many. His words were not words of deception and death, but were spirit and life (John 6. 63) and in Him God was preaching peace to men. And in Him we have peace, and in a world of unrest that can know peace no more until Christ comes, we can be undisturbed, looking for that blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

THE MYSTERY OF GOD'S WILL. No. 3. (H. J. VINE.)

GOD has made known "the unchangeableness of His purpose," and from the first thought to the final display, we are shown the great outstanding features as the mighty strides onward are taken to its complete attainment, as well as a multitude of intervening and necessary details that are according to His good pleasure, leading forward to the glorious culmination when all things shall be headed up in Christ. Here are five of those distinguishing features.

1. HIS ETERNAL PURPOSE which is "in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. 3. 11).

2. CREATION, which has the same end in view; "for Thy pleasure (or will) they are and were created" (Rev. 4. 11).

3. PROPHECY, too,—the spirit of which is "the testimony of Jesus,"—came not "by the will of man" but by the Holy Ghost (2 Pet. 1. 21).

4. REDEMPTION,—which is ours in Christ through His blood,—also has the pre-eminence of Christ in view as Head of the body the assembly (Col. 1. 18), according to God's good pleasure.

5. THE UNIVERSE,—"all things,"—"the breadth and length and depth and height,"—filled with beauty and order and honour and glory,—centring in Christ,—resounding with the praise of God,—shall display the full outcome of "the mystery of His will" (Eph. 1. and 3.).

"Loud Hallelujahs then shall lift the song."

Throughout the whole realm of universal rejoicing and splendour the will of God shall be done by all. The good pleasure which He purposed in Himself will have come to pass to His everlasting praise. On earth and in heaven not one will be found acting contrary to His will. Darkness will have overwhelmed the wicked—the unrepentant—for ever; shut out from the scenes of light and life and liberty and love eternally—shut out from the

realms where our Lord Jesus Christ is exalted and loved,—they will have perished from the way, from the way that leads to life eternal, from the way to the abodes of God's good pleasure, and, away from that, they exist eternally in what is called "the second death" (Rev. 20. 14). The glories of immortality and incorruptibility are not there though eternal existence is.

Wonderful indeed is the exceeding greatness of God's power which has quickened us and set us apart from the ways of death, placing our feet in the path of life according to the great end He has in view. Our hearts may well be grateful and our lips speak forth His praise! for, if,—(1) "This is the will of God, even our sanctification,"—and, (2) "This is the will" of God that we "should have life eternal," and be raised up at the end, as we have seen;—so also, (3) "This is the will of God in Christ Jesus" concerning us: "IN EVERY THING GIVE THANKS!"

Thanksgiving is indeed most fitting and becoming! Saved and sanctified according to the good pleasure of God, to share in the scenes of life eternal,—knowing that all things work together for the good of such,—for grace has called them according to God's purpose,—what could be more suitable than giving thanks "IN" everything, though "FOR" everything it may not always be possible? Yes, such is the reasonable and striking exhortation given to those who are of the "one body in Christ,"—literally reading,— "In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus towards you" (1 Thess. 5. 18). Colossians 3. 15 also says, "Let the peace of Christ preside in your hearts, to which also ye have been called in one body, and *be ye thankful*" (N.T.).

In a far higher sense than the sweet Psalmist indicated shall the hosts of heaven and earth praise and bless His holy Name: "The Lord hath prepared His throne in the heavens, and His

kingdom ruleth over all," he sang!—" Bless the Lord, ye His angels, that excel in strength, that do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word. Bless ye the Lord, all ye His hosts: ye ministers of His that do His pleasure. Bless the Lord, all His works in all places of His dominion: bless the Lord, O my soul." This will be truly glorious: the blessed responding to the Blesser in praising and blessing. It reminds us of the end of Luke's Gospel, when the risen Saviour ascended to heaven from Mount Olivet with His hands outstretched in blessing, and the disciples rejoiced with great joy, " Praising and blessing God continually!" Begun here on earth, it shall never end even when universal glory is established in Christ Jesus for God's glory in the power and grace of the Holy Spirit.

The result of those divine words recorded in that first writing,—“ Lo, I come to do Thy good pleasure,”—shall be seen in abiding blessedness,—“ The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand!” The result of the cry heard by God in the loneliness and agony of the garden of Gethsemane shall be full with abiding joy,—“ Thy will be done!” The result of the good pleasure of God's will, the revealed mystery of His will, and the work done according to the counsel of His will, shall be to the praise of His glory, when all heavenly and earthly things are headed up in Christ in the fulness of times for an administration which will surpass in wealth and wisdom and power and honour and splendour the administration of the wise and royal Solomon, even though the priesthood and the ark and the cherubim and the temple and the city of the great king,—the earthly metropolis,—were associated with his great throne of ivory; for, in the administration which has Christ Himself as its Centre, there shall

be seen the all-varied wisdom of God, and the city,—the heavenly metropolis,—the bride,—the Lamb's wife,—shall be illumined with the glory of God; and her radiance like unto a stone most precious, clear as crystal, shall shine undimmed for ever. “ The throne of God, and the Lamb,” shall be in that city! (Rev 22. 3).

“ God and the Lamb shall there
The light and temple be,
And radiant hosts for ever share
The unveiled mystery ” (Rev. 21. 22).

The words of Christ, the prayer of Gethsemane, the many prayers of the saints, shall have a perfect and abiding answer,—His will be done: His good pleasure accomplished.

Meanwhile, may it be ours to prove and practise His will on the way. Shall we not pray as the Psalmist, “ Teach me to do Thy will, for Thou art my God ”? Surely, this is our desire. Only One could accomplish it in the fullest degree, as we have seen, and He said, when on earth, “ I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me.” Not that His will was ever contrary to the will of the Father, but that which governed His activities was the Father's good pleasure. The Son quickens whom He will and that in accord with the Father's will. Likewise, “ the willing and the working ” (Phil. 2. 13) which God produces in us are not in anywise at variance with His own good pleasure; but it is in Christ we see the perfection of obedience and subjection; not in ourselves. We are told to behold Him, to consider Him, yea, to consider Him well. There we see the truth,—the expression of what is true,—even as the full display of the mystery of God's will shall be seen in Him universally very soon.

“ O gracious God! Thy pleasure
Is in Thy Christ made known,
In Him Thy glory's centred,
In Him Thy purpose shown.”

It is only as we approach God's words with the same object which God had in view **THAT THEY SHOULD BE DONE**, that we can have any hope of blessing.

LIGHT AND LIFE.

(JAMES BOYD.)

Meditations on the Gospel and Epistles of John. No. 1.

IN the beginning of this Gospel we have the Creator, but spoken of as the Word; in the epistle we have the same person in the creation, having taken part in it, and spoken of as the Word of life. We read: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have contemplated, and our hands have handled of the word of life." A Man in flesh and blood, the perfect revelation of the whole mind and thought and heart of the unseen God! And that revelation a Word of life! Not death to the sinner! Not destruction to the rebellious child of fallen man, but life brought near to men under death! How wonderful! How attractive! How inspiring! A Man amongst men! Here to be heard, here to be seen, here to be contemplated, here to be handled! Come from the very heart of the Father, and on His way to the heart of the earth!

In the Epistle we find souls in the light. They are in the sphere of light that was created by the coming of the Son. He says: "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth in Me should not abide in darkness." Therefore is it said that God is in the light (1 John 1. 7); that is, He has been manifested; and, as I have said, the sphere of light has been created by that manifestation. And it is in that sphere the believer walks. His eyes have been opened, he has apprehended the great truth that the Son is the sent One of the Father. Hence his thoughts of God are altogether altered. The light of the Father's love has come into his heart by the power of the Holy Spirit, and his soul is in the light of the perfect revelation of God. And in this light he walks.

"If we walk in the light" is not to be understood as if it said: "If we

walk according to the light," but altogether the sphere in which we walk. We can say we know that the Son of God has come (1 John 5. 20). How do we know this? A person might say: "I know it because the Scriptures say so, and I believe them." Very good! But that is not the whole truth on the subject, nor is it the way in which we know it as set forth in the verse, part of which I have quoted. When we awake in the morning, how do we know if the sun has risen? You will say that we can tell by the light that it brings. But has the Son of God brought no light into this world? The first epistle of John tells us that "The true light now shineth." And do we not know that it shines? Are its beams so feeble that we cannot tell whether it shines or not? We know that the Son of God has come, because we are in the light that He brought. He who made the sun to shine in the heavens gave us a capacity for taking in the light; and He who made the true light to shine has opened the eyes of our hearts to receive the light; He has given us an understanding that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, in His Son Jesus Christ, He is the true God, and eternal life.

This brings me to the question of life. The question of life was raised at the very beginning of the history of man. When man was made he was set in a very exalted position, but was to maintain himself in life and blessing by his obedience. There was one tree that would have preserved him in life as long as he had access to it. Severed from partaking of the fruit of that tree of life, decay that resulted in the death of the body set in. There was another tree that tested his obedience, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Of this tree he was not to eat. He had nothing to do with that question, which was

already in the creation, but not yet on earth. The key of the door by which it could enter, however, was placed in the hand of the innocent being who was made in the image and likeness of God, and he was well warned as to the consequence of his using that key. He opened the door, sin came in, and death followed.

Hence life became a very important question in a world of human beings over whom death reigned. Was there any way back to life? If there was, where was it? Cherubim and a flaming sword guarded the tree of life. There was no way back to it. Was it in the law? Death and the curse were there. No man could discover any better way of life than by the fulfilment of his obligations. But as no one could fulfil his obligations, no one could arrive at life.

Now that we know the truth, we might think it strange that it did not dawn upon every inquiring mind, that only by the settlement of the question raised by man's partaking of the forbidden tree could life be reached. The judgment incurred by that transgression could not be cancelled, and as the erring creature could never exhaust that judgment, so that he might stand before God as though he had never sinned, lost he surely was from the outset of his sinful career.

But we see the judgment has been executed in the cross of the lifted up Son of Man, and in that judgment, and by means of that judgment, man, as after the flesh, has disappeared. The serpent of brass indicates the judgment of God upon the serpent that bit the people, and is a type of sinful flesh receiving its judgment in the holy and righteous Saviour, who gave Himself to bear that judgment, and glorify God in bearing it.

And this work was undertaken and accomplished in order that the believer in Jesus might not perish, but have eternal life. Not that he might return to innocence, for that is impossible

now that he has the knowledge of good and evil, nor that he might be immune from death in the life of fallen Adam, but that he might be partaker of the life of the risen Son of God, divine life, eternal life, life that has no ending, but life also that never had a beginning; life never taken by the Son, for it was His own eternal life; not like the life of flesh and blood, which He took in order to make atonement for our souls, and which, when He had made atonement, He gave up, and resumed not again. It is His own life, the life that is now in Him, the life of divine persons, the life of Godhead, that has been communicated to us in the power of the Holy Spirit. What an inestimable blessing!

This is the life of the children of God, as viewed in the first epistle, and by the display of the beautiful characteristics of that life are they made manifest. In the last verse of chapter 2. we read: "If ye know that He is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him." Then again, we read in chapter 4.: "Every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God." These two characteristics mark and manifest those born of God. And "Whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother." Let us lay to heart these words.

Therefore new birth is a necessity for man. It was always a necessity since the fall, and in the sovereign grace of God there were always those who were subjects of it. But until the coming and rejection of Christ it was not plainly stated. It has been asked, If this was essential to the salvation of souls, why was it not stated? What would have been the benefit of the communication to men while man in the flesh, as a child of Adam, was under probation? There was always God to turn to. There was always grace for the guilty. There was always pardon for the penitent. What more was needed? New birth was not a thing that man could bring about, for

it is of God we are born again. Why then tell us now? Man is now told because his trial is over, and he is pronounced God's enemy in nature, and in an utterly lost condition. Man thought he could gain righteousness and life by his own works, and it pleased God to give him a long and favourable opportunity in which to make trial, but the longer the trial was continued, and the more help he received from God, the more clearly was it manifested that he was a sinner by nature, and could be nothing else by practice. Therefore when the trial was over, and he was proven to be a hater of God, he is told the truth about himself, his lost condition, and the necessity that exists that he should have a new life and nature.

But it would be a great mistake to suppose that new birth solved the whole question of life eternal; for this exists in the power of God. It is not only a work wrought *in* man, which new birth is; but it is a new life communicated *to* man, the life of the Father and the Son; of the Son before He became incarnate, but brought into humanity in His person by incarnation. He was that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us; and being the life of divine persons it was ever in divine power. Therefore it is in us in connection with the Holy Spirit, who is the vital union between the glorified Christ and His own.

I do not in the smallest degree desire to convey the impression that in new birth life is not communicated. We are born again by the *living* Word of God, and where new birth is there is life. Nor do I question that that life is essentially the life of Christ; but when I come to the truth of eternal life, as set before us in the Word, I find it connected with knowledge of the Father, and all the new relationships into which we are brought by faith in the gospel, and only those who have the Spirit know anything of these relationships. We have to keep in

mind that everything we know in an objective way, with reference to the truth of Christianity, we know by the revelation God has been pleased to make to us; and as it is repentance and remission of sins that the gospel brings to us on the ground of the work of Christ, we cannot know more until more has been communicated to us. We receive the Holy Spirit when we believe that Christ died for our sins, and that He was buried, and that He was raised the third day. But this says nothing about new birth, children of God, or the relationship in which believers stand to one another as brethren. These blessings are made known to us after we have received the Spirit. But even the babes in Christ know the Father, and the Father is not known until we have received the Spirit of adoption. Now John, the only writer in the New Testament who credits the believer with eternal life in this world, does not include in the family of God one who does not know the Father. For these reasons, as well as others, I could not accept that new birth carries with it the blessing of eternal life.

“That which was from the beginning.” With regard to the subject on which the apostle was occupied, everything previous to the appearance of the Son on earth goes by the board. In the Son we have a new beginning of a new order of things. Old things were in decay, and fast disappearing. Soon they shall have passed away for ever. The darkness must disappear before the true light which now shineth; the old race with its sinful and rebellious history must pass away, and the last Adam and His holy and righteous race must subsist in blessing to the glory and praise of God; the earthly must give place to the heavenly, and the old order to the new. The advent of the Creator into His own creation rang the death knell of that creation in the condition in which He found it. “Behold, I make all things new” might not be said until thousands of

years after, but the new heavens and the new earth were in the thought of God before the present earth and heavens were called into being.

And the fathers had learned this important truth: "I write unto you fathers, because ye have known Him that is from the beginning." He does not say this to the babes or to the young men. He has other things to say to them, and warnings to give them; but the fathers had come to the understanding that God had made a new beginning in sending His Son into the world.

And not only had the fathers known that He was "the beginning of the creation of God" (Rev. 3. 14), but they had known *Him* who was this. They had "come to the knowledge of the Son of God" (Eph. 4. 13). Something of the greatness of the person who was this beginning had dawned upon their souls. Through the Word of God they had learned of the creation of the heavens and the earth, and of the making of the earth into a habitable

place for man, before he was formed who was to take the position of head over the work of God's hands; and now before all things have been made new, they have seen the Head to which everything in the universe is to be made subject. This is the reverse order to the old; there the man was the end of the old, here the Man is the beginning of the new.

And for this, need I say, there is a grand and glorious necessity. In the new everything derives from the Head. Everything must put on the heavenly character. And when that day comes it will not be, "When I look up into the heavens, the work of Thy fingers," but it will be the work of His *heart*, and all founded on the blood of His cross. Neither will it be a scene that may be favoured by the uncertain visitations of the beneficent Creator, as the innocent creation seems to have been, but it shall be a creation in which God shall be pleased to take up His abode; for the tabernacle of God shall be with men, and He will dwell among them (Rev. 21.).

The Gospel.

THE cross is the meeting-place of faith and God; for there at one and the same time there came into full manifestation man's sin and God's love, the condition in which we were and the love of God that meets it. In approaching the tabernacle in the wilderness, the first thing that met the eye on going through the gate of the court was the altar upon which the burnt-offering was consumed. So when a man turns his face towards God and his back upon the world it is this that faces him, the

cross of Christ—it is his way of approach to God, and through it God says, "See, what your sin demanded My love has provided. The SON OF MAN must be lifted up, for there could be no expiation of your sin apart from His suffering and death, and no eternal life for you; but the Son of Man is My ONLY-BEGOTTEN SON, and Him I have given for you; and I gave Him, the best I had, because I loved you." What a Gospel is this! (John 3. 14-16.)

"At that time ye were without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, . . . having no hope."—Ephes. 2. 12.

WE ought to remember this. We shall fully understand and ever remember it in the glory. We shall never forget how vile, how worthless, how utterly lost and helpless we were when God looked upon us polluted in our own blood, and said unto us,

"Live." The remembrance will only make us more truly to understand the height and depth and length and breadth of the love of our God, and to sing more loudly, "Salvation to our God, and to the Lamb."

J. N. D.

NOTES ON SERVICE.

A CORRESPONDENT sends us a letter from a reader of "Scripture Truth" in China, from which we quote: "The major part of my work here in China is that of helping young evangelists in the study of the Word, any suggestions would be most gratefully received."

"Do the work of an evangelist" is one of the many exhortations that Paul gave to his son Timothy in his farewell letter to him (2 Tim. 4. 5), and we should suggest that when the gospel by which men have to be evangelized is known no part of the New Testament could be of greater value to the servant of the Lord than this short Epistle; it should be well read and carefully studied. The following simple notes may help.

As to himself, Timothy was A MAN OF UNFEIGNED FAITH. He was a real man in his faith in God. Of what use could a man be in the service of God who had not faith? The work is God's work, a work of faith, and those who labour in it must not walk by sight, or before men, but by faith and before God. Faith carries the servant of God to God Himself, and "without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 10. 6). Strange evangelists they are who desire to be men-pleasers or self-pleasers and not pleasers of God, hence faith is the first great essential.

He had to be A MAN OF ENERGY and not indolent (verse 6), for an idle servant of the Lord is an abomination to Him, but true energy is not mere natural energy, it is the energy of the Spirit, described here as the Spirit of power, and of love and of a sound mind. This Spirit has been given by God to every true servant. Power is given because of the enemy that opposes and the evil that has to be met. Love because the servant of the Lord

must display in his service the very nature of the One who has sent him, or he belies his message and mission. A sound mind—"wise discretion" because apart from wisdom given from above, he will, by his own folly, mar the service and bring discredit on the Lord's Name. And this wisdom is "first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy" (James 3. 17). The Spirit of power, love and wise discretion is the Holy Ghost; none can do the work of an evangelist apart from the Holy Ghost.

He had to be A MAN OF COURAGE and not a coward (verse 8). "Spirit of fear" in verse 7 is really the *spirit of cowardice*. If he thought of men and their opinions he would come under the fear of men and he would be useless and would be ashamed of the testimony of the Lord, which is not popular with men. The Lord is rejected by the world, and the testimony has to be proclaimed in any enemies' land, the heralds of it cannot look for support or expect the patronage of the world, hence the afflictions of the Gospel. Natural courage will give way before these afflictions and fly the field, but the power of God can make His servant triumph through them and fight the good fight until the victory is won.

He had to HOLD FAST the form of sound words. The Gospel in the whole scope of it had to be clearly before his mind, and to it he had to hold fast. It is by words that men are saved (Acts 11. 14), and it is sound words that the devil most fears and hates—the pure Word of God (Luke 8. 11, 12). If the Word of God is set aside and men's opinions substituted for it the devil does not care. But an evangelist is one who carries God's message of grace to men, and He must carry it as God sends it and not change it in any-wise for another message, or he becomes

a false witness of God. And those who preach "modernism" have become this. They do not sow the incorruptible seed, the word of God, by which men are born again (1 Peter 1.), but corruptible seed, the thoughts of men. They serve the devil and not God, they destroy men's souls and do not save them.

He had to be **STRONG IN THE GRACE THAT IS IN CHRIST JESUS** (chap. 2. 1). It was necessary for him

to know where was the base of his supply, and he could not war a good warfare unless he kept in communication with his base. All the evangelist's supplies are in Christ Jesus—the risen, glorified Lord. The servant of God who is strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus is undismayed and invincible and he carries on his service in confidence and hope, and like a tree planted by the waters he flourishes, and whatsoever he doeth prospers.

A Cripple's Testimony.

"We also joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ."—Rom. 5. 11.

CHRISTIANS might avoid much trouble and inconvenience if they would only believe what they profess, that God is able to make them happy without anything else. They imagine if such and such blessings were removed they would be miserable; whereas God can make them a thousand

times happier without them. To mention my own case, God has been depriving me of one blessing after another; but as every one was removed He has come in and filled up its place; and now, when I am a cripple, and not able to move, I am happier than ever I was in all my life.

"Rejoice evermore. In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God, in Christ Jesus."—1 Thess. 5. 16-18.

SOME of you are perpetually mourning your lot when you ought to be perpetually praising. You look at your mercies wrong side up, and label half of them "crosses." Some of you never know when you are well off. "The only drawbacks to this lovely homestead," said a poetical auctioneer, as he offered a paradise for sale, "are the

litter of the rose leaves and the noise of the nightingales." Many of you have no drawbacks worth mentioning but the lack of time to handle all the good things God has given you. Still you fail to sing. Put on the garment of praise, brethren, and let it cover you from shoulder to ankles.

God's Gift, Our Response.

"Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."—Rom. 12. 1.

GOD is never our debtor, and so He pays us beforehand—an earnest of what is yet to come. He has put into our hands what He wants us to give, and then He makes us rich by fellowship with Himself in the giving.

God gave His most precious treasure out of His bosom for us. What shall we render back? Ourselves, our souls, our bodies? What a poor offering! And yet the Spirit of God calls it "holy and acceptable." "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift."

A STUDY OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

G. I. STEWART.

Chapter 3.

JESUS had already been presented as the merciful and faithful High Priest; now as Apostle He is said to be:

“FAITHFUL TO HIM WHO CONSTITUTED HIM.”

He perfectly fulfilled all things for which God had sent Him. Moses was faithful in all God's house; a good testimony to Moses. There was also a wonderful exhibition of God's ways with His people, for Moses knew His ways. But the one exceptional detail above serves to bring out the difference between the fallible type and the infallible Antitype, Jesus, the Sent One of God. He will indeed use the rod of government faithfully, but never without the impleadings of mercy, that government may not harden, but meet with due response from broken hearts. Neither rod, we may be assured, will ever be used without the other, nor either in excess, as we are so naturally inclined to act.

It is further noticed (Acts 7. 35), “This Moses whom they refused . . . did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel that appeared to him in the bush. He brought them out after he had showed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt and in the Red Sea and in the wilderness forty years.” His faithfulness had been shown in refusing to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; in forsaking Egypt; in keeping the Passover and passing through the Red Sea. These were all preliminary to the house, and showed him to be a suited man for his office there.

In the house Moses met with even greater difficulties. The idolatry of the people, the murmurings of their ungrateful hearts, the envy of Aaron and Miriam, the rebellion of Dathan and Abiram, the refusal to go up into the land; in all these things Moses was the butt of their attacks. But in

all these things he was faithful to Him that sent him, pleading always for the people and for Jehovah's great Name. Little wonder that he failed at last at the waters of Kadesh; he had been more than man, had he not done so. Blessed be God, we have now to do with One who is more than man in Jesus, the Son of God.

Moses did not lead the people into the land, his connection with the house was entirely in the wilderness. It is here his faithfulness is noticed, and it is just here we need one more faithful than he. So Jesus, faithful on earth, has reached the right hand of God and is able thence, as a faithful Apostle, to bring right through to God's rest all who consider Him, regarding not the enemies nor the difficulties, however many in the wilderness.

This brings fairly before us:

THE HOUSE.

The aspect of the house in connection with which Moses obtained his glory was as we have seen the Tabernacle in the wilderness only. Jesus, however, who fills that type, will never cease His connection with the house of God. “He is counted worthy of more glory than Moses, by how much he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house” (verse 3). The same two words, glory and beauty, are found here, as we have seen are used in connection with the Priest.

After Moses had received instructions concerning the Tabernacle and the Ark into which the testimony was to be put, he then received also at God's hand the law itself. It is in connection with receiving the law that Moses' face shone with glory. Though but reflected and evanescent, being the glory of the law which was to be done away, yet Moses had to put a veil over his face—it was too bright for man under law to behold. But the glory

which shines direct from the unveiled face of Christ is infinitely brighter, being the glory of the grace. Here unveiled hearts which turn to the Lord rejoice in the glory and are metamorphosed into His image, making them morally like Himself. The apostle argues (2 Cor. 3.) that this glory of the grace is to be preferred rather than the glory of the law, inasmuch as there is more real glory in it, being indeed the excellent glory out of which God spake to His Son, a glory which abideth for ever.

There was a beauty, too, in the adornment of the Tabernacle house which spread its fame abroad. This was but the reflection of His beauty, who builded and adorned it, for the Tabernacle in every detail speaks of the beauty of Christ. The vast system of the ornate universe certainly also declares His glory, but the Personal presentation of those beauties in the living Man Christ Jesus, infinitely transcends everything set forth in the builded house, and He is the Apostle of our confession.

But, ah ! the Master is so fair,
His smile so sweet to banished man ;
That they who catch it unawares
Can never rest on earth again."

Moses was faithful in all God's house as an attendant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after, that is now ; and he himself said, " A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you like unto me, Him shall ye hear " (Acts 7. 37). Christ is that prophet, and He is Son over God's house, and He it is who is to be heard there. God introduces Him thus at the Mount of Transfiguration, " This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased ; hear Him." Servants now are no more to be heard, the One to whom they testified has come ; Moses and Elias disappear. Happy they who heed the Father and hear the Son in His more faithful administration of the rule and order in God's house to-day. There is no

thought of its being the Son's house, though it is the house He builds ; it is God's house, albeit the company who form the household is in other views of it, the body and the bride of Christ.

All this makes the present aspect of the house of the utmost importance. It is that which shall be maintained in the most intimate relationship with God and with Christ for ever, and is presented in those wonderful words :

WHOSE HOUSE ARE WE.

The thought of God's dwelling with His people is not a matter of revelation even in type until redemption is accomplished. Everywhere redemption is presented before the house is spoken of. God had visited Adam—more frequently Abraham ; but He never spake of dwelling with them. As soon, however, as redemption is accomplished the thought of a house and God's dwelling with His people is put into their hearts. Once introduced it is never absent from God's testimony until it becomes an accomplished fact. " Thy testimonies are very sure ; holiness becometh thy house, O Lord, for ever."

After the Passover, on the wilderness bank of the Red Sea, God's delivered people sing, " Jehovah is our God and we will prepare Him a habitation." This, though right, they had to learn they were unable of themselves to do. They attempted it provisionally under God's direction and failed ; then they say, " Except the Lord build the house they labour in vain that build it." Eventually God builds it Himself by the Son. This the Spirit in their song anticipates—" Thou has guided them in Thy strength to Thy holy habitation . . . to the place which Thou hast prepared for Thee to dwell in . . . to the Sanctuary, O Lord, which Thy hands have established " (see Exod. 15.). This is what Christ is doing now ; Man indeed, but very God, the builder of God's house as of all things.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The Fellowship of God's Son.

We are called by God to the fellowship of His Son, 1 Cor. i. 9. (a) Why do we come so far short of this calling? (b) How can we get away from our own trials and exercises and enjoy this fellowship?—D.

IT was not because the Corinthians had trials and exercises that they came so far short of this calling, but because they were carnal, and if we come short of it, it is for the same reason, unless, of course, we are ignorant as to what the fellowship really is. And as this latter is the case with many it may be well to briefly consider it. God has called us to the fellowship of *His Son*, Jesus Christ *our Lord*. Nothing like this ever existed of old, for the very nature of man in the flesh was to do his own will instead of God's, always and deliberately. His mind was the carnal mind which is enmity against God (Romans 8.). God looked in vain for any response to His will from the carnal mind; out of such material as that He could form no fellowship suited to Himself. But in due time Christ came and in Him every thing was according to God. He came not to do His own will but the will of Him that sent Him, and the Father said of Him: "This is my beloved Son in whom is all my delight." Not only did Jesus stand in this most blessed filial relationship to the Father, but there existed that which goes along with that relationship when it is perfect—absolute oneness of mind with, and subjection to the Father. This is illustrated in the case of Paul and Timothy when Paul says of him: "I have no man *like minded . . . as a son with a father* he hath served with me in the Gospel" (Phil. 2. 20, 22). If we keep that thought before us it will help us to understand this fellowship.

In His life here the Lord stood alone in this complete subjection to the will of God, but by His death and resurrection the way has been opened up for others to stand in it with Him, to be partners with Him in a partnership to which He gives His own blessed character. With this end in view He is our Lord. God has called us by the gospel to yield to the authority of the Lord and to have Him as our Director and Resource. As OUR LORD, it is His mind that governs the fellowship—the mind of Christ (chap. 2. 16). As GOD'S SON He gives to it His

own character—that filial character of which we have spoken and which is so delightful to God. So that this fellowship is something for God; it is really the extension of what Christ was when here, and it includes all who are *sanctified in Christ Jesus* (verse 2); but it cannot be enjoyed by any who are not subject to the Lord, or who do not delight in that blessed filial love of the Son of God that called forth the Father's full approval. Self-will and self pleasing belong to another sphere of things entirely.

It was clearly demonstrated how blessed a fellowship it was in the early history of the church, but it should be just as plain that a continuance of the joy and power of it depended entirely upon the mind of Christ being dominant in it, "the mind that was in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2.). When the carnal mind began to assert itself all kinds of confusion invaded that sphere of peace, and so we find it in the church at Corinth. There men sought their own ways and pleased themselves regardless of the will of God, and this carnality did not only show itself in its grosser forms, but in the conduct and order of the assembly. That phase of it that is most often and severely censured in this Epistle is the dividing of the saints of God into sects and schools. Those who were doing this, probably thought that their conduct was an evidence of their spirituality and they would in consequence look down upon others who were not of their school of thought. But they were carnal, the Lord's authority was set aside by them, they did not seek to please God but themselves. When parties are formed it is the mind of the party makers that control them and not the mind of the Lord, and every party within the one church to-day was formed and is maintained either in ignorance of, or in defiance of God's call to the fellowship of His Son. There is no greater hindrance to the enjoyment of this fellowship than a party spirit or party conduct, for wherever this is it is carnality, and a subversion of the fellowship.

There are three things in the first three chapters of the Epistle that we need to understand. Chap. 1., Christ crucified—the basis of the fellowship. Chap. 2., The Holy Spirit—the power and intelligence of it. Chap. 3., It is all for God; the saints as the church are God's building, God's tillage, God's dwelling-place, God's temple. Christ crucified strikes at the root of all our pride and prejudices, shows that the wisdom of man in the flesh is folly, and removes him out of the way as worthless, that we might glory in him not at all, but in the Lord who has become everything according to God in the Christian sphere. The Holy Ghost is the uniting power, and the One by whom the blessed things about which we have communion are opened up to us, and by whom the mind of Christ is communicated to us. The fellowship is to be wholly for the glory of God, which shows the holiness of it, and the seriousness of being called to it. Chapter 3. is a searching chapter revealing the fact that we are all either helpers or hinderers of the fellowship, and that God takes account of what we do and how we do it.

Space forbids us to enlarge upon these three things, but they are well worthy of study, and as we consider them we shall see that the fault in the Corinthians was that they had not been transferred in their affections and outlook from self to God. They had not learnt the meaning of the cross, so they pleased themselves; they had not learned that the Spirit only could impart wisdom to them, so they trusted in their own carnal thoughts; they had not awakened to the fact that God had saved them and called them for His own pleasure and had placed them in a sphere where He could, if they were true to it, delight in them. Hence they neither appreciated the blessings, nor fulfilled the responsibilities of the fellowship. That state of things is general to-day, and yet in spite of the countless difficulties created by the will of man, the cross is the same, and the Holy Ghost is the same, and God has not abandoned His purpose. He still calls by the gospel unto this fellowship. The Word has been preserved for us and the Lord abides to direct us by the Word; and it is still possible for us to enjoy the fellowship unto which God has called us through grace.

“Conditional Immortality.”

Will you kindly explain what the advocates of Life, Truth or “Conditional Immortality” stand for. This question is prompted by the receipt of a monthly magazine, “Words of Life,” which is the organ of the Conditional Immortality Mission.—CALCUTTA.

WE have not seen the magazine in question, but the teaching of “Conditional Immortality” is not new. It is, that only those who believe and are saved will exist for ever; for eternal life and a never ending existence are conferred by it. The soul, it is said, is mortal like the body and dies at the death of the body or at the judgment of the great white throne, so that the whole person becomes extinct unless he has received eternal life through faith in the Son of God. It is false and unscriptural teaching.

That the soul does not cease to exist when the body dies is clear from many Scriptures in both Old and New Testaments. Two will suffice: “It is appointed unto men once to die and *after this* the judgment” (Hebrews 9. 27); “Fear Him, which *after He hath killed* hath power to cast into hell; yea I say, Fear Him” (Luke 12. 5). Nor will the bodies

of the dead become extinct, for resurrection has the body in view and all are to be raised either in the resurrection of life, or in the resurrection of damnation (John 5. 28, 29; Revelation 20. 4–15).

The words “destroy,” “destruction,” and “perish” are used in this teaching as though they meant extinction of being, which they never do. Two instances of this will be enough to prove it. In Mark 2. 22 we read that if new wine be put into old bottles it will burst the bottles and the bottles will be *marred*. The word translated *marred* is the same as the one translated *perish* in John 3. 16. “O, Israel, thou hast *destroyed* thyself; but in Me is thy help” (Hosea 13. 9) If Israel had put herself out of existence she would not have needed any help from anyone.

At the base of this teaching lies the fallacy that the life that we possess in

these mortal bodies is the same as that which the beasts possess, and that unless eternal life is given by the Lord men perish in the same sense as the beasts perish. It does not recognize the fact that the making of the beast was one act in creation and the making of man another.

The beasts were called as living creatures after their kind out of the earth, the earth brought them forth; man is the offspring of God. When he was to be made, his creation was a matter of counsel on the part of the Godhead, and after his body was formed of dust and lay an inanimate thing, God breathed into it the breath of life, and man became a living soul, in the image and likeness of

God. He is a moral being placed in responsibility to His Creator to whom he must give an account when death has forced him out of this world into the next. This false teaching weakens the sense of responsibility to God and is a comfortable doctrine for those who are determined to live after their own bent. "Let us eat and drink for to-morrow we die." It also belittles the sacrifice of Christ, for if death is the one and only penalty for sin, and if there is no judgment from God except extinction of being, then He had no need to have cried: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me." And there was no suffering for sins on His part, and 1 Peter 3. 18 is not true.

A Female from the Flock for a Sin Offering.

Can you tell me what is the significance of a female animal being offered instead of a male? This is specified in certain cases as in Sin offering for one of the common people (Lev. 4. 28, 32), the trespass offering (chap. 5. 6). Also in Numbers 15. 27, and 19.—BRIGHOUSE.

IN interpreting the types in the details of them we can only suggest thoughts and you must judge as to the correctness of them. In the male in Scripture, we have signified what is *objective*, in the female what is *subjective*. By objective we mean what is presented to us external to ourselves for our faith and admiration, and which abides the same no matter what our thoughts or feelings about it may be. By subjective we mean the effect of anything in ourselves, this side of things belongs to what is inward, our consciousness, perception, feelings.

Now in those cases where the female sacrifices are specified there seems to come into special prominence the subjective side of things. In the case of the sin offering we have the fourfold and complete departure from God presented. The sin of the priest shows that man has failed in his approach to God, and so robbed God of thanksgiving and praise; the sin of the congregation shows that the whole of mankind has failed and so robbed God of His pleasure in man; the sin of the prince shows that man has failed as set up to maintain righteousness in the earth for God, and by this God has been dishonoured. Now there is no degree in these sides of man's sin, they present to us the way in which God has been robbed of that which is due to Him whether we realize it or not, and Christ

became the sin offering for all that. In each case a male was offered, it is the truth presented objectively. But *one of the common people* presents the particular and individual aspect of sin. It is not a question of what is general, as with the congregation, but each man had to say for himself, "I have sinned," or official as with the priest and the prince, but personal, the sinner had to feel it for himself, and to acknowledge that the sacrifice that he brought was for his own individual sin. To take it out of type. It is not the preaching of Christ as a propitiation for the whole world and that God might be glorified; but my taking it home to myself in contrition of soul and saying, "it was for me." In that there are degrees of apprehension according to the depth of conviction. This thought seems to be borne out in connection with the trespass offering, for if one did not *feel* that he had trespassed against his neighbour the bringing of an offering would be merely formal or hypocritical. Certainly this is the thought in the ashes of the Red Heifer in Numbers 19. For in that wonderful chapter we have in type how a Christian is restored to communion after having failed, and there can be no such restoration if the sin is not *felt*, and if the memory of what Christ suffered—for of this the ashes speak—is not brought home to the soul, producing confession and self-judgment.

The Kingdom of God.

The kingdom of God is likened to many things in the Gospels. Will you kindly help me as to what it is?—F. C. D.

THE kingdom of God is God's dominion, specially over men; it is not yet established in visible power in the world as it will be at the coming of the Lord, for if it was, all evil would be subjugated by it, and we should have no need to pray, "Thy kingdom come." Nevertheless it is here, and is very effectively here, too, but in its moral characteristics.

Only those who are born again can see and enter into it in its present reality (John 3.). The Lord Jesus is the Administrator of it, for God has made Him both *Lord* and *Christ* (Acts 2.). He administers grace and salvation in it, for grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 5. 21). The Holy Ghost is the power in which it subsists, "for the kingdom of God is not in word but in power" (1 Cor. 4. 20); it is not a matter of outward observances, of mere externals and ritual such as satisfied the consciences of men under the law, for "the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Romans 14. 17), and that is what we mean by its moral characteristics. Men come under the authority of the Lord, grace and righteousness are ministered to them, and by the power of the Holy Ghost they are changed; and what God is in His nature and character is formed in their souls and comes out in their lives. The kingdom was established in its present character, by the

preaching of the word by the apostles when they bore witness to the exaltation of Christ and called upon men to own Him as Lord, and it is carried on and extended by the same word.

When the Lord likened it to a grain of mustard seed and leaven which a woman took (Luke 13. 18-21) He was warning His disciples of the wider and worldly aspect that it would assume, for it was to become a sphere of *profession*, including all who are baptized with Christian baptism. The real would be still there and God's true work be carried on in the midst of it, yet outwardly the mere profession would be chiefly in evidence. This is how we see it to-day. Simon Magus (Acts 8.), the first mere professor to enter it, is the type of that which has produced this result, he thought that his money could give him place and power in it. The great tree into which the mustard seed has grown signifies this, it is pride, pretension and power in the world (compare Daniel 3. 10-12 with Luke 13. 19), and is very different in character to the meekness and lowliness of Christ.

Leaven symbolizes evil that works insidiously and spreads and contaminates. Here it is the corruption of doctrine, as we see it in "Modernism" and other anti-Christian teachings that have spread with such rapidity of late years. At the coming of the Lord He will purge out of His kingdom all these things that offend.

THINE, THINE ALONE.

RAPTURED on Thee I gaze,
Lover, divine!

Crying in sweet amaze,
Thou, Thou art mine!

Thrilling to love's sweet call,
My heart Thy captive thrall,
Bursts forth for joy, to fall
Outpoured to Thee!

O Lord, in Thee complete,
Thy love I own.

Adoring at Thy feet,
Thine, Thine alone!

Made Thine through agony,
Purchased, O Lord, by Thee,
My life shall ever be,
Thine, Thine alone!

Clara C. Atwood.

SEARCHED, SAVED, SATISFIED.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

WEARY, hungry and thirsty, He sat at the well side. He, whose power upholds the planets in their tireless processions, and whose opened hand satisfies the need of every living thing, *sat thus* at the well, waiting and alone. *Waiting,* for at that hour came a solitary sinner to that place, weary, hungry and thirsty in another sense, and it was His Father's will that He should meet and bless her there. *Alone,* for He had sent His disciples away to buy meat, thus giving them the opportunity of serving Him, and preventing them from obtruding their unsympathetic presence upon the sacred interview that was to be. Such was His gracious and considerate way with them.

He was to reveal Himself as the Christ who had come into the world to that lonely sinner that day, and to many others also, but who amongst them conceived what it meant to Him to be here, and how feeble is our conception of it? He was the Lord of glory, infinite in His holiness; His eternal dwelling place was the Father's bosom, yet He came and dwelt among us to bring God near to us who were so far away from Him. The world into which He came reeked with moral putrefaction and offensive pride, and He saw it all, knew it all, felt it all according to the holy sensitivity that was inherent in His nature. He changed His circumstances when He came but not His nature. He was just as holy when He moved amid the noise and tumult of those filthy Eastern streets as He was when He sat upon His glorious throne and made the worlds; and because of that unchangeable holiness He was the Man of Sorrows in a world of sin. We hide the most offensive men and repulsive sights behind frowning walls and closed doors, but nothing was hidden from His eyes. We see only what is external, and cannot look into the hearts of others to discover the corruption that

is there nor plumb the depths of evil in our own, but He knew all men and needed not that any should testify to Him of men, for He knew what was in every one of them.

I speak not of that more terrible experience through which He had to pass when He was made sin for us upon the cross, and when in the sinner's place He passed through all that it meant to be abandoned of God and to sink down beneath His righteous judgment as our substitute. No mind of man can grasp what that meant to Him, but all that was necessary if the grace of God that He brought into the world was to reach us. We often think of that, and not too often. Now I would press this other side, the side of His sorrow as the Perfect Man in a polluted world.

It is impossible that we should understand or illustrate what it meant to Him to come from unsullied light to a sinful world, but I recall an experience that may help. I was invited to a leper colony in the West Indies, to preach the Gospel to the pitiable wretches within it whose only door out of their prison was death. One hundred and forty of them gathered in the little meeting house of the colony. A moving sight—the faces of many of them were distorted out of all human semblance, and the atmosphere was foul with their corruption, producing in me violent nausea. I wondered greatly at the altruistic heroism and love and pity that could have moved the Christian doctor and matron to live and labour there and to give their lives for the sakes of those dying negroes. But from them my thoughts turned to the Lord who came to live amongst men, a race of moral lepers, and what is physical corruption in comparison with spiritual and moral corruption? It was Divine love that made Him do it, love that transcends all human speech and thought; it alone brought Him here not to be ministered

unto but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many. And this calls not for admiration as we might justly yield to fellow mortals who do great deeds, but for adoration, for worship such as only ransomed souls can give to the God of all grace.

He was full of grace as the world was full of sin, but the grace in Him was greater than the sin that was in the world, and so it showed itself to be when the Samaritan woman arrived at the well. He was there to give to her as only the giving God could give, if she would but ask of Him, but she did not know Him and so she did not ask. Then He took the place of the suppliant and begged a drink of her. That was within her power to give Him, and He needed it! It is a marvellous thing to contemplate. He who could change water into wine for the joy of others would put forth no power for His own necessities. She marvelled that He, a Jew, as she supposed Him to be, should condescend to ask a favour of her, and his disciples marvelled also when they came and found Him talking with her. They had only known the pride that was in the heart of the Jew that would not bemean itself to talk with a despised Samaritan, they had yet to learn what that grace was that could go down to the deepest depths of the sinner's degradation to meet and remove it.

The result of the interview was as marvellous as the interview itself. The sinner was changed by it, completely changed, as every soul is changed to whom the Lord reveals Himself as He revealed Himself to her, and she ran to tell the news and bring back others to Him. What He had done for her He could do for all. So she cried, "Come and see." This knowledge that she had acquired of Him was not for herself alone, it was for all, for was not He the Christ?

It is not difficult to imagine what she would say to those who were drawn together by her enthusiasm.

"You men of the city shunned me, and no Jew on earth would have had dealings with me, but He talked to me, He sat by my side and unfolded wonderful things to me of which I had never heard." And they would reply, "Ah, but He did not know you. If He had known you as we know you He would have shunned you as we have shunned you." "Not know me!" she would answer. "Why He knew me through and through and yet He did not spurn me. *He told me all things that ever I did*, and yet did not make me afraid. He exposed my sin but He revealed Himself. *Is not this the Christ?*"

It was all grace. Grace that looks for no merit in the objects of it; that only looks for needy, empty hearts to display what it is in itself; and no need is too vast, no sin too great, no sinner too far away for this grace of God that is in Christ, it is grace abounding. The grace of God that bringeth salvation. Yet let none think that grace makes light of sin, or that God is ignorant of the depths of evil in the soul that He blesses. No, grace shows sin to be exceeding sinful, but shows that God is greater than it. Grace shows that God knows the worst, but blesses in spite of all He knows. And this Samaritan sinner, a typical case, for there is no difference, for all have sinned, was made to realize in the presence of the Lord that He knew all, for He told her all that ever she did. She was SEARCHED before she was SAVED; but the One who searched her did so in order to save her. The disclosure of what she was prepared her to appreciate the revelation of Himself. And what a joy it must have been to Him to say to her, "I am He."

When first He spoke to her, she only saw a Jew in Him, and marvelled that He should talk with her. She could have no hope from a Jew, or from any other man; all in whom she had trusted had failed her, and all who knew her shunned her; to whom could

she turn, poor, harried, deceived, disappointed, degraded, unsatisfied woman? Now her conscience had been searched by the light, and with the conviction of sin, a new hope had sprung up in her soul; it is always so while grace reigns, and she cried, "When Messias cometh which is called Christ, He will tell us all things." Her hope was in Him, her weary heart cried out for Him, He only could speak the words that her now repentant soul longed to hear; there was none other than He. When He appeared all darkness, doubt, and difficulty would disappear. Christ was all she needed, for Him she looked. Amazing fact, He was there, and waited no longer to make Himself known. "I that speak unto thee am He," said He.

Then her eyes were opened, and she saw, she was saved and satisfied. And as she passed from darkness to light He was compensated for all the weariness and toil, and His joy was full in the midst of sorrow and grief.

The revelation of Himself was salva-

tion to her as it is to all to whom He reveals Himself. But that was only the beginning. He was full of *truth* as well as full of *grace*, and all the truth came out in Him. God was to be known and worshipped as Father, and Christ revealed Him as such; and the Holy Ghost was to be given to be a spring of Divine joy and satisfaction within the hearts of those who believe—the power of a new life that should find its never-ending joy in God; and Christ it was who should give the Spirit. All depends upon Him. Yet before this could be He had to die and rise again and ascend to His Father and our Father, to His God and our God, for the new life and endless satisfaction into which He brings those whom He has searched and saved, is not of the flesh but the Spirit; it is not of the earth, it belongs to heaven. A wonderful story is this that is unfolded for us in John 4. It is grace and truth brought livingly before us in the Person of our Lord, and the effect of it in the sinner whom He SEARCHED, SAVED AND SATISFIED.

"I will hear what God the Lord will speak." Ps. 85. 8.

TO enter the place of a *doer* before you have occupied that of a *hearer* is to reverse God's order and throw everything into confusion.

If God is not first in the ear, He is not sanctified in the heart, nor is He rightly confessed with the mouth.

Bernard has tritely described a Christian as, "One that willingly *hears* what is taught, and wisely *understands* what he heareth, and diligently *practices* what he understandeth."

For the first *faith* is needed, for the second the Holy Spirit, for the third the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

"Quicken Thou me in Thy way." Ps. 119. 37.

A DAY'S walk with God will do more to awaken awe, wonder and amazement in your soul than would a century of travel through the sights of the earth. He chooses for you a way you know not, that you may be compelled into a thousand intercourses with Him, which will make the journey ever memorable with glory to Him and blessing to you.

Tear to shreds any itinerary of the journey which your imagination may have drawn up.

LIGHT AND LIFE.

(JAMES BOYD.)

Meditations on the Gospel and Epistles of John. No. 3.

HOW marvellous are all the works of God! How perfectly are His creatorial wisdom and power displayed in the things that He has made! Whether we consider the sun in the heavens, or the dust that comes to light in its glorious beams; the innumerable host of shining worlds that, when the darkness gathers over the face of heaven, comes forth to watch over the safety of a slumbering world; or the restless seas whose mad waves dash themselves to spray against the rocks that buttress the earth from the fury of their attack; the well-balanced gravitation of the earth and the attraction of the sun and the heavenly bodies with respect to animal life and vegetation, or the various seasons with their wealth of blessing for the health and sustenance of all, and the providence that over all presides and makes provision for the well-being of the work of His hands: shall we not say with the prophet: "O Lord, how manifold are Thy works! in wisdom hast Thou made them all" (Psa. 104.).

But if His creatorial wisdom and power are displayed in the things that He has made, and if these awake the admiration and praise of our hearts, so that we with enraptured souls declare: "I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being," how much higher shall be the praise and adoration of our hearts when we are led to contemplate by the power of His Holy Spirit the counsels and purposes of His eternal love! If the glory of the universe, that cost Him but the utterance of a word, draws forth the worship of our moral being, what an eternal volume of praise shall the glory of the new creation call forth! a creation that never could have had an existence had it not been for the sorrows and sufferings of the Son, become incarnate in order that He might lay in the blood of His cross an

unshakeable foundation upon which the whole superstructure of the new heaven and earth might be righteously and holily erected! In that creation righteousness shall dwell for ever, and evil shall find no place by which it might enter. There shall be both peace and—

- "Safety—where no foe approaches;
Rest—where toil shall be no more;
Joy—whereon no grief encroaches;
Peace—where strife shall all be o'er.
- "Where deceiver ne'er can enter,
Sin-soiled feet have never trod;
Free, our peaceful feet may venture
In the paradise of God.
- "Drink of life's perennial river,
Feed on life's perennial food,
Christ the fruit of life and giver,
Safe thro' His redeeming blood."

Peter says to Jesus: "Thou hast the words of eternal life." What was there in the words spoken by Him that drew from Peter such a confession? What did he know about words of eternal life? Had he not heard in the Scriptures the words of the prophets? What power compelled the officers, that were sent to the temple to take Him prisoner, to return without Him, and to give the apparently lame excuse for their failure: "Never man spake like this Man"? His words came warm from the heart of the Father, and lost nothing of their unspeakable grace, freshness, fervour, or life-imparting strength in their journey through the lips of Jesus. Speaking to the Father, He says: "I have given unto them the words that Thou gavest Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from Thee, and they have believed that Thou didst send me." And, again, He says: "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." And, again: "If any man hear My words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. 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." The rejection of His words was the rejection of everlasting life ; and so it is as regards the Gospel, for the Gospel is the Word of life.

"That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you." What else was there to declare ? All that God had to say to men was vested in the Son of His bosom. He had come forth from the Father, and was here in this world, a light in the midst of moral darkness. He spoke of the Father, from whom He had come. The leaders of this world speak of the world, for they know nothing else, and the world hears them, for heavenly things have no charm for them. Jesus said to the leaders of the people : "I speak that which I have seen with My Father ; and ye do that which ye have seen with your father." Everything was in this way brought to light. Man's origin came to light by his manner of life in this world ; righteousness, truth, and love pointing out the children of God ; and sin, falsehood, and hatred proclaiming the children of the devil.

The true light, that shone in the words and works done by Jesus in the midst of this dark world, had a life-giving power with it, bringing men out of moral death into life. "The hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God ; and they that hear shall live." The words that He spoke came forth from the heart of the Father, and lost none of their infinite and heavenly fragrance and power of blessing on their way to the ears of men through the lips of Jesus. Where there was no previous work of the Father the resistance with which the word was met turned it aside from its life-imparting mission, and like the dove that was sent out of the ark, it returned rejected to the heart from which it came, to await the last day, the day of retribution, when it shall rise up in judgment against its miserable rejecter : "The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."

"The just shall live by faith" was plainly stated in the past dispensation ; but with the Gospel ringing in the ears of men to-day, we are made to see how difficult it is to get the thoughts of men turned away from their own profitless doing. This simple statement is the Divine denial of the notion that men can gain either righteousness or life by their own works. The principle upon which a man is justified must be the principle upon which he lives ; and the principle upon which he lives must be that upon which he is justified. Fulfil your obligations, and as long as you do so you will live in the life of flesh ; but if you are justified in Christ, it is in Him your life is found. And as Christ is of another order than Adam, then it is another order of life that is yours who are justified in Him. He cannot be your life and not your righteousness ; He must be both righteousness and life to all, or if neither of these, then Judge.

Neither can one be justified by faith, and live by works. If one is justified by faith, it is evident he is not justified by law ; and if he is not justified by law, he is not under it, for it is the measure of his obligations toward God and men. If he keeps it, it will justify him, but if he breaks it it will curse him and slay him. Under law he cannot be justified in any other way than by keeping it ; he cannot appeal to grace to make up his deficiencies ; and faith does not count in the least, for "The law is not of faith, but the man that doeth these things shall live in them" ; that is, he will live as long as he does them ; breaking one commandment he becomes guilty of all.

Then, again, if one were justified by law, his righteousness would be of a human order. Our righteousness must be either man's or God's. There must not be any mixture about it. It must be either human or Divine. It must be altogether that which I have done, or altogether that which God has done, supposing that He intervenes in grace. I must be accepted in *my own* best, or

it must be *God's* best that covers me. But if I fulfil my obligations, so that I cannot justly be numbered with transgressors, I am immune from death; I am entitled to live upon earth, but have no title to heaven.

But if I have taken the place of a sinner before God, and by faith in Christ have found righteousness in Him, then I am made partaker of His life, and am numbered amongst those who are of His race, and whose origin and destiny are of a heavenly character, and who are strangers in this world, and who are only passing through this world as pilgrims to their heavenly home. I am no longer "in the flesh," but "new creation in Christ Jesus." The present condition of the body, that still connects us with this old creation must, by the mighty power of God, undergo a change, and the earthly give place to the heavenly, mortality be swallowed up of life, and not a remnant of the old order be left to link us up with the former state of things; the old shall have passed altogether away, and all things shall have become new.

That eternal life that had been with the Father was the life that was declared to us by the apostles. That life had ever been with the Father, for it was the life of Divine persons, but, never till the Son took flesh and blood had it come into manifestation. The disciples saw it, when they saw His glory, the glory of an only-begotten Son with His Father. Before the beginning of the works of God this life in all its strength, sweetness, and glorious characteristics, existed in the holy Trinity in Unity. Nothing was, or could be, added to it by the incarnation of the Son. That which was manifested was that which had ever been. It was with the Father in the Son of His love. It was no creation of God: it was His own life, but in the Son for us in the counsel and purpose of God. It would be a fatal mistake to suppose that it had its beginning when it became manifest. It is as eternal as the Son and the Father, and to these

Divine persons no beginning can be attributed.

It will not do to say that Father and Son are but names taken in connection with the revelation, for the revelation is of that which exists. The Son has declared the Father. He says: "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world." It will not do to say that He came forth from another Person of the Deity, who took the name of Father with relation to Him in incarnation. I may be told that the very name Father denies eternity to itself, as also does that of Son, for it is manifestly impossible for such relationships to have eternal existence. But such an argument is founded upon the knowledge that we possess from creature relationships, and not from the revelation given to us of God. If the point of His departure was the Father's side and that He the Son was with the Father before He gave up the form of God, we had better make no attempt to fit this mystery into the mould of human relationships. We do not know Divine relationships by knowing them as found in this fallen world. We know them by Divine revelation, though the Spirit of God may use the earthly to help us to understand the heavenly; but we must not think that they are alike in every particular.

"That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ." If we have the life and nature of the Persons of the Godhead we cannot but have fellowship with them. Having the moral nature of fallen men our fellowship with them is of the most intimate character. Our thoughts, desires, and affections, flow from the life and nature that we possess, "They that are after the flesh mind the things of the flesh," and that is all corruption. But "They that are after the Spirit mind the things of the Spirit," and that is life and peace.

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH. No. VII: The Deity of Jesus.

(A. J. POLLOCK.)

WE come now to a very vital point in Christian doctrine—one around which controversy has raged all through the Christian era. Satan's ceaseless attack has been directed against the doctrine of the Deity of Jesus. If that doctrine is allowed, it puts everything in Scripture in proper perspective—the miraculous birth of Christ, His miracles, His speech, either directly or by powerful implication claiming to be what He was, His death and His ascension can all be looked at in a right way.

In the early Christian church and all down the ages Christians have cherished this as a very cardinal doctrine of their faith.

Pliny, the younger, writing to the Roman Emperor Trajan, reports to his imperial master with the impartiality of one who is reporting facts, elicited in cross-examination of the Christians, "The Christians meet before daybreak, and sing among themselves, a hymn to Christ as God." The Emperor Adrian writing to Servian describes the population of Alexandria as divided between the worship of Christ and the worship of Serapis. Lucian in the 2nd century A.D. said with contemptuous sarcasm, "The Christians are still worshipping that great man who was gibbeted in Palestine."

In those far-off days every Christian worshipped Jesus as God. Alas! in these last days apostasy has set in in the Christian church, and you can find professing Christians, who deny the very deity of our Lord. This is the rock upon which they split. The person of Christ becomes to such "a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence" (1 Peter 2. 8), but how vital is their mistake, for we read, "Who-soever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it shall grind him to powder" (Luke 20. 18).

It is upon no isolated passage of

Scripture that the claim of our Lord's Deity is made. There is abundant evidence. The whole life, acts, and speech of Jesus would be wicked to the last degree were He not "God . . . manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. 3. 16); whereas such was their character and such His person that He could say, "I am the Light of the world" (John 13. 12).

What mere man could say this? Such an expression could not have fallen from the lips of Moses or Isaiah, or John the Baptist or Peter or Paul. To have made such a claim in their case would have been unspeakable blasphemy, and would have utterly destroyed their testimony as servants of the Lord; but in our Lord's case to have said less would have been for us unspeakable loss.

We stand here on the brink of a fathomless mystery, and we may go no further. The Lord Himself states the limits of our possible knowledge on this profound subject. "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father" (Matt. 11. 27). The person of Jesus is an inscrutable mystery, which no human intelligence can understand. The intellectual powers and wit of men are of no use here. It must be so. If I, a mere creature, could understand the Creator, I should no longer be a creature. The lowly Jesus here on earth, the Son of Mary, a true Man among men, ever was, is, and ever will be God. Who can understand this mystery? No wit of man can, but faith can receive and rejoice in the testimony of Scripture, and the heart can bow in lowly adoration like Thomas of old, and say, "My Lord and my God."

Isaiah, the royal prophet, could write, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace"

(Isa. 9. 6). Here we have predicated of the same Person that He is a Child of Days and the Father of Eternity. Would an uninspired writer in his wildest dreams have ever put upon record such an impossibility from a human standpoint? And yet it is blessedly true, and the whole glory of God and the blessing of man depends upon the great truth of Christ being "God manifest in the flesh."

In the same way John writes: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The Same was in the beginning with God" (John 1. 1, 2). "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1. 14). Here we have affirmed—

1. The pre-existence of the Word before all things created.
2. His distinct personality in the Godhead.
3. His full Deity.
4. His true Humanity.

The affirmation is as distinct as can be on all these heads. Substitute the name of Abraham or Moses, or Isaiah or Paul, or any servant of the Lord for the Word, and how blasphemous would be the substitution. But in learning what John by inspiration has to say of the Word we have a sense of fitness and proportion, and without such knowledge we should have no adequate sense of the Person and work of our adorable Lord.

Take the titles of the blessed Lord as given in John 1. and they can fit no other person.

The Word.

The Light.

The only-begotten of the Father.

Christ—Messias (The Anointed).

The Lord.

The Lamb of God.

The Baptizer with the Holy Ghost.

Master.

Jesus of Nazareth.

Son of God.

King of Israel.

Son of Man.

This is a dazzling galaxy of glory to be compressed within the narrow compass of one short chapter.

Take the self-assertion of Jesus in the Gospel of John. Self-assertion in man is wrong, his place is in the dust; in the case of the Lord entirely necessary, for unless He revealed who and what He was we should never have known it. The true knowledge of Christ is necessary for the very foundations of our faith.

Chap. 6. 48, "*I am that Bread of Life.*"

Chap. 8. 12, "*I am the Light of the world.*"

Chap. 10. 7, "*I am the Door of the Sheep.*"

Chap. 10. 14, "*I am the Good Shepherd.*"

Chap. 11. 25, "*I am the Resurrection and the Life.*"

Chap. 14. 6, "*I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.*"

Chap. 15. 1, "*I am the True Vine.*"

To these may be added similar assertions recorded by the same writer in the Revelation.

Chap. 1. 8, "*I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.*"

Chap. 1. 17, 18, "*I am the First and the Last: I am He that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell [hades] and of death.*"

Chap. 3. 7, "*These things saith He that is holy, He that is true, He that hath the key of David, He that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth and no man openeth.*"

Chap. 3. 14, "*These things saith The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the Creation of God.*"

Chap. 22. 16, "*I am the Root of the Offspring of David, and The Bright and Morning Star.*"

Scarcely one of these titles could be

applicable to the blessed Lord if He were not a Man and had died. For instance, how could He say, "I am the Resurrection," had He not died and risen again? And yet how could they be predicated of Him unless He were also God? What creature could answer to this description? But admit that Jesus was "God manifest in the flesh" and all is plain and simple and understandable.

But there are two instances in the Gospel of John where the assertion is of absolute deity.

Chap. 8. 58, "Before Abraham was I AM."

Chap. 18. 6, "As soon then as He had said unto them I AM [*he*], they went backward and fell to the ground."

The other assertions could not have been made unless He had become Man, in the light of His atoning death and glorious resurrection, they involve in the fullest sense His Deity as giving character to His humanity—one blessed Person. What mere creature, the greatest conceivable let it be granted, could say, "I am the Light of the world," and how could He be the Light of the world save as "God manifest in the flesh," and in the light of His death and resurrection?

The claims are of the loftiest nature, universal in their character, stretching back to timeless eternity and looking forward to timeless eternity, presenting Jesus as the exclusive depository of blessing to man. Such claims are either absolutely true and blessed beyond words, or else are the most blasphemous assertions conceivable. But no base man could ever have conceived such assertions. They must be true in the very nature of things. The moral sense of the child of God bows in deepest assent and worship. We are overwhelmed in the presence of such an One.

His whole manner of life was in accordance with these claims. He

lived, moved and had His being in the true knowledge of His Person. He never acknowledged to a mistake. He never apologized for His words or actions. He stated what He was, but never argued about His claims. He stated them, and that was enough. He claimed to be the Son of Man again and again. See Daniel 7. 13, 14 to understand what this means.

When He said, "I and My Father are one" (John 10. 30), the Jews took up stones to stone Him. When asked why they would stone Him they answered, "For a good work we stone Thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God?" They quite well understood the loftiness of His claims.

When He performed miracles there was an ease and dignity comparable to no one. He cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth" (John 11. 43), and death itself yielded its prey, yet when Peter gave healing to the lame man he used the words, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk" (Acts 3. 6), and explained that "His Name through faith in His Name hath made this man strong" (verse 16), and disclaimed that it was by any power or holiness of his own by which the miracle was performed.

Yet, how beautifully He takes the place of the lowly dependent One, sent by the Father to do His will. He tells us that He says nothing and does nothing but what His Father bids Him say and do. Though this is blessedly true, yet He ever acted as One who was "God manifest in the flesh," yet ever the dependent One of the Father. Who can understand the unity of such a Person? None but the Father.

He could claim to be greater than the temple; Lord of the sabbath; greater than Jonas; greater than Solomon (Matt. 12. 6, 8, 41, 42). He could say to His disciples, "Ye call Me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am" (John 13. 13).

He was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1. 4). In truth the resurrection proves all that Christ claimed to be. God would not have raised an impostor. As soon as Saul of Tarsus learned that the One, whom he treated in his blind zeal for God as an impostor, was at the right hand of God, in a moment his proud will was broken, and he who persecuted to the death God's people, preached the faith which once he destroyed.

No historical event has better proof than that of the resurrection of Christ, and that resurrection was God's seal upon every word that Christ spoke, every deed that He did, and especially upon the character of the work that He did upon the cross. The resurrection is the Divine upholding of every claim made by Christ.

Heb. 1. 6 says, "And again, when He bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, He saith, And let all the angels of God worship Him." Would God call upon the angels, a higher creation than man, to worship that Babe born in Bethlehem's inn and cradled in its manger, were He only the child of Joseph and Mary, that and nothing more? Impossible! To ask the question is to answer it.

Col. 2. 9 says, "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." There is no ambiguity about this statement. It could not be more concise—it could not be fuller. Ten words, yet an ocean of meaning is conveyed.

1 John 5. 21 affirms of Jesus, "This is the true God, and Eternal Life." Could affirmation be more direct?

It is one mark of anti-Christian religions, masquerading as Christian, that they one and all unite in denying the Deity of Jesus. On other points they differ widely but in this they agree, betraying their common origin, hell itself. The branches of a tree may travel in contrary directions, but they are supported by the same trunk and fed by the same roots.

I well remember a man, who had been delivered from one of these anti-Christian systems, and who had travelled a considerable distance to thank me for his deliverance through reading a pamphlet, which I had been privileged to write on the subject, saying with great emphasis and joy, "It was that verse that set me free, 'And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee BEFORE THE WORLD WAS'" (1 John 17. 5). That one verse is sufficient, if understood, to destroy utterly all the anti-Christian religions in the world.

The subject is so immense, the scriptural proofs so numerous, that one is only able merely to quote in a very desultory surface fashion a mere tithe of what could be said on this entrancing theme.

It is a vein of purest gold, which the believer will find profitable in working out from Genesis to Revelation.

Believing in Christ.

SUDDENLY, as I thought, I saw the Lord Jesus look down from heaven upon me, and saying, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. . . . Then I said, But, Lord, what is believing? And then I saw from that saying (He that cometh to Me shall never hunger, and he that

believeth on Me shall never thirst) that believing and coming was all one; and that he that came, that is, ran out in his heart and affections after salvation by Christ, he indeed believed in Christ. . . . And now was my heart full of joy.—JOHN BUNYAN.

A STUDY OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

Chapter 3. *Continued.*

(G. J. STEWART.)

THE house in one form or another has been always in view since Israel sang their song of triumph at the Red Sea. Three views of it are given in the passage before us—the Tabernacle; the assembly, “whose house are we”; and the universe as built for God to dwell in.

When the Tabernacle waxed old, the thought was continued in the Temple, twice rebuilt, but the same house. This failing, it was taken up by Christ Himself, who said of His body, “Destroy this Temple and in three days I will raise it up again.” After His death and resurrection, Atonement having been wrought therein in all its aspects, He builds now that house of which He says, “Upon this rock I will build My assembly,” the rock being Christ, the Son of the living God. In millennial days, the assembly, the heavenly city, the Bride the Lamb’s wife, will answer to the holiest; while in the eternal state the Tabernacle of God is with men and He dwells with them. It is looked at as the same house all through, but in different stages. So it is said, “The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former” (Hag. 2. 9).

It may be seen from the above that the most important and wondrous aspect of the house, after Christ Himself, is the present aspect—“Whose house are we.” Though in its provisional stage now, it retains its position in spite of failure as time unrolls God’s counsels, until eternity declares its full glory.

We, then, are God’s house to-day: a wonderful dignity! Christ as Son is over it, and all the government is in His hands. The Spirit speaks in it testifying of the rest to come: God’s glad tidings—His own rest. It is a wonderful building composed of living stones builded together; living men who form one household. The government never really slips out of the

hands of the Son, however much man may usurp it. All the confusion which results from this usurpation is only really part of His government and because of the usurpation itself.

In connection with this house Christ Jesus exercises His Apostolate and High Priesthood at the present time for us. He is still giving light, though there is no fresh revelation. The end of chap. 4. carries on what is here introduced—the Word of God is living and operative. This is the voice of Christ as Apostle, by the Holy Spirit, heard in the house; to which we do well that we take heed and to which the true soul turns amid the perplexities of the wilderness. There also the effects of the High Priesthood of Christ are known and experienced.

How much better is the government of God’s house in the hands of the Son when recognized, than in Moses’ hands! How infinitely above all that parody of government in the hands of those who are but the subjects of it themselves! There can be no true administration but in the hands of Him who is faithful to Him that constituted Him Apostle.

But there is an “if” here, showing that the house is set forth provisionally and as:

IN THE WILDERNESS.

“If ye hold fast the beginning of your confidence and the rejoicing of the hope (glory) firm unto the end” (verse 6). This indicates that only those who come right through to the end will compose the house finally; it can only be formed of true men. There is a profession which may not be real, and indeed is not all real. It is likened to a great house which will come under judgment in 2 Tim. 2. God in mercy dwells in this house among His people upon the basis of redemption, spite of its defection, and this necessitates government and priesthood.

QUESTIONS RAISED BY YOUNG CHRISTIANS.

Under this heading, we propose, as far as we are able, to answer questions and meet exercises that are continually arising in the experience of young Christians. With this end in view we invite such to write to us as to their difficulties.

God's Full Knowledge of us.

A young Christian writes complaining of failure and disappointment in the endeavour to live unto God, says, "Yet God knows my heart and sees all the desires and motives that are there; I wish sometimes that He did not."

YOUR greatest need is the knowledge of the grace of God. When you do know His grace, sovereign and unconditional as it is, you will never wish to have anything in your heart and life hidden from Him. There can be no comfort, no lasting peace unless we see that He knows all and has seen all. If we could hide anything from Him we should ever be in the fear that He would by some means discover it, and what then? Take the prodigal (Luke 15.) as an illustration. If he had not been able to say "I have sinned . . . in Thy sight," he could not have been completely at rest. He would have been always fearing that some old companion of his evil days would arrive at his father's house to tell the full story of his shame, and then that his father, discovering all, would drive him from his door. But instead of being in that state of fear he had perfect rest about it all. He could say, my father knows all and has forgiven all; he has seen all and covered all he has seen; he knows the worst about me and has given me the best. He has kissed me, clothed me and fed me, and made his whole house rejoice over me, the vile, the guilty; me, who was lost and is found, who was dead and is alive again! And so may we say, for such is the grace with which we are blest. And such unconditional blessing is just what grace is.

Having been saved by grace, we stand in grace (1 Peter 5. 12). God's attitude towards us will never change, He will always act towards us in grace. Never shall we be put upon the ground of law before Him. The spring of our blessing will always be in Him as revealed to us in His beloved Son, and

not in us; the cause of our blessing and its continuation is what He is and not what we are. If He could change as we do, then the grace in which we stand could change, but that is impossible; our blessing is based upon the immutability of the blessed God, it is as sure as His word and as stable as His throne.

He knows all that is in our hearts; He has no discoveries to make in regard to us, for He knew all that we had been and all that we would be before ever He took us up at all. We have discoveries as to what we are to make, and He would have us to make them in His presence and not in the presence of Satan's temptations and power. If we discover what we are in His presence, He is there in all the plenitude of His grace, and Christ is there in all the value of His work, and our hearts are made to rejoice that His grace is greater than all our sin, and we find that we can turn from what we are to what He is, and occupation with Him is better than occupation with self. But if we learn what we are by falling under Satan's temptation, shame and bitterness of soul are ours, and the lesson that we must learn is learnt in a hard school. Yet even then God does not change His feelings and attitude towards us, and we can tell Him everything who knows all, and be assured of His forgiveness and restoration to communion; and a sense of forgiveness before Him is a very blessed experience. "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven and whose sin is covered." God has no sympathy with our sin, but He deals very tenderly with us when we confess all to Him.

The Will of God.

We have also received the following. " *These questions arise from a genuine desire to know how to put into practice some of the great truths of Scripture. We learn from many passages in the New Testament that the one grand aim and object of our lives should be, to do the will of God: (a) What is the scope of His will? (b) Could it be summed up by the Lord's own words 'follow Me,' since we are told that He came to do the will of God? (c) How are we to be maintained in this pathway?* "

THE scope of God's will reaches up to the highest point of His purpose in Christ, and down to the smallest detail of our lives. In the first we are lifted up to Christ where He is, in the second He is brought down to us where we are. The first sets forth the favour in which we are in Christ before God, the second the grace that there is for us in Christ for all the vicissitudes of the life of faith and obedience below. It is Christ either way, we in Him on the one hand, He for us on the other. We are instructed as to the first in the early or doctrinal parts of such epistles as those to the Ephesians and Colossians, as to the latter in the practical or hortatory parts of these and other Epistles. Indeed, we cannot leave out any part of the Word, if we are to stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.

But we gather from your letter and other questions in it that your exercises lie more on the side of your daily life, and that your desire is to please God in all things, and to know His will in matters about which the Word gives no special direction. "To begin well is half the battle" is an old saying, and it is certainly that and more in this matter. To begin with the desire to do His will is to begin well. How often we wish that the thing that we would like was His will for us. Our desire is for our own will, and we pray, perhaps eagerly and often, that it might be so. A little girl one night added to her usual prayer, "And please God make Manchester the chief city in Great Britain." "Whatever made you pray like that?" asked her mother. "I said it was in my exam. paper to-day," answered the tearful and doubtful little

maid, "and I want it to be." Yes, often we want a thing to be, and want it so passionately that we are not in a fit state of mind and heart to learn what the will of God is.

"If any man will do His will he shall know . . ." There we must begin, and we do begin there when we understand that God's will for us in everything springs from His great love; that it is not against us at any point, but is against everything that would be harmful to us. This is proved in the Epistle to the Romans. There we are able to trace out all the way that God has taken to bless us and we have to exclaim at the end of the review, God is for us, who can be against us? And "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him freely give us all things?" (Romans 8. 32). Can we trust a love like that? A love that would stop at nothing when our good was in view! Then let us trust it fully and say, The will of God is good, perfect and acceptable (chap. 12. 2). But to prove it there must be subjection to God. But is subjection difficult when it is perfect love that asks for it? "Yield yourselves unto God as those alive from the dead" (chap. 6. 13) is such a reasonable exhortation that the heart that knows His love responds to it naturally and at once.

Granted then the willing mind to be subject to God, and that confidence of heart that trusts Him and leaves consequences with Him, since He sees the end from the beginning and cares for us with a Father's love and care, the next thing needed is nearness to Himself. If we walk with God as Enoch and Noah and Abraham did,

we shall become conversant with His will even when it has not been definitely expressed. We can understand this in natural things. I knew a boy who when asked to do certain things said, "No, my father would not wish me to do that." Yet his father had expressed no will as to the matter at all. The lad knew his father's thoughts through companionship with him and did not require a definite word on the matter.

Psalm 32. 8, 9 show us God's way of leading us. "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye." But such guidance calls for nearness to God and that sensitiveness of soul that responds to His instruction. If we are not near Him we are like the horse or mule that does not know its owner's will except by the check and pull of the bit and bridle. This life of nearness to God and obedience to His will was perfectly portrayed for us in the Lord's life on earth. He is our pattern.

We are maintained in this path by the grace and company of the Lord Himself, and apart from Him we could not tread it, for often—

"Across the will of nature, leads on the path of God,
Not where the flesh delighteth, the feet of Jesus trod."

Yet when we step out on that path,
"We leave at once behind us the fetters of the slave,
We leave ourselves behind us, the grave clothes and the grave."

It is the path for those who are alive from the dead, and immediately we step into it we find that we have a travelling companion. He hath said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Hebrews 13. 5). "Thou art with me, Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me" (Psa. 23). Cultivate the thought of the Lord as YOUR TRAVELLING COMPANION in the path of faith and obedience to God's will, and the sufficiency of His grace for you in it will not be a doctrine only but a blessed experience. He comes down to us in all the sufficiency of His grace to keep us from stumbling in the path of God's will, and at the end of it He will present us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, and to Him be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. Amen.

"Let your requests be made known unto God."

LET none of you hold his prayer cheap; He to whom we pray holdeth it not cheap. One of two things we may without doubt hope, that He will either give us what we ask, or what He knoweth to be more useful to us. For we know not what

to ask for as we ought, but He hath pity on our ignorance. He graciously receiveth prayer, but He giveth not, either what is not altogether good for us or what need not be given us yet. But the prayer will not be without fruit.

"He careth for you."

[F I could only surely know
That all these things that tire me so
Were noticed by my Lord—
The pang that cuts me like a knife.
The lesser pains of daily life,
The noise, the weariness, the strife—
What peace it would afford!

Dear Lord! my heart shall no more
doubt
That Thou dost compass me about
With sympathy Divine!
The Love for me once crucified
Is not the Love to leave my side,
But waiteth ever to divide
Each smallest care of mine.

REVELATION AND INTERPRETATION.

(S. E. McNAIR).

WE should never have known the Father if the Son had not revealed Him to us. The greatest of the Old Testament saints—Moses or David, for instance—drew very near to God and learnt much of His grace and goodness, but the feeling of the multitude was, "Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us lest we die" (Exod. 20. 19). So Moses, David and the prophets delivered the Word they received from God to Israel, but Christ revealed the Father to us. He is the Word.

We could have known nothing of the Father's loving-kindnesses if Christ had not revealed them to us in our common human life. How little we should have known of the counsels of His grace, if Christ had not spoken to us the words that the Father gave Him to speak (John 12. 50); or have appreciated the extent of His limitless power to save, if Christ had not done the "works" that the Father gave Him to do! (John 5. 36).

We may believe that *to make the Father known to men* was the greatest work for which Christ came to earth, so the wording of John 17.: "I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do," may perhaps refer less to the then future work of redemption than to what He had already done: "I have glorified Thee . . . I have manifested Thy name. . . ." Though this could not have been completed apart from the work of redemption.

Where the Father was unknown and God misunderstood, it must have been a great joy to the heart of Christ to declare Him aright, so that men might feel that God was revealed and indeed come near to them in grace. How grievous it would have been to Him, had such a thing been possible, to have by look or word or deed in any way *misinterpreted the Father* to men! But He could always say, in every circumstance, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."

One must not attempt to discuss such a theme exhaustively in the limits of this paper, because room must be left for a further truth that develops out of it: *Just as Christ revealed the Father to us, so we must interpret what is revealed, and in so doing interpret Christ to the world.* Many of our neighbours will not come to know Christ unless they first see His graces revealed in His people.

Some, indeed, may find Him declared in the written Word, but many will not. They will not read *it*, but they do not cease to read *us*, and everything they see in us either commends Christ to them or leads them to think ill of Him and His influence over His people.

We may rightly think it as great a privilege to interpret Christ to men, in the terms of our common, every-day twentieth century life, as it is to preach to them a Gospel of deliverance from the wrath to come. And whatever there is of Christ in us—His grace, His loving-kindness, His holiness, His purity—if it be a living reality, will perhaps take root and bear fruit also in other lives. The two are brought together in Phil. 2., "holding forth the word of life," and "shining as lights."

We read: "As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world," not, of course, as redeemers, nor yet as *revealers* exactly, but as interpreters: He revealing the Father to us; we interpreting Christ to men.

It is not only the unsaved who may learn Christ in His people, or who may need some such near, present-day interpretation of Him. "Christ in you" may not only mean the hope of glory for yourself hereafter, but may prove a means of grace to me to-day. There are moments when our Saviour may seem to us remote—in a distant century and other circumstances—and temptation assaults us just here, where

we walk now, so far from where He walked then. But if a fellow-believer, circumstanced as we are, displays the overcoming grace of Christ in such circumstances as ours, all that is of Christ in him may be a blessing to our souls, and may livingly interpret our Saviour to us, and encourage us to turn to Him for the grace displayed in the fellow believer.

To "Show forth the virtues of Him who hath called us" may well be thought the highest service which we are allowed. We can none of us show *all* that Christ is, but we may each

show something of His perfections; and none of us need show anything that He is not. How very important this makes every act of the daily life! Does our every look and word and deed interpret Christ to men—remind them of His love and holiness? Only through the power of the Spirit of God—the Spirit that filled His life—can this be the case.

Christ could say, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." Can our acquaintances say that they have learnt more of Christ since they have associated with us?

CHRIST "FORMED IN YOU."

(F. B. HOLE.)

A SERVANT of God like the Apostle Paul, who combined in himself both the evangelist and the shepherd of souls, could not rest content with the outward profession of conversion or the outward assumption of the Christian place, no matter how many such professions there were. Nothing but inward reality would satisfy him. The churches of Galatia had their origin in the enthusiastic reception they gave to Paul and his message. In his epistle to them he does not deny their profession nor their church position, but he does express grave apprehension as to them, and an anxiety so acute as to be comparable to birth-pangs, because as yet he could not recognize that Christ was found in them and consequently he had to say, "I stand in doubt of you" (4. 19, 20).

We call attention to this because the tendency to rest content with mere profession is very strong at the present day. It is good when souls profess faith in Christ, and thereby take the place of being "in Christ"—whether they realize the meaning of that term or not. What the true servant of Christ longs for, however, is to find Christ formed in souls, for then *he knows* they are in Christ, and all doubt of them is removed from his mind.

In the latter part of Romans 5. we

have man's need, and the Divine intervention in view of man's need considered from the standpoint, not of offences, but of nature and heredity. Adam was, as we may call him, the old fountain-head of humanity, and alas! that fountain and the stream which has proceeded from it are hopelessly defiled and corrupt. God has intervened by raising up a new fountain-head in Christ, once obedient unto death and now risen from the dead. Here all is perfection and by the full gift of grace the believer comes under this new Headship and partakes of this new source of life. We have not read far into chapter 6. before we meet with the expression "in Christ Jesus" for the first time in the epistle as applied to ourselves. We are to reckon ourselves "dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus" (6. 11, N.Tr.). We have "eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (6. 23, N.Tr.), and "there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (8. 1).

Just as *in connection with the dispensational ways of God*, Gentiles who by nature are like wild olive branches have been "grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree" (Rom. 9. 24), so, *in connection with God's eternal purpose* have we believers, who were but sinners, whether Jews or Gentiles, been grafted

into Christ, and now stand *in* Christ. In nature the good is always grafted into the worthless stock, in grace, whether it be a question of God's ways or of His vital and eternal purpose, the thing works in the contrary direction. We who believe are of God in Christ Jesus. (See 1 Cor. 1. 30.) By a Divine act of infinite favour we find ourselves to be partakers in the very life and nature of Christ. From Him we derive and in Him we stand.

We are not, however, in Christ apart from the Spirit of God. If Romans 8. 1 speaks of us as "in Christ Jesus," verse 2 speaks of the spirit as "the spirit of life in Christ Jesus," and He indwells us so that He may extend His "law" or control over us, thus liberating us from the control which formerly sin and death exerted within us. As the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus He brings that blessed life into evidence in the saint. As the Spirit of Christ He forms Christ in us; and this is the subjective counterpart to being in Christ.

By way of illustration consider again the matter of grafting. If in nature it were possible to work it in this contrary direction so that a branch of wild olive were grafted into the good olive tree to partake of its root and fatness, what would be the effect? Surely this, that the erstwhile wild olive branch would begin to put forth good and cultivated berries. Thus, and only thus, would it prove to the gardener the reality and effectiveness of the grafting operation. The reality of the branch being *in* the good olive would be attested by the good olive, in the visible shape of its good fruit, being *formed in it*.

Now it was just here that the trouble lay with the Galatians. The true gospel had been preached amongst them, for Paul was the preacher. They had ostensibly received it and were professedly in Christ, but instead of Christ being so definitely formed in them that they were zealous for Him, they were desiring to be under law, and the apostle who was their spiritual

mother was thrown again into birth-pangs of soul on their account.

What would be Paul's state of mind if he stood in the midst of professing Christians to-day? What travail would be his! But Paul is not here. Would it not be well then if we each endured a little travail over this question?—and possibly each endured it over his own case. Self-examination, when it has become a chronic habit, is not good; yet there are moments in all our histories when it is very profitable as leading to self-judgment. If self be judged, then Christ alone fills the vision of the soul. The spirit of self-judgment consequently is always good.

The assembly at Corinth was in a poor condition. In his first epistle Paul plainly tells them that they were carnal. In his second he indicates that they were worldly (see 6. 11-18). It was to such believers that he said, "Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me . . . examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates" (13. 4, 5). That which is by profession the church to-day is swamped in carnality and worldliness. Would not the apostle then say just the same thing to us to-day?

In writing to the Galatians he speaks of himself thus:—"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (2. 20). So Paul was a shining example of that which he desired so earnestly in the Galatians. Later on in the epistle, too, he details for us "the fruit of the Spirit," as "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (5. 22, 23). These nine features set before us the life of Christ. They preach to us Christ *characteristically*—the fruit of the Spirit and the outward result of Christ *formed in us*.

Let each of us earnestly consider these things for, in a day of much outward profession, inward reality is of all importance.

EPAPHRAS, A SERVANT OF CHRIST.

(G. F. EDINGTON.)

IT has pleased God to single out, and bring before our notice, in the Holy Scriptures, certain individuals who have, in their day and generation, stood loyal and true to the testimony committed to them. Doubtless, the record of such men has been given for the strengthening and encouragement of God's children all down the ages (Rom. 15. 4). In these days of cold intellectualism, and increasing indifference to the claims of God, and the authority of His Word, it is good for us to be recalled to that which shines out so brightly in the lives of those who have trodden the path of faith in days gone by.

The times in which Epaphras lived and laboured made demands upon the Lord's servants, to which only stalwart and wholehearted men could respond. The glad tidings of God's grace to guilty sinners were being published far and wide, throughout the dark strongholds of Satan, his fortresses boldly assailed, and his captives delivered. Wherever the silvery tones of the Gospel were rung out, souls were subdued, under its powerful spell, and multitudes of men and women were rescued from the enemy's grasp. But the adversary was on the alert, and the mighty forces of evil were let loose against such a determined invasion of his territory.

From country to country, from city to city, the rulers of darkness pursued the heralds of the Cross. Stripes and imprisonment, storm and tempest, perils on land and sea, ill-usage from hostile, surging crowds, desertion of professed friends, hunger, pain, privation, and fierce persecution: such was the common lot of those early Gospel pioneers. Nothing short of devotedness to Christ, and confidence in the living God, could maintain these men of God through the mighty conflict.

A man of such sort was Epaphras. He was a close companion of the Apostle Paul: one who had fully identified

himself with "the testimony of the Lord" and the afflictions connected therewith (2 Tim. 1. 8; Philemon 23.). He was essentially "a man of prayer." Scripture bears abundant witness to the fact that "men of prayer" are men of "spiritual power" (Neh. 1., 2., 8.; Dan. 2. 14-23, 46-49). He it was who, after his visit and ministry at Colosse, brought the report of their state to the Apostle Paul: "Their faith in Christ Jesus, and their love to all the saints," the true "hall-mark" of the renewed nature: doubtless also pointing out to the Lord's beloved servant the subtle danger to which these dear saints were particularly exposed (Col. 2. 8, 16-23). Nothing delighted the apostle's heart more than to hear of the soul-prosperity of the saints, and it was ever his joy to recognize and commend all that he saw of Christ in his fellow-labourers, and those who, in faith, identified themselves with the work of the Lord. Accordingly, he thus writes to the believers at Colosse: "Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God." We may ponder the depth and compass of this dear servant's earnest petition to God on behalf of these believers, and remind ourselves that nothing short of this is the desire and design of God for every one of His children. The death and resurrection of Christ has secured eternal redemption for us, and "full conformity" to Christ is God's settled purpose for all who have put their trust in His blessed Son. We have the earnest of this by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, who, if unhindered and ungrieved, will form and mould us after the heavenly pattern, building us up in Christ and leading us into an ever-deepening knowledge and understanding of the will of God. The question for us all is simply this: Are we prepared to allow the Spirit of God a free hand with us, refusing all hindrances to His gracious

activities in our souls?—for in this lies the true secret of spiritual progress.

May we not conclude that Epaphras himself was in the good of that which he so earnestly desired for the saints at Colosse? Notice, Epaphras *laboured fervently* in prayer for these dear believers. There was nothing cold, half-hearted, formal, about his prayers, nor were they spasmodic outbursts, but, with his soul divinely moved on their behalf, his longing desire was to see them entering, in the faith of their souls, into that which was the will of God for them. "I bear him record," says the apostle, "that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea and them in Hierapolis." In his faith and prayers Epaphras takes in three assemblies: a man with a great heart and wide sympathies was he; and we can well suppose that he embraces in his affections the whole family of God on earth. It is only as this is true of us that we can compass in our souls the great thoughts of God for His beloved saints. His close association with Paul would be of the greatest service to him, enlightening him in the wonderful truths of the Christian calling, as only the great apostle of the Gentiles could unfold them: The exaltation of Christ; the sending down of the Holy Ghost; the truth of Christ's union with the assembly; the baptism of all believers into one body; the rapture of the saints, and kindred truths. On the other hand, we may gladly observe the stimulating and energizing effect produced upon the apostle on the return of his dear fellow-servant with his cheering news from Colosse. "We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," he writes, "praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and the love which ye have to all the saints, for the hope which is laid up for you in heaven . . . which is come unto you . . . and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in

truth: as ye also learned of Epaphras, our dear fellow-servant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ; who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit. For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding." Following up the prayers of his friend Epaphras, the apostle, on bended knee, launches out into still deeper and wider fields of spiritual desires, not only for Colosse, Laodicea and Hierapolis, but for every saint of God on earth. May we not well *desire*, and *pray*, that a deeper measure of the spirit of men like Epaphras might characterize the saints of God in our own day? If there is a lack of spiritual energy and feebleness of testimony with many of us—and can we gainsay it?—is the root cause, in many cases, not the neglect of that which shone out so conspicuously in this dear servant of Christ? Habitual, fervent prayer and waiting upon God! Our lot is cast in the perilous days spoken of in 2 Tim. 3. 1-5, and if ever there was the need of urgent prayer, and laying hold upon God, surely it is now. Do we not under-estimate the mighty power which is put at our disposal in our approach to God? And this wonderful privilege is open to the weakest and feeblest of God's dear children. We do not read of Epaphras that he was a great evangelist or a gifted preacher, but the Spirit of God has signalized him as "a servant of Christ," and a whole-hearted "man of prayer." He would have been the last to think or speak of himself as a model or pattern; but God has been pleased to mark him off as one who, in a day when the enemy had ranged his mighty artillery against the Christ of God and His Gospel, stood shoulder to shoulder in the forefront of the battle with the Lord's faithful warriors; and his name has been honourably inscribed in the Holy Scriptures for the cheer and encouragement of all who are set for the interests of Christ in this

world until He comes. The closing notice of Epaphras is given to us in Paul's letter to Philemon, written from the prison at Rome, where the apostle and his friend are still seen united together in the bonds of Jesus Christ. "There salute thee," he writes, "Epaphras, my fellow-prisoner in Christ Jesus" (verse 23).

The Lord's veteran servant has grown grey in the Master's service (verse 9) and Epaphras is by his side. Together they have stood in many a fierce conflict. Sustained by the power of God and the mighty love of Christ, they are still "holding the fort," for the One who is dearer to them than life itself. Paul and Epaphras, and the noble army of men who upheld the banner of the Cross in the early days of the church's history on earth, have passed from the scene and are now in the presence of the One they loved and served so faithfully; but the record of their lives has been handed down to us in the written page of Scripture. For what purpose? Is it not that we, too, should be encouraged to place ourselves, body, soul and spirit, at the disposal of that glorious Person who, at such infinite cost, has made us "His own"?

Evidences are abundant that we are in the closing days of our sojourn here, and that the return of the Lord for His saints may be expected at any moment. One gratifying indication of this is: the revival of affection in the hearts of many of God's children and a great increase of blessing in the Gospel, especially among the young. Surely we may unite in prayer to our God, that this may deepen and increase; and that, in view of the Lord's coming, there might be a widespread stirring up, and an awakening of bridal affections in the hearts of the saints, and a mighty ingathering of precious souls, for the glory of Him whose face we expect so soon to see.

The enemy, with all his subtlety and malice, is powerless against us if Christ has the supreme place in our affections. We have the comfort of knowing that "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under our feet shortly," and we also know that his final doom is registered in the annals of heaven (Rev. 20. 10). Meanwhile "we are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Pet. 1. 5).

Death swallowed up in Victory. 1 Cor. 15. 54.

WHAT a moment of glorious victory will that be! For when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory." No trace of death or its results will be found on

the body of one of that innumerable host of the redeemed. The only memorial of death in God's new creation will be seen in Him who is the Head thereof, for He is there as the Lamb that was slain, and by whose death upon Calvary its stability and unfading glory are secured.

What is Sin?

CHRISTIAN, beware how thou thinkest lightly of sin. Take heed lest thou fall by little and little. Sin, a little thing? Is it not a poison? Who knows its deadliness? Sin, a little thing? Do not the little foxes spoil the grapes? Doth not the tiny coral insect build a rock which wrecks

a navy? Sin, a little thing? It girded the Redeemer's head with thorns and pierced His heart! Could you weigh the least sin in the scales of eternity, you would fly from it as from a serpent. Look upon all sin as that which crucified the Saviour, and you will see it to be "exceeding sinful."

THE MYSTERY OF GOD'S WILL. *Concluded.* (H. J. VINE.

THE riches of the grace of God have abounded in securing not only our present and eternal blessing in Christ, but also in giving us even now intelligence as to the mystery of God's will, according to His own good pleasure to centre up all things in the heavens and on the earth in Christ, in whom we are granted an inheritance in the vast realm of glory of which He is the Head, for we shall share it with Him as the assembly, as His body and His bride. When the glorious administration takes place in the fulness of time Christ will be supreme as Head and Centre of all, and meanwhile in view of this God works all things according to the counsel of His own will, so that we should be to the praise of His glory in the day of Christ's pre-eminence. Having marked us out for sonship according to "the *good pleasure* of His will," the present working out therefore of the "*counsel* of His will" has in view the full display in glory of the "*mystery* of His will." It is the latter of these three which He has made known to us (Eph. i. 5-10).

From God's side this is so, but on our side—Do we understand it? It is one thing to have it told to us in the Scriptures, it is another to make it ours "in all wisdom and spiritual understanding." The importance of this should be rightly valued. A kindly father has planned for the good and pleasure of his family, friends, and household, as well as for his own good

pleasure, to lay out his gardens and grounds in a certain way. His son is in his fullest confidence. They design together, but he desires all the others in the family circle to know also, that they may be in communion with him and have his mind while all is being wrought out. They will benefit when the desired end is reached, but how greatly will the father value their *present* interest in his interests before the end is attained; and how their ways, their instruction, and their communion with the mind of their father will be affected as they enter into his designs. It will surely be so with ourselves, and that increasingly, as we get apprehension in what is before the mind of God. The end which He has in view will certainly be reached, but as it fills our own hearts many minor matters will be understood better by us. The molehills which we had magnified into mountains will assume in our eyes their right proportion, the giants will become as grasshoppers, the difficulties as food for faith, and many inexplicable happenings will be seen clearly to be working for our good as we hourly draw nearer to the full fruition of God's rich designs of glory, honour and praise. With spring in our steps and patience in our souls we shall hasten along the upward way, whilst our rejoicing increases and our communion deepens, for to that end the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has disclosed to us the "mystery of His will" even now.

"What manner of Persons ought ye to be?" 2 Peter 3. 11.

WHAT an assemblage of motives to holiness does the Gospel present! I am a Christian. What then? Why, I am a redeemed sinner, a pardoned rebel, all through grace, and by the most wonderful means which infinite wisdom could devise. I am a Christian. What then? Why, I am a temple of God, and surely I ought to be pure and holy. I am a Christian.

What then? I am a child of God, and ought to be filled with filial love, reverence, joy, and gratitude. I am a Christian. What then? Why, I am a disciple of Christ, and must imitate Him who was meek and lowly in heart, and who pleased not Himself. I am a Christian. What then? Why, I am an heir of Heaven, and hasten on to the abodes of the blessed.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Why so little blessing through Gospel Preaching ?

Can you tell us why we see so little blessing in the Gospel meetings in spite of earnest prayer and faithful preaching ?—LONDON.

THE question is one that should cause deep exercise of heart wherever this dearth of blessing prevails. That the fault is on our side goes without saying, for God is as ready to bless as ever He was, and the message of grace that He sends to men is as full and free as when it reached and blessed us. Then on the side of men, though the majority seem to have cast off all fear of God and are lovers of pleasure more than God, yet they still have burdens and sorrows and fears that nothing but the Gospel can remove; they have sins and needs, and they know and feel it; they still have consciences and hearts to which we can appeal. Why, then, should such a question arise? There are many reasons, and each must discover these for himself; we suggest one only. Can we expect the Word of God to affect the unbelievers if we ourselves are unaffected by it? Will those who hear us become obedient to it if we who preach it disobey it? Will the Spirit of God honour the Word where it is dishonoured by those who professed to uphold it?

The great question for us is, how far we are doing the word of God, for that

is the measure of our love and sincerity. We quote three plain Scriptures in this connection. "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first *be reconciled* to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift" (Matt. 5. 24). Then Peter said unto Him, "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I *forgive* him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, until seven times; but until seventy times seven" (Matt. 18. 21, 22). "Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even *as Christ forgave you, so also do ye*" (Col. 3. 13). If all were obedient to these commands, for they are not less than that, one great hindrance to the blessing of others would be removed in many places. We cannot expect the grace of God to work *through us* if we refuse to let it work *in us*. But if the spirit of grace is flowing into us and showing itself in forbearance and forgiveness, there will be the outflow, the overflow of blessing to others. To "increase and abound in love one toward another" precedes love to all men. (1 Thess. 3. 12.)

New Birth and the Sealing of the Spirit.

Is it possible to be born again and yet not be sealed by the Holy Spirit? I have heard that this is so. Kindly give references.—WESTON-S.-MARE.

YES, it is possible. New birth and sealing are two distinct actions of the Holy Spirit. The first was a necessity in every dispensation since the fall. Apart from it there is nothing in men but the flesh, and "the mind of the flesh is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God: for neither indeed can it be: and they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. 8. 6, 7, N.Tr.). The only way in which men could be brought into subjection to God—into His kingdom—at any time, was by being born again, and this was and is still brought about by the sovereign action of the Holy Spirit through the Word (John 3.; 1 Peter 1. 22). But the sealing of the Spirit is the peculiar characteristic of this

present period and takes place in virtue of faith in Christ, once dead, but now risen and glorified—this is the Gospel of our salvation (Eph. 1. 13).

New birth has to say to the condition of death in which men are by nature; the sealing of the Spirit has to say to the place and favour into which the Gospel brings them. It is the unbeliever who is awakened and born again, but it is the believer who is sealed by the Holy Spirit, and the Gospel of our salvation comes in between the two. New birth is the foundation *in a man* of the work of grace, the sealing of the Spirit gives to him the full Christian state. New birth is the preparation of the house, the sealing of the Spirit is the taking possession of it.

The necessity of new birth comes clearly into view in John 2. 23-25. Many were convinced when they saw the miracles that Jesus did and believed on His Name, but He did not commit Himself to them, He did not trust them, they were not born again. But there were some to whom He committed Himself, and they followed Him and loved Him and were subject to Him. They were surely born again, a new life was theirs, but they had not the Holy Ghost dwelling in them, for the Spirit was not then given, as John 7. 39 ; 14. 16 ; 16. 7, 8, prove. The Samaritans too were born again—for they believed—some time before they were sealed by the Holy Spirit (Acts 8.), and Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9.), and Cornelius (Acts 10.), and the disciples at

Ephesus (Acts 19.). Plainly showing that the two are distinct. The difference is important, and must be understood if the full blessedness of the Christian state is to be known and enjoyed, for in the sealing of the Spirit we have not merely what was an absolute necessity as in new birth because of our condition of moral death and corruption, but what God would bring us into according to the exceeding riches of His grace. It is not merely the fact of a new life communicated, wonderful as that is, but the consciousness and the power of the new position in which redemption places those who have that life. Into the intelligence and enjoyment of this we are brought by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

The Temple of God.

Can an individual Christian be the temple of God? Is there not a distinction between the Christian indwelt by the Spirit and the assembly, the dwelling place of God? (2 Cor. 6. 16). Is the temple of God in 2 Cor. 6. 16 collective or individual? How would you explain 1 Cor. 3. 16? Who are the "them" of 2 Cor. 6. 17?—HALLSIDE.

YES, the body of the individual Christian is definitely called the temple of the Holy Ghost, for the Spirit of God dwells in each one, and this fact is pressed upon us that we may understand the sanctity of the body. It has been purchased with a great price—the blood of Jesus; it has been taken possession of by a great Person—the Holy Ghost. It was God who paid the purchase price, and it is God who has taken possession of that that He has purchased. Therefore glorify Him in your bodies, which are God's, is the only reasonable command (1 Cor. 6. 19, 20).

In 1 Cor. 3. 16, and 2 Cor. 6. 16, the truth widens out, and there comes into view what the saints of God are collectively. In both passages the local assembly is spoken of, and they bring out the solemn and blessed fact that there is more than the individual Christian life to be considered: we are God's building (1 Cor. 3. 9), which means that those spoken of are no longer units, but are brought together to form one homogeneous whole, having a common life as the dwelling place of God.

Many have a hand in building up the assembly locally, and all who take any part in the work are responsible for it; this 1 Cor. 3. teaches; but not the

builders only, but all who form the building have a responsibility, and this 2 Cor. 6. brings out—the temple of God can have no agreement with what is evil. If individual holiness is called for because our bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost, collective holiness is also demanded, for the Holy Ghost dwells in the assembly. And evil permitted there outrages the very presence of God, and as to this not one that belongs to it can be indifferent.

To associate the temple of God with idolatry, or with the evil world, or with unbelievers who deny God, is sacrilege, it is a great iniquity—alas! it is the widespread iniquity of Christendom, and the exhortation of 2 Cor. 6. 11-18 is needed now as much as ever. But clearly note what we are to be separate from—"unbelievers," "unrighteousness," "darkness," "Belial," "infidels," "idols." These are the "them" from whom we are to be separate. These may appear under Christian names. The "*Modernism*" of the day, that denies the truth as to the Person and work of Christ, and that treats the Word of God as some ordinary book that can be criticized and judged by the will of man, is INFIDELITY; the *superstitions of Rome* that are spreading in Protestant lands are DARKNESS;

Spiritism and kindred cults are from BELIAL. All that denies the Lord His place of supremacy in the church is UNRIGHTEOUSNESS. The assembly is the place where God dwells, where His truth is to be maintained and ministered, and His Person worshipped: hence these things should not be tolerated there, for holiness becometh His house for ever.

Ephesians 2. 22. "In whom [i.e., the Lord] ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit"

gives a still wider view of the truth than the Corinthian epistles; it takes in the whole church on earth at any time, and gives that view of it in which all is real and in which there is no admixture of "wood, hay, and stubble," as in 1 Cor. 3. And verse 21 of this chapter looks on to the completion of the church, when as the Holy Jerusalem it shall appear, and the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb shall be in it. Nothing shall ever defile it then or for ever (Rev. 21. 22-27).

"Thou shalt not kill."

At an open-air meeting, a bystander challenged the preacher who was maintaining the integrity of the Bible, how it was that God commanded the Israelites not to kill in Exodus 20. 13, yet within a short time they were told to put on the sword and slay every man his brother.

The answer given was that the law written on tables of stone was not yet delivered to the people so that God had not gone back on His commandment. This did not satisfy me, a believer, so probably no impression would be made on an unbeliever. Can you help?—C. W. M., N.S. WALES.

THE tables of stone had not come into the camp of Israel when the events recorded in chap. 32. took place, but the law had. Israel had received the law from God's own mouth and had responded to it with one voice, saying, "All the words which the Lord hath said will we do." Then Moses had written the words in a book, and had read them to them, and they had deliberately confirmed the oath they had taken, and there and then had entered into a solemn covenant with God. This covenant was sealed by blood (chap. 24. 3-8). Now the law carried a penalty with it and that penalty was death, but this the people disregarded. They flouted the law of God, deliberately ignored the covenant that they had made with Him, and broke the first and most important of all the commandments. They gave the glory of God to a molten calf, and made themselves shameless, degraded, naked idolators. On the ground of the covenant into which they had entered with God the judgment could not be restrained—there was no remedy. Someone must execute the

penalty, and the sons of Levi were chosen for this—they were the executioners of the just penalty of the law in the Name of the Lord and were not murderers, no more than is the man a murderer who executes a justly condemned criminal. The answer was not satisfactory because it was not true.

The preacher might have seized the opportunity and shown the great contrast between law and grace, between the old covenant and the new. Under the old covenant and on the ground of law 3000 Israelites were destroyed as law-breakers. But on the day of Pentecost, when the servants of the Lord proclaimed the grace of God for the first time, 3000 from the same nation were saved, even though they had slain the Lord (Acts 2.). Such was and is the efficacy of the sacrifice of Christ; such is the grace of God. Blessing is proclaimed to-day not on the ground of "We will do," but on the ground of "It is finished." On the former ground none could gain it, on the latter ground it is offered freely to all.

"Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men."—Col. 3. 23.

"A servant with this clause
 Makes drudgery divine;
 Who sweeps a room as for Thy laws,
 Makes that and the action fine."

HOW TO FINISH WELL.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

Notes of an Address.

IT is a great encouragement to younger Christians to see those who are older in the faith go on steadily to the end of life, with an ever-deepening devotion to the Saviour, to see them not less enthusiastic for Him when they say good-bye to earth and enter into His presence than they were when they began their Christian career. Thank God, we have known many such. Yet it is a notable fact that many who began well break down in middle life, or their early enthusiasm wanes and they grow cold and indifferent to the claims of the Lord, or continue with a dead routine as irksome to themselves as it is disappointing to others. The why and wherefore of this should interest us all, for while none of us would willingly backslide from our steadfastness we know that we are no better than others, for us there are the same temptations without and the same tendencies within that have brought others to grief in the Christian conflict, hence the need of exercise and enquiry.

There is not a soldier in the Christian ranks that does not desire to be able to say when life's warfare is done, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith" (2 Tim. 4. 7), or to have an entrance ministered unto him abundantly unto the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ (2 Peter 1.). Paul and Peter and a countless host beside have borne witness to the possibility of this, we are encompassed about with a cloud of witnesses to the fact that we also may be more than conquerors through Him that loves us, so that in spite of the failures, in spite of the cravens who have turned in the fight, or have been hindered in the course, we take courage and face the question as to how we may finish well. The story of David and his friends may help us.

There is no more interesting or

instructive story in the Bible than David's. He is very definitely a type of the Lord Jesus Christ, and his person and exploits always created great enthusiasm and devotedness for him or the opposite. It is this that the Lord looks for in regard to Himself. "I would thou wert either cold or hot," He says. To be lukewarm, half-hearted or indifferent is to be nauseating to Him.

Jonathan was David's friend, he began well, and outstript all others at the beginning in his devotion to David. He had every reason for his devotion, for David had jeopardized his life for him. It is not difficult to visualize this splendid prince with his staff about him, watching the shepherd lad going forth so fearlessly against Goliath. He would think, even if he did not say: "I ought to fight the giant, only by beating him could I establish my right of succession to the throne, but who am I that I should face him, I am no match for him. David is going out for me, he is fighting my battle." And when at last the bragging mouth was closed and the head was off that mass of flesh and the victory was complete, Jonathan would lead the triumphant shouts of Israel and say: "David has won the fight for me." No wonder that he stript himself. No wonder that he laid at David's feet all that distinguished him. No wonder that he loved him as his own soul.

But in the hour of David's victory he was a popular man, and so it was not difficult to stand on his side. It is true that Saul hated him—Saul, the self-centred, jealous, ill-stared and foolish king—type of the flesh that will not tolerate Christ, but "he was accepted in the sight of all the people"; the women sang, "David (hath slain) his ten thousands," and "all Israel and Judah loved David," and "his name was much set by" (1 Sam. 18). It is true that Jonathan went further

than them all, he stript himself of all his honours for David, and we delight in the story of his love, but the testing day had yet to come.

We felt like Jonathan when first we came to Christ. We had been oppressed by Satan, the great foe, who had kept us in bondage through the fear of death, and we had felt our need of a Saviour, a deliverer, and, thank God, we found one in Jesus. He suffered for us. He died for us. He set us free by His own great victory, and we loved Him for it and confessed Him as our Lord. It was easy to do so in the special meetings and when in the company of Christian friends to whom His Name was precious. That early enthusiasm carried us a long way and we were prepared to serve the Lord and even strip ourselves for His sake as we rejoiced in what He had done for us. But more than that is needed. Right and blessed as this holy enthusiasm is, and no soul is right without it, it is not enough.

John the Baptist in his day illustrates this phase of spiritual life, he was the Jonathan of the New Testament. When some came to him and said: "He to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and *all men come to him.*" He rejoiced and said: "He must increase, but I must decrease," but as with Jonathan, so with John, the test had yet to come.

The test came for Jonathan when David was cast out and rejected; when the people forgot what they owed to him, and the stream ran strongly against devotion to him. Jonathan's feelings towards him did not change, he still loved him *as his own soul*, but he could not go beyond that. He gave him the first place. "Thou shalt be king," he said. He owned that only one head in the land was fit and worthy to wear the crown, and that head was David's. He was right and true in that, but he added: "*I shall be next unto thee.*" He exalted David, but he did not abase self, and that was the

crux of the matter, he had not lost sight of himself in his love for David. He was prepared to say: "Thou shalt increase," but he thought of himself and claimed a place for himself, and there he failed. David did not despise his love, it was exceedingly precious to him, he cherished it ever as a most precious memory, but how different a story would have been told had he lost sight of himself and thrown in his lot with David, and gone out into rejection with him.

We do not belittle the love of Jonathan, it is a moving story, and such a surrender as he made to David is a great beginning for any soul who makes the like of it to Christ, but we must go further, and a deeper lesson must be learnt if our early enthusiasm is to deepen into unwavering devotion to the Person of our Lord. The Lord does not despise our first enthusiasm for Him, our first love, nor will He ever forget it, He cherishes it, it is a sweet recompense to Him for what He has done for us, but how soon we leave it, and *consider for self*, unless the deeper lesson of which I would speak is learnt.

Jonathan was a friend to David when all went well. David was a friend to Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, and in the appreciation of what David was to him Mephibosheth stood where Jonathan fell.

Mephibosheth was not a splendid figure as his father was. A cripple, a beggar probably, without standing or influence, he had nothing to surrender to his king. His relations with David were those of a receiver, yet when he was tested, the heart of him proved how true he was, and we must not forget that God does not judge by the outward appearance, but by the heart.

David was again in exile, driven from his throne by a rebellious son and a false people, and Mephibosheth mourned his absence and remained in seclusion and separation from the festivities of the guilty city until his lord's

return. Then he said to him : " All my father's house were but dead men before thee, yet didst thou set thy servant among them that did eat at thine own table " (2 Sam. 19. 28). A dead man has no rights, he can claim nothing. He can neither stand *first* as Saul in his day was determined to do, nor "*next*" as Jonathan thought would be a fitting place for him. A dead man does not count at all, and such, said Mephibosheth, am I before David, and all my father's house ; neither in myself nor my ancestry can I boast. Jonathan never reached this point of self-abasement before David, had he done so he would not have been slain by the sword of the uncircumscised on the mountains of Gilboa ; he would have lived to see David's glory and to share in it. It is a great day when any of us come to this in our relations with the Lord. It is more than John's, " I must decrease." It carries us beyond that to Paul's great cry—" I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, YET NOT I, BUT CHRIST liveth in me " (Gal. 2. 20). When a soul reaches this point he has disappeared from his own eyes and Christ fills his vision. And he is devoted, not only because the Lord has forgiven him and saved him, but because Christ has displaced self. All doubt has gone, and he never asks as John did : " Art Thou He ? " but he says, " for me to live is Christ," the Son of God, " who loved me and gave Himself for me."

But if Mephibosheth had no thought for himself and had nothing to ask for himself, it was because he was satisfied with David and his grace. He says : " Yet didst thou set thy servant among them that did eat at thine own table." " Worthless though I am that is the way that you have acted, and since you have done it, nothing can change it. You have done your best for me and it cannot be exceeded." It was in this that Mephibosheth boasted and not in himself. His whole delight was in David's grace for in that grace he

had displayed himself. Paul had reached this point when he said : " By the grace of God I am what I am," and again : " The grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant." " For by grace are ye saved through faith and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast " (Eph. 2. 8, 9). This deep sense of grace and this self-abasement go together, they are never separated, and it may safely be said that we cannot have the one without the other. And the more fully these things are felt by us, not only acknowledged because they are presented to us in terms in the Scriptures, but felt to be so by the Spirit's teaching within our souls, the more steady and true we shall be to Christ. We shall not lose our enthusiasm for Him, it may be tempered by this deeper knowledge of ourselves and of Himself, but it will be deeper, truer, and more wholly the work of God's Spirit within us.

David had captured the heart of Mephibosheth by his grace, and now his one desire was that David should have his rights and that he should be permitted to be where David had put him. " Let Ziba take all," he said. " I want nothing for myself. It is enough for me that my lord the king is come again to his house in peace."

It is for the lack of this spirit that filled Mephibosheth that many fail in the way. Thoughts of self obtrude themselves upon their relations with Christ and decline sets in. They consider for themselves, the early enthusiasm wanes and dies out, and Satan gains an advantage over them.

He can gain no advantage over the heart that is filled up and satisfied with the immensity of the love that has set us in Divine and changeless favour, love that has done its best for us. In this we are more than conquerors and we can say : " Who shall separate us from the love of Christ ? "

This same spirit of devotion controlled Ittai, the Gittite. He had

found a place in David's kingdom and had become firmly attached to his person. "Wherefore goest thou with us?" said the king to him, "Return to thy place, and abide with the king, for thou art a stranger and also an exile. Whereas thou camest but yesterday, should I this day make thee go up and down with us? Seeing I go whither I may, return thou, and take back thy brethren: mercy and truth be with thee." Hear the noble Ittai's answer to the king. "As the Lord liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also shall thy servant be." What balm to David's sorely wounded heart must this devotion have been, and this Ittai was not a young man, carried away by a passing youthful enthusiasm, he was

an old man, who might have thought of his own comfort and ease, but he did not, for David was more to him than self. What could the king say to such devotion as that? Only this: "Go and pass over." And Ittai, the Gittite passed over, and all his men, and *all the little ones that were with him* (2 Sam. 15. 19-22). David's story is one for us to consider deeply, one that should send us to our knees with the prayer: "Lord, may Jonathan's enthusiasm for David be the sort that we have for Thee. May Mephibosheth's conception of his own nothingness and of David's grace, be our conception of ourselves and of Thy grace, and may Ittai's devotion to David's person be the sort of devotion that we and ours have to Thyself. Grant this to us, for Thy Name's sake. Amen."

"LET GOD BE MAGNIFIED."

(W. BRAMWELL DICK.)

"Let such as love Thy salvation say continually, Let God be magnified"
(Psalm 70. 4).

A SPECIAL interest attaches to this little psalm of five verses, because the contents comprise the five closing verses of Psalm 40. The latter obviously refer to our Lord Jesus Christ. When we read Hebrews 10. we are left in no doubt with regard to that. These verses give us the exercises of His holy soul, and the desire of His heart as the dependent Man who was here to do the will of God (see verses 6, 7, 8). The one supreme object of His life as a Man in this world is summed up in the words: "The Lord be magnified" (verse 16). At a moment when everything and every one seemed to be against Him, He could say: "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth. . . . Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in Thy sight" (Matt. 11. 25-26). When "wearied with His journey" and deeply conscious of the barrenness of all around, but cheered by the response on the part of a poor degraded creature

to His revelation of God the Father, He said: "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work"; and the following verse shows how He rejoiced that the Lord was magnified (John 4. 1-42). We travel on to the wonderful close of that wonderful pathway, and John 18. 11, shows us how in the hour of His deepest anguish this was the one thing that was before Him. Across His entire history as a Man, from the manger to the cross we may well write, "The Lord be magnified," for He who coming into the world said: "Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of Me) to do Thy will, O God" (Heb. 10. 5-7), left it, saying: "I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do" (John 17. 4).

We have no doubt that psalm 70. gives us the desire that will be expressed by the godly remnant in a future day. Realizing that their only resource is in God, with confidence in His power, and assured of His deliverance, they will say, "Let such as love Thy salvation

say continually, Let God be magnified." This is the language of those who have unbounded confidence in God and whose only desire is His glory.

We suggest that in all this there is a word for us. We love His salvation. Should not we say therefore, "Let God be magnified"? It may be there is some friction amongst our fellow Christians with whom we gather from time to time. How may that be remedied? Not by each insisting that he, or she, is right. Not by one brother, or sister, demanding the unconditional capitulation of the other, but by each saying, "Let God be magnified." Differences may arise between those who seek to carry on the work of the Lord. There is danger of the work ceasing and the enemy triumphing. What ought such to do? Say: "Let God be magnified." In the thousand-and-one details of our individual life we want to say, "Let God be magnified." Amidst the trials and temptations, the victories and defeats, the disappointments and the encouragements, the joys and sorrows, our one desire should be, "Let God be magnified."

Observe, it says, "Let such as love Thy salvation say, Let God be magnified." We have proved His love and His power in saving us from sin's penalty. We shall know His love and His power when He shall save us, spirit, soul and body (Phil. 3. 20, 21).

We may experience His love and His power now as the One who is able to save us all the way (Heb. 7. 25), to render us superior to all our circumstances, and to enable us to say, "Let God be magnified." Finally, we note that our text says: "Let such as love Thy salvation say *continually*, Let God be magnified." When the sun shines and when the storm rages, in prosperity and adversity, in joy and sorrow, in every circumstance and on every occasion, "Let God be magnified." Let it be on our lips when we rise in the morning, let it be our desire when the disquieting incident occurs during the day, let it be our steadying word when pleasing news reaches us, let it dominate our thoughts at every point all the day, and let it be the wish with which we close our eyes in slumber at night:—

"Let God be magnified."

DIVINE LOVE.

"He brought me into His banqueting house."

LOVE bade me welcome; yet my soul drew back,
Guilty of dust and sin.

But quick-eyed Love, observing me grow slack
From my first entrance in,
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning
If I lacked anything.

"A guest," I answered, "worthy to be here,"
Love said, "You shall be he."

"I, the unkind, ungrateful? Ah, my dear,
I cannot look on Thee."

Love took my hand, and smiling did reply,
"Who made the eyes, but I?"

"Truth, Lord, but I have marred them, let my shame
Go where it doth deserve."

"And know you not," said Love, "who bore the blame?"
"My Lord, then I will serve."

"You must sit down," said Love, and taste my meat.
SO I DID SIT AND EAT.—George Herbert.

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH. No. VIII. The Virgin Birth.

(A. J. POLLOCK.)

WHEN God created man He made him to have dominion over the work of His hands (Gen. 1. 26). A great fixed gulf was Divinely put between him and the lower creation. Man was to have dominion over the lower creation, but was himself endowed with faculties that enabled him to have intercourse with his Creator.

We learn that that intercourse took place, the Lord God walking in the garden of Eden in the cool of the day.

But sin came in, and intercourse with man was rudely broken. Yet God ever pursued His thoughts of blessing for man, and we find angelic visitations to specially favoured individuals at long intervals, the Lord Himself at times appearing in this form, as witness one of the three men in Gen. 18. being none other than "the Judge of all the earth," the Lord Himself in theophanic appearance.

But all this was working out a wondrous plan. Occasional visitations of angelic beings were only to lead on to the largest, fullest revelation of God possible.

The Lord Himself in human form appearing at rare intervals, and for special purposes, was to give place to His becoming a real Man—the Eternal Word was to be made flesh and dwell among men.

One is not surprised if an event of such amazing importance was signalized by very special circumstances. Such was the Virgin Birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. It was a miracle of vast and pregnant importance.

Modernists have sought to assail this great fact and to make out it matters little if our Lord had a sinful father as well as mother. The Roman Catholics, on the other hand, believing in the Virgin Birth, have added an article of faith to their creed, viz., that of the Immaculate Conception. By this the

Roman Catholic Church teaches that the Virgin herself was sinlessly conceived, a pure assumption, and without any support from Scripture.

Mary, the mother of our Lord according to the flesh, "blessed among women" surely, chosen for the highest honour possible in a woman, in her Magnificat says, "My spirit hath rejoiced in God MY SAVIOUR" (Luke 1. 47). Now, if Mary had been sinless she had no need of a Saviour, for surely need of a Saviour she had, like the rest of us.

But now let us see the real significance of the Virgin Birth. King Ahaz is bidden to ask a sign of the Lord. Wicked man as he was, he declined to ask a sign, whereupon the Lord gave him a wonderful sign, and surely, as inscribed in holy writ, given to us all: "Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel" (Isa. 7. 14). There has been an attempt to prove that the word "virgin" simply means an unmarried woman, and does not carry the force of Immanuel being born of what we, English readers, understand by the word "virgin." But the narration of the birth of Christ as given in Luke 1. 26-38, makes abundantly plain what the word "virgin" means in Isa. 7. 14.

The learned translation of the Old Testament, into Greek, commonly called the Septuagint, and from which our Lord quoted again and again, plainly understood the word, virgin, as indicated by Mary herself in Luke 1. 34, and rendered the word by *parthenos*. a word which does mean "virgin."

But now for the real significance of the Virgin Birth. Of all the millions of the human race only ONE has been born of a virgin, for if born of a virgin we have a miracle of the first magnitude. If there were no human paternity then the Virgin Birth could only take place if Mary were the passive

agent of none less than God's Holy Spirit. No one can give life but God, and if the ordinary channel of procreation was set aside, then it must be by creation—the creative act of God Himself.

And if God, the Holy Spirit, overshadowed Mary, then her offspring, a member of Adam's sinful race though she were, could only be truly described as "that holy thing which shall be born of Thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1. 35).

Now Isaiah 7. 14, prophesied that the child of the Virgin should be called Immanuel, which Matt. 1. 23 tells us means, "God with us." Modernists seek to fritter away the tremendous meaning of this by saying that it means, "God is with us"; but this is not so.

The real significance of the Virgin Birth is that the child so born is none less than Immanuel, "God with us." Only one individual has come into the world in such fashion, and this One is "God with us." Isaiah 9. 6, bears this out when he gives the child the names of the Mighty God, the Father of Eternity.

We stand here on the threshold of the most amazing revelation of God. In Old Testament times He spoke by *channels*—the prophets; but in these last days He has spoken to us in Son. The prophets were *channels*, the Son was God. When He spoke God spoke, "not as the Father nor in the person of the Father; not merely by the Holy Ghost using a person not Divine, but as Himself a Divine Person, and that Person the Son" (J. N. D.).

No wonder that Modernists endeavour to get rid of the Virgin Birth. The attempt finally is to get rid of His Godhead. To accomplish that purpose the enemy will extol His humanity in the highest panegyric. Allow Christ to be the fairest product of humanity, to be lifted far above every other man in excellence and achievement, and deny His Godhead, and you have lost Christianity, you have lost everything that is vital and blessed in Christ.

The sign, we repeat, is of the utmost significance, a virgin was to be with child, an event that has only occurred *once* in the whole history of the world, and this is to demonstrate that the One so born is "God manifest in the flesh," "the Word become flesh," "the Mighty God," "the Father of Eternity," yet a true Man.

If this is true, and it is, blessed be God, we are not surprised at the Virgin Birth, nor at the whole life, death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But let us see how Scripture presents this important truth. The first indication of it is presented in Gen. 3. 15, when the Lord God said to the serpent, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel." Where did Moses get the idea of THE WOMAN'S *seed*? Over fifteen centuries rolled by between the Lord God speaking of the serpent, or the record of it by the inspired pen of Moses. The seed of the woman was utterly unknown in creation. When Seth, the promised line, was born, it was by the seed of the man. Generation succeeded generation, and it was ever and only by the seed of the man. If Moses had not been inspired he would never have written what looks from a merely human standpoint a flagrant mistake, and utterly unknown in physiology.

And yet, in this prophecy, for prophecy it was, the most stupendous truths were wrapped up. The world's history had to travel on, till we come to Mary, the espoused wife of Joseph, both of royal blood, but in humble circumstances.

But let us go step by step. We have already looked at Isaiah's remarkable prophecies of chaps. 7. 14 and 9. 6. Turn now to Micah, the contemporary of Isaiah. "But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting.

Therefore will He give them up, until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth" (chap. 5. 2, 3).

Here we get two things. The One prophesied was to be from everlasting, that is a Divine Person, whilst as to His humanity, "the King from Bethlehem . . . has a nameless one as mother, and of whose father there is no mention" (Delitzsch). Not to mention the father was the exception, not the rule. But when there is no father, there is no father to mention. How was it that Micah could have put such thoughts together for which there was no precedent in the whole history of the world if he were not inspired?

In Jer. 31. 22, we read, "The Lord hath created a new thing in the earth, a woman shall compass (or *encompass*) a man." This passage is very remarkable. It uses the word, create (*bara*), something specially brought about by the creative word of God Himself. It bears out in a remarkable way a former sentence, that the birth of Christ was not by procreation but by creation. The seed of the woman was the special result of God, the Holy Spirit's, creative act; and the Offspring was perfectly holy and sinless, though Mary, "blessed among women," a specially prepared vessel of God for the high honour put upon her, was herself a member of a fallen sinful race. "That holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." The Jews were under no illusion as to what was claimed in the title, Son of God. "Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God" (John 5. 18).

The sign given in the height, was that God stepped down and became Man; in the depth that the blessed Man, who went down into the dust of death, was none less than "the mighty God." The Child of Days was at one and the same time the Father of Eternity. What a conception! How grand and glorious!

Let us now examine very briefly the records of the Virgin Birth as given by the evangelists, Matthew and Luke.

Matthew gives us right away the genealogy of Christ through Abraham and David. Matthew is the Gospel presenting the King, and the genealogy of the King is important. It is said that Christ is the only one of Israel's race that can prove His genealogy in and from New Testament times.

The short account of the birth of Christ as given in Matthew's Gospel is presented in eight short verses and from the standpoint of Joseph.

Mary was espoused to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Joseph, a just man, not knowing this, was determined to end the espousal. None less than an angel brought him the Divine information that instead of Mary being in dishonour the greatest honour put upon a woman was hers, and the child to be born, of the seed of the woman, through the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost, would be none less than JESUS (Jehovah Saviour), Emmanuel (God with us)—that Mary's firstborn Son was to be the long-promised Messiah of Israel, the Saviour of mankind.

The whole record is given with a delicacy of touch that could only come by inspiration. Nothing is left out that is necessary.

It is interesting as showing the marvellous grace of God that four women are introduced into the kingly genealogy; firstly, Tamar who begat Phares through an act of adultery with her own father-in-law, Judah; secondly, Rahab, the Caananitish harlot; thirdly, Ruth, a Moabitess, of a nation who were not to enter the congregation of the Lord even to the tenth generation; and, fourthly, "her that had been the wife of Urias," recalling a very dark bit of history in connection with David.

How would an uninspired writer have chosen to mention these four ancestresses of our Lord? Would he

not have assuredly suppressed their names? The introduction of their names only enhances the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ in becoming Man, yet sin apart.

The account in Luke's Gospel is from Mary's standpoint. She needs to be assured as much as her espoused husband. An angel is sent to her. Would a less exalted messenger have been sufficient? He informs her that she is to give birth to a son, whose name should be JESUS (Jehovah Saviour), the Son of the Highest, and that He should sit on the throne of His father, David, and of His kingdom there should be no end.

Mary asks the angel a direct question, for she cannot understand how such a thing could be. She is informed of the Holy Ghost's overshadowing her and that her child should be "holy" and the Son of God.

He then instances her cousin, Elizabeth, who after long years of barrenness and past the natural powers of nature, was to give birth to a wonderful child, destined to be the forerunner of the Christ, John, the Baptist.

The less wonderful birth is brought before her notice to strengthen her faith to believe in the more wonderful birth. "For with God nothing shall be impossible" (Luke 1. 37).

The genealogy in Luke is placed between the account of Christ's baptism and His entry upon His public career. In Matthew we have the descent of Christ from Abraham and David down to Joseph, His reputed father, to prove His legal right to the throne of David; in Luke we have His ascent through His mother up to Adam, which was of God, in order to demonstrate his natural right to the throne, and His manhood, for Luke's Gospel presents Christ as the blessed Man down here doing God's will and blessing man.

Note, too, the exactitude of the language used. In Matt. 1. 16, we read, "And Jacob begat Joseph the

husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ." It is careful not to claim Joseph's paternity of the blessed Lord.

In Luke 3. 23, we read, "And Jesus Himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli."

By *marriage* Joseph is looked upon as the legal heir of Heli, Mary's father, as was the custom among the Jews.

So that the Lord claimed *legal* rights through his reputed father, and *natural* rights through His mother—the Virgin Mary.

And as if to make succession through Joseph an impossibility we read in Jer. 22. 24-30, that no descendant of Coniah, or Jechonias, as he is called in Matt. 1. 11, should sit upon the throne of God.

"Thus saith the LORD, Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah" (Jer. 22. 30).

Thus, if our blessed Lord had been the son of Joseph this prophecy would have barred the throne to Him, and it was only by the marriage of Joseph to Mary, uniting the legal and natural lines, that gave the Lord the title to the throne of David.

Thus has God guarded with extreme jealousy the entrance into the world of Him who is its only Hope.

How surpassingly beautiful, how grand in its conception is the truth of the Virgin Birth. How everything is lifted above the sordid conceptions of man into the realm of the pure, holy and exalted purposes of the Divine.

Well might the angels chant at His birth,

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men" (Luke 2. 14).

Fulfilling the Divine decree,

"And let all the angels of God worship Him" (Heb. 1. 6).

LIGHT AND LIFE.

(JAMES BOYD.)

Meditations on the Gospel and Epistles of John. No. 4.

"That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ" (1 John 1. 3).

OUR fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. These Divine Persons have been revealed, and we who have believed the Gospel have been brought to the knowledge of them. It is not only that we have been turned to God, have received forgiveness of sins, are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and have the love of God shed abroad in our hearts, but we have been brought to the knowledge of the Father and of His Son Jesus Christ; and in this knowledge lies eternal life for us. Jesus says: "I am the good Shepherd; and I know mine own, and mine own know me, even as the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father." We have been brought into intimacy with Divine Persons, and we have the life and nature that is Theirs, and thus is this vital fellowship established; and our affections, thoughts, and actions flow in harmony with the Divine mind. We love the things that are loved by Him, and we hate the things that are to Him abhorrent. His interests are our interests, and His honour and glory are sacred to our hearts.

In our complicated condition, as having the flesh in us down here, this may, alas, be, in our practical lives, greatly modified; for the flesh in a true believer is no better than the flesh in an enemy of Christ; and we may, if not very watchful, find ourselves in practical fellowship with the man of the world. But this necessitates our going down to his level, for he cannot rise up to ours. We have in us that which loves the things that he loves, and therefore must we keep a vigilant eye upon our movements, lest we be led away by the error of the wicked, and be found asserting by our general behaviour that we "*know not the Man.*"

But if we bring the judgment of the cross to bear upon the old Adam nature, which is in us all, and if God, as revealed in the Son, is kept before the vision of our souls, we shall go on in uninterrupted communion with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ, and our joy shall be full.

We have the cross for the flesh, and the power of the Spirit for the new nature, therefore we are privileged and enabled to view the flesh in us as a foreign element, not in the least ourselves nor part of ourselves, but an element that, though not ourselves, has a seat in our members, causing us no end of annoyance, and which would control our every movement if we would allow it. But it is our unspeakable privilege to view the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ as the means by which the flesh has received its condemnation, and to apply that judgment to all its movements in ourselves, to have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts, and to bring out in our practical ways the beautiful traits of the life of Jesus (2 Cor. 4.). This is the brazen serpent aspect of the death of Christ, and is found in John 3. as necessary to our possessing eternal life. And, as I have said before, it is the life, not of Egypt, nor of the wilderness, but of Canaan; and therefore have we the brazen serpent at the close of the desert wanderings of Israel. After that we have "the springing well," which is the living water that springs up into everlasting life (John 8. 4); then the Jordan, which is the realization of risen with Christ; then Gilgal, the putting off the body of the flesh. It is not only that Christ has died for us and is risen again, but we are dead and risen with Him: dead with Him from the elements of the world, so that we do not appear as living men in connection with this world's system; and risen with Him by faith of the operation of God, who has raised Him from the

dead, our life being hid with Him in God, but the beautiful traits of that life coming out here in our desert pathway on earth.

There can be no mingling of the new life and nature with the old. They are in every way opposed to one another. The old is the life of Adam, the man made of dust; the new is the life of Christ, the Man out of heaven. There is no affinity between the two. Their thoughts, affections, desires and aspirations are utterly opposed to one another, as opposed as righteousness and sin, love and hatred, truth and error, darkness and light, Christ and Belial. It was not the life of Adam even in innocence, however pure that life was, nor is it the life of angels, however holy they may be; it is that life that we shall enjoy to the full in the Father's house when we are there, and which the children of God enjoy now in the power of the Holy Spirit; for in the writings of John we have the life of the Father's house brought down to earth.

It is of the utmost importance to apprehend that it is by means of the Mediator that we come into the rich and eternal blessings of the Gospel. The eternal life is, that we should know the Father, and *Jesus Christ His sent One*. It does not say, the Father and the Son, and leave it there. We can only have to do with Divine Persons in the way in which They make Themselves known to us. God has approached us in the Mediator, and only in the Mediator can we approach Him. "Our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, *Jesus Christ*." In this first epistle we are told that by the teaching of the Spirit we shall abide in the Son and in the Father, but it is always the Son in Manhood that is kept before us. "We are in Him that is true, in His Son, *Jesus Christ*." It is by means of the Son on the human side that we are in Divine and eternal relationship and blessing, and not with these Divine Persons in absolute Deity. It was necessary that the Son should

become a Man if we were to stand in those intimate relations with God.

In the Gospel we have things presented objectively, that is, in the Son and for faith to lay hold of. In the Epistles we have things viewed more in a subjective way, that is, in the saints, and in them by the work of the Divine Spirit. "Which thing is true in Him," this we find in the Gospel; "and in you," this is found in the Epistles: God revealed in the Gospel, saints in the light of that revelation in the Epistles; the Son in the Gospel, the Spirit of the Son in the saints in the Epistles; the old commandment in the Gospel, the new commandment in the Epistles.

In chapter I. we have God come into this world to manifest Himself in all the grace and love of His heart to men, but that glorious light unapprehended, because of the blindness of the human heart: "The darkness apprehended it not." Never previously had such light entered into the universe. It was seen of angels, but it was not for them that it had shone forth: "The life was the light of men." It shone on behalf of men here in this benighted world. And by it everything was made manifest. Nothing now could be hidden. Everything was seen just as it really was. It revealed the hitherto thoughts of the human heart. There was no hiding place from its powerful rays. Its brilliant beams penetrated to the deepest depths of the human soul, and brought all that was there into evidence. There was no escape from it, and therefore was it hated by all who desired to make a fair show in the flesh. It could not be otherwise, for in the light of God everything must appear in its true character.

When questioned as to his mission John the Baptist has nothing to say for himself other than that he is a voice crying in the wilderness: "Prepare ye the way of Jehovah." Surely no man is anything in the presence of the Son of the living God. Later he announces Him as "The Lamb of God

that taketh away the sin of the world " ; and later still as " He that baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." Whether John entered into the true import of his testimony it is impossible to say, but his words indicate to us, that the universe shall be freed from the presence of sin, and a way of salvation opened up for the sinner, for it is the " LAMB " of God that shall take the sin away. He shall also baptize with the Holy Spirit those who submit themselves to the way in which God can righteously save the lost.

Next, we find that those who follow Him are led to where He dwells. The desire of every heart that knows Him is to be where He is, and it is His desire to have us with Himself. They came and saw where He dwelt, and abode with Him that day. And surely the instruction that He gave them while they continued with Him in His temptations was His way of leading them to where He had His dwelling, in the Father's love. He says : " If ye keep my commandments ye shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my

Father's commandments, and abide in His love." Next, we see Him as the gathering point for all, and indicating to Nathaniel who confesses Him as Son of God and king of Israel, that He shall be in the day of His glory the connecting link between heaven and earth, the object of the ministry of angels.

Chapter 2. opens with a marriage in Cana of Galilee. It is said to have taken place on the third day. We have John's testimony, and then the testimony of the Lord Himself which brings us to the glory of the Son of Man, and after these two days we have the third ; and here is foreshadowed Jehovah's resumption of relationship with Israel in the coming day. The water of purification is changed into the wine of earthly joy for His redeemed people. The temple also is cleansed, and when He is challenged as to His authority for doing such things, He indicates by the answer He gives, that all the future blessing of the people will be established on the ground of His death and resurrection.

WHAT IS IT TO BE IN THE FLESH ?

" They that are in the flesh cannot please God."—Romans 8.

TO be in the flesh is to be before God on the ground of our natural responsibility as men, as children of fallen Adam. It is as to our moral state making the disposition of God towards us to depend on what we are to God. Of this state the law is the perfect rule. The one in it says, if conscience is awakened, I am not what I ought to be and consequently God will be against me. And that was so under pure law, everything depended upon what men were, and on that ground all blessing and even life itself was forfeited. Now to be under grace

is the exact opposite to this. All depends upon what God is, and He is revealed as the God of all grace. It is what He has been and is in Christ, everything flows from that, and because of what He is blessing is mine and life and all that grace can give. And the Spirit also, the crowning gift of all, to give character to the place of favour into which I am brought by grace, and to be the power of response to the grace and the enjoyment of it. Ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.

QUESTIONS RAISED BY YOUNG CHRISTIANS.

(F. B. HOLE.)

Christians in Trouble.

"Why are Christians, good Christians, who have been Christians for years, very sad and cast down when trouble comes upon them? Do they not know that God sends it and that He will not try them more than they are able to bear?"

TO give a kind of general diagnosis which will cover every case is not possible; we must content ourselves with offering a few suggestions.

It may be that a sad and cast down frame of mind in the Christian, when he is faced with trouble, is simply the evidence of a breakdown in faith. For the moment God is lost sight of and nothing but the clouds of trouble are seen.

On the other hand it may be that his sorrow is only the proper feeling induced by coming under the chastening hand of God. "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous but grievous" (Heb. 12. 11). If God the Father sees fit to chasten one of His children, He intends it to have a subduing and humbling effect, with a view to future profit. In this case, however, where there is sadness there will still be an undercurrent of spiritual rest and even joy. We may be "in heaviness through manifold temptations" yet at the same time we "greatly rejoice" in the salvation and the inheritance yet to come (see 1 Peter 1. 4-6).

The Apostle Paul exemplified this.

He was troubled, perplexed, persecuted, cast down,—yet not distressed, not in despair, not forsaken, not destroyed (see 2 Cor. 4. 8, 9). Consequently He was "sorrowful, yet always rejoicing" (2 Cor. 6. 10).

We rather think that in endeavouring to impress young Christians with the joyful nature of true faith, some have drawn a rather fictitious picture, and the impression has been created that Christian life is to be summed up in such lines as:

"I feel like singing all the time"

or—

"My life flows on in endless song."

The life of the Apostle Paul did not, however, flow on quite thus. All was not sunshine and sweets and flowers for him. He knew what exercise and conflict and tears were. But then he was a full-grown man in the spiritual sense and not a babe. The fact is, that suffering and sorrow and sadness, are the things that develop our spiritual muscles if we go through them with God, feeling their weight but not sinking under them, because supported by an inward joy which is of faith.

Has God a life-plan for each of us?

"Has God a life-plan for each individual believer? We know that we are all called to be followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that the whole of our lives should be governed by the Word of God, but would you say that the individual circumstances of our lives are planned by God, and that our varied exercises are sent to keep us in the path of His will for us?"

WE may be certain that we are guided aright when our path is set for us by the Word of God, and we are simply acting in obedience to it. Apart from the Word of God, we know of no infallible guide.

There are, of course, details of life

and service that cannot be decided by reference to the Scriptures, such as the problem that confronted Paul and his companions "when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia" (Acts 16. 6). First it was Asia that was before them, then their

thoughts turned to Bithynia, but Macedonia was the Divine plan, and a special vision was granted to Paul to settle the matter. From this vision they "assuredly gathered" what they were to do. This was guidance of a special and extraordinary kind, inasmuch as a step of a most momentous character was involved, and we can hardly expect similar guidance to-day.

Still the general principle that governs all guidance remains. "The meek will He guide in judgment; and the meek will He teach His way" (Ps. 25. 9). The one who draws near to God in meekness of spirit, self-assertiveness absent, and self-judgment present, will not fail to be directed aright, even though he may not be full of certainty as to his path, but advances with fear and trembling; such was the case with Paul, as recorded in

2 Cor. 2. 12, 13; 7. 5; 2. 14. Read the verses in the order indicated.

Each individual believer, being a member of the body of Christ, is set in the Church by God, according to His will and plan. This is made very manifest in 1 Cor. 12.

As to the various circumstances of our lives, they are all too often the result of the mistakes and folly, and self-will which has marked us, yet even so we may be sure that God keeps an over-ruling hand upon our circumstances and turns them to account in His dealings with us. Romans 8. 28 assures us of this.

Exercises are often given to us in regard to things that might hinder us from discerning God's will, and through them we are brought into a truer conformity to His mind.

A STUDY OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

Chapter 3. *Continued.*

(G. J. STEWART.)

THE "To-day" of verse 7 is applied to our own position as awaiting the glory of heaven. Alas! They hardened their hearts. Why should not we sing His praise? It was certainly written for our admonition as well as those of the coming day. Why should not our songs of praise make the wilderness joyous? His sheep to-day will surely hear His voice and be kept among those who follow Him.

There is, however, no more serious and sweeping warning in the epistle than here. The whole of the men who left Egypt with Moses above twenty years old, save two, to the number of six hundred and three thousand, five hundred and fifty, fell in the wilderness. The forty years was, indeed, one long provocation and temptation. Beginning at Meribah (strife), and Massah (temptation), where they spake against Him (Exod. 17. 7), and breaking out afresh at Kadesh, where they

provoked Him (Num. 14. 2). Although He met them in mercy and they saw His works forty years; yet for forty years they grieved Him. It was an evil generation who always erred in their hearts and did not know His ways. Moses alone knew His ways, they had to bow to His acts.

God therefore sware in His wrath, They shall not enter into My rest. "As truly as I live, saith the Lord,"—this is God's oath; He swears by Himself—"All the earth shall be filled with My glory," yet they who have had it before them and have seen My miracles which I did in the land of Egypt and in the wilderness and have tempted Me now these ten times, and have not hearkened unto My voice. Surely they shall not see the land which I sware unto their fathers, neither shall any of those men who provoked me see it (Num. 14. 21-23).

Solemn beyond measure is all this !
We may well be prepared for the
warning :—

TAKE HEED, BRETHREN.

Though the wilderness is not part of God's purpose, yet in His ways it is right and we can only get into the land through it. It is a wonderful place of contrasts and of alternations. It is folly to think we are not at all in it. It is a place where there is no resource but God ; where, too, a wily enemy seeks to ensnare the hearts of believers in his toils. There are two experiences which are true for all believers upon earth to-day, that of the wilderness and that of the house, but they cannot be ours at the same moment. In the house we may for the moment enter in spirit into the rest, though not actually in it yet. When not in the house, God is with us in the wilderness.

The children of Israel in their tribes surrounded and were related to the Tabernacle, whether when on march or when it was set up. When moving, the priests marched as well as the others, their experience then was a wilderness experience. When a halt was sounded and the Tabernacle was set up, the priests went into the Tabernacle where they had a very different experience. God was with them on the march, the Ark being then in its travelling dress ; but they were with God in the Tabernacle, worshipping and enjoying the rest of His presence. It is this that is meant by being in the house.

Even when rightly in the wilderness in this way, it is at its best but a land of drought where no water is. Everything there is against us, but " God for us " settles all. Therefore the warning to hear His voice and not harden the heart as of old. Caleb and Joshua being men of faith were rightly in the wilderness and enjoyed true wilderness experience, tasting by faith the joys of the land as they had seen it. How different from those who received the evil report brought by the others who

spied out the land, and who at once themselves fell before the Lord.

But when wrongly there, as after Kadesh the whole company was, and save that Jehovah had lessons to teach them, wandering aimlessly in it, the wilderness is a very dreadful place. Moses himself reminds them of that great and terrible wilderness through which God had led them. At another time he speaks of it as a vast, howling wilderness. Who can pass through it but with God ? If one settles down in it and seeks to mitigate its asperities, he has no true wilderness experience and no true experience of the God of the wilderness.

If all the difficulties, oppositions, temptations, and failures which go to make up the complement of our pathway here, together with our own utterly treacherous hearts were put before us in their totality at the first, it would stagger us and drive us back. Oh God ! preserve us from this wilderness apart from Thyself ! If with Thee, all is well,

" In the desert God will teach thee,
What the God that thou hast found ;
Patient, gracious, powerful, holy,
All His grace shall there abound."

Israel of old entered the wilderness with a song—Sing ye to the Lord for He hath triumphed gloriously. That song should have been maintained to the end and the land entered with it still upon their lips. There is strength in singing of victory. But all that company died during the forty years of provocation, and at the end two and a half tribes of the new company begged to be allowed to remain where they were. The place had grass for their cattle and that suited them—worldly advantage was more to them than Jehovah's presence in the pleasant land. Bring us not over this Jordan, they plead. Alas ! how like believers to-day ; it is death to self and this world to go where God leads. They say in effect, Behold we die, we all perish, shall we be consumed with dying. And to preserve their natural life they die to spiritual things.

“COMPLETE IN HIM WHO IS THE HEAD.”

(H. J. VINE.)

WITH strong and subtle energy various influences were ceaselessly at work to side-track the brethren in Christ at Colosse. Paul was aware of this, and though he had never seen them, he was guided by the Spirit to write showing them the all-sufficiency of Christ Jesus, warning them not to be diverted from Him in the slightest degree, and encouraging them to continue in Christ Jesus the Lord even as they had received Him when they first believed the Gospel of their salvation.

He sought to instruct them more fully as to the grace and glory of their Saviour, but he desired they should increase in the excellent knowledge of Him—the same One they had trusted at the start; and thus they would be preserved from the distracting and deadening influences which were attacking them so forcefully. There were philosophy, carnal religion, psychic practices and asceticism; and the apostle shows in chapter 2. 8–23 that these things are the elements of the world and not according to Christ whom the world had rejected—that they are after the teachings and injunctions of men and not after Christ, who has died to the world which refused Him, and is now exalted as Head at God's right hand. In Him they had trusted. In Him they were to abide. He is enough.

Similar, and perhaps even more deceptive, influences are succeeding to-day in depriving many of the proper enjoyment of the true portion of the assembly which is rightly theirs in Christ Jesus—seducing them from “holding fast the Head, from whom all the body, ministered to and united together by the joints and bands, increases with the increase of God” (2. 19). All that is necessary for the assembly, which is Christ's body, is in Him; but the constant energizing of Satan in that vast and varied system named “*the mystery of*

iniquity” is designed in one way or another to get the brethren away from this glorious truth. Just as on the other hand the present mighty working of God is to bring us to realize that all fulness resides in Christ according to the truth of the other “*great mystery . . . Christ and the assembly.*” Paul tells the Corinthians that he had espoused them to Christ, but he feared “lest by any means, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craft,” so their thoughts should be corrupted from “SIMPLICITY AS TO CHRIST” (2 Cor. 11. 3., N.T.).

Often we find Jehovah reminding His people, Israel, of the sad fact that all their trouble sprang from their turning away from Him. “Surely as a wife treacherously departeth from her husband, so have ye dealt treacherously with Me, O house of Israel, saith the Lord” (Jer. 3. 20). He was their ALL, but they sought solace elsewhere. “They have forsaken Me the Fountain of living waters,” He said. It was so with God's people of old, and John had to record later on of the assembly at Ephesus—where Paul laboured so long and so faithfully—“Thou hast left thy first love” (Rev. 2. 4).

With wholesome zeal the apostle writes, “*Beware!*”—Yes, for it is easier to behold the danger of others than to be awake to our own—“BEWARE !!” therefore he says, “lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit” (Col. 2. 8). And then, as if he were anxious that we should not dwell unduly on the evil, he at once points us to the Divine Source of all good—to the infinite plenitude which resides in the One who is the Head of the assembly, as well as the Head of all authority, and in one magnificent Spirit-given statement of fact, which might well bow our hearts in adoration and worship—he sweeps aside all rivals, and places us in the presence of Christ, the all-

sufficient One, as he says—"IN HIM DWELLETH ALL THE FULNESS OF THE GODHEAD BODILY. AND YE ARE COMPLETE IN HIM WHO IS THE HEAD OF ALL PRINCIPALITY AND POWER" (Col. 2. 9, 10). Here then is the grand antidote! The fulness of the Infinite One dwells in Him in whom we are complete—in Him who came down beneath all for our salvation, who is now above all in exaltation—in the glorified Man who glorified God on earth, who is now crowned on high: in Him the Godhead fulness dwells bodily, and we, too, are filled full in Him. The *Ptērōma* (fulness) of the Godhead is there, and we too are *Ptērōō* (filled full) there also.

How gloriously simple this is, and yet how Divinely profound. It more than meets the creatures deepest need, and yet brings highest glory to the Creator. In it we behold the marvellous combinations of wisdom and majesty, grace and glory, love and power, along with the splendid distinctions of redemption and reconciliation, for it is in the One in whom we are blessed all the fulness resides; and as chapter 1., 22 shows, it is in His body, through His death, we are now already reconciled to the fulness which is in Him. ALL is there! Our ALL is there! May we with this be satisfied!

*"All fulness resides in Christ Jesus our Head,
And riches in glory beyond every need."*

We do well to ponder the unfolding of this precious truth—to dwell upon it in the presence of God—to allow the wealth of it to sink down as heavenly moisture into our grateful hearts; and thus we shall be preserved not only from the dread effects of the workings of error, but be kept in the proper enjoyment of that which rightly is ours through Divine grace in Christ Jesus, the Head of the assembly. If Jehovah was the Fountain of living waters for Israel, now, in our glorious Saviour, the exalted Man, we are

reconciled to the rich plenitude which is in Him, through His death, which put away all that was offensive to God.

The best illustrations can but partially aid us in our understanding of this great truth. Look yonder at that wonderful structure among the lofty hills which tower above it on every side! It is a reservoir. So carefully has it been designed, and so ably has it been formed, that it is capable of containing the liquid treasures of those mighty mountains. Their brooks, streams and rushing rivulets pour their abundance lavishly into it. Far down in the distance there are cities, and townships, and villages, and farmsteads, and other homes. These, by a fine system of supply are immediately connected with the reservoir,—the most excellent in the world! The mass of those who benefit have never seen it, and wise-acres are soon trading on their ignorance. They propose with their divining rods to locate independent springs for them, or to connect their homes with some waters which are in sight. Even if they are not the best, a system of filters will purify them they are told, and so on. Surely, it were simpler, easier, and far better to abide in relation to the fulness in the reservoir! Truly, but some restless beings welcome unnecessary difficulties, even though they lead to disaster. All are not satisfied to remain in "SIMPLICITY AS TO CHRIST,"—to abide in the faith once delivered to the saints. They prefer their own springs, or to walk by sight rather than by faith.

The apostle indicates this in chapter 1., after he has shown that we are reconciled to the fulness in Christ, as he says, "To present you holy and unblameable and irreproachable before it, if indeed ye abide in the faith founded and firm" (22-23, N.T.). Mark, he does not here say "abide in faith," or "in believing." Profession is in view, and we are told that some who profess "the faith" will turn from it. We are preserved as we abide in the faith.

Grave dangers result from well-meaning men seeking by expediency to help the members of Christ's body by setting up independent supplies instead of seeking to recover the faith and affection of the members to the Head of the assembly. Schools, parties, sects, conferences, etc., are set going with the best of motives, but only in the long run to divert from the truth of Christ and the assembly practically, and from the resources of our Head on high. Even in regard to service, missions, councils, funds, secretaries, treasurers with offices and headquarters at some centre on earth are often established, thus frequently diverting the servants of the Lord from exercising faith in regard to the One who is above, and in getting direct guidance and support from Him. Is the exalted Head and Lord not sufficient for the saint and the servant too?

Is it honouring to Him when one says, "I am employed by the Society for—, and our headquarters are in London?" or "I am sent out by the G— Mission?" or "I belong to the A— Party and only go where I am sent or invited?" or "I am an ordained E— minister, etc.?" Are such expressions consistent with the fact that each servant is directly responsible to his own Master? or with the indisputable fact that the gifts are given to men by the ascended Head of the assembly in view of the benefit of all the members of His body (Eph. 4. 8-12)? Again, is it consistent with the truth of the all-sufficiency of Christ for the well-being of the assembly to arrange special conferences or gatherings which necessarily exclude many of the members of His body? Granting that the best motives govern the promoters,—Is it following righteousness—consistency with the truth of Christ and the assembly—to convene semi-worldly meetings,—classy meetings or conferences for a certain sort of believers,—which ignore that which is of an assembly character? Is this abiding in the faith? We do not here refer to the individual work of a servant

of the Lord. Human arrangements to meet present exigencies are often most sincere, but often most disastrous in the long run. The fulness of the Head abides, and a return to that is what faithful men should seek to promote among those who are members of His body.

It is for the faith which was delivered to the saints at the beginning we are to contend together, to be in the full benefit of,—not to contend *against* opponents,—but "FOR the faith . . . once delivered" (Jude 3). The inspired writings are able to *fully furnish* us, we are told (2 Tim. 3. 17). This is important to recognize when so much is proposed, and so many claims made on our time, our service and our energies, for we can prayerfully enquire,— "Is this or that of the faith once delivered?"—"Is there Scripture for what is suggested? Many who condemn traditional practices in others, give way themselves to expediency without Scriptural warrant.

With a sense of glad relief and holy elevation of thought, we can turn again to the Holy Spirit's teaching, which abides as true to-day as when it was first made known in all its Divine beauty. In Christ "dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; and ye are filled full in Him who is the Head of all principality and power," and we may surely be encouraged in "holding fast the Head, from whom all the body, ministered to and united together by the joints and bands, increases with the increase of God." Truly, as we said in regard to our illustration. It is "simpler, easier and far better to abide in relation to the fulness" than to be diverted by the man with the divining rod and his independent suggestions. Who or what can improve on that which has been Divinely established by God Himself for our faith to rejoice in?

How completely and perfectly He has set us up in relation to Christ Jesus our Lord, giving us to have our full repletion with and in Him. As regards the

flesh we are (1) cut off in the circumcision of Christ, (2) buried with Him in baptism, (3) raised with Him through faith of the operation of God in raising Him from among the dead, (4) quickened together with Him; (5) having died with Christ from the elements of the world, we are now risen with Him, (6) our life is hid with Him in God, (7) when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory (Col. 2. 11-3. 4). Outside of Him therefore the assembly has no need to go, and does not the ministry of the Spirit by John constantly exhort us to abide in Him that our joy may be full. Yea, and in Ephesians 4., after the gifts given by the exalted Head have been spoken of, the members of the body are encouraged in this positive attitude,—to "grow up to Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love" (16).

"Then Lord remove whate'er divides
Our longing souls from Thee;
'Tis meet that where the Head resides,
The members' hearts should be."

The heavenly supplies would be so precious to us then, we should be preserved on the one hand from the loose and independent spirit which jauntily says, "*I am not of the body*" (1 Cor. 12. 15)! And, on the other, from the legal and harsh spirit which peremptorily ejaculates, "*I have no need of you*" (21)! "Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary" (22). And the absurdity of independent meetings, setting aside effectually the truth of Christ's Headship of the "*one body*" on earth, would be turned from instinctively as a practical denial of that which we prove experimentally to be so blessedly true.

Purposefulness on our side is greatly needed! Let us not be side-tracked, beloved brethren! Let the normal truth,—the truth which is the true portion of all the saints,—be held fast by us! Let us overcome! God grant that *we ourselves* may not be overcome! Let the positive good, so freely given, be definitely before us!

"Its rich and unexhausted store,
And all its joys is ours."

OURS? *Yes! Ours* in Christ Jesus, in whom the fulness of the Godhead resides! We are complete in Him! Ah, but WHO IS HE?—Did we lovingly grow up in the excellent knowledge of Himself, we should shun as unworthy of Him much that is carelessly allowed. He, blessed be His Holy Name, is the Son of the Father's love, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of the invisible God, the First in dignity of all Creation, for He created all the positions of dignity in the heavens and on the earth,—the thrones, the lordships, the principalities, and the authorities. By Him and for Him were they all created. And He is before all, and all subsist together by Him. Moreover, He is the One who made peace by His precious blood, and the Fulness was pleased to dwell in Him in view of reconciling all to itself by Him eventually; but in Him *we* are already reconciled to the Fulness, as we have seen. And He it is who is the Head of the body, the assembly. He is the Beginning, the Firstborn from among the dead. This is the One in whom we are filled full. How great, how gracious, how glorious is the assembly's Head!

Our glad hearts may well add their "AMENS," and their "HALLELUJAHS," to what the Spirit says concerning Him as the Head of the body, the assembly,—the Beginning in resurrection,—"that in all things He might have THE PRE-EMINENCE" (Col. 1. 18).

GOD AS FATHER.

(A. W. TRENCH.)

In view of the widespread and false teaching called "The universal fatherhood of God," this study in Scripture texts will be useful to our readers.

1. **FATHER**—general use of—not involving relationship, but as **SOURCE**. Source and origin of all blessing. The One from whom all proceeds.

As "Father in Glory."—Eph. i. 17.
 "Father of Mercies."—2 Cor. i. 3.
 "Father of lights."—James i. 17.
 "To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things."—1 Cor. 8. 6
 "One God and Father of all."—Eph. 4. 6.

2. **FATHER**—in and by **CREATION**.

Angels are called the "sons of God."—Job i. 6 ; 2. 1 ; 38. 7. Also Psa. 29. 1 and 89. 6 (Delitzsch).

[NOTE.—By first creation we are the offspring of God ; but this does not imply individual relationship—to enter into which we need absolutely to be born again.]

"Adam—which was the son of God"—Luke 3. 38.
 "In Him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also His offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, etc."—Acts 17. 28, 29.

"Call no man your father upon the earth ; for one is your Father, which is in heaven."—Matt. 23. 9.

"Did not He that made me . . . make him ?"—Job 31. 15.

"Have we not all one father ? hath not one God created us ?"—Mal. 2. 10.

"O Lord, Thou art our Father, we are the clay, . . . we all are the work of Thy hand."—Isa. 64. 8.

3. **FATHER**—to Israel, in **NATIONAL RELATIONSHIP**.

"Wilt Thou not . . . cry unto Me, My father ?"—Jer. 3. 4.

"Thou shalt call Me, My father."—Jer. 3. 19.

"I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is My firstborn."—Jer. 31. 9.

"Is not He thy father that hath bought thee ? Hath He not made thee ?"—Deut. 32. 6.

"I called my son out of Egypt . . . I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms."—Hos. 11. 1, 3.

"Thus saith the Lord, Israel is My son, my firstborn."—Exod. 4. 22.

"The Lord hath spoken : I have nourished and brought up children."—Isa. 1. 2.

"Doubtless Thou art our father, though Abraham be ignorant of us . . . Thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer."—Isa. 63. 16.

"If then I be a father, where is mine honour ?"—Mal. 1. 6.

"Ye are the sons of the living God."—Hos. 1. 10.

"The God of all the families of Israel."—Jer. 31. 1.

"I will be his father, and he shall be My son."—2 Sam. 7. 14. See Hebrew 1. 5.

"He shall cry unto Me, Thou art My father, My God . . . also I will make Him My firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth."—Psa. 89. 26, 27.

And **FATHER** to His King (in a special sense.)

4. **FATHER**—in the character of **KINDNESS** and **CARE** and **DISCIPLINE**.
- “A father of the fatherless . . . is God.”—Psa. 68. 5.
 “Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him.”—Psa. 103. 13.
 “I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son.”—Mal. 3. 17.
 “Whom the Lord loveth He correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.”—Prov. 3. 12.
 “Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth . . . God dealeth with you as with sons.”—Heb. 12. 6, 7.
 “As a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee.”—Deut. 8. 5.
 “That ye may be the children of your Father, which is in heaven; for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good.”—Matt. 5. 45.
 “I will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”—2 Cor. 6. 18.
5. **THE FATHER**—as **REVEALED BY THE SON**, while on earth.
- [NOTE.—We cannot know God as Father except as the only-begotten Son who dwelt in His bosom has revealed Him in His own Person.]
- “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.”—John 1. 18.
 “Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father.”—John 6. 46.
 “Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him.”—Matt. 11. 27 and Luke 10. 22.
 “If ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also.”—John 8. 19.
 “If ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also; from henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him. Philip saith unto Him, Lord show us the Father . . . Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me? . . . He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; how sayest thou, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me?”—John 14. 7-10.
 “I and My Father are one.”—John 10. 30.
6. **MY FATHER** and **FATHER**—the new individual relationship, on the ground of the finished redemption work of Christ, as witnessed by the Holy Ghost given. Relationship which is entered by being born of God, and enjoyed by the Holy Spirit,
- “My Father and your Father.”—John 20. 17.
 “As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God . . . ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba Father . . . We are the children of God; and if children, then heirs.”—Rom. 8. 14-17.
 “Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children.”—Eph. 1. 5.
 “Ye are all children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.”—Gal. 3. 26.
 “That we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba Father.

who is the Spirit of sonship and indwells all who are sons.

Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son ; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ."—Gal. 4. 5-7.

"The sons of God."—Phil. 2. 15.

"The manifestation of the sons of God."—Rom. 8. 19.

"The glorious liberty of the children of God."—Rom. 8. 21.

"As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God . . . Which were born . . . of God."—John 1. 12, 13.

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God."—1 John 3. 1.

"Now are we the sons of God."—1 John 3. 2.

"Everyone that doeth righteousness is born of Him."—1 John 2. 29.

"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin . . . In this the children of God are manifest."—1 John 3. 9, 10.

"Everyone that loveth is born of God."—1 John 4. 7.

"Of His own will begat He us."—James 1. 18.

"Bringing many sons unto glory."—Heb. 2. 10.

"I will be his God, and he shall be My son."—Rev. 21. 7.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Who is the Object of Worship ?

"Will you kindly explain, in view of John 4. 23 24, how our Lord Jesus is so much the object of worship at the meeting for the breaking of bread [the Lord's Supper] and why in giving thanks for the bread and cup is He the one addressed ? Does this Scripture not indicate that the Father is the object of worship ? I have met some who say that God the Father alone is the object of worship, but does this Scripture warrant that view ? I cannot find any other. They put much stress on Phil. 3. 3., but I find that the Revised version reads thus : 'who worship by the Spirit of God,' is this right ?"—T. F. E., GLASGOW.

TO say that worship should only be addressed to the Father and not to the Son is as obnoxious to the sensibilities of the Spirit-taught Christian as it is contrary to the Word of God. The question never ought to arise with men. We can understand the *possibility* of it arising with angels when the Lord became Man—thus taking a place "a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death," but instantly any such question is silenced by God's decree." When He bringeth the First-begotten into the world, He saith : "And let all the angels of God worship Him" Heb. 1. 6. Shall men be permitted to withhold from Him what angels are commanded to give ?

God has been revealed as Father, and as such is seeking worshippers who shall

worship Him in spirit and in truth, i.e., intelligently and according to the revelation of His Name by the Lord Jesus, but that does not exclude the Son from the worship of Christian hearts. On the contrary, it is the Father's purpose that "all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father ; 'He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father that sent Him'" (John 5. 23). All men must either render worship to Him or be judged by Him. "At the name of Jesus every knee should bow" (Phil. 2. 10) emphasizes the Father's determination in this respect.

Thomas worshipped Him when, filled with awe in His presence, he exclaimed, "My Lord and my God !" and he was not rebuked ; Stephen and Paul prayed to Him, and prayer to Him is not less

the confession of His Deity than worship ; the twenty-four elders (the whole ransomed host) in heaven fall down before Him in adoring worship, and sing a new song to Him, and that new song strikes the note that is caught up by every creature in heaven, on earth, and beneath it (Rev. 5). He is yet to be the object of universal worship. The Christian who has heavenly life and light and intelligence now does not wait for the day when all shall own His worth. He worships Him now. It must be so, for the Lord Jesus is the great subject of the Holy Spirit's ministry. "He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you" said He, and the response produced by the revelation of His glory to the heart is worship.

It seems to us that it is eminently fitting that thanks for the bread and the cup at the Supper should be given to the Lord. He gave these emblems of His death to His disciples, we really receive them from Him, and of them He says, "This is *My body* given for you," "This is *My blood* shed for you." It is Himself and us, His love for us. What He has given for us. He could not have done more, He could not have given more. Surely the least we can do in response to what He has done is to say, "We thank Thee." But this does not exclude thanks to the Father. The Lord Himself gave thanks to Him when He broke the bread, and we may well do the same. The assembly should come together in the spirit of thanksgiving to the Father.

Now as to worship to the Father ; it was to secure this that the Lord Jesus came into the world. It is response from hearts into which the revelation of His Name has come, and is the highest privilege that is ours. The hymns that are popular among Christians show how little of it there is. The great majority of them do not rise above thanks for blessings received ; they do not consider the blessedness of the Blesser ; the spirit of worship is not in them ; it is the church's common shame. The reason for this is, we believe, that the truth and position of the church, or assembly of

God is so feebly understood, for worship in its fullest, truest sense is collective. This is evidently set forth in the Lord's own words given to us in Heb. 2. 12.—"I will declare Thy Name unto My brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto Thee." And here the Lord takes His place in the midst, not exactly as the object of worship, but as the One who produces it and leads it. And it is this, we suppose, that has made some who cannot look at more than one side of the truth at once, deny worship to Him.

How wonderful is this place that is given to us—to all believers—He calls us "My brethren," He raises us up to His own platform, we stand together as one with Him before His Father, loved with the same love that rests on Him, and having His life and nature, and His Spirit—the Holy Ghost who is the Spirit of Sonship. To such as we are He has declared the Father's Name and in company with Him—the Firstborn among many brethren—we may enter into the joy that the knowledge of the Father yields, but only as we are in company with Him, it would be impossible to enter into it apart from Him. He represents and reveals the Father to us, and before the Father leads us in responsive praise and worship.

This is a subject which cannot be developed within the narrow compass of an "answer," but it is one that ought to produce the deepest exercise in every Christian heart. We ought to zealously seek that what the Father seeks He may find, and that the Lord may not lack companions who shall join with Him in the song that He sings to His Father and our Father, to His God and our God.

As to the correct rendering of Phil. 3. 3., J.N.D., in his new translation gives the passage in the same words as the R.V., "who worship by the Spirit of God," but from his note on it we gather that there is some doubt about it. In any case it does not affect the question we have been considering.

Is Faith the Gift of God ?

“Is faith the gift of God, or is it an act of the human will ?”—F.E.D.

I CANNOT do better than answer your question by quoting from the “Synopsis,” by J. N. Darby. “It is by grace we are saved. Now we are not yet in the glory : it is by faith. Would any one say the faith is of man ? No ; it is not of ourselves in this respect either : all is the gift of God ; not of works, in order that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship.” Then follows a footnote. “I am quite aware of what critics have to say here as to gender ; but it is equally true as to grace, and to say, ‘by grace we are saved . . . and

that not of yourselves’ ” is simply nonsense ; but ‘by faith’ might be supposed to be of ourselves ; “by grace” cannot be. Therefore the Spirit of God adds, “and that [not it] not of yourselves, it is the gift of God ! That is, the believing is God’s gift, not of ourselves. And this is confirmed by what follows, ‘not of works.’ But the object of the apostle is to show that the whole thing was of grace and of God—God’s workmanship—a new creation. So far, grace and faith and all go together.”

“David, their King.”

I was reading Jeremiah 30. 9, and wondered if it was to be taken literally that David would be actually set upon the throne in Jerusalem. I always thought that the Old Testament saints would take part in heavenly blessing during the millenium, though associated with Christ in reigning over the earth (Revelation 20. 4), but this Scripture in Jeremiah 30. seems so definite. How do you take it ?—J. M., MELBOURNE.

THE prophecy is of Christ, in His Davidic character. This character has a two-fold aspect—the sure mercies of David, and the deliverance of Israel from the yoke of their enemies and their being shepherded as one flock, by *the One whom God will raise up for them*. The first sets forth God’s own faithfulness to the promises that He made to David ; the second the Lord’s ability to deliver Israel and bless them, as was typified in the overthrow of Goliath and the uniting of Israel in one happy and triumphant nation under David’s sceptre—the king whom God raised up for them and not Saul, whom they chose for themselves.

You will find, we believe, one or other of these two parallel lines always when Christ is foreshadowed as the true David in the Psalms and prophets. And we might remark in passing that we must look for Him always in the prophets : they spoke of Him—He, and not a failing man as David was is the hope of Israel—and there cannot be any blessing for them apart from Him. But, wonderful is His greatness and glory ! He is equal to the carrying out and establishment of every

promise that God made to David. David failed ; the man was not equal to God’s promises, his sceptre was not a righteous sceptre, and though he grieved that it was not, he was able in his dying song to sing of the One who was coming, upon whose escutcheon there would be no blot. “Who should be as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, a morning without clouds.” He is the true David.

In the passage referred to, the deliverance of Israel by the One whom God *will raise up* is the theme, and the establishment of Zion—David’s city—where the goodness of God and the song of Israel will flow together. Some other prophecies in a similar strain are Isaiah 55. 3, 4—“the sure mercies of David” ; Ezekiel 34. 23 ; 37. 24—the Lord as the Shepherd. The two great Apostles, Peter and Paul, interpret these prophecies as applying to the Lord Jesus (*see Acts 2. and especially Acts 13. 34–36*).

The Old Testament saints will have their part in the heavenly side of the kingdom, as is indicated in Hebrews 11. 13–16.

BITTER WATERS.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

"And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter" (Exod. xv. 23).

IT was not in Egypt that the sons of Jacob had to taste the bitter waters. There they groaned in a BITTER BONDAGE, which typifies the awful tyranny from which a man suffers before he is delivered from the power of the devil by the Lord.

Nor was it on the great passover night, the night of their deliverance from the bitter bondage that they tasted these waters. There they ate the BITTER HERBS with the lamb roast with fire, which typifies the sorrow of heart and repentance which we feel when first we realize that the Lamb of God suffered for us, and that our sins were the cause of the anguish that filled His soul as He hung upon the centre cross of Calvary.

The BITTER WATERS were in the wilderness, and these ransomed slaves reached them there after their foes had perished in the sea, after they had sung their song of triumph to the Lord who had set them free, and when they thought that they had said "Good bye" to trouble for ever. Then they came to Marah, and the waters thereof were bitter. This was an unexpected thing, and it greatly shook the faith of that pilgrim host. It was a strange experience that needs to be explained, and so much the more as it typifies an experience that every ransomed soul must pass through. Saul of Tarsus came to the bitter waters when with overflowing heart he preached to his brethren the Jews that Jesus was the Son of God, and found that they hated him for it and went about to kill him, and that the only way of escape from their fury was to be *let down* in a basket over the wall of the city, an unlooked-for and humiliating experience for that zealous convert, and a very bitter draught for such a man, sensitive and courageous as he was. A Mohammedan

priest, of whom I heard, tasted the bitter waters when, having found a living and all-sufficient Saviour in the Lord Jesus, he eagerly confessed His Name to his fellow-priests, and was spat upon for it, and struck in the face by their doubled fists. A sore trial for a proud Moslem who had been trained from boyhood to resent an insult instantly and indignantly.

A little High School girl, of fourteen, whom I know well, came suddenly on these same bitter waters, when on the day after she had owned the Lord as her Saviour, her schoolmates mocked her and refused to travel in the same compartment of the train that took them to the city where the school was, saying they would not ride in the same carriage with "a religious girl." That was an unexpected and bitter experience for an affectionate child, and she told me that as she watched her old friends disappear one by one she "felt very choky, and could not restrain her tears."

But a tree cut down and cast into the waters of Marah made them sweet for Israel, and that miracle teaches us that the cross of Christ can sweeten the strangest and most bitter experience for us. It can make us "glory in tribulation." The bitter waters were made sweet for Saul of Tarsus when he realized that it was for Christ's sake that he suffered, who had suffered so much for him. Then he could say, "I am crucified with Christ . . . the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2. 20). The waters were made sweet for that Mohammedan priest when, during his great trial, a sense of what Christ had suffered for him so filled his soul, that he said, "When I thought of what my Lord had suffered for me, great joy filled my heart because I was counted worthy to

suffer for Him, and I said, "If such joy is mine when merely smitten and spit upon for Thy sake, O Lord, how great must be the joy of dying for Thee." And the waters were made sweet for my little High School friend in her isolation and tears when she began to sing to herself—

"Oh, who can it be with His brow crowned
with thorn,
The centre of hatred, the object of scorn?
Exposed to derision, and shame on the tree,
Enduring such anguish, oh, who can it be?"

"The darkness surrounds him, no helper is
nigh,
No sweet word of comfort, no pitying eye;
Alone on dark Calvary, by faith I can see,
My blessed Redeemer is dying for me."

That changed everything, and she said, that as she sang, the presence of the Lord seemed to fill the compartment in which her friends had left her, and she was glad that she had told them that she belonged to the Saviour.

It is sometimes supposed that when a man turns to the Lord he will henceforth have no difficulties or troubles. But that is not so; indeed, for that very reason troubles often thicken about him. Those who belong to Christ, and *because they belong to Him*, are often despised, flouted and persecuted; the world that once courted them can do without them, and often makes them feel that their room is preferable to their company. This is not strange, for it was thus that the Lord was treated, and the disciple is not greater than his Lord. But *Marah* covers more than this; indeed, in its truest, deepest meaning it involves another experience, and teaches a lesson harder to learn; and it offers water to the taste that could not be drunk at all apart from casting into it the cross of Christ. A Christian, before he knew the Lord, had natural hopes and ambitions, and these he carries with him into the pilgrimage to the heavenly Canaan, only to find them blighted and checked. God's will leads him along a road other than that of his inclination; the will of God runs right athwart the

desires of his nature, and he feels it bitterly. How can he drink a draught of that sort, and say "No" to self, and take up his cross daily, and follow the Lord? The cross of Christ is the only answer. In that cross the personal love of Christ for every ransomed saint was disclosed, and *the will of God* came into evidence also. It was the will of God that we should be redeemed from Satanic bondage by that one and only way; it was the will of God that we should be sanctified unto Himself, and this could not have been realized apart from that cross, as Hebrews 10. shows us. But in the cross of Christ the will of God has shown itself to be set upon our eternal blessing, and it will surely plan the best way for us in this life. It is the knowledge of this that sweetens the trial and enables us to say, "I am crucified with Christ," and, "the world is crucified to me, and I to the world."

This is not something that is learned by faith merely, the waters have to be tasted and drunk, which implies a deep inward experience. Who can turn from self and the most cherished natural hopes for the path of God's will save he who has realized that God so loved him as to give His Son for him, and learns that the will of God is not against him but for him, and is only against everything that would do him harm? It is this that sweetens the waters and shows, as has been said often and well, that *my disappointment* was HIS APPOINTMENT.

There is more in this instructive and affecting type that we may learn in the presence of the Lord. It covers every disappointment and every bitter experience that we may have in this wilderness world, but the cross of Christ will sweeten every one of them for us, and make us sing—

"O Cross that liftest up my head,
I dare not ask to fly from thee;
I lay in dust life's glories dead,
And from the ground there blossoms red
Life that shall endless be."

And lo, the waters are sweet.

“PUT ON, THEREFORE.”

(J. J. ANNING.)

IN his letter to the Colossians the Apostle Paul shows that he knew a great deal about their spiritual state. He thanks God for their faith in Christ Jesus, their love and their hope. Prayer is then made that they may walk worthy of their Lord and increase in their knowledge of God. His theme is Christ, and as he shows them HIS greatness as THE SON, as the IMAGE OF GOD, as the CREATOR, as the PRE-EMINENT ONE in whom all fulness dwells and in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge—he warns them against philosophy, traditions, voluntary humility, ordinances, ritual and angel worship; all things that make something of man and “spoil” the follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. He reminds them that they are *dead* in Christ, *buried* with Him in baptism and *risen* with Him. We thus see how the characteristics of the old nature are *put off* or shed (anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communications, falsehoods), and appreciate what the apostle means when he exhorts them to *put on* the characteristics of Christ. The new life means a new objective, new affections, and these are only found in the glory of God, where Christ is.

He takes the high note—it is not “less of self and more of Christ” but “none of self and all of Christ.” As we quietly read the letter we just feel how it hits us Christians of to-day; true, we may not be addicted to angel worship, body neglecting, spiritualism, ordinances, or the keeping of holy days, but how far can any one of us say our affections are *set on things above*, how far are we *rooted and built up in Christ*—established in the faith?

We realize how active self is and how just as much, if not more than the Colossian saints, we vainly puff up our fleshly minds.

My object in writing this note is that we may take notice of the apostle's

injunction not only to “PUT OFF” but “PUT ON.”

This putting on is not a legal order or a pious effort; there is no cant about it and it doesn't mean that I am to try to make myself peculiar or conspicuous; but if it is a fact that I am chosen of God, holy in His sight and beloved—dead, buried and risen with Christ, I must THEREFORE manifest His loveliness in this poor dark world. With the Lord Jesus Christ there was of course no “*putting on*,” as He ever was completely perfect in every way and in every state. The apostle sort of shows us the rainbow of Himself as He was seen in this world. He refracts His glory into seven colours—

1. Bowels of mercies (compassions).
2. Kindness.
3. Humbleness of mind.
4. Meekness.
5. Longsuffering.
6. Forbearing one another.
7. Forgiving one another.

Many is the time that I have let my thoughts rest on this lovely unfolding of the moral glory of Christ—philosophy has no place here, but you and I in all our nothingness can dwell on His beauties, His characteristics, bow down in adoration before Him, and come out from His blessed presence as those who have been with Jesus to radiate in some small degree His excellencies.

We think of that leper who besought Him to make him clean, and of Mark's statement, “And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth His hand and *touched* him and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean.” This was more than kindness, His power could have healed by a word, but His compassion makes Him touch the loathsome, unclean wretch, and prove to him that He entered into even his extreme circumstances. He was moved with compassion toward the “*much people*” because they were as sheep not having a shepherd, and He began to teach them

many things. Then He fed them and, oh! how kindly—there was no condescension manifested, comfortably and orderly they were seated on the green grass and had their hunger satisfied. The “good byes” were not left to the disciples—He sent them away Himself.

For an illustration of kindness I like to think of how the Lord looked upon Peter after his third denial of Him.

He ever did, from morning to night, kind things so kindly that He was indeed the friend of publicans and sinners. There was nothing of the “Hear now, ye rebels, must we fetch you water out of this rock?” He could say with verity that He was meek and lowly in heart, and as we look back on the Divine record of His blessed, holy, earthly life, how we affirm it! We see Him, defenceless, standing before the High Priest listening to defamatory lies against Himself, holding His peace. We see Him spat upon, buffeted and mocked—when He was reviled, He reviled not again. We see Him girding Himself with a towel, washing His disciples’ feet, and saying, “I am among you as one that serveth.”

Grace Sufficient.

PAUL’S thorn was not pleasant to him. He prayed to be rid of it. But when he found it had come to stay he made friends with it swiftly. It was no longer how to dismiss, but how to entertain. He stopped groaning and began glorying. It was clear to him that it was God’s will, and that meant a new opportunity of drawing

“LONGSUFFERING”—we do not need to look to Holy Writ for its illustration, you and I, as we look back over our profitless lives for Him confess to His blessed patience. Who but He would have suffered such bad service for so long? As we realize it we are humbled and ashamed.

“FORBEARANCE”—putting up with one another, our cranks, our unkindnesses, our weaknesses. We wonder at His grace as even a glimpse of His forbearance comes before our thoughts.

FORGIVING ONE ANOTHER—*even as Christ forgave you.*

LOVE totals the addition sum. The apostle evidently takes it for granted that for our poor lives to manifest such glories of the Christ the peace of the Christ (N.T.) must rule in our hearts, the Word of Christ must dwell in us richly, and all that we do we must do in the name of the Lord Jesus. His last word is Grace be with you. Amen. We can, and do, reiterate this with all our soul, and pray that in our lives we may represent our Lord a little better by being increasingly more like Him in our ways, manners and life.

upon God’s supplies. What God means is always too good to be lost, and is worth all it costs to learn. The grace compensates for all the suffering and Christ is glorified. But then Christ was more to Paul than Paul. He loved His Lord more than he loved himself, because he knew the love of Christ that passeth knowledge.

“*He by the grace of God should taste death for every man.*”—Heb. 2. 9.

WHENEVER you see an attempt to connect a living Christ before death and resurrection with living sinners, be sure there is error. It unites sin with the Lord from heaven, and it denies that its wages is death. Had Christ delivered Himself, as the

rulers, with the people, said in derision, He would not have delivered us. He must pass through death and take a higher place, even in Resurrection, and there He takes us. For the incarnation cannot bring life and redemption to those who are dead in trespasses and sins.

THE THREE MINDS.

(DAVID ROSS.)

The Mind of the Master, the Mind of the Child, the Mind of the Servant.

To those who labour among the children and all who serve the Lord.

THE mind of the Master and the mind of the child must be the supreme studies of the worker among the young. His own mind having thus been brought into conformity with his Lord's and into sympathy with the child's, his interpretation of Christ will not only be true, but will be suited to the capacity of the mind on which he seeks to imprint the knowledge of the Saviour.

I.—THE MIND OF CHRIST.

I. "Let this MIND be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2. 5).

In Philippians, chapter two, the beloved Apostle Paul, the bondslave of Jesus Christ, depicts for us the wonderful condescension of the Lord of glory, not merely as a doctrine to be learned and tenaciously held, but rather as a powerful incentive to the abandonment of self-seeking for the blessed service of others. The very name of the virtue which he inculcates, "lowliness of mind," was unknown to the Greeks, whose ideal was "greatness of soul," really a glorified self-esteem. This new grace, which has been happily called the casket or treasure-house in which all other graces are contained, was seen first, and only in all its fulness and beauty, in the man Christ Jesus, who is also God over all blessed for ever. True service for God, whether among old or young, can only result as we are absorbed by, and drink into the spirit of Him, who though He was in the form of God, emptied Himself, and took upon Him the form of a servant.

Let us study Him in His contact with child life; the lowly Babe in Bethlehem's manger; the eager boy about

His Father's business in the Temple; the subject child increasing in stature and in favour; the busy preacher and healer pausing in His tireless activities to take into His arms the little children and bless them; the interested spectator of the children's games in the market place; the patient teacher setting in the midst of self-seeking disciples a child as an object lesson in humility; the tender comforter saying to the distracted father of the demon-torn boy, "Bring him to Me"; the wonderful life-giver gently taking the dead maiden's hand, and dispelling death and sorrow with His "Little girl, wake up."

Then remembering that this is none other than the Son of God, let His mind be in us so that, emptying ourselves of any fancied superiority or dignity, we may become the true servants of God to those of whom He said, "It is not the will of your Father that one of these little ones perish."

II.—THE MIND OF THE CHILD.

"When I was a child . . . I understood as a child" (1 Cor. 13. 11).

The apostle, however, not only knew his Master's mind, but with all his marvellous advance in the knowledge of Divine things, he had not forgotten his childhood's days, for he says, "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as (or had the *mind* of) a child." It is here that many smaller men than Paul fail in their efforts to win children for Christ. To hear them talk in a language unintelligible to young minds and wholly devoid of sympathy with the children's mentality or view-point, makes one almost wonder if they have ever been

children themselves. In restoring life to the dead lad Elisha had to stretch, or rather contract, his stature to that of the child, mouth to mouth, eyes to eyes, and hands to hands. We often stretch and strain the immature mind in our efforts to make it understand things too high and deep even for the adult mind to comprehend without the enabling of the Holy Spirit.

The youngest child can appreciate love. Teach him therefore that God is love, and show him the great proof of it at Calvary's cross. Take care, however, not to distress him by harrowing details of the Saviour's physical anguish, lest "when a few years have rolled over his head, he hear of the Cross without feeling." He can appreciate the misery and unhappiness which follow disobedience to an earthly parent. Point out, therefore, to him the misery which sin against God must bring with it, but beware lest irreparable harm be done by painting too vividly the terrors of judgment to come. All normal children like stories, but dislike morals, therefore tell them the beautiful stories of the Bible, but do not be over-anxious to point the moral. Trust the Word of God to do its own work of making wise the simple unto salvation. Begin early like Lois and Eunice, and from babyhood let them know the Holy Scripture. Finally, let children grow up without an unnatural restraint upon the desire to skip and romp and play which they have in common with the lambs, and while seeking to inculcate self control and Christian decorum, give them to know and feel that the *blessed* God desires for them true joy and happiness untainted by sin.

III.—THE MIND OF THE SERVANT.

"Set your mind on things above"
(Col. 3. 2).

Now let us turn once more to the apostle's writing to learn the characteristics of the mind of the true servant. Weeping, he has to warn us against the false servants, the enemies of the cross

of Christ, who "mind earthly things." How many, alas! are engaged in moulding the minds of the young whose minds never rise higher than the earth. How it should stir to greater activity for Christ, when we read of the increase of Socialist and Communist Sunday Schools, where blatant Atheism and Materialism, the worship of the belly, are deliberately instilled into the youthful minds. How much even of the ordinary education common to-day takes us no further than "under the sun," and must lead in the end to the lament "vanity of vanity and vexation of spirit!"

The need, therefore, is for consecrated men and women whose minds are set on things above, where the exalted Christ sitteth at the right hand of God, and whose eyes are filled with a nobler vision than the dreams of socialists, scientists or educationists. "Think the things that are above." Language-students must learn to think in a language, before they can know the full use of it in speaking; missionaries endeavour to "think black" in order to reach the "blacks," and we must cultivate "thinking heavenly things" in order to speak the heavenly language which shall win the young for Christ. Wide reading is a great asset in Christian service, but a mind which feeds on garbage is useless for God. Whatever things are true, honourable, just, pure, lovely, of good report, worthy of praise, think on these things. Rich pasture yields rich milk, and only the mind which feeds on and assimilates the heavenly pasture can yield for the babes the sincere milk of the Word.

Let us, therefore, gird up the loins of our mind, casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. Thus having minds in tune with the Infinite—the mind of Christ—and in understanding of the finite—the mind of the child,—we shall have the true wisdom of him who winneth souls.

THE DEATH OF THE LORD.

(FRANK B. HOLE.)

"For the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof" (1 Corinthians 10. 26).

THE supper of which 1 Corinthians 11. speaks is the supper of the Lord, and in it the death of the Lord is shown. Verse 26 does not speak, be it noted, of the death of Jesus, nor of the death of the Son of God, though He who died was Jesus, the Son of God. He is the Lord, the Master, and great Administrator of the coming age, and it is the death of the Lord that we remember and show forth.

Consider Him as Lord for one moment. In that character He will take up and administer the vast inheritance of glory in the coming day. All will be committed to His hand, for He is the Heir of all things. God has made known to us the mystery, or secret, of His will; it is to "gather together in one all things in Christ" (Eph. 1. 10). Heavenly things as well as earthly things are included in this vast purpose of the will of God. The great pyramid of glory, if we may so speak, will be broad based on the very earth where He bled and died, but will rear itself into the heavens and find its finality and apex in CHRIST. The top stone of a pyramid is itself a pyramid; it gathers together in one,—in itself,—all the lines and faces and angles of the pyramid as it crowns and completes the whole. Conversely once the top stone of a pyramid is chiselled and fixed, the character and proportions of the whole pyramid are determined, all save its height—which depends on how far the lines and faces are carried downwards.

Christ is that apex, and hence, as Ephesians 4. tells us, He has "ascended up far above all heavens that He might fill all things" (verse 10). In the coming age He will be Head of all and Lord of all and impress His own mark and character on the whole realm, blessed beyond compare, that will lie beneath Him.

Now we show forth the death of Him

who is Lord and Heir of all things, for in that way He has elected to take up the inheritance. The thoughts of men's hearts had been that by killing the Heir they would end His claims and seize on the inheritance for themselves. When the Lord Jesus expired between two thieves it did indeed seem as if their thoughts had come to pass. Apparently the Prophet of Nazareth had met with sudden eclipse, His cause was extinguished. Through the ages the devil had played his pieces with but a feeble reply from prophets and servants of God. Now playing with masterly skill the adversary encompassed the death of Christ. But the death of the Lord proved to be God's first great move, a move of overwhelming consequence, a move of such a character that only another move or two of a simple sort need be taken and the devil's checkmate will be a completed thing. By death the Heir has acquired a fresh title to the inheritance, the title which redemption gives. By death and resurrection the Lord has consolidated His sway in all spheres. He is Lord both of the dead and of the living.

But it is still the dark hour of His rejection. Since the hour of His apparent eclipse the world has been bereft of His light. He is forgotten, and men pursue their own way as though He would remain but a Name for ever. He is coming! And when as Lord He assumes authority He will rapidly and effectually overturn the existing order and establish that which is Divine. We know it through grace, and that it is His death which has made all possible. It has made it righteously possible for Him to take up His glory and link us with Himself in it.

We wait, therefore, for Him, and while we wait we eat the bread and drink the cup and thereby show forth the death of the Lord until He come.

"I HAVE LOVED THEE . . . I COME QUICKLY" (Rev. 3. 9-11).

(H. J. VINE.)

THESE words are said by our Lord Jesus Christ, not to men who are prominent in world affairs or who are famous for great learning or successful work, but to His saints who have a "little power," and who look with eager longing for His return; and who use the power they have to keep His Word, and that in consistency with who and what He is—not denying His Name.

In the prophetic and symbolic book of Revelation the assembly in *Philadelphia* represents these. *Philadelphia* means "love of the brethren." This is always found where God's love is known, for is it not written, "We love because He first loved us"; and again, "We know we have passed from death to life because we love the brethren." ? If we love Him that begat, we necessarily love those who are begotten of Him. These marks given in the Spirit's writings through John abide. It is said also of those saints that they keep the word of "*Christ's patience.*" They remain true to their absent Lord, unswayed from Him by the world or Satan or any plausible schemes of men who would put the world right without Him. They wait for Him, their quickly coming Saviour, who will take them up to Himself before the clock strikes "the hour" of the great tribulation!

With a word of encouragement and exhortation THE HOLY AND THE TRUE cheers these loved ones: "I come quickly," He says. "Hold fast what thou hast, that no one take thy crown" (11). There is nothing "*adverse*" in these words, nor in all that He says to them.

There is nothing spectacular in waiting on and for the Lord; in simply keeping His word and not denying His Name. There is nothing in that that the Daily Press would care to chronicle, and those who are doing this may

be despised for it all, but they need not be dismayed, for their risen Lord says to them, I have set before thee "an opened door which no one can shut," and the key of David is in His hand. Regal authority belongs to Him. The royal treasures are under His care: the throne of glory, the riches of His Father's house. He is the great Administrator. He has opened the door for them, and He loves them, and He will keep them till He comes to take them up to be with Him for ever. "*I come quickly*" He says to such. Even the "*Behold*" is left out in their case!—As though their attention did not need to be arrested by this great truth, because it was already the joy and hope of their heart.

What a solemn contrast we find in *Laodicea*! Neither cold nor hot! Luke-warm! Nauseate!—about to be spued out! Nevertheless, these *Laodiceans* are boastful and self-satisfied! Some one has said a great store of truth had come down to them from *Philadelphia*! God says the opposite!—they are "*wretched*" and "*miserable*" and "*poor!*" The truth cannot be in *Laodicea*, for the truth would have set them free had it been received by them. They possess none of "the excellent spiritual wealth" which would have produced an excellent spiritual condition. They "SAY" they are rich, but the One who cannot lie says they are poor and wretched and miserable. Who tells the truth in this matter? We believe God. There is no hint that *Philadelphia* will cool down into lukewarm *Laodicea*. *Philadelphia* is "*kept*" by her quickly coming Saviour, but *Laodicea* is *spued out* by "the Amen, the faithful and true Witness."

The condition of *Laodiceans* is described as "*blind and naked.*" They are without the anointing which gives

sight, and without the white raiment which would cover the shame of their nakedness, without the gold that would make them rich, yet they are boastful, and say they have need of nothing. They can even do without the One who could supply them with the true riches, for He stands outside their door. A true description of that sphere where intellectual attainments are crowned, and the power of the Holy Ghost despised, where "modern" thought is preferred to the Word of God, and where man vaunts himself and Christ has no place at all. On the other hand, although He is about to refuse them altogether, yet He reminds them of the door of repentance, just as He wept over Jerusalem and pleaded with her before her doom overwhelmed her, for He rebukes and disciplines "as many" as He loves (19). If any individual therefore who heard His voice as He stood at the door and knocked, and opened the door to Him, He would grant an individual communion of a personal nature, as He says, "I will come in and sup with him and he with Me" (20). Precious as this character of communion is, it does not suggest the heights of intimacy we read of elsewhere. It is suitable to the condition and relationships in view. It is the same in regard to the overcomer: a part in regard to His throne, when we shall reign with Him, does not indicate such a deep and abiding portion as other Scriptures speak of. Further, in regard to every condition of the assemblies, it is taken for granted that there are those at all times who have ears to hear what the Spirit says to them,—to all the assemblies,—not to one phase only. This is specially true in regard to the final four, where the hearer is addressed last of all, and not as in the former three, where the last word is said to the overcomer.

The wise man was once moved to write,—and with good reason,—“Say not thou, what is the cause that the former days were better than these? For thou dost not inquire wisely con-

cerning this” (Ecc. 7. 10). We cannot improve or alter *the past*, and we may be in glory with Christ *to-morrow*; wisdom says, Follow that which is good *now*! and do it earnestly. Christ abides, and He still says, Follow Me. The remnant of Malachi thought upon His Name and ordered their path according to that. Philadelphia keeps the word of His patience, and He keeps her right on to the end, she is true to His Name. And the door is still set open before her, the door of devotion to her Lord and for the maintenance of His testimony. Nowhere does the Word of God say she has “lost her crown,” or that she has “cooled down into lukewarm Laodicea.” If Scripture does not say so, who has authority so to do? Could Ephesus become Corinth? It is equally impossible for Philadelphia to become Laodicea. The two are quite different and remain different till the Lord returns as these addresses to them show.

The Lord Himself is the test, to Philadelphia He is every thing: to Laodicea He is nothing. It should be a question of solemn moment to all who bear the Name of the Lord as to which of these two conditions or spheres we move in. It becomes increasingly solemn and momentous as we hear His voice saying, “I come quickly.” It is true that none who are His will be left behind when He comes, but who would care to be dragged out of a state of things wholly obnoxious to the Lord, as Lot was dragged out of Sodom? Would it not be for His pleasure and our joy to have Enoch’s testimony at last—“God had translated him, for before His translation he had the testimony that he had pleased God” (Hebrews 11.). The hand that holds the keys of David has opened this door for us and keeps it open, and we may to the very end keep His word and not deny His Name. We may have as our greatest treasure the knowledge of His love that passes all knowledge, and have as our brightest hope His speedy coming again.

LIGHT AND LIFE.

(JAMES BOYD.)

Meditations on the Gospel and Epistles of John. No. 5.
New Birth. Chapter 3.

THE subject of chapter 3. begins at verse 23 of chapter 2. Beholding the signs that He wrought, many believed in the report that they had heard concerning Him. They were convinced that the report had not been exaggerated. But though they seem to have been convinced that there was something supernatural about Him, their consciences do not seem to have been aroused in the least, and without this it was only a passing tribute of homage bestowed upon One whose works were of such a character as silences either criticism or unbelief. But to these Jesus does not commit Himself, because the convincement of the human mind in things relating to God, where the conscience was not reached, was neither lasting nor reliable. "He needed not that any should testify of man, for He knew what was in man." They go away, and think no more about it.

But with this superficial belief in Jesus, Nicodemus is not satisfied. He cannot drop the inquiry at this early stage, nor does he seem to have possessed the moral courage necessary to acknowledge the divine mission of Jesus under the eyes of his associates. He will venture into the presence of the heavenly light veiled by the cloud of night. He is quite certain that Jesus is a teacher sent from God, and yet he is afraid of the Pharisees finding out that he harbours such thoughts in his mind. Poor Nicodemus! But he is just like the rest of us, who fear before worms of the dust to confess the lowly and rejected Son of Man.

In chapter one the light of God is in the world unknown and unapprehended. God in His own world cold-shouldered and despised! But here the felt need of Nicodemus, and divine light, cause him to risk the possibility of discovery, and the loss of human

prestige. "He that doeth truth cometh to the light." Come he must, whatever be the result of his coming.

The first ray of light that enters his heart must be that which reveals to him his lost condition: "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." This is a revelation that lays in dust the son of Abraham and ruler of the Jews. His natural birth will not do if he desires to be in vital relations with God. He was born blind. The kingdom was there before his eyes, but he could not see it. He saw a Man doing great works of power, and of such a character that he rightly judged that God was with Him. But the kingdom of God, which was the power of God vested in Jesus for the delivery of man from the consequences of his sinful condition, he saw not that. He was thoroughly convinced of the Divine mission of Jesus, and he will not admit that anyone can have the slightest doubt on the subject. He says: "We know." If others refuse to admit that which is confirmed by abundant and overwhelming testimony, it is a sin against light: "We know that Thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that Thou doest, except God be with him."

Feeling the darkness that was about him, and the darkness that was in his own soul, he comes for light to the Divine Teacher. But he was little prepared for the powerful light into which, through the dark clouds of night, his feet had carried him. And yet it was only that which was always true that he has for the first time in his history to learn. It was humbling for him to learn that all men, himself included, were born blind to all that concerned their vital relations with God. But he had come into the light, and he must not shirk the consequences

of his daring venture, whatever those consequences might be.

"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." He had, like all other Jews, looked for the kingdom as the open and public government of God, established in the Messiah enthroned on the hill of Zion, and in the midst of the Jewish nation. Now he has to learn that the kingdom is already established, but that unless a man is born again he cannot see it. That man will not do as he is learned by this ruler of the Jews, as the first ray of this heavenly light breaks upon his inquiring mind.

But how can a man be born when he is old? Is he to begin again as he had previously begun in flesh and blood? Manifestly that would not do, for he would just be the same Nicodemus over again. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," and the flesh has been proven worthless for God. No, he must now be born of water and the Spirit, and when this takes place, he can not only see but enter the kingdom. The "water" is the Word which, as the seed of God in the soul, communicates a new nature, and judges all that is of the old, cleansing thus the heart of man, who is the subject of it, from all its impurities, so that the Lord could say of those who were the subjects of such: "He that is bathed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit." The reference seems to be to Ezekiel 36, where the Lord speaks of gathering them out from among the heathen, and bringing them into their own land, then, He says: "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you." This, the Lord seems to say, Nicodemus should have known.

We sometimes unwittingly hinder our own understanding of the Word by supposing that, when natural things are taken up as figures of things spiritual, the former must be a distinct image of the latter. Therefore, with this erroneous notion in our minds, everything regarding the spiritual that does not closely conform to the natural is rejected. But really there is nothing in the natural that is the very image of the spiritual. We who believe are members of that body of which Christ is the head, but when our own bodies are taken up to illustrate that wondrous mystery, eyes and ears, which are really in our head, are viewed as members; and even the head itself is said to be a member, not able to say to the feet: "I have no need of you." We see, therefore, that the human body is taken up as a faint shadow of the mystery, and not the very image, though exceedingly helpful in the way in which the Holy Spirit uses it.

It is so also in regard of new birth. We must be born again to see the kingdom of God, but we must be born of water and of the Spirit to enter it. We have seen in the first chapter of this Gospel that only those born of God received Christ when He came into the world. The flesh will not receive Him. If it would I fail to see how new birth could be said to be a necessity. All that was needed when our Lord was here was that He should be received by men. He was not received, and therefore judgment comes upon the world, both on the Jew and on the Gentile. The flesh never did anything nor shall it ever do anything, but reject Christ. "Ye believe not because ye are not of My sheep." "No man can come to Me except the Father who hath sent Me draw him." "Every one that hath heard and learned of the Father comes to Me." "No man can come unto Me, except it were given to him of My Father."

Now, what is that work that is wrought in the soul, without which no man will receive Christ? Flesh

neither will nor can come to the Saviour. But man's inability to come lies in his innate enmity against God, and his determination to have nothing to do with Him, if he can avoid it. He hates the light, even when that light is the light of eternal love, and he will murder his brother rather than allow him to bring God under his notice.

What a strange thing is this hatred of God! How dark and mysterious! How difficult to understand? Why should the creature hate his Creator? Why, even when fallen, should he resist the gracious intervention of God on his behalf? Men may talk about the mistakes of Moses, mock at the story of the garden, the serpent, and the fall, speak of the holy Bible as a compendium of folk-lore and fable, but let them explain the open and shameless devotion of idolatrous nations to their gods, the boldness of every man who confesses a false religion on earth, but when the fringe of Christianity is touched, there is a cowardly shrinking from the danger of being considered too religious, and the nearer you get to the heart of the matter, and therefore the nearer to having to do with Christ, you find too many suffering from the disease that afflicted Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathæa. Why is it that of all the religionists upon earth, it is only the *true* believer in the Son of God who has need to guard against being ashamed of his Master? There is no explanation of it, except this fact that it is the only light that shows man up as he is, a moral ruin, in whom there is not one element of good from head to feet, fit only for the judgment of a holy and righteous God, and who, if he is to escape judgment, must be a subject of sovereign mercy and grace. Within the sphere of Christian profession, the farther you get away from that which is true and spiritual, or, I may say, from Christ, into that which lies in forms and ceremonies, and heathenish ritual, the sense of timidity decreases. No one is ashamed to

confess himself a good churchman, or anything denominational, as long as he has not to say that he is Christ's. Cain was as religious as Abel, but Abel was in vital relations with God, and in the confession that he was a poor sinner who needed a Saviour of God's providing. This Cain denied, not only for himself, but refused to tolerate such a testimony to be maintained upon earth. The flesh is incorrigibly evil, and man must be born again, and born by the living Word of God, and by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Word of God is a living and mysterious power. By His Word the worlds were framed, and by that same Word are they upheld (Heb. 11. 3; 1. 3). There is nothing abiding on earth but that Word. "All flesh is grass, and all the goodness there, is as the flower of the field: the grass withereth, the flower fadeth; because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the Word of our God shall stand for ever" (Isa. 40). "And this is the Word which by the Gospel is preached unto you" (1 Peter 1.). Nothing but the Word of God abides. It framed the universe, and it will fill that universe with a new spiritual generation, who shall stand before God in the position of sons brought to glory.

But Nicodemus must hear of heavenly things, however little he may have entered into the true meaning of the earthly. And who could unfold the heavenly things before the eyes of men but He that came down from heaven, the Son of Man, who, as to His Divine essence, never left heaven: "The Son of Man who is in heaven." To whom but Himself could we go to learn anything of that glorious region? What can men tell us? None have ever been there, and returned to give us some account of the nature of the place, and of what is suitable for dwelling therein. No mortal man could live there any more than he could live in the depths of the ocean. A life

suitable for such a sphere is needful for all who shall make their home there.

Therefore must the Son of Man be lifted up upon the cross, if men were to partake of that life which, as I have indicated already, is the life of the Father's house. This life is the life of the believer, and "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we should live through Him." He sent His Son indeed to be the propitiation for our sins, but the great thought of God for

us was not forgiveness, that was a necessity for us as sinners, but that we should live through Him. Life was in His eternal purpose for us, and it was His supreme thought in sending His Son to die for us. In the knowledge of the Father and of His Son Jesus Christ this life is possessed and enjoyed, and its home is that home into which the Son has entered, for He is it, and in having Him we have that life.

It is in hope with Paul, for he is used of the Spirit of God so to speak of it.

"Even so, Father."

A VISITOR at a school for the deaf and dumb was writing questions on the blackboard for the children. By and by he wrote this sentence: "Why has God made me to hear and speak, and made you deaf and dumb?" The awful sentence fell upon the little ones like a fierce blow in the face. They sat palsied before that dreadful "why." And then a little girl arose. Her lip was trembling. Her eyes were swimming with tears. Straight to the board she walked, and, picking up the crayon wrote with firm hand these precious words:—

"*Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight!*"

What a reply! The faith of it reaches up and lays hold of an eternal truth upon which the maturest believer as well as the youngest child of God may alike unshakeably rest—the truth that *God is your Father*. But these precious words were uttered by the Lord Jesus when He was on earth, and can we, can you, adopt them as ours, as yours? Does it not savour of presumption to do so? Nay, for He has said, "My Father, and your Father; My God and your God." Did He mean

that? Yes, He did, and He found a deep joy in declaring the blessed fact. He suffered "all Calvary's sorrow and its woe" that it might be true. Do you really and fully believe that? When you do, then your dove of faith will no longer wander in weary unrest, but will settle down for ever in its eternal resting place of peace. "*Your Father!*" Why, that takes in everything! Because He is your Father, how *could* He fail, or forget you? Look into your own father heart and mark the strength, the tenderness, the unspeakableness of your love for that winsome little one enshrined in your heart of hearts. Then say to yourself, "God's Father love for me infinitely surpasses all this." *Your Father!* Against that all doubts must at last dash themselves to pieces as the salt-spray beats itself to nothingness upon the rock-bound coast. Down upon your chastened [child-trained] soul will come a quietness and peace, and your heart will find a final resting place in untrembling trustfulness. Rear that up before the devil's subtle, hideous, hissing "why" and he will stagger back, the unmasked, baffled, beaten traitor that in truth he is.—(Adapted.)

The Lord's Supper.

IN the Lord's Supper it is not so much what we have gained, but what it cost the Lord to secure the gain for us. Many remember what Christ has done for them who forget what it cost Him.

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH. No. 9. The Atonement.

(A. J. POLLOCK.)

THE character of the death of Christ constitutes an enquiry of vital importance to every one of us. Was His death merely a supreme example to the rest of mankind, or was it a sacrificial death?

One thing is plain—the most casual reading of the Bible brings out the fact most clearly that whilst the death of Christ is a supreme example of obedience to God, yet first and foremost it is a sacrificial death—an atonement to God for sin.

How any honest person, capable of reading the Bible, can cherish Unitarian views passes comprehension. And yet in recent years Unitarian views, once confined to Unitarian Chapels and causing a universal shudder on the part of Christians generally, are leavening Christendom to-day, till in many a Baptist, Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian Church such views are held and taught, as well as in many a Church of England establishment. All this is serious to the last degree, and proclaims the fact that the apostasy, prophesied in Scripture, is well on the way.

If it was necessary for Jude long centuries ago to exhort faithful men to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints” (Jude 3), how much more necessary is it to-day!

There has been a very subtle design to fritter away the meaning of the atonement, by arguing that it means *at-one-ment*. It is true that the English word means *at-one-ment*, and was used by old English writers in that sense, that is, in the sense of getting two parties at variance to be of one mind.

Theological writers have tried to make out that the death of Christ was an example of good will on the part of God, calculated to bring the human mind to think well of God, and thus bring God and man to one frame of

mind, and so make *at-one-ment* between them.

This view is thoroughly unsound, and is as sophistical as it is wicked. It is plain that if the word ‘*at-one-ment*’ was the strict equivalent to the original word in the Hebrew Bible then this view would be correct, but this is not the case.

What, then, is the Hebrew word, which has been translated by the word ‘atonement’ in our English Bibles? It is the word ‘*kaphar*’ meaning *to cover*.

This thought is at the root of all judicial procedure. A man commits an offence. The case is tried. The judge passes sentence of so many days’, weeks’ or years’ imprisonment, or even capital punishment, according to the gravity of the offence. In this way the punishment covers the offence, in other words, is calculated as sufficient to counterbalance the wrong committed.

Let us see how Scripture illustrates this idea. When our first parents fell they sought to cover themselves with aprons made of fig leaves, a useless expedient that did not meet the case. Why? It was a bit of unabashed Unitarianism. It was an effort to be their own saviours.

We must remember that sin is ever and always an offence against God. The creature may make the breach, but he cannot repair it. Here comes in the wonderful story of the love and intervention of God.

What did God do when our first parents fell? Did He suffer the breach to continue? No; He immediately sought the guilty sinners, cowering behind the trees of the garden. The fig-leaved aprons did not suffice.

Adam and Eve sought to make a covering and failed. Were they then left to their doom? No; GOD HIMSELF clothed them with coats of skins. God covered them, but how? In order to procure the skins the animals

to whom they belonged had to be slain. How touching that when death was pronounced as the sentence upon our first parents, it was not their death that was first in this world, but the death of the innocent victims. One thing is clear. It took death to meet death. The sentence had to meet or cover the offence.

Of course, the scene we are considering was typical, and all its value lies in what it typified. There was no value in the animals being sacrificed and furnishing the skins for a covering, if that were all. All the value lay in what this signified, and that was undoubtedly the sacrificial and atoning death of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The next scene we may consider is the Passover night in Egypt. A lamb without blemish had to be slain, and its blood sprinkled on the doors and lintels, and God said, "And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt" (Exodus 12. 13).

We are left in no doubt whatever as to the meaning of this, for the New Testament puts the type and antitype together when it says,

"Even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. 5. 7).

The sacrificial atoning character of Christ's death is plainly emphasized here, and only wilful rejection can deny this.

Then we come to all the elaborate ritual of the sacrifices prescribed in the opening chapters of the Book of Leviticus—burnt offerings, peace offerings, sin offerings, trespass offerings. Of the burnt offering it is said,

"It shall be accepted for him to make *atonement* for him" (Lev. 1. 4).

Of the peace offering we read,

"And Aaron's sons shall sprinkle *the blood* upon the altar round about" (Lev. 3. 2).

Of the sin offering we read,

"And the priest shall make an *atonement* for him, and it shall be forgiven him" (Lev. 4. 31).

Of the trespass offering we read,

"And the priest shall make an *atonement* for him before the LORD: and it shall be forgiven him for any thing of all that he hath done in trespassing therein" (Lev. 6. 7).

On the great day of atonement it was said of the High Priest,

"He shall take of *the blood* of the bullock [the sin offering], and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward; and before the mercy seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times" (Lev. 16. 14);

whilst we read an equally impressive statement,

"The life of the flesh is in the *blood*: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an *atonement* for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an *atonement* for the soul" (Lev. 17. 11).

The New Testament confirms all this when we read,

"And almost all things are by the law purged with *blood*; and without shedding of *blood* is no remission" (Heb. 10. 22).

How any one, claiming to be sensible and honest, can be Unitarian in the face of such Scriptures, passes comprehension. Atonement is always connected in Scripture with sacrifice, with blood. Listen to the testimony of a converted Jew.

"This is the Passover week among you, my Jewish brethren, and as I sat here, I was thinking how you will be observing it. You will have put away all leaven from your houses; you will eat the 'motash' [unleavened wafers] and the roasted lamb. You will attend the synagogue services, and carry out the ritual and directions of the Talmud; but you forget, my brethren, that you have every-

thing, but that which Jehovah required first of all. He did not say, 'When I see the leaven put away'; or, 'When I see you eat the motash or the lamb, or go to the synagogue,' but His word was

'When I see the blood, I will pass over you' (Exodus 12. 13).

'Ah! my brethren, you can substitute nothing for this. You must have blood, *blood!* BLOOD!! BLOOD.'

As he repeated this word with ever-increasing emphasis, his black eyes flashed warningly, and his Jewish hearers quailed before him. He continued—

"BLOOD! That is an awful word for one who reveres the ancient oracle, yet has no sacrifice. Turn where he will in the Book the blood meets him, but let him seek as he may he cannot find it in the Judaism of the present."

After a moment's pause the patriarchal old man went on somewhat as follows:

"I was born in Palestine, nearly seventy years ago. As a child I was taught to read the Law, the Psalms and the Prophets. I early attended the synagogue, and learned Hebrew from the Rabbis. At first I believed what I was told, that ours was the true and only religion, but as I grew older and studied the Law more intently, I was struck by the place the blood had in all the ceremonies outlined there, and equally struck by its utter absence in the ritual to which I was brought up.

"Again and again I read Exod. 12. and Lev. 16. and 17., and the latter chapters especially made me tremble, as I thought of the great Day of Atonement, and the place the blood has there. Day and night one verse would ring in my ears: 'IT IS THE BLOOD THAT MAKETH AN ATONEMENT FOR THE SOUL.' I needed atonement. Year after year, on that

day, I beat my breast as I confessed my need of it; but it was to be made by blood, *and there was no blood!*

"In my distress at last, I opened my heart to a learned and venerable Rabbi. He told me that God was angry with His people. Jerusalem was in the hands of the Gentiles, the temple was destroyed, and a Mohammedan mosque was reared up in its place. The only spot on earth where we dare shed the blood of the sacrifice, in accordance with Deut. 12. and Lev. 17., was desecrated, and our nation scattered. That was why there was no blood. God had Himself closed the way to carry out the solemn service of the great Day of Atonement. Now we must turn to the Talmud, and rest on its instruction, and trust in the mercy of God and the merits of the fathers.

"I tried to be satisfied but could not. Something seemed to say that the Law was unaltered, even though our temple was destroyed. Nothing else but blood could atone for the soul. We dared not shed blood for atonement elsewhere than in the place the Lord had chosen. **THEN WE WERE LEFT WITHOUT AN ATONEMENT AT ALL?**

"This thought filled me with horror. In my distress I consulted many other Rabbis. I had but one question: **WHERE COULD I FIND THE ATONEMENT?**

"I was over thirty years old when I left Palestine, and came to Constantinople, with my still unanswered question ever before my mind, and my soul exceedingly troubled about my sins.

"One night I was walking down one of the narrow streets of the city, when I saw a sign telling of a meeting for Jews. Curiosity led me to open the door and go in. Just as I took a seat I heard a man

say, 'The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin' (John 1. 7). It was my first introduction to Christianity, but I listened breathlessly as the speaker told that 'without shedding of blood is no remission' (Heb. 10. 22); but that He had given His only begotten Son, the Lamb of God, to die, and all who trusted in His blood were forgiven all their iniquities. This was the Messiah of Isaiah 53.; this was the Divine Sufferer of Psalm 22. Ah! my brethren, I had found out the blood of the atonement at last. I trusted it, and now I love to read the New Testament, and see how the shadows of the law are fulfilled in Jesus. His blood has been shed for sinners. It has satisfied God, and it is the only means of salvation for either Jew or Gentile."

This testimony is arresting. May God give each reader to appreciate aright the value of the death of Christ—its sacrificial and atoning character.

But the reader may ask why in this article have we hitherto confined ourselves to the examination of this subject in the Old Testament? Why not begin with the New Testament?

The reason is this, the word 'atonement' occurs nearly fifty times in the Old Testament, no less than nine times in one chapter; whereas in the New Testament it occurs only once, and then it is undoubtedly a mistranslation. We refer to Rom. 5. 10, where the word translated atonement should undoubtedly be rendered reconciliation. The Greek word *Katallagee* is in every other instance rightly translated reconciliation.

But if the word 'atonement' never rightly occurs once in the New Testament, yet we have the atonement presented to us over and over again.

Seals are made in two parts, the obverse and reverse. Suppose a party of explorers discovered the obverse part of an ancient seal, elaborate in design

and evidently having belonged to some great monarch. They would diligently begin to search for the reverse part of the seal, and having found it they would expect one part to exactly answer to the other. They would rightly assert that no man in his senses would make half a seal.

So with the subject before us. God would never have given us types of the atonement, if He had not intended giving us the Antitype, even our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God.

Rom. 3. 25, tells us that "God hath set forth [Christ] to be a *propitiation* through faith in His *blood*."

Now the word 'propitiation' is the same as rendered 'mercy seat.' The mercy seat was the propitiatory and the mercy seat was the place of atonement. So that we find all the types and shadows gloriously fulfilled in the atoning death of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The character of that death is abundantly testified to in Scripture. The Lord Himself said—

"The Son of man came . . . to give His life a *ransom* for many" (Matt. 20. 28).

* * * *

"This is *My blood* of the New Testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matt. 26. 28).

* * * *

"Behold *the Lamb of God*, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1. 29).

* * * *

We have the very distinct testimony in Scripture—

"This is He that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ, not by water only, but by *water and BLOOD*" (1 John 5. 6).

There we have the blood of the atonement. And this is so, in one way or another, all through the New Testament. It is woven into the very web and woof of Scripture. It is the

foundation of every bit of blessing that comes to poor fallen man.

It is the strangest, blindest piece of folly on the part of man that he should refuse the only thing that can secure his eternal blessing, that he should deny what is so very prominent in the whole of Scripture from beginning to end.

If a man should deny the existence of the sun shining at mid-day in a cloudless sky we should conclude that he was stone blind and absolutely foolish in refusing the universal testimony to the existence of the great orb of day, upon which depends our very existence—in fact, we cannot conceive that such a man could ever be. And yet we find learned professors of theological colleges, eloquent ministers in their pulpits, denying what is just as obvious, even the atoning character of the death of Christ.

Not only are such blind, but they are blinded by Satan. Their carnal mind is enmity against God. They are blind leaders of the blind—awful responsibility rests upon them. Going themselves to an eternal, hopeless hell, alas! they are taking others with them.

In conclusion let us quote a text here and there in the New Testament out of all the multitude of texts that could be adduced.

“ Being justified freely by His grace through *the redemption* that is in Christ Jesus : whom God hath set forth to be *a propitiation* [or *mercy seat*] through faith in His *blood* ” (Rom. 3. 24, 25).

* * * *

“ For the preaching of the *cross* is to them that perish foolishness ; but unto us which are *saved* it is *the power of God* ” (1 Cor. 1. 18).

* * * *

“ He hath made Him to be *sin* for us, who knew no *sin* ; that we might be made *the righteousness of God* in Him ” (2 Cor. 5. 21).

* * * *

“ Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for *our sins*, that He might deliver us

from this present evil world according to the will of God and our Father ” (Gal. 1. 4).

* * * *

“ In whom [Christ] we have *redemption* through *His blood*, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace ” (Eph. 1. 7).

* * * *

“ In whom we have *redemption* through *His blood*, even the forgiveness of sins ” (Col. 1. 14).

* * * *

“ There is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus ; who gave Himself a *Ransom* for all ” (1 Tim. 2. 5, 6).

* * * *

“ Our Saviour Jesus Christ . . . gave Himself for us, that He might *redeem* us from all iniquity ” (Titus 2. 14).

* * * *

“ This Man . . . offered *one sacrifice for sins* for ever ” (Heb. x. 12).

* * * *

“ Christ also hath once suffered for *sins* the Just for the unjust ” (1 Peter 3. 18).

* * * *

“ *The blood* of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin ” (1 John 1. 7).

* * * *

“ Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in *His own blood* ” (Rev. 1. 5).

* * * *

Could any person honestly or intelligently deny the plain meaning of this testimony of Scripture ?

Thank God ten thousand times for such a clear unfolding of the ground of our salvation ; ten thousand thanks to our ever adorable Lord Jesus Christ for having procured at such an infinite cost our salvation.

This subject cannot be exhausted in a short article for a monthly magazine, but enough has been written to show that the death of Christ is sacrificial and atoning.

QUESTIONS RAISED BY YOUNG CHRISTIANS.

Christian Endeavour.

(ANSWERS BY EDITOR.)

"We are sometimes told that we can never progress in the Christian life while we continue on 'THE LINE OF EFFORT.' What, according to Scripture, is to be substituted for our own effort in order to be pleasing to the Lord?"

IN the first place we must understand what is meant by "the line of effort," for a well-meant phrase, which may be perfectly true in its right connection, may easily be wrongly used and become very harmful. If it means effort to secure a place of acceptance before God, to gain a position better or higher than grace has given us, then the line of effort is all wrong, for as to this human effort is in vain. Every Christian stands in the true grace of God; they are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. Nothing can improve upon this, they are in Christ before God, accepted in Him, the Beloved, and from that high place of favour they can never fall. The nature and life of the children of God is theirs also, and the Holy Ghost dwells in them to direct the energies of this new life. All this is of grace, and if of grace then it is not of works. No effort could secure it, and no effort can improve it. When a person is established in the truth of this the question of effort may be rightly faced.

We must beware of *fleshly* effort in the things of God, says one. True, but it has been remarked by a wise man that "some are so afraid of fleshly effort that they make no effort of any kind," and such have surely fallen into a state of fleshly ease, or fleshly legality that paralyses all activity. In the physical and intellectual spheres of life there is no progress or growth without exercise and energy, and this is undoubtedly the case in the spiritual sphere. The frog in the fable that sat lazily on a sunny bank all day long waiting for flies to enter his opened mouth was sick and faint at the end of the day, while his brother who had gone forth bravely in search of food returned vigorous and satisfied. Those that seek, find, and in all labour there is

profit. Diligence of soul and purpose of heart are indispensable to spiritual progress.

If, however, in self-confidence, we rely on our own natural wisdom and energy and forget that the Holy Spirit dwells in us we discover soon or late that that in which we trusted is folly and weakness; and yet the Holy Spirit does not work independently of us, He identifies Himself with us, and He must be grieved if there is not in us a responsive energy to the impulses that He gives. Paul spoke of his own "purpose of heart"; his energy of soul is revealed to us in Phil. 3., where we see him **PRESSING** towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. The idea is that of a hound at full stretch on the track of the deer; he had a great ambition to be acceptable to Christ, and for this he laboured unceasingly. Every part of him was brought into subjection to his great purpose—spirit, soul and body were an untiring unity, and strained to the utmost of their powers in the pursuit of it. Happy are all those into whose lives a little of this holy enthusiasm for Christ enters.

We greatly question the wisdom of too much self-analysis on the part of young Christians. It will do them no good to be continually inquiring as to whether this or that was the energy of nature or of the Spirit; that sort of thing can only lead to the worst kind of self-occupation, which is well illustrated by another fable.

"A centipede was happy quite,
Until a toad, in fun,
Said, 'Pray, which leg goes after which?'
That worked his mind to such a pitch,
He lay distracted in the ditch,
Considering how to run."

Simplicity, sincerity and earnestness ought to be the characteristics of the

young Christian, and if the heart is set on Christ they will be, and this is the one secret of all progress. Only let the heart be taken captive by the Lord, then progress will be happy and uninterrupted, and the soul will be kept free from a continual and paralysing self-examination, and there will be energy of soul. Perhaps at times this will show itself with more zeal than wisdom, but that should not be a cause of discouragement to a true heart. The Lord looks at the heart and knows what it is that produces the effort and appraises it at its true value.

The Great "I Am."

THE old and great name of God, "I am," was taken by our Lord Jesus Christ and filled up. God revealed Himself to Moses as "I am what I am." To the Jews the Lord declared, Before Abraham was, I AM," not "I was." He says more, He takes all the symbols of strength, sufficiency and tenderness and adds them to that name, and claims it as His own. He is not only true, but says, "I am the truth." He is not only light, but says, "I am the light"; He says "I am the Door"; "I am the Bread"; "I am the Good Shepherd." Whatever the human

Perhaps the word "effort" is not the best one to use in this connection, it implies what is special and occasional. We make an effort to meet an emergency. An effort is the *result* of energy of mind or body. There should be efforts in our lives behind which are the power of the Holy Ghost, but it should be our *continual endeavour* to be acceptable to Christ, and as He fills our hearts with His love this will be the condition of our minds and manner of our lives, and we shall not be occupied with the endeavour or from whence it springs, but with Himself.

spirit needs, that He claims to supply. In Him, if His words are true, all fulness dwells. He invites men to come to Him and He will give them rest. "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." The words were spoken first to a little knot of forgotten Jews, but they were spoken for the weary generations of men yet to come. He confronts all the multitudes with their burdens, and declares Himself able and willing to give rest to them all. Could this be the claim of One who was only man?

A Saviour in the Glory.

HAVE you discovered that you have a Saviour in the glory of God; that the very brightest spot, the glory of God, has become the most attractive to you because your Saviour is there? Stephen saw Him there, for He looked up steadfastly into heaven and saw the glory of God and JESUS. You have a terrible world to go through, and God desires you to know as you

go through it that all is bright up there. You have a Saviour in the glory and you belong to the place where He is. When that is known you are ready for anything, either to go or stay. Stephen, who saw Him there, said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," and Saul of Tarsus, who saw Him there, said, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

The Way of Divine Love.

IT is the very essence and glory of the salvation of God that it is for all. He that truly receives it, receives it as a salvation for all, and feels himself impelled to communicate to others. With it comes the power at

once to consider and to care for others. The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost that is given to us, and as this is enjoyed we spontaneously, unceasingly, joyfully love, because it is our very nature.

A STUDY OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

Chapter 3. *Continued.*

(G. J. STEWART.)

THE godly remnant in Israel in Psalm 95.) are expecting Messiah to return to lead them into their possession, and they prepare anticipatively a song—"O come let us sing unto the Lord, let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation." This is their own song—"Let us sing," they say, encouraging each other. How much better than provoking! They will teach and encourage others to sing presently as in Psalms 96. and 98. "O sing unto the Lord a new song." The ransomed heart knows that Jehovah loves praise and loves itself to render it. This, too, at a time when they are only expecting deliverance (see Ps. 94. 14, 15, 20).

We, too, are expecting the Lord to come and take us to Himself into heavenly glory; in how little, how little a while will it be. And we are exhorted to hold fast the rejoicing of the Hope firm unto the end; how much more should we sing! Let us encourage each other to sing the songs of heaven and of glory to our Lord! We have enough to tell. No room for murmuring. Of old the song was but momentary; it died out alas, amid the echoes of the wilderness. The howl of desolate hearts replaced it, stirred up with fear of the howl of the wolf. May the desert of Christendom be kept in full resonance by the songs of the Christians, the songs of salvation! They sing again at the end—"Spring up, O well; sing ye to it." May we

"Sing without ceasing, sing
The Saviour's present grace."

It is still called "To-day" (verse 13); listen to the voice of the Spirit; it is the Living God with whom we have to do. Take heed, brethren! To-morrow the voice, the Shepherd's voice may cease and the mutterings of the thunders of judgment be heard. Beware lest there be an evil heart of unbelief; encourage yourselves each

day while it is called To-day. Soon it will close and the night set in. Sin is deceitful and hardens the heart, too ready to listen to its suggestions.

But we have now another "if" for the wilderness, which again refers to the original confidence begotten in God—"If we hold fast the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end," we are become:—

THE COMPANIONS OF THE CHRIST.

Here it is in the house and as priests we are His companions. The word translated "partakers" (verse 14) is the same as that used in chapters 1. 9, and 3. 1. These three uses of it show the position. Those who are companions in the heavenly calling become companions with the Christ as priests in the house now and will be His companions in joy and glory in the coming day. Only here in our verse the "if" of wilderness responsibility occurs again. True men only will hold fast unto the end, and become the priesthood for the universe in glory. Consequently only such are really His companions now. In each case the companions become what they were not before, it is not their state by nature.

It is thought a great thing in the world to become a Companion of the Bath, or of the Garter; distinctions which the world bestows upon its honourable men—How much better to be a companion of the heavenly calling! As we value this we learn our portion is not here, though our path lies through the world. At the same time it puts a dignity upon us in the pathway which none of the sons of men can boast.

In the wilderness God numbers the very hairs of the heads of His people, they are not left to their own devices; there also in the house they can throng around the Lord whose companions they are and shall be manifestly in the

glory; there, too, He ministers to them, filling their hearts with experiences of His love and their lips with praise to God.

To a certain extent 1 Pet. 2. 1-4 is a parallel Scripture to this, as in each passage believers are looked at as both the house and the priesthood. Peter gives the spiritual house and the holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices; there all is real inasmuch as he bases his statement directly upon the words of Christ—"Upon this rock I will build My assembly, and the powers of hell shall not prevail against it." In our passage profession is supposed, and hence the "ifs"; but here also it is indicated that only true men will form the house finally, or be Christ's companions in glory.

These two Scriptures which present the people of God as both the house and the priesthood, certainly give the house a joyous aspect, though in the wilderness. Verse 14 says, "We are made companions of Christ," while Peter speaks of "a holy priesthood offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ," and all offerings now are in the way of gifts. He also refers to their "showing forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light." Heb. 13. 15, 16 speaks, too, of offering through our High Priest, "The sacrifice of praise to God continually, the calves of our lips giving thanks to His Name," and of scattering blessing around them here. Other Scriptures present the house as the place where God dwells as the house of prayer for all nations and as the pillar and ground of the truth. It should strike an outside observer as the place of joy and gladness, of song and praise. Certainly, though the hymnology of Christendom may show much that is mediocre, there is nothing apart from Scripture that so stirs the spirit of the believer as Spirit-taught hymns and songs of praise. Scripture shows alas! that this house as at present in

man's hands waxeth old like the Tabernacle, and is ready to vanish away. It will be rejected of the Lord, and come under the judgment of God.

The position is thus laid as to privilege, with a solemn warning as to the responsibility attaching to it. It is also pressed home upon the conscience that the privilege is true only to faith at the present time, though eventually in glorious actuality; for it is evident that believers are not yet in the land but in the wilderness.

This appears yet more in the closing verses of the chapter, where the alarming extent of the evil effects of unbelief is shown. Here again is pressed upon us the word:—

TO-DAY.

"While it is said to-day harden not your hearts as in the provocation" (verse 15). Oh! will not the sheep hear the voice of the Shepherd to-day? Is not the hearing His voice the first characteristic of the sheep? There is no fold in the wilderness under this figure; only one flock and one Shepherd. Enough indeed for faith, for this Shepherd is an almighty Shepherd. But to hearken and to provoke, means, alas! to fall in the wilderness.

For who was it who, having heard, provoked? But was it not all who came out of Egypt by Moses? (verse 16). Yes, all! all! Two men only, Caleb and Joshua, were excepted; but these proved the rule and formed the link between the old company and the new. These two companies really set forth the same people, for believers have two natures. The flesh is set forth by the company that came up out of Egypt and cannot enter the land; the new company sets forth that which is born of God in us. The wilderness in God's ways serves for the destruction of the flesh (at times through the devil's agency), that the spirit, rid of its encumbrances, may enter into heavenly things. This is too frequently a lifelong lesson.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The Blood and Flesh of Sin Offering.

“Please explain Leviticus 10. 18. ‘Behold the blood of it was NOT brought into the holy place : ye should indeed have eaten it in the holy place as I commanded.’ Is this the same sin offering as is referred to in Leviticus 16. of which it is said that the blood was taken within the veil ?”

THIS was not the sin offering of the day of atonement. The carcasses of the animals offered for a sin offering on that day had to be wholly burnt without the camp and the blood of them carried into the holiest and sprinkled there before and on the mercy seat. In this solemn type the offering was wholly for God, for it was the basis upon which He could be in relationship with a people who were sinful. His inflexible righteousness called for the judgment of their sin, this judgment fell upon the victim that died for them in the outside place and wholly consumed it. His holy nature called for that which met its claims if He was to dwell amongst them. These claims were met by the blood sprinkled in the holiest. This was all for God, no creature could have any part of it, for no creature could conceive what sin was in the sight of God. It all set forth in figure that which happened in reality when Jesus died for us, darkness covered the awful scene, for no creature eye could see or heart understand God’s holy judgment against sin, endured to the utmost by our holy Substitute, when He was made sin for us. But now because God’s judgment has been fully endured, and His Name and nature vindicated and glorified by that one offering, we become the righteousness of God in Him and have the freedom of His presence.

But the sin offering of Leviticus 10. had a different character, it did not set forth the basis of God’s relationship with His people, but had to do with their daily sins and failure as being already

in relationship with Him, and the thought in the flesh of it being eaten by the priests is that as representing the people before God, they identified themselves with their sins, bearing them as a sorrow before Him. This we believe was typical of that that comes out in many places in the Pslams, where the Lord is presented to us as a perfect Man, and His feelings before God find expression, because of the failure and sin of the people of Israel with whom He identified Himself here, Himself sinless and without failure. The godly remnant of Israel will in measure take this up when they mourn before God for the sin of the nation in rejecting their Messiah (Zech. 12. 13). It has an application, too, to the present. We ought as Christians, and those whose privilege it is to approach God as priests to be so in the vigour of priestly life—typified in the “sons of Aaron”—that when any of the Lord’s people sin or failure comes into the House of God, we should feel it before God and grieve over it in His presence, and feel what is due to Him about it, and so be intercessors on behalf of those who have failed. Alas, there is little of this we fear; more often than not we are like Aaron and his sons in Leviticus 10., unable in our feebleness to meet emergencies of this sort because we have such a poor conception of the grace of God that is greater than all failure, and know so little of the power that can make us true intercessors on behalf of others.

“Hearts Sprinkled and Bodies Washed.” Hebrews 10. 22.

“I am seeking help from Heb. 10. 22, and would be very pleased if the undernoted question could be answered through the medium of your valued magazine.

“Heb. 10 22 : ‘Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water,’ please explain the meaning of these two expressions, and their spiritual interpretation to the believer now.”—LANARKSHIRE.

THE reference is to the consecration of the priests (Exodus 29. and Leviticus 8.). Before they entered upon their service to God in the Tabernacle,

they had to go through a certain ceremonial, in which the washing all over with pure water and sprinkling with blood mingled with oil had their part.

The typical and spiritual meaning of this is taken up in Hebrews 10. and applied to us. The heart sprinkled from an evil conscience is brought about by *the blood of Jesus*. It has met the *guilt of our sins*. The Holy Ghost bears witness to us in the Word that because of the eternal efficacy of the blood, God will remember our sins and iniquities no more, hence we are freed from all sense of condemnation and guilt before Him. The washing with water has reference to the regenerating effect of the Word of God in us and has special reference to the *defilement of sin*. Such passages as John 13. 10, and 15. 3, help in the understanding of this. God has not only wrought for us and cancelled all our guilt and freed our consciences before Himself about it, but He has wrought in us a new nature, and this affects us entirely, the man is born again. The body is that through which the new

nature expresses itself as once it was the vehicle for the expression of the old nature—that comes in on the practical side.

The meaning of the passage for us is that we can, free from the sense of the guilt of sin and its defilement, enter with boldness in the holiest, the very presence of God, for we are justified by blood and made clean by the Word of God; both have been done once for all and abide for ever, though our feet need to be washed continually (see John 13.), i.e., our ways and walk need to be brought continually under the cleansing power of the Word, for we are ever contracting defilement in the world that unfits our spirits for communion with God. The priests had to wash the laver before entering into the Tabernacle for their daily service there, but this side of the truth does not enter into the passage in question.

The Crisis (John 6. 67).

TO whom, Lord, shall we go, away from Thee?
 When shadows fall on life's uncharted sea:
 Who shall our Pilot and Protector be?
 Who, but Thyself, can guide us safely home?

Creator, Thou, of all created ways:
 Maker and Builder of the length of days:
 The uncreated Word which ever says:—
 "Fear not, confide in Me, I am the WAY."

Thou art the solace of the troubled mind:
 Thine the strong arm of love our fears to bind:
 Thou art the key to all that lies behind
 The shadows of the night: Thou art the TRUTH.

Thou wilt, in struggles with contention rife,
 Be the resolving chord that ends the strife:
 "Wisdom Divine" Thy words of grace and LIFE
 Bind us to Thee: how can we go away?

—Adapted.

Fruit Bearing.

ARE you saying: "But, what a fruitless branch I must be that God must needs so to purge me"? Nay, not so. Have you not noticed what kind of branches it is that God purges? Hear His word: "Every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it" (John 15. 2). It is not the fruitless but the fruitful branch which is purged. And why? "That it may bring forth *more fruit*."

"I WILL COME AGAIN."

(J. T. MAWSON.)

"*IN My Father's house are many mansions.*" The Lord was not leaving His disciples alone in the world as though there was only room for Him and none for them in the Father's House. There was room for them all, had there not been He would have told them long ago, and not have drawn them after Him as He had done. He had won their hearts, because He wanted them **THERE**. They had looked for a place here in an earthly kingdom, He was going to prepare a place for them there, *in the Father's house*. They had looked for honour and power on earth, He had something better for them in heaven. He had a *home* for them there—home and love; His own home, His Father's love. This they were to share with Him, for nothing would satisfy His love but sharing it with them. And this is our prospect. The light of it shines with a soft and comforting radiance into our hearts, it fills us with longing for its realization, for the longing to have us there is in His heart.

And He is coming for us. He will not send for us. We are too precious to Him, too dearly loved for that. He will come Himself. Had we known Him only as a great potentate, splendid in His glory and supreme in dignity, then it would have been fitting that

some noble servant should have been sent forth to lead us into His presence chamber to touch the sceptre that He might condescendingly extend to us. But it is not glory, or dignity or splendour of that sort that is revealed to us here, but love; yearning, tender love that can neither wait until we are brought, nor send another for us, but must come itself. The first face that our eyes shall gaze upon at His Coming will be His own face. Countless hosts will attend Him, but they are not mentioned here, nor will they fill our vision then. It will be Himself, and Himself alone. And to Himself He will receive us, that where He is there we may be also.

It is the voice of our great Lover that speaks to us here in words so tender and true and wise, and His voice thrills our hearts, and to us it is enough that where He is there we shall be. Scant is our knowledge of the place; we do not know its glories, its extent, its location, nor are we concerned to know; it suffices us to know that it is the Father's house, and Christ is there, and He wants us to be there to share it with Himself, and we want to be there because He wants to have us there. These are the longings that His love has begotten in our hearts, and so we say, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

THE Rapture (the coming of the Lord for His saints) is the first wave of His power. He thinks first of His own. They enjoy the first-fruits of His coming, but His church, His bride, would not only look for her own joy of being with Him, but, as in concert with His concerns (which no one but a wife could be). She looks

for Him as the King—the Root and Offspring of David, as well as the bright, Morning Star. The Morning Star is the rapture—the harbinger of day. I can understand how an individual saint looks for the rapture, but as having part in the bride we should look onward for the day when the Lord will get His rights.

Practical sanctification is the setting aside of self for Christ.

A devoted man is like a spruce fir-tree; one shoot striking upwards, not detracting from, but encouraging all the other branches to follow.

If Christ in glory be your polar star, you are sure to be kept right.

SOME MESSIANIC PROPHECIES AND PREDICTIVE TYPES.

(R. McCULLUM.)

EVERY true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ will gladly acknowledge that throughout the Old Testament Scriptures there are clear foreshadowings of Christ. We may miss many of them and but feebly apprehend the import of others, but of this we may be sure, if we could in measure discover the wondrous revelation of Himself in that discourse to the two journeying to Emmaus when "Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself," we, too, would find our hearts set aglow.

A prophecy in the sense of prediction is a miracle of utterance, and gains significance the further removed it is from its fulfilment, so that it is interesting to find the prophecies concerning Christ running from the early pages of Scripture right on to the concluding books of the Old Testament. Since we know that a gap of at least 400 years separated the closing pages of the one from the opening pages of the other, it is clear that there could be no possibility of collusion or conspiracy between the prophets and the One in whom their prophecies are fulfilled. Divine wisdom has allowed such a hiatus to exist, that an irrefutable witness might be borne to every intelligent being who will be at pains to consider that the Bible is unique, that its authorship is Divine, that God has looked into the future, that all things are "naked and open" to Him, and that we might recognize in Jesus, the Christ, the Messiah.

In Genesis, chapter 3., we have the account of the temptation of our first parents in the Garden of Eden. Disbelief and disobedience brought in their wake the judgment of God. Sin, disillusionment, sorrow and death entered; innocency and unbroken felicity fled. God pronounced sentence upon those concerned, the curse upon the serpent, the curse upon the one

who had used the serpent as his instrument, sentence upon the woman and the man, and a curse upon the ground. It is interesting to note in passing that the curse upon the earth has been signally confirmed by the following facts given on the authority of Sir J. W. Dawson, the eminent Canadian geologist, namely, that "Thorns and thistles" are not to be found before the advent of man, and that everywhere the world over they spring up where man tills the soil. But of far deeper import and of more striking fulfilment is the curse passed upon the one who had used the serpent, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." There is no mention here of the man's seed, but there will arise *One*, peculiarly the woman's seed, who will enter into conflict with the seed of the serpent. Nor will the issue be left there. The victory will be made secure and complete by dealing with the author of evil himself. The struggle is portrayed in a wonderful pictorial metaphor. It is the picture of a man with his heel crushing the head of the serpent, while the serpent casts its venomous fangs into his heel. He is crushing its highest point, its most vital part, while it is stinging his lowest point. The prediction is clear to faith. One is promised, the woman's seed—first intimation of the virgin birth—who will enter into deadly conflict with evil's author and will triumph over him, howbeit in the hour of triumph He Himself will be a sufferer. It most certainly points to Christ, to His suffering and to His victory, and it has been well said that "That prediction is God's hall-mark upon this, the only history which man has ever had of his origin and of his fall."

It can hardly fail to attract notice that in "The Book of the generations of Adam" found in Genesis, chapter 5.,

we read only of Seth and his descendants; there is no mention of Cain nor of his seed. The reason is clear. Seth was the one son of Adam whose line was to be perpetuated, for Noah and his sons were Sethites and all other male descendants perished in the flood. Of Noah's descendants Shem is marked out for special favour: "Blessed be the Lord God of Shem and Canaan shall be his servant. God shall enlarge Japheth and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem, and Canaan shall be his servant." Much has been written about this wonderful prophecy. It must suffice here, however, to note that it is to the Shemites that God will specially be revealed as Jehovah—Elohim, the strong and faithful One, "the self-existent One who reveals Himself." But the God of Shem is our God. We dwell in the tents of Shem, for we enjoy the revelation that was primarily his, while in the New Testament Scriptures, penned by Jewish writers, but written in a Japhetic tongue, we have presented to us the full revelation of God in Him who was of the seed of Shem, even Jesus Christ our Lord. As we proceed we find Abraham, the son of Terah, a Semite, marked out as the one through whom blessing will come to the sons of men. It is a most remarkable fact that more than three-quarters of the entire book of Genesis is henceforth devoted to the history of three men—Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. To Abraham the promise was given, "In thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed." Before Isaac was born it was said, "I will establish my Covenant with him for an everlasting Covenant," while to Jacob the promise was repeated, "In thee and in thy seed shall all families of the earth be blessed," so that the prominence given to them is due to the fact that the deliverer would come from them. He would be of the house of Jacob, and through Israel, smallest of the nations, God decreed that *He* should come to whom would be the gathering of the nations and through whom salvation

would come to the ends of the earth. Nor should we forget the New Testament Commentary on the promise made to Abraham, "He saith not, and unto thy seeds, as of many, but as of one and to thy seed, which is Christ."

Let us turn for a little to the story of Abraham and Isaac on that momentous day when, in response to the command of God, Abraham journeyed to offer up his only son Isaac whom he loved. We have in this record a prophetic type, just as miraculous as a purely predictive utterance. There are those who count it strange that God should test in such a way a faith which He held precious, but God passed Abraham through such a fiery furnace of testing that he might stand attested—that the faith of Abraham, which the eye of God alone could discern, should be manifested to us in his deeds, so that with James we can say, "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?" And as we look to the antitype, the query of unbelief, "Could such a command have been given by God?" is silenced by the question, "Could it have been given by any but God?" for let us consider some of the details. The place of the sacrifice was the land of Moriah, the place of the Crucifixion, Abraham's son, by Divine direction, was to be offered where the Son of God was to die for the sin of the world. One lesson which stands out very prominently in this wonderful narrative is that God's people are saved by substitution, for had Isaac died that day, the entire race of Jews had perished. Throughout his long rejection of Christ the Jew, then, has borne witness to the truth that the people of God are saved because a Substitute was found. Bear in mind too that the shadow of death lay heavily on Abraham for three days, at the end of which the darkness was dispelled, the burden was removed, and he received his son in figure, alive from among the dead. Do you not remember that near the

cross there was a garden, and in that garden there was a tomb? It was Joseph's tomb, but our blessed Lord was laid in it, and for three days the earth was the bier of the Son of God. With what wonder the angels must have watched it revolving in its course. Its Architect, its Creator, within a grave! But on the third day, the shadows passed away, and the light dawned; despair in the hearts of the disciples gave place to joy, for He rose, a Victor. But there is more. The son had done nothing worthy of death, nor was there wrath in the father's heart towards him. There was no sacrifice which the father would not have made to spare Isaac, yet his surrender was unfaltering. While we cannot muse too much on the perfect submission of the Son who could say, "The cup which my Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?" are we not too prone to overlook the sacrifice on the part of Him "who spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all"?

In Genesis 49. we find Jacob's blessing, prophetic of the tribes of Israel, and it is plain that of the twelve Judah is singled out as the one through whom the blesser will come. "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh come and to him shall the gathering of the people be." It is plain then that the claimant of the Messiahship must not only be an Israelite, but must be able to establish a Judaic descent. The personal Shiloh is the Prince of Peace, the Giver of Rest, a name prophetically significant of the blessings found by the weary, heavy-laden ones who come to Christ to-day, and of the longed-for blessing to be experienced by this perturbed earth when He comes again to wield the sceptre in righteousness and in equity. Judah, we know, attained pre-eminence among the tribes in the time of David. This supremacy survived until the time of our Lord, but forty years after the Crucifixion the

Jews were dispersed and without any central authority.

In Exodus, chapter 12., we find one of the most remarkable types to be found in the pages of Holy Writ. The profusion of detail in the instructions given in connection with the offering of the Passover Lamb would be meaningless were there not a symbolical significance behind all. We might well ask, Why was it necessary that blood should be shed ere God delivered His people from the land of bondage? Why should the lamb chosen be without blemish? Why should the time of slaying be specified? Why should the blood be sprinkled upon the lintel and side-posts? To every such question faith is supplied with a wondrous answer. It is most noticeable that throughout the narrative the word "Lamb" is used in the singular, although thousands of lambs must have been slain on that memorable day. God looked beyond them all to the one true Lamb to which they pointed, which would take away the sin of the world. The Lamb was to be a male, a year old. It was to be in the fulness of vigour, and we remember that Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed when in the virility of manhood. The "Lamb" was to come under careful scrutiny and had to be pronounced "without blemish," and we remember how our Lord could say, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" He was arraigned before the Sanhedrim, false witnesses testified against Him, and yet there was not evidence on which they would condemn Him. They brought Him before Pilate who had to declare, "I find no fault in Him" — "without blemish." The day on which the Lamb was to be slain was the 14th day of the month Nisan, and although there has been much disputing, it is now generally admitted that our Lord died on the 14th day of the same month. But even the time was stipulated. While our authorised version reads, "The congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening"

(verse 6), it will be noticed that the marginal reading is "Between the two evenings." Josephus has left it on record that the sacrifices were slain in the Court of the Temple between three and five o'clock; the former hour was the first evening and the latter the second evening. Now we know about the ninth hour Jesus bowed His

head and said, "It is finished and He gave up the ghost," so that not long after the ninth hour, three o'clock in the afternoon according to our reckoning, our Lord, the Holy Lamb of God, died on Calvary's Cross.

(To be continued.)

THE MASTER IS SO FAIR.

"Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ" (Phil. i. 23).

"Hadad said to Pharaoh, Let me depart, that I may go to mine own country. Then Pharaoh said unto him: But what hast thou lacked with me, that, behold, thou seekest to go to thine own country? And he answered, Nothing: howbeit, let me go in any wise" (1 Kings 11. 21, 22).

AND thus our hearts appeal to them,
When we behold our dearest rise,
And look toward Jerusalem
With strangely moist and kindling eyes.

And thus we vainly seek to hide,
With the poor curtain of our love,
The shining gates that open wide
To welcome our sweet saints above.

Yet still to them from that bright land,
Through our thin tent the glory gleams;
Already lost to us they stand,
Wrapped in a mist of golden dreams.

For ah! the Master is so fair,
His smile so sweet to banished men,
That they who meet it unaware
Can never rest on earth again.

And they who see Him risen afar
At God's right hand to welcome them,
Forgetful stand of home and land,
Desiring fair Jerusalem.

Yet had we lavished at their feet
The precious 'nard of hearts that break
For love; we counted sorrow sweet,
And pain—a crown for their dear sake;

"What have ye lacked, belov'd, with us,"

We murmur heavily and low,
"That ye should rise with kindling eyes,
And be so very fain to go?"

And tenderly the answer falls
From lips that wear the smile of heaven;
"Dear ones," they say, "we pass this day
To Him by Whom your love was given.

"And in His presence clear and true,
We answer you with hearts that glow,
No good thing have we lacked with you
Howbeit, let us even go."

And as they speak their holy thoughts,
They wander upward toward the Throne,
Ah God! we see at length how free
All earthly ties must leave Thine Own.

Yet, kneeling low in darkened homes,
And weeping for the treasure spent,
We bless Thee, Lord, for that sweet word
Our dear ones murmured as they went.

It was not that our love was cold,
That earthly lights were burning dim,
But that the Shepherd from His fold,
Had smiled, and drawn them unto Him.

Praise God the Shepherd is so sweet!
Praise God the Country is so fair!
We could not hold them from His feet,
We can but haste to join them there.

(By permission of Drummond's Tract Depot. See cover.)

TELL MY BRETHREN.

(H. J. VINE.)

John 20. 15, 17.

"SHE supposing Him to be the gardener." It was the mistake of one who loved the Lord with an ardent affection. There was no doubt that Mary was deeply attached to Jesus, and coming at early morn to the tomb in which He had lain and finding it empty, she eagerly sought for His precious body, so that it might be properly and reverently cared for.

Mary had good cause to be devoted to her Lord! Had He not delivered her from the thralldom of seven wicked spirits? In His service therefore she engaged; and when He went from city to city, and from village to village, with the twelve spreading the glad tidings, she, along with the wife of King Herod's steward, and other ladies, sustained the financial needs, ministering "to Him of their substance." And now, far beyond the expectations of her eager heart, she had found Him again—not dead, but alive—her risen Lord. The One she had mistaken for the gardener was JESUS HIMSELF risen from among the dead! He was alive, to die no more! Not the gardener, but the Lord of life and glory.

There He stood speaking with her, the risen Man!—the Son of God in resurrection! That spear-rent side, those pierced hands and feet plainly told that He was a real Man still; that He was beyond all question "this same Jesus." He had raised up others from death during His life on earth, and had by this proved that He was Son of God, but now His own resurrection pre-eminently marked Him out as "Son of God in power, according to the Spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1. 4). This was He who called her by name—"Mary," and to whom she responded with affection and reverence, saying, "Rabboni!" And, on that glad day of victory and triumph, His thoughts were at once engaged in regard to those He called *His brethren*. Who could these favoured ones be? Who

could have such a place in His love at such a time? Who could be of such value in His eyes that on the very first day of His resurrection, the first day of the week, He so thinks of them?

He had just now returned from the great conflict, when, through death, He had broken Satan's power, from the scenes of suffering and rejection and crucifixion by man; from the bearing of our sins in His own body on the tree; from the putting away of sin by the sacrifice of Himself; from the three hours of darkness; from the forsaking of God; from doing the stupendous work which glorified God and secured eternal redemption for us; from sustaining the just claims of God's holy throne and gaining eternal salvation for all those who believe; from that awful time of blood-shedding and death; from the cross and the grave! How much then must He have loved those He was thinking of, those He speaks of to Mary as "*My brethren*"! Who were they?

They were not the Jews who retained Moses' seat and the place of Jehovah's name! They were not the Pharisees who vaunted their orthodoxy! They were not the Saducees who boasted in their sceptical and critical acumen and scholarship! They were not the Greeks or the Romans or any other special nation. Jesus twice designated them in His intercession to His Father as "not of the world even as I am not of the world" (John 17. 14, 16). He Himself had been rejected by Israel, and, though the world was made by Him, "the world knew Him not" (1. 10). These, however, received Him and He gave them the right to take up a new place and relationship with God, not now of the children of Israel or any other people, but "*the children of God*" (1. 12). This, we are told, is the portion of those "*who believe on His name*"; and any earthly distinction or otherwise connected with

their birth into this world is superseded by the fact that such are "*born of God*" (1. 13). Our Lord Jesus Christ also said, "I know them, and they follow Me, and I give them life eternal, and they shall never perish, and no one shall seize them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all, and no one can seize them out of the hand of My Father. I and My Father are one" (John 10. 27-30, N.T.). They are also spoken of as "*His own*," and as those whom the Father had given to Him "*out of the world*" (17. 6).

But what of their walk and ways? Well, speaking mainly, they followed Jesus and followed Him closely. They "*continued*" with Him. Truly, they sometimes failed, but who does not? It is to be noted, John does not designate himself or the others as *apostles*. They are simply Andrew, Peter, John, that disciple whom Jesus loved, the disciples; and then "*those who believe . . . through their word*," "*other sheep*," and "*one flock, one Shepherd*" (10. 16, N.T.). Yes, they failed to fully enter into the truth which He unfolded. They were slow to lay hold of the revelation He had come to make. Often they quite misunderstood Him. Under Satan's special onslaught Peter denied Him, though his faith failed not; and, when the Shepherd was smitten upon the cross, like sheep they were all scattered. Still His love for them was quenchless and eternal; they were His first thought *on this resurrection morning*, they and the message that He would send them; and, finding in Mary of Magdala a suitable messenger, He entrusts her with His great resurrection message to them. May we say it with the utmost reverence, He was eager that they should know what it was that filled His heart. In Hebrews 2. 12 all those who are sanctified by His work upon the cross are called His brethren. They are one with the Sanctifier, "*for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren*."

These are the favoured ones. These are the objects of the risen Saviour's love. To them He sends the new message, instructing Mary to tell it to "*My brethren!*" He had been alone amidst the sorrows, sufferings, forsakenness and death of the cross, but He is to be no longer alone in risen life. "*The corn of wheat*" (John 12. 24) had fallen into the ground and died, and now risen, it bears much fruit of its own nature, life and order. New life, risen life, is ours in the risen Son of God. A new relationship is ours with His Father and God. A new inheritance is also secured for us in Him as His co-heirs. And a new love—new to us—the eternal love of the Father for the Son becomes ours too (John 17. 23, 24). He spoke also of His ascension to Mary, bidding her not to touch Him, for He was not now to be known in the old relationships of life, but His ascending to His Father as Man would secure a new place for His brethren, where eventually we shall be with Him according to eternal purpose, and He shall shine as "*the Firstborn among many brethren*" (Rom. 8. 29).

What then is the new resurrection message which Mary is honoured to carry to the disciples? Jesus said to her, "*Go to My brethren and say unto them, I ascend to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.*" His Father theirs! His God theirs! His ascension to His Father and God involving that His place with Him in glory was theirs too, for they were brought in Him into the same relationship, though they were not yet in glorified bodies. What a message! Nothing like it had ever fallen upon the ears of man before. Little wonder that they were found together the same evening of that first resurrection day; the first day of the week. And Jesus came into their midst speaking to them the "*peace*" He had secured by His finished work at Calvary; and showing them His hands and His side. JOY also was imparted to their adoring hearts as they beheld the Lord!

LIGHT AND LIFE. No. 6.

(JAMES BOYD.)

Meditations on the Gospel and Epistles of John. Chap. 4.

CHAPTER 4. of this Gospel is an account of the beginning of our Lord's public ministry, which closes at the end of chapter 10., when He leaves them, and goes away beyond Jordan into the place where John at first baptized, "and there He abode." His day's work was over; the night in which He must feel the bitter blast of Divine judgment was drawing on apace. He had spent His strength for naught and in vain. The signs that He had wrought were presented to blind eyes, and the words of grace that fell from His lips smote upon the deaf ears of a rebellious people. They had seen the Father and the Son in perfect manifestation, and they hated the sight of both. To the proud leaders of the nation His presence had become utterly unbearable. Too long had they tolerated the scathing condemnation with which He met their hypocritical ways. In His heart's blood must His burning words be quenched. But all this will come to light in the seven chapters in which His patient grace is met by the enmity of their impenitent hearts.

The commencement of His public activities of grace meet with a hearty welcome from a people who stood in no position of outward relationship with God, though they ignorantly claimed descent from the patriarch Jacob. On His way from Judea into Galilee He has to pass through Samaria; and He who was not only the light of the Jews but the light of the world, must illuminate a few hearts of that despised and mongrel race. The true light could not be hid, and the poor Samaritan must come into its bright and life-giving beams as freely as the nation of Israel, for the line of *life* is heavenly and sovereign, and has nothing to do with earthly administration. Therefore "*Whosoever*" is a characteristic word in this Gospel. But the place that Israel has in the purpose of God is the central place in the government of

this world, head of the nations, and the people among whom shall be established the throne of the Messiah. This kingdom was purposed from the foundation of the world, and the saved among the nations shall have part in it (Deut. 32. 8, 9; Matt. 25. 34).

But the promise of eternal life was "before times eternal," or "before the ages of time" (see R.V.). It was a promise that had no relation to earth at all. "Life for evermore" (Ps. 133.), or "eternal life," as in the first three Gospels, is simply immunity from death (Matt. 19. 29). In these I see no reference to anything that is heavenly. The promise of eternal life, which Paul says he was in hope of, and which is in this Gospel, is a heavenly life, and has nothing in common with the human race as descended from fallen Adam, nor indeed had it anything to do with man in innocence.

Therefore when it comes into this world in the Son, it is no more for Israel than it is for the rest of mankind. It is: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." He was the bread that came down from heaven, and gives life to the world. The aspect of this life is universal. Where God is acting in sovereignty the creature possesses no claim, all are on the ground of pure mercy. Presented by God, or approached by men, as Son of David, the claim of the natural seed of Israel must be allowed; but the promises on this line go no farther than the kingdom, and blessing on the earth. As God come in sovereign grace into His own world, for the accomplishment of His eternal counsel, the claims of the Jewish nation disappear altogether, and the Gentile comes in along with the Jew on the ground of free grace.

Hence while the promises made to the fathers were fulfilled in presenting Christ to the responsibility of the

earthly seed of Abraham, their rejection of Him opened the way for the bringing in of eternal counsel, and opened the door of free salvation to the whole human race. The Jew is not cast out, but the Gentile is brought in. Therefore grace is not in this Gospel limited to the natural seed of Abraham. If the Jew must be born again, then is he no better than the Gentile; and if the Son of Man must be lifted up, it is because God so loved the *world*. The true light was not only among the Jews, it was in the world; and in this chapter 4. He is confessed as Saviour of the world. Viewed as Son of David He was not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, but viewed as Son of Man, or only begotten of the Father, it is: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life."

And what a glorious mission into this world was His! Here He is amongst the Samaritans. He comes to bring satisfaction to the poor human heart: "That your joy may be full." Nowhere in the universe has ever the vagabond from God been able to find satisfaction for his heart. Had he remained in innocence he never would have known what want was, away from God as a rebel sinner he can never know what satisfaction is. How could he? God has set every intelligent being in relationship with Himself, and in God he is to find all his satisfaction and delight. The dumb beast was placed under men's domination, man under responsibility to God. Man revolted from God's authority, and the fear and the dread of man has largely departed from the beast.

And man is a poor dissatisfied mortal, ever looking beneath him for something to fill and satisfy his heart; not seeing how impossible this is, for in his alienation from God how could he expect ever to be happy. The only perfect Man that ever trod this earth has said to God: "In Thy presence is fulness of joy: at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (Ps. 16.). And for this joy, though both shame

and cross lay in the path to that goal, He could despise the former and endure the latter. To reach that land of delight He would go through everything that rose up to deter Him, however dreadful it might be. He well knew the infinite joys of that presence and home, and no sorrow could turn Him from the path that led to it.

Having become a Man He will walk in dependence upon God, the only right way for a man to walk through this world. He was the Creator, and the upholder of everything that He had created. But He had taken the place of a servant and was here in fashion as a man, and hence obedience and dependence characterized Him the whole of His journey down here. Nothing could induce Him to depart from that which was involved in the position He had taken up. Hence He waits upon God to be shown the path of life (Ps. 16.). That path led through the deepest humiliation, and through the death of the cross, but the glory that it led into was ever before Him, and its attractive brightness was more powerful than was the repelling darkness of Golgotha.

But the highway that led to that home had also its attractions: "My meat," He says in this chapter, "is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work." If the highways to Zion shall have their attraction to the Jew, when God shall take that people up once more, though those highways shall teem with tribulation, surely the highway to our home above, whatever perils are to be encountered, should have infinitely greater attraction for us. The Jew will learn much on the way to Zion, and the sorrows that we may have to meet with on our heavenly way shall furnish occasions for God to make Himself better known to us, for tribulation shall work endurance, and endurance experience, and experience hope, and hope shall not be disappointed, for already the love of God has been shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us

(Rom. 5.). To be with Christ in the Father's house is that which attracts us, but we learn much on our way thither, and we learn through the very roughness of the way.

For the first time in the history of this fallen world satisfaction for the human heart was brought into it by the advent of the Son. One who could plant in that heart a wellspring of life had drawn near to men in infinite grace, and satisfaction was assured to all who would come to Him and drink. "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water." He was there to implant in this poor degraded creature a fount that would spring up into everlasting life. And this before ever one word was spoken to her regarding her guilty life! What unfathomable grace!

And how blind and deaf and stupid was that heart that He so graciously addressed! "Thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep; from whence then hast Thou that living water?" How singular and out of place it seems to those who are at a distance from God, to find themselves addressed by a perfect stranger on the subject of their relations with God! So unusual and timeless does it often seem, that the person thus addressed can scarcely believe that it is to Divine things his attention is being directed. One who has through grace been brought out of darkness into light naturally supposes that heavenly things, and not the things of this fleeting world, are the things to which the heart and mind should ever revert. But a man of this world has his heart set upon things here, and he cannot suppose anyone can have other propensities.

This woman had her social life, which was openly immoral, and she knew something of the place where the fathers of her race had worshipped. Whether

she ever resorted to that place we are not told. But she has to learn that, bad as her life of foolishness had been, her religion was nothing better. In neither of them was satisfaction to be found. She must have to do with God. She must see things as they really are. Both the vanity and the sin of such a life as hers must be set before her. Her conscience must be reached. "If thou knewst the gift of God, and who it is that saith unto thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He^e would have given thee living water," could not turn her thoughts away from that which necessitated her daily peregrinations to the well of Jacob. Another way must be taken with her if she is at all to be reached.

"Go, call thy husband, and come hither." The light is not pleasant to her. She seeks to avoid its searching rays. But better have it all out now, however unpleasant and humiliating it must be, than leave it to the day in which every man shall be rewarded according to his works. He was speaking of grace to her. He had not accused her of anything wrong. But to her accountability to God her conscience must be awakened, otherwise it will be her waterpot, the well, and her daily labour to satisfy the recurring necessity of her life. But the patience of the Son of the living God was hard to exhaust, defeated by her lack of understanding He could not be, and in the end it would surely come to pass that not one word that had fallen upon her ears would be found to be fruitless.

She must be exposed in the presence of God. She must see that she is nothing but a poor corrupt sinner, and that only mercy can save her from the judgment to which her guilty life had made her liable. It is in the light that we get salvation; and in one sense salvation is by the light, for salvation lies in the knowledge of God. The word to Christ is: "I have set Thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that Thou shouldst be for salvation unto the ends of the earth" (Acts 13. 47). Salvation, as

known at this present time, is the emancipation of the soul from every evil thing that held it in bondage, so that the subjects of salvation may be at liberty to serve the living God. "Let My son go, that he may serve Me," was the word of God that was sent by Moses to Pharaoh. This salvation was realized by the people at the Red Sea, when the proud host of Egypt was overwhelmed by the waters, and Israel was brought to God in the wilderness. But that salvation was temporal and governmental, and was a deliverance of flesh and blood from the domination of flesh and blood, whereas our salvation is the salvation of the soul, and is spiritual and eternal. The work of the cross is, I need scarcely say, the foundation of all God's dealings with us in grace, but practical salvation lies in the knowledge of God; and therefore is Christ both light and salvation.

"I have no husband." How we naturally hate the light! Her inward thought was, He does not know me; I must pass myself off upon Him as a virtuous woman. But she must find herself in the presence of One who knew her infinitely better than she knew herself. She must be made to feel herself under the eye of the omniscient God. The holy love of Christ will not let her go away blindly into perdition, thinking how successfully she had palmed herself off upon this Stranger who had made her to think so seriously of her guilty life. "If we judge ourselves, we shall not be judged" (1 Cor. 11. 31). But it is only as we get the knowledge of God that we really know ourselves, and therefore is it in the light of that knowledge that we find salvation. "Now mine eye seeth Thee, wherefore I abhor myself" (Job 42.).

She sees her sins in the light of His countenance, and they are calling for judgment; and she sees the worship that her people trusted in as worthless in the sight of God. Still, with the natural trust of her race, she claimed an interest in the Messiah, of whom the prophets had spoken, and from His lips

she expected to get the question between Jerusalem and Mount Gerizim settled. But she has to hear that, as far as true worship went, it was all settled already: "Neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father," though she has also to learn that salvation is of the Jews, and that the worship of the Samaritans was both ignorant and vain. Yet as to both these places the question was over: "Now is when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship Him." The light had already come, and she knew it not, though it was light that judged everything upon which it fell.

"I that speak unto thee am He." What a revelation! And to what a poor degraded mortal was that revelation made! How wonderful are the ways of the living God! One would have naturally expected that revelation to be made to the élite of the Jewish nation; but God's ways are not as our ways, neither are His thoughts as our thoughts; He does that which pleases Himself, and we have to learn that all His works are truth, and His ways justice, and that He is able to abase those that walk in pride (Dan. 4.). He choses the base things, and things despised, yea, and things that are not, to bring to naught things that are (1 Cor. 1.). Only to this poor woman does He say definitely that He is the Christ. One may be perfectly sure that the Father would draw the very best people on this earth to His Son. And of what value, in the estimation of the world, were the twelve that Jesus speaks of as "the men that Thou gavest Me out of the world." To Him they were the excellent of the earth, and the men in whom was all His delight (Ps. 16.). It has ever been seen in the history of the world that not many wise men after the flesh have been called of God. God has chosen the poor of this world, who are rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom.

The disciples come back to Him with

the food that they had purchased in the city, only to learn that doing the Father's will, and bringing the light of grace into the heart of the poor Samaritan woman, was meat that they knew not of. What real joy this was to Him, and how truly in this is the heart of God made known to us! Does it not fill us with joy unspeakable? To learn and know that we have to do with such Divine Persons is surely more than enough to make our cup run over.

But He has not yet done with the woman, or rather she has not done with Him. In the boldness of the grace that imputes nothing to the confessed sinner she goes to call the men of the city to see a Man that told her all that ever she did. She desires others to share in the gladness that filled her own heart. She does not reflect upon the character of the inducement that she supposes the men would respond to; for who would care to enter into the presence of one before whose eyes the whole past history of the creature shone out to the most minute detail? Men generally go on the principle that the less people know about one another the better. But most would admit that the reason she advanced for their coming to see Him would have been a more powerful reason for their remaining at a distance.

But the fields were white to the harvest, though this was not manifest to the disciples. The grace of God was in operation amongst those who worshipped "they knew not what," and

whose claim to the covenant of promise was utterly fallacious. Later on, when the work of redemption was accomplished, and the Spirit given through the preaching of Philip, a harvest was reaped, and fruit was gathered to life eternal. But ere that great gathering of precious souls to Christ, many believed through the saying of the woman, who testified of Him as the searcher of hearts, and got their faith powerfully confirmed when they had come to Him and heard Him themselves, so that they confessed Him as "the Christ, the Saviour of the world," admitting thus that they did not come into blessing on the ground of promise, but on that of pure mercy.

But if He leaves Judea, rather than be spoken of as the rival of John, He does not forget His earthly people, but will show Himself as Minister of the circumcision, to confirm the promises made to the fathers (Rom. 15.). He, in the greatness of that love that rises above all the evil of the human heart, will maintain in life a remnant of the people on the principle of faith, and not on that of works. This is said to be the second sign that Jesus did, when He was come out of Judea into Galilee. The first was shown at the marriage in Cana, when was set forth in figure the resumption of Jehovah's relationships with His earthly people, turning the water of purification into the wine of joy; and in this the power of death set aside by the power of life that was in Himself.

"Thou art with me." Ps. 23.

THERE is no home so lowly, but some sorrow finds the door. There is no palace so upraised, but some sorrow mounts the steps. Faith shields not from this. "In the world ye shall have tribulation." But welcome all sorrow if Jesus enters by its side. This always is so to the true believer. Health may wither like a fading flower; languor and disease may feed upon the frame: there may be tossings to and

fro until the dawning of the day. Earthly friends may fail and leave us, or death may desolate our hearts and homes, but He fails not, nor will forsake us. The Lord brings the solace with Him, He Himself is it. He can relax with smiles the pain-contracted brow, and beguile with songs the wakeful night. Yea, in all these things we may be more than conquerors THROUGH HIM that loves us.

QUESTIONS RAISED BY YOUNG CHRISTIANS. Evening Classes or Bible Study?

Answered by the Editor.

"Ought time to be spent in increasing one's proficiency as a workman that might be spent in Bible study?"

"As a Christian I want to get on spiritually and in the knowledge of the Lord, and for this time is needed. I can't just read a chapter and expect it to have some magical effect on me. I feel that I must needs devote much time to these things in order to grow. But I have also to earn my living in this world, and for this I need instruction, and I am advised to attend evening classes which would be a great help to me in my calling. I want to do my work properly, and at these classes I should learn a lot that I don't know. I'd like to have my evenings for Bible study, but this other seems important. What am I to do?"—S.

THE difficulty raised by this young Christian working man is one that many are facing with more or less exercise, hence we choose it for answer this month.

In the first place let us understand why God has saved us. Not to be *theologians* but CHRISTIANS. An indifferent workman who had no desire to serve his earthly master well, might become a theologian if he gave time to Bible study, but he could not be a creditable Christian. It is not knowledge in the head but grace in the heart that makes a man a practical, everyday Christian, and one may be this who has very little time for study. There is an old story that will illustrate. One of the old saints, as such men have been called, separated himself from the haunts of men to live in a wilderness and give himself to study. One day he heard a voice saying to him, "Thou art not so perfect a man as a cobbler is that dwells in Alexandria." The recluse at once left his cave and sought out the cobbler, and said to him: "Tell me thy whole conversation and how thou spendest thy time." "Sir," said the cobbler, "my life is but simple and slender. In the morning when I rise, I pray for the whole city in which I dwell, specially for all such poor neighbours and friends as I have. After, I set me to my labour, where I spend the whole day in getting my living; and keep me from all falsehood, for I hate nothing so much as I do deceitfulness, so that when I make any

man a promise I keep it, and do the work truly. And so I spend my time with my wife and children, whom I teach and instruct as far as my wit will serve me to fear God. This is the sum of my simple life." The faithful life of the cobbler at his last brought more glory to God, and was a better testimony to men, than that of the studious ascetic in his wilderness cave.

If the lesson that the story teaches be well learnt, it will be understood that a Christian workman should be the best workman he knows how to be, and for this he should take advantage of every legitimate means within his reach to increase his proficiency, not of course from the selfish motive of advancement in his calling or to shine above his fellows, but that he might not tarnish the name that he professes by careless or ill-done work, but "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things"; and if evening classes will help him to be a better workman with this view, by all means let him take them. We may be sure that the tents that Paul made were good tents, and if anybody could have told him how to make better tents he would have listened to him and learnt from him.

But there is a greater thing for the Christian than his business life or even his domestic life—his true life is hid with Christ in God (Col. 3.) and his mind should be set on the things that are there—on heavenly things—He may bring heavenly grace into these earthly relationships and responsibili-

ties, and fulfil them as a heavenly man should, but they are secondary though indispensable. Through them God passes His children through discipline and exercise, and proves to them what He is in His care and mercy, and the resources of His grace, and often teaches them needed lessons as to themselves, as He did with Israel in the wilderness. But these earthly things ought not to engross the mind to the exclusion of the things of the Lord; His things, Himself, must ever be paramount, and in that life in which He is not paramount everything else must be on a lower level. Hence the necessity of giving diligence in the pursuit of the things of Christ, of seeking the company of Christ as often as one may. When the heart cleaves in true purpose to the Lord, time will not be wasted on trivial and useless things, and the relative value of the necessary things of this life will be seen, and it will be understood how much time ought to be given to them.

The study of the Word is important, but many study the Word for knowledge merely, and to become theologians, and such knowledge may only result in their being puffed up (1 Cor. 8. 1). But to read the Word prayerfully and to meditate upon it with purpose of heart and to practise it, this it is that produces true Christian living, and those who do this will be surely blessed in their deed (James 1.25).

The Lord makes no harsh and legal demands upon us as to how much time we should spend in prayer or in the reading of the Word. It is our hearts that He wants, and if He is the supreme object of our hearts we shall

resort to Him naturally when free from other things, just as the workman hastens to his home when his day's work is done because those whom he loves are there. The one who is going on happily with the Lord is free and natural, and can pray that the Lord will give him that success in his daily work and in his studies that He sees will be good for him, and he can take up the word in Col. 3. 22-25; serving the Lord Christ in his daily calling.

Finally, we would not have any young Christian to overlook the fact that Christ has a circle of interests on the earth. He loves His church and lives for it, and all who love Him will be interested in that which interests Him, and the more truly the heart of any one is in concert with His heart, the greater will be the desire to be of service to Him. Affection for the Lord makes one quick of understanding as to what pleases Him and how best His interests can be served on earth, and time will be made even in a busy and well-filled day for this. No Christian ever really suffered by putting Christ's interests before his own, while many a Christian has suffered most grievous spiritual loss, and indeed in every way, by letting those interests fall into a minor place. In relation to the interests of Christ on earth we would quote two important words: "Where two or three are gathered together in My name there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18. 20). Not forsaking the **ASSEMBLING OF OURSELVES TOGETHER**, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another; and so much the more as ye see the day approaching" (Heb. 10. 25).

Our Mission.

"THE Lord came from the Father to make Him known to us as He knew Him. We come from Christ to make Him known as we know Him; that is true ministry, blessed and happy, but solemn in its character. Our Lord said: 'Peace be to you! As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you.' What a wonderful mission, even though we be not apostles!"—J. N. D.

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH. No. X.—The Resurrection and Ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ.

(A. J. POLLOCK.)

THE resurrection and ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ are vital and essential to the Christian faith. The life of our Lord began with one miracle—the Virgin Birth—and was completed with another—resurrection. If the resurrection happened, as the Scriptures claim, then Christianity is completely proved, and to believe in the resurrection, as understanding its import, is to bring the soul into all the blessings of Christianity.

The epistle to the Romans emphasizes this. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that *God hath raised Him from the dead*, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. 10. 9). Again we read, "Now it was not written for his [Abraham's] sake alone, that it [righteousness] was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on *Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead*" (Rom. 4. 23, 24).

The epistle begins with a very strong affirmation as to the vital meaning of the resurrection when it says of our Lord that He was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, *by the resurrection from the dead*" (Rom. 1. 4).

The reason for this is that the death of our Lord Jesus Christ was no ordinary death. It was far more than that. The Apostle Paul did not die an ordinary death, yet many deaths can compare with his; for instance, the Apostles James and Peter, and all the long line of martyrs.

But no death can compare with that of our Lord Jesus Christ's. One word only describes it. It was infinitely more than out of the ordinary—it was infinitely more than extraordinary—it was **UNIQUE**. It stands altogether and immeasurably by itself in character and results.

Not one atom of Divine blessing could flow to man if the resurrection of Christ were not what it claimed to be in fact and in character.

It takes its character from all that it involved.

First, as to Christ personally. He claimed to be the Son of God—equal with God, "that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father" (John 5. 23)—the Son of Man with universal claim and authority.

Secondly, as to the nature of His death. He accepted the title of "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1. 29), by which title His forerunner, John the Baptist, described Him. He declared that He came "to give His life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20. 28); that "the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19. 10).

If in Luke 15. He describes Himself as the Shepherd seeking the lost sheep, in John 10. 11 He indicates the price of rescue that had to be paid. "I am the good Shepherd: the good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep." In John 6. 53 He insists upon the character of His death, when He says, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." His was a sacrificial death—an atonement for sin, propitiatory in character.

His resurrection proved all of these claims, for if they had been false God would never have singled out the worst of imposters, the most blasphemous of blasphemers, for the unique honour of resurrection—a resurrection which could have had no meaning in it. It would have been confusion worse confounded.

But in raising our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, God confirmed all that Christ ever affirmed of Himself. All

the statements He made of Himself were all gloriously true, and in resurrection Jesus was declared "to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness."

If the resurrection proved Jesus to be all that He claimed to be, to be the sent One of the Father, and proved the nature of His death, then it is incumbent upon us to bow to the incomparable claims of Christ.

The ascension is a logical sequence to His resurrection, for if the resurrection was God's seal upon His life and death on this earth, it was only to be expected that His own words should be fulfilled, "What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before" (John 6. 62).

Let us now pay some attention to the historical side of the resurrection.

As an historical fact the resurrection is amply proved.

There is a well-known story told of two deists of the seventeenth century—Lord Lyttleton and George West, two well-known lawyers, well trained in the use of evidence.

They rightly came to the conclusion that the resurrection of Christ is the keystone of Christianity, that once prove it to be a fiction there would be no difficulty in overthrowing the whole fabric. They agreed each to write a book, one to prove that the resurrection of Christ never took place, the other that the conversion of Saul of Tarsus was fictitious, for if Christ was not raised, how could His voice be heard from heaven, arresting Saul on his journey to Damascus, and completely changing his career?

They both set to work to read the evidence. Trained minds and honourable men, they both were convinced of the truth of the resurrection; and one wrote a book to uphold the truth of the resurrection of Christ, the other to uphold the veracity of the description of the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, just the opposite to what they set out to do.

The books they wrote can be seen in the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

Thirdly, the witnesses were slow to believe. The apostles were not a set of credulous men, who were anxious to believe any story that was chosen to be foisted upon them. They were not like the followers of Joseph Smith, the founder of the Mormon community, who were ready on his word alone to believe that an angel had shown him golden plates inscribed in an Egyptian language, which he was unfamiliar with, and yet which he claimed he had translated miraculously.

The slowness of the apostles to believe was all the more remarkable, seeing that they had followed the Lord during the three and a half years of His public ministry, that they had witnessed his wonderful acts of power, and had even seen Lazarus, dead four days and stinking, restored to life at His command.

This last miracle should have prepared their minds for His resurrection, coupled with His own prophecy that in three days after His death He should rise again, for the resurrection of Lazarus, though prior as to time, was in reality dependent on the resurrection of Christ. "Christ [is] the firstfruits" (1 Cor. 15. 23). And yet, in spite of all this, they were "slow of heart to believe" (Luke 24. 25).

Matthew tells us, "Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw Him they worshipped Him: *but some DOUBTED*" (Matt. 28. 16, 17).

Hear the testimony of Mark. "Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven devils. And she went and told them that had been with Him, as they mourned and wept. And they, when they heard that He was alive, and had been seen of her, *believed not*. After that He appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went

into the country. And they went and told it unto the residue: *neither believed they them*. After He appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, *and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed them not which had seen Him after He was risen* " (Mark 16. 9-14).

Luke's testimony is on the same line. The two disciples from Emmaus to whom the Lord made Himself known returned to Jerusalem, and finding the eleven testified to them, that they had seen the risen Lord, and found them saying, "*The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon*" (Luke 24. 34); yet when the Lord appeared in their midst they were afraid and supposed that they had seen a spirit, and when He bade the disciples to handle Him and see that He was really flesh and bones, and showed them His hands and His feet with the marks of the nails in them, we read "*they believed not for joy*" (Luke 24. 41).

It all seemed too good to be true, yet what had they were it not so? Absolutely nothing, and infinitely worse than nothing.

John tells us how unbelieving Thomas was, and not convinced till He had seen the Lord for Himself.

As to the ample number of the witnesses there can be no mistake.

1 Cor. 15. gives us the list, and that not exhaustive. The Lord appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve (we gather from the end of John's Gospel this occurred three times). James is singled out as having seen Him, and we are told that "He was seen of about five hundred at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present" (1 Cor. 15. 6).

If the Apostle Paul had stated a falsity when he called on over two hundred and fifty witnesses to attest the truth of what he said, he would have had many vehement denials of his assertion, and his whole testimony would have been valueless.

Moreover, the Lord was seen by the Apostle Paul himself. Arrested by the ascended Saviour's voice on the road to Damascus, with no doubt as to His resurrection, he narrates how he was caught up to the third heaven, and it was doubtless then that He saw the Lord in glory. The restraint put upon Paul by the Holy Ghost in the narration of this is one of the great marks of its truthfulness.

In 2 Cor. 12. he tells the story. If a man were not under restraint the tendency would have been to have glorified himself over such an astounding occurrence. The place and circumstances of it would have been described with elaborate and meticulous care.

Some fourteen years had elapsed before he described this occurrence, and then in self-defence it was wrung from him. The barest allusion is made to it in 1 Cor. 15. 8, 9, only one year earlier. He wrote, "And last of all He was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God."

As to the *reliable* character of the witnesses we have ample proof. A witness is worth a great deal when he is of proved worth and uprightness. In a court of law the evidence of a man of character and worth would be accepted if it were pitted against the word of a rogue or vagabond.

Take the character of the prominent Apostles—Peter, John, Paul. Study their writings. Never was religious teaching of a higher order than theirs. Would their writings be received as inspired by the early church if the character of the apostles had not corresponded with their teaching?

One mark of some evil religions such as Christian Science is that they are money-making systems. Mrs. Eddy, the hysterical daughter of a small New England farmer died enormously rich as the result of propagating her evil cult.

But in the case of the apostles, they had everything to lose as men in this world in pressing the claims of Christ. We know in the case of the three apostles whom we know most about, that the end of their strenuous lives of Christian service ended in poverty and martyrdom.

So that we have not only an abundance of witnesses, but also witnesses of the highest order, and whose interests as men in the world were all against their taking up the line they did.

Again and again did the apostles put the resurrection of Christ in the forefront of their testimony. Peter, in his famous Pentecostal sermon, laid stress upon it. Addressing the High Priests and other notable Jews, he speaks to them of "Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead" (Acts 4. 10).

Indeed, the great feature of the testimony of the early church was that "with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 4. 33).

The whole teaching of the Christian faith is founded on resurrection. As the Apostle Paul argues: "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ" (1 Cor. 15. 14, 15).

Finally, look at the grand results of the testimony to the resurrection of Christ. If the risen Christ had not appeared to His disciples and demonstrated that risen from the dead, He

was all that He claimed to be, and that He was the Conqueror over death and sin and hell, there would have been no Christian Church.

That the Christian Church has maintained its way, spite of the worldliness of many of its professors calculated to smother it to death; spite of all the fleshly divisions, which are a scandal on the name of Christ, is an overwhelming proof, not of the failure of Christianity, as many would loudly assert, but of the very opposite.

It is reported that when an earnest seeker after truth in the middle ages travelled to Rome to inquire into the truth of Christianity at its headquarters, finding the unabashed profligacy of Pope and prelates and the utter worldliness of their lives, he exclaimed, "God's Spirit must be in Christianity, else it could not survive when its chief pastors live such shameless lives," and he became a Christian. Wise man! Sensible deduction!

The personal testimony of millions of believers during the centuries of the Christian era is to the knowledge of a living Christ, One risen from the dead and ascended to God's right hand, One we look for to come again, and receive us to Himself for ever.

We can dismiss the theory that Christ never died, that He was simply in a swoon and recovered, as infidels assert, for it is unthinkable that a character like our Lord Jesus Christ could lend Himself to such deception, and that the edifice of Christianity, with all its beneficent, uplifting results wherever it has taken root, could have been reared up upon a lie.

The Father's House.

THE prodigal had but two places: the far country and the Father's house and he left the one for the other, there was no third place. Do you connect yourself with the Father's house? Christ is there, and "where your treasure is there will your heart be also."

THE ALL-SUFFICIENCY OF THE SON OF GOD.

Matthew 17.

(INGLIS FLEMING)

IN view of the close of His ministry, and to confirm the faith of His own, the Lord takes Peter, James and John up into a mountain apart. He separates them from the usual haunts of men in order that they may be free from interruption and learn the thought of God. And let us not forget that we, beloved, have to be separated from the world in ways and spirit if we would enter into the mind of Christ and behold His glory.

There in this "apart" place He is transfigured before them. As someone has said, "The glory salutes Him." He has trodden His unsullied way for the praise of God, ever doing His holy will and telling out His grace and goodness towards His fallen creatures. Now at the close of His pathway He is as it were invited into that glory, the expression of the immediate presence of God, for He was in all His course in perfect consistency with it.

His face shines as the sun, His raiment is white as the light, His personal glory shines forth, that which was usually veiled is displayed before wondering eyes. Then with Him are seen Moses, the lawgiver, who had died; Elias, the prophet, who had been caught away to heaven without dying, picturing for us both the saints risen from the dead and those who have been changed without dying at His coming (see 1 Cor. 15. 15; 1 Thess. 4. 15) who will company with Him in His kingdom.

They are, as Luke tells us (chap. 9. 31), speaking with Him of His decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem. It was this which engaged their attention. That decease had been typified in all the sacrifices offered under the law of Moses, and by Elias on Carmel, when "at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice" the bullock was killed for a burnt offering. They saw the great Antitype had come, and with

Himself they could talk over all that He was about to effect at the cross of Calvary. Peter, delighting in the scene of glory, would fain detain it. He did not realize that the sufferings of Christ must precede the glories that should follow. Thus it was that he cried, "Lord, it is good for us to be here, if Thou wilt let us make three tabernacles, one for Thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias." He was putting the Son on the level of the servants as though all three were equal.

The glory was affronted, as it were, now. The cloud overshadows them, and a voice is heard "from the excellent glory," saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear ye Him."

Moses, the lawgiver, and Elias, the prophet, must disappear so that the eye may rest upon the Son alone. So when the cloud was gone the disciples saw no man but Jesus only, or as Mark's Gospel narrates, "Jesus only with themselves." Yes! He was to be all-sufficing. They had valued, rightly valued, the honoured servants, but now the Son had come and all others must pass from the gaze of faith that He alone may fill their vision. But, wonder of wonders, *He* the Lord of glory, Creator and Upholder of all, is "with themselves." In lowly grace He was to be found in their company, and in a little He would go unto death that they might be His companions in life eternally. For "He died for us that . . . we might live together with Him."

God is jealous for the glory of His Son and will not brook that another should share with Him His glory. In all things He must have the pre-eminence. And do not our hearts, beloved, rejoice in this, in some sense of His greatness, while we joy also in the love that chooses such as ourselves to be with Himself for ever.

A STUDY OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

A Summary of Chapters.

(G. J. STEWART.)

IN *Chapter 2.* Christ has tasted death for everything, and has been made perfect through suffering. Meanwhile God does not allow His praise to cease, but the assembly is set up upon earth, in which Christ sings and leads the praise of God. Blessed to sing after Him who says, "In the midst of the assembly I will hymn Thy praise."

But there are disabilities to this. The fear of death, the dread of imputation, and weakness hinder approach and worship. To each of these His death is severally applied. Faith triumphs amid all and is found prostrate before Him in adoration.

There are three aspects of the assembly in the New Testament: (1) As the House of God; (2) As the Body of Christ; and (3) As the Bride of Christ. Hebrews deals chiefly with the first aspect.

Chapter 3. presents an additional thought, necessary to what has gone before. It is that of the House of God, in which Christ can exercise his functions both as Apostle and High Priest; we are to consider Him as such. There are three views of the House here. The Tabernacle was the first presentation of it; here Moses was faithful as a testimony. But the Tabernacle typified the Universe as God's House; this is future when the true Melchisedec will exercise His universal rule and Priesthood. God still has His house on earth—"Whose house are we," and the Tabernacle was typical also of the "present time." Christ is Son over it. The rod of government and that of Priesthood are both in His hands alone (1-6).

The Holy Spirit is His Vicar in the house, to make His voice heard. Listen to Him! Beware of unbelief! (7-13).

We are His *companions* in the house as a priesthood there. Continue in

faith; hold fast the beginning of your confidence (hypostasia, that which has substance). Unbelief wrecked the whole of the nation in the wilderness, so that they entered not into rest in Canaan (14-19).

Chapter 4. We, too, are in a wilderness with the rest of God before us; do not seem to come short of it. Faith, mixed with the report, obtains entrance (1-3).

Rest is necessary to approach and worship. Three times man refused rest, not having faith. Sin marred creation's rest; unbelief the rest of Canaan; rebellion, that of the kingdom. GOD'S REST remains. Rest after labour and conflict; triumphant rest. Some *must* enter into it. Let us labour to enter into *that* rest (4-11). We are thus privileged to labour for Him before entering into rest, though the rest does not depend upon our labour but His.

God's rest lies beyond, but we may taste it here by faith, spite of the wilderness pressure on the unbelieving heart; and the fact that the Word of God also, living and operative, exposes all that is contrary to God there. This Word is the voice of Christ, as Apostle, heard in the house, by the Spirit in whomsoever He will. It searches the thoughts and wills of the heart (12, 13).

Over against the wilderness and the Word of God is placed: First, the Great High Priest, Jesus the Son of God, that we may not give up but hold fast our confession. Secondly, the Throne of Grace, that we may APPROACH to obtain mercy and find grace for seasonable help (14-16).

Every fresh exercise and consequent mercy strengthens us in grace for future trials. Note—Here we approach to *get*; in chapter 10. to *give*.

Chapter 5. A priest taken from among men must offer both gifts and

sacrifices (see chap. 8. 3), and be compassionate; he must also be called. But Christ's Sonship is His title to an eternal Priesthood after the order of Melchisedec (1-6).

In incarnation He learned, though Son, to be compassionate by the things that He suffered, and thus to exercise Aaronic functions; and was, after accomplishing atonement, saluted of God on high, High Priest after Melchisedec's order (7-10).

There is much to be said of Him in that aspect, but they had *become* dull of hearing. They needed teaching afresh the first principles of the oracles of God, and had become babes who needed milk. Strong meat is for full-grown spiritual athletes, who, skilful in the word of righteousness, discern good and evil. As Melchisedec was king of righteousness and peace, so Christ in glory is the last word in righteousness accomplished; food for the soul, of fuller, stronger savour than milk (11-14).

Chapter 6. Let us go on to this perfection, Christ in glory, leaving the mere Jewish elements. But a mere external participation even in Christian blessings produces even more fatal results. If, being made *companions* of the Holy Spirit (in this epistle, the Witness) they shall fall away, there is no possibility of repentance; but rejection, cursing, burning (1-8).

But better things than these were hoped for of them, things which accompany salvation, they had borne true fruit; and a little fruit shows life. Let them show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope to the end! (9-12).

God's promise and oath were to Abram when he fled from idolatry and

the judgment it brought on the earth, to a new inheritance. There was also safety for the manslayer when he fled for his life, to the city of refuge, from the avenger of blood. So now the Word and oath of God give strong consolation in hope of eternal salvation to refugees from the fear of death; also the assurance of a new and eternal inheritance linked up with that within the Veil, i.e., the life of the High Priest—Jesus our Forerunner, made High Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec (13-20).

Chapter 7. Established in this, they were free to consider the "many things" about Melchisedec, in whom He wished them to understand their present interest. Made like unto the Son of God, He abideth a Priest continually (1-3).

Greater in Person than Abram or Levi, He exercised a better Priesthood by which came perfection (4-12).

This Priest is King. He is Priest also by an oath and in the power of an endless life (13-17).

He is surety of a better covenant, by which we draw nigh to God securing access to God and salvation from all that hinders those who **APPROACH** God by Him, having become an ever-living, intercessory Priest for them (18-25). So far we have the wilderness Priesthood.

Now comes the Sanctuary Priest. He is made higher than the heavens, having done for ever with sacrifice for sin, His better sacrifice of Himself having met all God's claims with reference to sin. He is without infirmity; was made High Priest since the law by an oath; **THE SON** perfected for evermore. (26-28).

"Without Me ye can do nothing" is a very sweeping statement, but very encouraging. It is the Lord's warning to us not to withdraw from Him, but it surely conveys the thought to us that He will not withdraw from us.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

"Saved by his life."

"I shall be pleased if you will give in 'Scripture Truth' an explanation of Romans 5. 10, 'We shall be saved by His life.' Is it on the line of the Lord's intercession on high, Hebrews 7. 25?"—OSWESTRY.

THE passage takes in more than the present service of our Lord for us as our Intercessor on high, it is the fact that He lives that is pressed rather than what He does, though it surely includes that also. We have been justified by His blood (verse 9).—Our past is settled, all that we had done is cleared away. We have been reconciled to God by the death of His Son (verse 10).—We ourselves have been brought into right relations with God. But what of the future? What of all the foes that would gladly destroy us in the present? We fear neither the future nor the foes, for the One who died for us lives. If by His death, that which was in one sense weakness, He wrought so mightily on our behalf, what does the fact that He

lives again mean for us? What will He not do for us in the glorious energy of that life that has conquered death? Whether it be future wrath or threatening foes, our own frailty or liability to fall, we may be at peace and happy about it all, for we have a living, omnipotent Saviour. We quote a comment on the text from the writings of J. N. Darby: "If a dead Christ is made a Saviour, a living Christ will be a friend to you. If He died for you when your sins were on you, how much more will He care for you now your sins are gone! A living Christ cannot be to destroy you, if a dying Christ has saved you. Mark, not only the power of the argument, but its grace also, in taking away all fear from the heart."

Discerning the Lord's Body.

"Would you kindly give me help on the following expression, which is an extract from — 'The Supper is so much greater than the Breaking of Bread. The Corinthian saints were breaking bread, yet missing the Lord's Supper.'

"Questions: (1) Is there a difference between the breaking of bread and the Lord's Supper? if so, what is it?

"(2) What is meant by not discerning the Lord's body (1 Cor. 11. 29)."—NEW ZEALAND.

THE breaking of bread as we now speak of it is the Lord's Supper. "The bread which we break" and "the cup which we bless" of 1 Corinthians 10. are the bread and cup of the supper of chapter 11. It may be that the writer of the statement you quote meant to say that some partake of the Lord's Supper, or break bread, without realizing its solemn import. Which is very true, it was the case with the carnal Corinthians, it is the case with carnal Christians to-day.

"Not discerning the Lord's body" means that they did not discern that the bread that they broke represented to them the dead body of the Lord. They were careless about it and did not appreciate it rightly. May we all be preserved from that. What did it mean to the Lord to go into death? What tongue can answer? Never was such an act, such a sacrifice seen before. That solemn hour when the Lord of glory bowed His

head in death will never be forgotten for ever. There never was nor will be, nor could be another hour like it. And since it was for us He died, no hour, no act should affect us more, and especially when we partake together of those elements that represent to us His body and His blood. How solemn a thing it would be for any to be careless and indifferent then! to treat that Supper lightly as they would a common meal! The Corinthians did that and God chastened them for it. The Lord's body of our Scripture is His dead body. As we enter into this—into the fact that the Lord actually died, and that it is *as dead* that He is set before our hearts and minds in the Supper—we begin to realize the meaning of it. We think of Him as having accomplished God's will, as having made the great and all-atoning sacrifice; as have proved His love to us in all its strength. We see Him as having, in

obedience to God and love to us, gone to the uttermost point of sorrow and shame and judgment, and the effect of it is that we bow before Him, united in a holy

fellowship and in worship, whom we now know as the living One. Thus we discern His body and are able to give joy to His heart by responsive love.

“Believing a Lie.”

“I am always interested in your answers to correspondents in ‘Scripture Truth.’ In the May issue you reply to ‘Glasgow’—‘Must the Gospel be preached to all nations before the coming of the Lord?’ Your answer is full and lucid, I judge, till you state that none who reject the testimony of Christ enthroned in glory will have any hope of the lesser or earthly blessing. In support you quote 2 Thess. 2. 11, 12. Does this Scripture apply to the present dispensation? If the interpretation be as you put it, then there can be no hope for any one, either Jew or Gentile, remaining on the earth after the translation of the church who had heard the Gospel of the grace of God, and not received it; and a considerable time must elapse before the sealing of God’s bondman (Rev. 7. 3) and the sending forth of the Gospel of the kingdom, the fruit of this ministry being seen in verse 9, for those who remain must be removed by death, the Gospel then only reaching the children who come after them. Understand I am not thinking, or speaking, of a second chance, but to my mind the Scripture quoted applies to those who have believed the lie, received the mark of the beast, and worshipped the one who exalteth himself above all, called God. I would be very pleased if you could make this as clear as the main part of your answer to ‘Glasgow.’”—UDDINGSTON.

THE text in question, 2 Thess. 2. 10-12, refers to the period of time which will follow the rapture of the church when Antichrist shall go forth to deceive men. The lie is his lie, but those who will be deceived by it will be those who “received not the love of the truth that they might be saved” (verse 10) and “believed not the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (verse 12), i.e., those who had rejected the Gospel that is now being preached. If they had believed it, it would have saved them; because they would not believe it,—God’s truth, God sends this strong delusion upon them so that they will believe the lie—the devil’s lie, and as a result, are damned.

But if none who have heard the Gospel

of the grace of God and refused it can be saved, it does not follow that a long time must elapse before the Gospel of the Kingdom can be preached, until, in fact, the children have grown up. Missionary statistics inform us that not many more than one-third of the earth’s population have heard the Gospel of the grace of God, so that among the more than 1,000,000,000 who have not heard it, the preachers of the Gospel of the Kingdom will have a wide and fruitful field. Out of these will come the companies of Israelites—not Jews only—and the great multitude that no man can number of all nations, kindreds, people and tongues, to which our correspondent refers in Revelation 7.

“Neither Male nor Female.”

“Does Galatians 3. 8 give a charter to sisters to perform any of the offices usually performed by brethren in the service of the Lord? Does it warrant them reading the Scriptures in, say, a mixed Bible Reading?”—CARDIFF.

NO, this Scripture gives no one the warrant to ignore or disobey 1 Corinthians 14. 34, 35, and 1 Timothy 2. 11, 12. The Scriptures would be of little use to us if one contradicted another in that way. The great teaching of Galatians 3. is, that all blessing for us is in Abraham’s Seed—Christ, of whom Isaac, in figure raised from the dead, was a type. Before God we are in Christ, but it is in Christ risen from the dead, and in resurrection all national and natural distinc-

tions disappear. We have our responsible lives to live on earth in relation to the assembly of God and His service, as well as in natural and national relationships, and as masters and servants, but not on this plane is our blessing founded, for every one fails here, but in Christ in resurrection where nothing fails. All distinctions and diversities that may give one priority over another disappear there and Christ is all and in all.

The Son of Man.

"Would you please state whether the expression, 'the Son of Man,' in Psa. 8. 4 has reference to the Lord Jesus Christ or to mankind—the race of Adam? I understand that the Psalmist is speaking of the place of glory and honour that had been given to man as the head of this lower creation, which place he lost through the fall. Hebrews 2., taking this up, says we see not yet all things put under him, but we see Jesus crowned with glory and honour, and Psa. 8, which failed in Adam's race, will find fulfilment in Him. Should be glad if you can help on the subject."—NEWCASTLE.

THIS beautiful Psalm certainly has man in view as the object of God's pleasure and counsels, He has not purposed to set angels over all things but man, and the Psalmist viewing the vastness of the heavens and the smallness and frailty of man—*Enosh*—frail, mortal man—breaks out with the exclamation: "What is man, that Thou art mindful of Him? or the son of man that Thou visitest him?" We do not get the answer in the Psalm, but we do get it most conclusively in the New Testament. In no less than three wonderful passages we learn that the man, the Son of man, is Christ (1 Cor. 15. 25; Eph. 1. 22; Heb. 2. 6-9). It is in Him that man is to be exalted above all things. He it is that was in the mind of the Spirit when the

Psalm was written, He is the man of God's pleasure and counsels, not the first man but the second, not the first Adam but the last Adam. Adam was a pattern of Him, but He could hold nothing for God, not even himself, but Christ stood as the obedient, dependent man where Adam fell, and then went into death to bear in judgment all the liabilities that rested on man and to relieve the inheritance of the heavy mortgage with which it was oppressed. Having done that we see Him now crowned with glory and honour, awaiting the time when all things shall be put under His feet. Christ fills out the Psalm as He will yet fill the whole earth with the excellence of God's Name, according to the 1st and 9th verses of it.

The Most Affecting Miracle.

IT was at the end of our Lord's life, when the swift eventful years of His works were past, that His most affecting miracle was done, when He was being led to His death—not surrounded, as at the marriage feast when He performed the first miracle, with smiling faces, but by threatening, frowning foes. One of His servants took a sword and cut off the servant of the high priest's ear. His sun was sinking into its sea, and shone brightly at its setting. "Suffer ye thus far," He said. He asked for the use of His

bound hands, and, having obtained His request, He touched his ear and healed him. And though in their furious hate His enemies were all unmoved by this strange mark of love and power—love manifested to His enemies in their extreme madness, power manifested when He seemed to be weakest—we have leisure to mark the deed and to see in it a revelation to us most blessed and welcome—the revelation of God showing mercy to sinners in the height of their sin.

The Bible.

What an unspeakable privilege, comfort and stay, when the shadows of old age begin to steal upon our path, when physical powers are waning; when the very end comes near and we look at death at very close quarters, to have the inerrant, inspired Word of God in our hands, telling us of a Father's love, assuring our consciences of pardon and forgiveness, of an eternal home where there is

no crying, pain, separation or death.

It is diabolical cruelty on the part of the Modernist to rob the dying saint of this blessed Book, for unless it is God-breathed in all its parts, we have nothing but the shifting sands of human opinion, and are left to the exquisite torture of doubt in things where we need the most assurance.

Thank God, again and again, for His holy inspired Word—our precious Bible.

“LOOKING UPON JESUS AS HE WALKED.”

(J. T. MAWSON.)

“Again the next day John stood, and two of His disciples, and looking upon Jesus as He walked, he saith, **BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD.**” (John 1. 35, 36.)

THREE things resulted from this testimony of John to Jesus in the disciples who heard him speak :—

1. Their hearts became engrossed with Christ.
2. They were drawn into unity and fellowship with each other.
3. They bore a fruitful testimony to others.

Than these three things nothing can be greater in the lives of any of us, but the first of them is the key to the others; it is the one secret of everything in our lives that is or can be acceptable to God. Because this is so, and that we may become engrossed with Christ, as these disciples were, I propose that we also should look upon Jesus in some of His steps as He walks through this Gospel of John, remembering as we do so that He is here the Lamb of God, and that as He walks He is on the way to Golgotha, there to pour out His precious blood for us in self-sacrificing love.

At the close of chapter 7. He was in the midst of His public testimony to the world. He had just made one of the most astounding offers that human ears had ever heard. He offered to satisfy the deep thirst of the hearts of men, no matter who they were, and to make them overflow in blessing to others. The world had nothing like this to offer. The great preacher of old described the weary round and apparent aimlessness of human life as he knew it, and the emptiness of everything under the sun, when he said, “All the waters run into the sea, and yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the waters come thither they return again.” But here was something in complete contrast to that. The “greater than Solomon is here.” He had come into the world from above the sun to *speaking His Father’s words*, and to offer to every man who thirsted, if they would come to Him, living waters that, flowing into their hearts, would fill them, satisfy them, and make them channels of blessing in a needy world—

superior to its thirst themselves and contributors to its needs. Such a proposal as this was one surely that only God could make, and it was well calculated to gather the crowds about Him, confessing their need and beseeching Him to bestow upon them this wonderful gift—the gift from heaven. But did it do so? No, it did not. The sun sinks behind the western hills; the excitement of the great day of the feast dies away, and every man goes to his own house, leaving the Lord of glory a homeless stranger in the streets. None amongst all the inhabitants of Jerusalem who had heard this voice that day said to Him, “Sir, Thou art a wayfarer in this city; come and shelter for the night under my roof.” “He was in the world, and the world was made by Him and the world knew Him not; He came unto His own, and His own received Him not” (chap. 1. 10, 11). They did not want Him, and the blessing He offered did not attract them. **AND JESUS WENT TO THE MOUNT OF OLIVES.**

There was no resentment in His heart, no stern denunciation on His lips. He was here to do the will of His Father who sent Him and to speak His words. He had become man for this purpose, and His joy lay in carrying out His mission and not in the apparent success of it; and when spurned and despised He found His consolation in the presence of His Father, whose words He spoke to the people; there was the home of His heart, though the world gave Him none. Look upon Him, unrecognized, unwanted by men, but sustained and comforted in His sorrows by the

Father's love. Behold Him as the Lamb without blemish! Look upon Him as He moved from the day of His witness to men to His night of communion with His Father, there to review the day that had been and renew His strength for the day that was to be, as the obedient, dependent man! And let us say whether we would have chosen to have spent the night snugly sheltered in one of those Christless homes in Jerusalem, or to have shared with Him the bleak hill-side?

At the end of chapter 8. their indifference had deepened into deadly hatred. They had found their answer at last to anything and all that He could offer them, and that answer was murder. "Then took they up stones to cast at Him, but Jesus hid Himself; and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them and so passed by." What was it that brought this hatred surging up from their evil hearts? It was the declaration of His eternal Godhead. He had said, "Before Abraham was, I AM." He did not say, "I was before Abraham" as though He had begun to exist as Abraham had, but prior to him. No, He declared Himself to be "I am"—ever subsisting and self-existent God: before angels, men and worlds, the originator and Creator of them all. The stones in the hands of those Jews in the very precincts of His own temple were to cast at their God. Look upon Him, and see how He walks in the midst of their hatred. "AS JESUS PASSED BY, HE SAW A MAN WHICH WAS BLIND FROM HIS BIRTH."

The One who is in His own Person eternal God had become flesh not only to speak the *words* that the Father gave Him to speak, but to do His *works* also, and those works were works of mercy and not of judgment. The passion blazing in the eyes of His foes moved Him not save to pity, but the sightless eyes of a beggar man moved His heart to deepest compassion. His eyes were always open for needy

objects, nor could all the hatred of men prevent Him from being a Blessor among them. He walked through scenes of violence and hate unchanged by it all, doing for men what none but God could do for them, for in Him was life and the life was the light of men. Behold Him, not only without blemish, unprovoked to wrath by the evil of men, but showing forth also the excellence of His own nature and the goodness of His heart; showing forth, in fact, all that God is. Let us say, as we look upon Him, whether of the twain is more attractive to us—the hearts of men from which poured forth those murderous thoughts, or His heart from which poured forth mercy and the love of God!

We come to the end of chapter 14. He had filled up the day with the works that the Father had given Him to do before men, and now the night had come when no man can work. Yet though its darkness was deepening about Him He did not stumble. "The prince of this world cometh," He says, "and hath nothing in Me." And why was that? It was because there was no self-seeking in Him. One thing only remained to make it absolutely clear to the world that He loved the Father and that the Father's commandment was everything to Him, and that one thing was *the Cross*—the last, the supreme test. And with that in full view He said: "ARISE, LET US GO HENCE."

There was more than the indifference or the hatred of men to meet now; that hatred remained, and was to show itself in hot frenzy against Him, but behind it and urging it, and fiercer and more relentless than it all, was the Satan and his malignant forces—the power of darkness. He had tried conclusions with the Lord before, and endeavoured to allure Him from the path of obedience, but had failed, and for a season he had left Him, to nurse his wrath, to mature his plans, and to marshal his legions. Now he returns to confront the Lamb of God with the

fear and horror of the death of the cross. The "many bulls," the "strong bulls of Bashan," the "ravens and roaring lion," the "dogs," "the assembly of the wicked," "the power of the dog," "the lion's mouth," and "the horns of the unicorn" of Psalm 22. show us what forces the prince of this world had at his command for this great conflict. But the Lord was undeterred and invulnerable. Satan had attacked none like Him before. He could not drive Him from the path of obedience. Yet the only compulsion for the Lamb of God in that path of suffering was His Father's commandment and His love to the Father. Yes, He had come not only to speak the Father's words and to do the Father's works, but also to obey the Father's commandments. Behold Him for a brief hour in the company of *His own*, whom He loved to the end, finding solace for His heart in telling them all that His love would do for them; but He may not linger there; that quiet hour must end; His time had come, and so He says, "Arise, let us go hence." Behold the Lamb of God, and mark the fact that the more severe the test with which He was tested, the more blessed is the perfection that is disclosed in Him.

In chapter 18. He goes forth to the garden, and now there is to be no further delay on the part of His foes, so "Judas, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons." Was this the time for flight or fight? For neither. Without panic, surprise, or hesitation Jesus faces the crisis. He never did hesitate. Not once in all His earthly life was He at a loss how to act, never had He to seek the advice of any, or change His mind or purpose. As it had always been so it is now, and we read, "Jesus, therefore, *knowing all things that should come upon Him, went forth, and said unto them, What seek ye?*" He knew from the beginning that this hour would come, and He

enters it with the calmness of that eternal knowledge, to yield Himself to their will. They answer His question by saying, "Jesus, the Nazarene." It was a name of contempt upon their lips, yet a glorious Name in spite of that; but He answers them with His own eternal Name, and they go backwards and fall to the ground in the presence of God.

But He does not use His power to save Himself, for He had others to save, and so He says, "*If, therefore, ye seek Me, LET THESE GO THEIR WAY.*" He must be sacrificed, but they must be saved. Why was this? Surely because He loved them with a love that would die for them; that was a great reason, but there was a prior reason. And we are plainly told what it was: "That the saying might be fulfilled which *He spake. Of them which THOU GAVEST Me I have lost none.*" He had His Father's gift to keep.

There was only one way in which He could do this, and He explains that way Himself, when He says to Peter, "Put up thy sword into its sheath: *the cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?*" With them was given to Him this cup—a cup of bitterness and judgment and death. Their sins had filled it, their sins and ours, and it must be drunk by someone; Divine justice demanded this; the devil himself could demand it at the eternal throne, or charge that throne with having abandoned Divine rights and Divine righteousness. Into the hands of Jesus the Father places the cup, and He in holy submission takes it, to drink it to its last drop. "*Let these go their way,*" He says. Not one drop of this burning draught must excoriate their lips. Their sins have filled it, but My love will drink it. This commandment have I received of My Father. Let us still look upon Him as He walks, and let wonder give way to adoration and gratitude to deepest devotion as we acknowledge Him to be the Lamb of God, without spot, without blemish.

Thus far have we looked upon Him and traced His ways in regard to—

- The Father's words ;
- The Father's works ;
- The Father's commandment ;
- The Father's gift of love ;
- The cup that His Father gave to Him.

This brings us to the depths of the way that He trod, for in chap. 19. 16, 17 we read : "*They took Jesus and led Him away. And He, bearing His cross, WENT FORTH into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha, where they crucified Him.*"

They led Him away ; in that their sin was consummated, He bearing His cross *went forth* ; in that His obedience to God defeated the foe, and His love to men won its great triumph. The crucified Son of God is the Lamb of God, and as of old not a bone of the Paschal lamb had to be broken, so now was that Scripture fulfilled in His case, as verse 36 tells us. He needed not to have His legs broken as did the thieves, for He had already yielded up His life when the soldiers came to do this ; but His side was pierced, and from it flowed the atoning blood, the blood of our redemption. So that we can say, "We are not redeemed with corruptible things such as silver and gold . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."

We follow Him in thought through death into resurrection, and hear Him saying to Mary, "I ascend unto My Father and your Father, to My God and your God" (chap. 20. 17), words that were to be spoken to His brethren—to us as well as to those disciples who spoke with Him face to face. We hear further, and from His own lips the words come, filling our hearts with a glad hope, "Till I come" (chap. 21. 22), and the purpose of His coming is

not hidden from us, for He has said, "I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also."

How worthy is He that our hearts should be engrossed with Him ! We do not wonder that the two disciples who heard John speak followed Him. We follow with them surely, drawn after Him by the blessedness that we see in Him, and as we follow we are in happy and holy fellowship one with another, for no breach could come in between two hearts that have Him as their object. No rules and regulations, restrictions and prohibitions are needed to keep our feet in the path of fellowship, when our hearts are engrossed with Him. All those things by which men endeavour to hold their fellowships together are carnal and of the will of man, and are an offence to God, for there is nothing in them for His glory or His heart. But if our hearts are full of Christ, then have we much in common, and we fulfil our relationships instead of wasting our time in ordering them, and in this God finds delight. In being right in regard to Christ, we are right with God and right with each other. And the end is His own dwelling-place. It was this that those two disciples sought when they said, "Master, where dwellest Thou ?" "Come and see," was His response and invitation. And as they saw where He dwelt and abode with Him, so we are to see where He dwells and we, too, are to dwell with Him there and behold His glory (chap. 17.), even as we have beheld His grace.

Meanwhile, having found Him to be enough to fill our hearts and to be our Centre and our Lord, we may serve Him successfully as did Andrew, for he first found his own brother Simon and brought him to Jesus. That is the object and the end of all true service. To find others to whom He, the Lamb of God, shall become the supreme Object of heart and life.

CHRIST, THE ETERNAL SON.

(JAMES GREEN.)

THERE is no occupation so blessed for the heart as to contemplate the Son of God becoming incarnate, entering the dark world of sin and woe, bringing into manhood the eternal relationship of Son, and all the love of the Father connected therewith, that sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him. This is of great importance, because we should lose the love of the Father in sending the Son out of heaven, if He was not Son before being born into this world. To this the words of our Lord Himself bear witness, "I came forth from the Father and am come into the world: again I leave the world and go to the Father" (John 16. 28). The disciples could grasp the thought that He came from God, but they had not received the greater fact that He came from the Father. The relationships are co-existent, for you have no Father if you have no Son. God is love, it is His eternal nature, and love cannot exist without an object, hence the Son addressing the Father in John 17. 24, says, "Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world." That the Son came forth from the Father is the source of deepest

joy to the saints, as it will be their chief witness to the world when glorified (John 17. 23). "That the world may know that Thou hast sent Me."

The eternal relationship of the Son to the Father in the mystery of the Godhead, is the holiest and sweetest which it is our privilege to know, and must draw forth adoring worship and praise for the riches of grace by which we know His Father as our Father, who has also given us the Spirit of His Son whereby we cry, "Abba, Father." As born into this world Christ is called "The Son of God" (Ps. 2. 7; Luke 1. 35), because in becoming flesh, He did not change the relationship which was His eternally. "Son of the Father" (2 John 3.) and "Son of God" are essentially the same, only the first refers to His place in the Father's bosom, the second to His Divine nature. It is this that makes the manhood of our Lord Jesus Christ unique, for although He has brought us into the relationship of sons and told us that we are loved of the Father as He is loved, yet the supreme place is His, in that He is "the Son," being God over all blessed for ever.

CONSISTENCY.

WE have boldness to enter the holiest through the blood of Jesus (Heb. 10.), but it is also necessary for us to do our business and provide things honest in the sight of all men. Then may we have two standards, be one thing before God and another before men? Certainly not. If we own the dignity of the place inside with God, we are His children through grace, we must be in keeping with it outside. **WE MUST NOT BE CANARIES ON SUNDAY AND SPARROWS ON MONDAY.** We must sing with the same note every day. It is what we are with God that sets the note; the beautiful melody comes from His presence.

Everything in the world is against

us. Nothing in it can help us, everything conspires to stop the song and mar the lustre of our testimony, but are we going to yield to it? May we not be overcomers in spite of every adverse element? It has been said that it is a fine sight to see a great man struggling with difficulties. It is a finer sight to see a Christian—a servant of Christ—superior to his difficulties.

I must give up my secular employment, says one, if I am to serve the Lord. No such thing; Paul worked with his hands while he was Christ's bondman. Look at our blessed Lord during those thirty years of private life—the heavenly traits shone out everywhere and in everything, and we are to learn of Him.

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH. No. XI.—The Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

(A. J. POLLOCK.)

THE last chapter in the Old Testament ends with the promise, "Unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings" (Mal. 4. 2); whilst the last chapter in the New Testament gives us the presentation of the Lord Jesus Christ by Himself in the words: "I am the Root and Offspring of David, and the bright and Morning Star. . . . Surely I come quickly" (Rev. 22. 20). The Sun of Righteousness—the Hope of Israel and of the world: the Bright Morning Star, the Hope of the Church, are here presented.

The similes are used skilfully, for just as the morning star rises before the sun, so the Lord will come FOR His heavenly saints, before He comes WITH them to reign over the earth.

The writer well remembers an illustration of this. Travelling from the Shetland Islands to the Orkneys he rose after a restless night at 5 a.m. On reaching the deck of the steamer he saw a really beautiful and impressive sight. High up in the sky, already beginning to light up with the morning glow, shone one large lustrous star—the only one visible. It was the bright morning star. Away on the eastern horizon the rising sun was shooting upwards his beams of golden light.

Instantly there came into his mind these symbols of the Lord in connection with His coming again: the Bright Morning Star—the Hope of the Church; the Sun of Righteousness, the Hope of Israel and of the world.

That the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ is fundamental to the Christian faith is evidenced by the fact that it is mentioned in every New Testament book, save five; and the reason for these exceptions only strengthens this statement.

These five exceptions are the little pastoral epistles to Philemon and the second and third epistles of John, and the epistles to the Galatians and Ephesians.

It is quite understandable that in the case of the three first named there should be no mention of the second advent. They were very short pastoral letters addressed to individuals, and not taken up with any systematic unfolding of Christian doctrine.

In the case of the epistle to the Galatians, the Apostle Paul fought strenuously the evil effects of the propaganda of the Judaizing teachers, who were undermining the very foundations of the Gospel in their attempt to bring the ritual of the law with Christianity as a system. The plain fact was that the believers in the Galatian assemblies were not clear as to the Gospel—as to the result of the *first* coming of Christ, and how could the apostle write to them as to the *second* coming?

Just as a boy at school who has not mastered what is taught in the lower class is not likely to be promoted to the higher, so the apostle had to keep to his theme as to what grace and the Gospel brought the believer into.

In the case of the epistle to the Ephesians the reason why the Lord's second coming is not mentioned is for an exactly opposite reason to that of the Galatians. In Ephesians the believer is looked upon as quickened, raised and seated with Christ in heavenly places. Already are they *in spirit* where the Lord's coming will place them bodily.

The coming of the Lord is made up of two parts, viz., the coming of the Lord *for* His saints, commonly called for convenience' sake THE RAPTURE; and the coming of the Lord *with* His

saints to deliver His earthly saints, and bring them into the millennium—the kingdom of heaven set up in manifestation on the earth—commonly called **THE APPEARING**.

The latter was prophesied even in Old Testament times. As far back as "the seventh from Adam," Enoch prophesied, "Behold the Lord cometh **WITH** ten thousands of His saints to execute judgment upon all" (Jude 14, 15). In the New Testament the great majority of allusions to the second coming refer to the appearing. Not that the importance of the rapture is to be reckoned by the number of allusions made to it. The appearing has to do with God's government upon the earth, and the place the believer will have in it is determined by his devotedness and faithfulness during the King's absence. The rapture has to do with heaven; the appearing with the kingdom of heaven upon the earth. The rapture has to do with the Father's house, sovereignty, God's grace, salvation, eternal life, and all believers share alike in this; whereas the appearing has to do with government, responsibility, reward, and believers will differ one from another according to their faithfulness and devotedness.

Naturally we should expect the appearing to be oftener presented to us in the New Testament as the means to awaken saints to a sense of their responsibility, and as an incentive to their privilege of seeking by devotedness and faithfulness to earn the Lord's encomium, "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (Matt. 25. 21).

But though this is the case, and the rapture is not referred to in the Old Testament at all, and only directly twice in the New Testament, though there are one or two other allusions to it, yet the rapture is a matter of supreme importance. Its blessedness

and importance must not be measured by the number of times it is alluded to as compared with the appearing.

What can be more wonderful than the Lord presenting the church "to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing"? (Eph. 5. 27.) And this will take place at the rapture.

There is a deep and widespread impression on the part of earnest Christians all over the world that the church of God is upon the very threshold of her translation to glory. It is true that there are no events which must be fulfilled before that wonderful event may take place. And yet there are recent events which clearly point to the imminence of the Lord's coming.

If for instance it were true that the church had to go through the great tribulation we should be in the position of saying that the Lord's coming could not take place until the Antichrist had appeared and made his treaty with the head of the Roman empire, yet to be revived; in short, that the coming of the Lord could not occur for several years at least.

In order to be clear on this point it must be grasped: (1) That no events need to occur before the return of the Lord **FOR** His saints, but (2) That there are events which must needs materialize before the Lord can come **WITH** His saints to reign on the earth; in other words, there are no necessary events to occur before the rapture, there are necessary events which must occur before the appearing.

But seeing that these two events are separated by a very measurable space of years, it is not surprising that before the rapture takes place there should be signs, ominous of and preparatory to the appearing occurring, and that these very signs, though necessary to and connected with the appearing, and proclaiming that the appearing is at hand, must necessarily tell us that if the appearing is near at hand, the rapture must be still nearer.

It is this that has stirred so many Christians of late years out of their lethargy and revived the hope of the Lord's coming in their hearts.

Read 1 Thess. 4. 13-18, 1 Cor. 15. 51-57, which are the two prominent Scriptures which present the coming as the immediate hope of the church, and you will find no event or events are outlined as needing fulfilment before the Lord shall come *for* His people; whereas in Matt. 24. 3-41, where the coming of the Lord *with* His people is the theme, you have many events necessary to take place before that event can occur.

How cheering for the believer to realize that there may be only "the twinkling of an eye" (1 Cor. 15. 52) between him and that most wonderful event—the coming of the Lord for His church. Do we really live in constant and daily expectation of this blissful event, which is surely coming, and that soon?

The church is listening for sounds, not looking for signs, which latter the godly Jew will do in a future day, when he will wait and long and pray for Messiah's appearing. We wait for the long-continued silence of the heavens to be broken, "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God" (1 Thess. 4. 16). And that silence may be broken before the ink which traces these words is dry upon the page on which they are written.

How sweet and comforting are the words, "the Lord Himself"! He will not send a deputy, however glorious. He will come Himself. How could it be otherwise? The One who has revealed the Father, the One who in His anguish sweated as it were great drops of blood in Gethsemane's garden, the One who died for His church in all the shame and bitterness of the cross of Calvary, the One who broke the power of sin and death and hell, the One who ascended to God's right hand,

the One who sympathizes with, succours and supports His people through their wilderness journey, is the One who is coming again for us. What a joyful shout His will be! How full of power and majesty!

The archangel, as leader of the uncounted angelic hosts, will voice with deepest reverence their sympathy with and joy in the glad shout of their Creator and Lord, whilst God Himself will sound the trump which proclaims so blessedly that the mind of heaven is one. The Father and the Spirit are in fullest accord with the Son in this wondrous moment.

Some uninstructed Christians may think of the Lord as gracious and merciful and tender and of God as austere and demanding satisfaction for outraged majesty in connection with sin. But the Gospel is to bring us *to* God, not to shield us *from* God. It was the Father, gracious and merciful and tender, who sent the Son, equally so surely. Righteousness must be upheld, but only that love might flow forth through the only channel possible. "Grace reigns *through* righteousness" (Rom. 5. 21).

"The river of His grace,
Through righteousness supplied,
Is flowing o'er the barren place
Where Jesus died."

It will be sweet to hear "the trump of God," as "the voice of the archangel," and "the shout" of the blessed Lord—to be welcomed by all in heaven.

The few verses—1 Thess. 4. 13-18—are of especial interest to the believer. Cut them out of the Bible and we should not know the order of the Lord's coming. Verse 14 reiterates that the Lord will come *with* His saints; verses 15, 16, 17 explain how the Lord will come *for* His saints, in order to come with them, and how the sleeping saints, the dead in Christ, will be the first to come under the mighty power of the resurrection shout, and then the living with them will be changed.

The question is often asked, "Will all believers be caught up at the second coming of Christ?" and the scriptural answer is clearly in the affirmative. But some may quote Heb. 9. 28, "Unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation," and say that only those who LOOK for Him will be caught up. That is exactly what the verse states, but "those who look for Him" describes the believers, whilst the unbelievers can be described as those who do not look for the Lord. It certainly does not describe a specially earnest section of the believers, but it describes believers as a class. It does not say, "those who look for His coming," but "those who look for HIM," and what Christian is there who cannot be thus described? 1 Cor. 15. 51, 52, settles the point beyond dispute that all believers will be caught up. We read, "Behold I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall ALL be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump."

Here it states categorically that ALL saints—dead and living—will be changed in a moment, not at different times, the duration of the moment being limited to "the twinkling of an eye." The whole chapter bears this out. Verse 22 says, "In Christ shall all be made alive," and "Afterwards they that are Christ's at His coming" (verse 23) will be raised.

The one qualification for the sleeping saints is, Do they belong to Christ? and surely that is the only qualification for the living saint.

But for a place in the kingdom of heaven in manifestation devotedness is required. It is this confounding of heaven and the kingdom of heaven that leads to this unscriptural view of partial raptures.

After the rapture, when saints have their glorified bodies and are like

Christ, there will be the judgment seat of Christ, when the deeds of the believer will be reviewed for his loss or reward. His person, however, will never come into judgment—we have the Judge's own assurance in John 5. 24 that this will never take place, but his deeds will be manifested. There is no question of his fitness for heaven being raised. That is settled on the ground of the wondrous efficacy of the atoning death of our Lord Jesus Christ, and hence there can be no question as to all believers being caught up at the rapture, but their position in the kingdom of heaven will be determined by the results of the judgment seat.

As for unbelievers, Scripture teaches that they must be judged. In their case it is their persons that will be judged according to their works. How different it is for the *person* of the unbeliever to be judged, and the *deeds* of the believer to be manifested either for loss or reward in view of the kingdom of heaven.

Let me give one Scripture which clearly proves that the believer's person will never come into judgment, I would refer to the hypothetical case adduced in 1 Cor. 3. 15, where we read, "If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." The case is adduced where a man's work might be thoroughly bad, and its condemnation at the judgment seat would actually be a means of salvation—not in the eternal sense of the word, but in a governmental sense. Yet, how solemn when the work of the flesh has to be burned by the fire of judgment. May the solemnity of this affect our lives even now and day by day till He come. And the knowledge that the judgment of the persons of the unbelievers means eternal punishment will make us more grateful for the wonderful salvation that is ours through the death of Christ and more zealous in the Gospel.

DIVERSITY OF ADMINISTRATION.

(T. OLIVER.)

1 Cor. 10. 15; 12. 5, 28, 31; 14. 3.

SCRIPTURE never addresses men as 'wise' in the sense of having philosophic minds. There are two words in the New Testament rendered 'wise' but with essentially different meanings. The word (*φρόνιμος*) (*phronimos*) in 1 Cor. 10. 15, has the force of 'sensible,' 'sane' or 'possessing common sense' in contrast to 'foolish' which the apostle used freely in the beginning of the epistle. I make no claim to speak as a prophet, but merely as a man of common sense to people of common sense. If one reviews the history of the last half century one is tempted to doubt the sanity, not to speak of the common sense, of the prime movers in many of the events of that history.

I am well aware that some brethren put a peculiar metaphysical construction on the Lord's presence. Fourteen years ago a former friend sought for the space of three hours to convince me that the Lord could not give His presence to two companies of Christians in the same place. I said that *if that were true* then I was sorry for the other companies in the place where I resided, because I was not under any hallucination in having realized the Lord's presence in the meetings with which I was familiar, although he declined to recognize them as being right. It seems late in the day that one should have to insist that the Lord's presence does not recognize geographical contour and Act of Parliament which define a place. We lose a great deal by evading the plain meaning of the words of Scripture: "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst."

Many seem to labour under a false conception as to what constitutes the Lord's administration. There are undoubtedly negative and positive sides to it. The former deals with discipline, of which I am not now prompted to speak. On the positive side there is the

authority of the Lord's name. Then there is power commensurate with that authority. Authority in heaven and power on earth are indissoluble, because the Spirit of God is here. His power, the energy of grace, is exercised in subduing all things unto Himself. Gifts were given with that end in view. His administration covers much more than the provision of oral ministry. But in that department we should recognize that gift is not necessarily accompanied by eloquence, although the latter quality will not be absent. Indeed, the Lord will take care that there will be a suitable vehicle for wheeling the truth up for our apprehension.

But in the Corinthian epistle, gift has a very wide sphere of application. Gift is indeed the expression of Christ on earth. If brethren in Christ are getting on well together anywhere, with low thoughts of self and each deferring to the other, that is evidence of the presence of gift. During last century it was said of a brother who lived in Devonshire that for forty years for forty miles around there was no lasting trouble in any of the local companies of Christians with which he had to do. This was undoubtedly due to the exercise of prophetic and pastoral gift: 'prophetic' in bringing those who had differences into the presence of God, and 'pastoral' in the exercise of the shepherd's care and love. In a contention, one asserted the axiom that both could not be right, overlooking the obvious fact that both could be wrong. In the inception of every difficulty there is usually right and wrong, but the one who was right is liable to go far wrong through the consciousness of being right. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is the universal solvent that is able to dissolve every hard crystalline substance likely to afford cause for complaint between Christians.

In 1 Cor. 12. 28, two of the depart-

ments of gift are apt to be overlooked as insignificant, viz., 'helps' and 'governments,' yet they are very necessary to enable the Christians in any place to make progress or growth by the process of "self-edification in love." In the nature of things where companies of saints are small there cannot be much gift which appeals to the senses, but if that which is born of God gets free course it will make increase of itself in love.

'Helps' may not rise higher as men say than cleaning the room where the Christians meet. For example, if a cobweb hang from lamp to lamp, it may serve to stimulate the study of the mathematical law of the catenary, even as Galileo was led to solve the pendulum inverse square problem by observing how the lamp supports of different lengths vibrated in church; but such phenomena are not conducive to happy fellowship and spiritual growth. That cleanliness is next to godliness is a common idea, but 'cleanliness' is godliness when associated with the Lord's name.

The term 'governments' does not necessarily refer to anything in the nature of the Prime Minister's duties, but simply taking an oversight over the small affairs as well as the large affairs in the Lord's interests. The Apostle John realized the value of oral conference when he wrote, "I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full" (2 John 12.). Isolation tends to breed distrust, which oral conference soon dispels. It should be remembered that there is no menial work in the House of God. When the principles of that House will be fully evident in 'the crowning day' that is coming, the very pots in the Lord's House will be like the bowls before the altar, they will be marked with Holiness unto the Lord. But to-day the same is essentially true in a spiritual sense.

Verse 31 of 1 Cor. 12. shows that gift is subject to desire. That our spiritual enablement may be different from

what we thought best may be quite likely. But the Lord knows best how to promote the work of grace in our souls. Gift will be singularly inefficient unless its function is performed in the way of superlative excellence, i.e., of love. We enjoy the blessing of the Kingdom, viz., righteousness, peace and joy enshrined in the Holy Ghost, through the Lord's administration subduing everything to Himself. No one can enjoy these blessings apart from having a spirit subdued by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus we get the good of Kingdom blessings through walking in self-judgment.

"He that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, exhortation, and comfort" (1 Cor. 14. 3). The popular idea of prophecy is that it deals entirely with prediction of future events, but this feature was secondary. The Old Testament prophets did speak of the future. But they sought to bring the light of "the world to come" (not the mere future of man's day) to bear on the consciences of those whom they addressed, so that they might bring them into the Lord's presence, and that their hearers might be in accord with His mind.

With reference to the two last-mentioned objects, scholars tell us that the word *παράκλησις* (*paraklesis*) translated 'exhortation' had initially the meaning of "one being at our side strengthening us by his presence," while the word *παραμυθία* (*paramythia*) translated 'comfort,' emphasizes the fact that there is an additional support in hearing the spoken word. We have not a mute fellowship, we are provided with oral ministry, and the assertion that we have no ministry not only proclaims the ignorance of the asserter, but is an insult to the Lord, and a slight upon His administration which extends wherever His Spirit is. Every Christian carries in himself or herself the proof of the Lordship of Christ. He will never cease to comfort and chasten those He loves unto the end.

LIGHT AND LIFE. No. 7.

(JAMES BOYD.)

Meditations on the Gospel and Epistles of John. Chap. 5.

IN chapter 5. we have Jesus as Life-giver and Judge; the Judge of all who do not come under His quickening power. Those who receive life from Him do not come into judgment. Not only their sins, but the old life with its guilty deeds, have come under the judgment of His cross, and they have a life that cannot be tainted with sin. Therefore such are said not to come into judgment; they have passed out of death into life, the life of the Son of God. Of this class those who have died will be in the resurrection of life, while all others shall be in the resurrection of judgment.

And this work of quickening the dead was the work that the Lord speaks of as being engaged in when here, though not to end at the close of His earthly mission: "The hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." And therefore did He work every day in the week. The Jews were ready to stone Him for not observing the Sabbath. This day spoke of the rest of God, and raised the question of man's ability to enter into it by the fulfilment of his obligations. But this test, applied to man as a responsible being, only brought to light the solemn fact that he could merit nothing but death and condemnation, for the law that was ordained to life proved his undoing; he could not keep it.

The impotent folk that lay at the pool of Bethesda present us with a true picture of the moral condition of the nation of Israel; they were blind, halt, withered. At this house of mercy they lay, waiting for the moving of the water. Israel never was placed under pure law. There was a good deal of mercy with it. Under pure law not one of the people would ever have got away from Mount Sinai. But after that the people had apostatized from God in the setting up of the golden

calf as an object of worship in place of Jehovah, God, through the intercession of Moses, turns from His hot anger, and takes them up again, proclaiming Himself as "merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin" (Exod. 34.). Yet with all this help from God their obligations remained unfulfilled, for their weakness was seen to be the result of wilful rebellion against God. "*Without strength*" they were, and proven to be, when God intervened in sovereign mercy.

In this man who had lain at the pool for thirty and eight years suffering from an infirmity, this is indicated. He had not the strength that would have availed him to lay hold of the blessing that was brought so near to him. Again and again had he seen the water troubled by the presence of the angel in the pool; and of the fact that healing virtue had been imparted to it, he had not the smallest doubt. But his weakness was against him, and every time, possibly for all those thirty and eight years, he had seen the coveted mercy snatched away from his grasp. To allow one to get into the pool before him made the case for him just as hopeless as though there had been a hundred: "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2. 10).

But that sabbath morning the true Bethesda was not far off. And in this instance it was not by angelic means the mercy was to be dispensed, but by the living God Himself come in grace and unspeakable love into His own world, in which His poor creature lay crushed and comfortless under the consequences of his fallen and perverted nature, and the curse of a broken law. No need now to await the troubling of the water. Its day was over; its modicum of mercy was no longer needed.

It had served its day, but it was inadequate to meet the requirement of a poor mortal who had no strength to avail himself of the mercy that it held out to the afflicted.

This was a day of rest which had been instituted by God, and which had been given to the nation of His choice, into which they could have entered had they done their work. But their attempt to enter into rest on the ground of their works was of a very hopeless nature. Hence when in this world there was no day of rest for the Son of God. How could He rest in a world under sin, suffering, death, and the domination of the devil? Men with their fat hearts and their flinty consciences might murmur against His breach of the sabbath, but the love of God was not going to rest amid the sorrows of His creature, no, not for one day out of seven: "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," is His answer to all their miserable objections.

There was no absolute necessity that the Father and the Son should work amongst fallen sinners, for by angelic means the guilty race could have been destroyed from off the earth. But not by angelic means could redemption have been accomplished, and the rebellious creature be brought into righteous and happy relations with God. Who but the Son could have revealed the Father? Who but the Son could have given Himself to bear the judgment to which we were liable on account of our lawless behaviour? Who but He could have borne the weight of that judgment? Who but He could have given Himself for our sins? Who but He could give Himself for anything? The creature must remain in the status in which his Creator has set him. To leave it would be apostasy. He cannot dispose of himself as he pleases. He is not his own master. But the eternal Son could surrender His Godhead status, could take the form of a servant, and take the place of subjection to the Father in everything, in order that

the eternal counsel of love might be accomplished. And He could do this, and must do it, if He do it at all, *voluntarily*.

He is that eternal life, and He quickens men who are dead in sins, and causes them to live in the power of the life that is in Himself. And it is of necessity that men should have this life, for in the life derived from Adam no one can live to God. In that old nature man is morally dead. The things in which he occupies himself on earth are engaged in without any reference to God. He neither knows Him, nor desires to know Him. His desire is to be let alone without responsibility or relationship with his Maker. He can do with a little bit of religion of some sort, but God in His true character must not be brought into it. He has nothing to do with God's world, neither will he allow God to have anything to do with his; that is, if he can help it. Therefore it is not only necessary that man should be forgiven; he must have a new life, a life in which he can live to God, as one who loves Him. Nothing less than this will do. Nothing less than this is salvation.

But Jesus quickens with the life that is in Himself, and He does this by means of the spoken word. He says: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." He quickens by His voice. His voice is His testimony, and His testimony is the love of God. The rulers of the people not only knew Him not, but knew not the voice of the prophets, which they heard read every sabbath day, and therefore fulfilled the words of the prophets by condemning Him (Acts 13. 27). It is not that they did not hear the words, but they missed the testimony that the prophets rendered, which was Christ; the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Now the *voice* of the Son of God was to be heard in all its life-giving power in this world of moral death,

and those who heard would live. His Word was but the expression of what He was ; He was altogether that which He said to the people from the beginning. To receive His word was to receive Himself, and to receive Him was to receive the Father.

This voice of the Son of God is still continued in the Gospel, and in the might of the Holy Spirit the same life-giving power accompanies it. The voice that was heard when He was upon earth was not to be silenced by His death and departure from this world. He says : " The hour *cometh*, and now *is*." It was heard then, and it has been heard throughout the centuries of this dispensation in all the quickening might in which it came forth from His own lips, and myriads have heard it, and myriads are hearing it, and passing out of death into life.

It is owned that it was suitable to the rude and semibarbaric character of that age, but as the world has advanced in wisdom and intelligence it is to-day altogether out of date ! In that day the world by wisdom knew not God, neither does it know Him to-day, in spite of all the light that has been spread abroad by that which far transcends the little sparks kindled by the researches and ingenuity of the corrupt and godless mind of the poor degraded and devil-deceived creature. If the creature by the study of the creation, so far as he has access to its mysteries, can advance in knowledge beyond the Creator Himself, then He may rise to an elevation beyond the revelation that God has been pleased to make known to us ; but if he cannot get beyond the Creator, he cannot get beyond Christ, who is Himself the Creator, and in manhood the expression of the essential being of the invisible God. If men are insane enough to imagine they can get beyond that, they had better be left alone until, in this day of grace, or in a lost eternity, they find out that they are not God, but only men.

" Lazarus, come forth " brought the

dead man out of his grave, with the life blood coursing through his veins, and the bloom of health upon his face. And when the word of life comes in the power of the Spirit to the soul that is morally dead that soul is made to live in the life of Christ. " Rise, take up thy bed, and walk " gave the bed-ridden creature at the pool of Bethesda all the power that was necessary to obey the command. But the law of Moses did not do that. The law came to man who had no strength to fulfil its righteous requirement and cursed him for his disobedience ; but grace communicates the power that the soul must have, if he is thankfully to respond to the word that is to him addressed.

In verse 24 we have before us the person that is partaker of this life. " He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death into life." The way we become partakers of the life is by hearing the voice of the Son of God. But there are certain effects produced in the soul who hears the voice that are made known to us in verse 24. The voice of Jesus has brought him to the recognition of the Father. He has heard the Word of Jesus, but his faith centres on the Father who sent Him ; and " This is life eternal, that they should know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." He is partaker in this life, and has fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ ; and fulness of joy is the result.

" And shall not come into judgment." He is no longer on the ground of responsibility to fulfil his obligations with a view to life. He has become the workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus. And God shall not bring His own work into judgment, to see if He can approve of it. If he has passed away from this scene before the Lord comes, he shall be in the first resurrection, the resurrection of life,

when the life that is now his in relation with God shall become the life of his body, and he shall be raised in glory, to have his home for ever with the Lord in the Father's house, where all shall be alive in that life, and in the likeness of the Son.

The resurrection of judgment is the last resurrection, and the judgment shall determine the eternal portion of those who have to stand there. That which the works of each shall merit must be meted to each in righteousness. Not only the overt acts of all shall be taken account of, but the secrets of the heart shall be made manifest. Not only what men have done, but why they acted, shall come to light, and there shall be no avenue of escape in that day. There is a way of escape to-day, and that is by submission to God's way of salvation, but where the present opportunity is carelessly rejected, the sinner who does so judges himself unworthy of eternal life, elects to stand for himself in the day of judgment, and too late comes to the discovery of the fool that he has proved himself to be.

"It is the sabbath day; it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed." The mercy of God is met by the religious self-will of the self-righteous legalist, who prides himself in his observance of a commandment that he had no scruple about setting aside, when it concerned his worldly possessions (Matt. 12. 11). For four thousand years fallen, guilty man had been suffering under the consequences of his sinful behaviour, and now that God has come into His own world, and in the grace of His heart is working for that unworthy creature's deliverance, He is met by the presumptuous interference of those who lay under the curse of a broken law, but too full of vanity to admit it, and they will stone Him for His gracious intervention on His own creature's behalf, and in His own creation.

But what a magnificent, and to a reasonable mind conclusive, answer the

man gives to the miserable formalists that so peremptorily withstood his fulfilment of the Divine Saviour's command: "He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed and walk." He had been long enough under Moses, without receiving the slightest benefit. If he had been able to fulfil the legal commandment, he would have needed neither the pool of Bethesda, nor the intervention of the Lord. He would have been immune from both death and disease. But not being able to fulfil his just obligations, Moses can do nothing but accuse him. But here is One who gives him all the power he needs, and tells him in what way that power is to be used; and what has the law got to do with it?

To this powerful and unanswerable defence of his actions his accusers can make no reply. But they turn the fierceness of their bitter hate upon the Son of God. "Therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay Him, because He had done these things on the sabbath day." Instead of being filled with thanksgiving, as they saw the grace of God on man's behalf rising above all legal barriers, they seek to destroy Him who was the faithful representative of that grace in this suffering scene. But it was that which man had shown himself to be from the beginning. They will raise no objections, nay, but they will be glad to be allowed to destroy seven nations of evil-doers, that they may inherit their land. But they themselves must not be interfered with, if they do according to the deeds of those same nations.

This is the day of life-giving. The word of that life is manifested by means of the preaching. He who is the life, the Son of the living God, is the subject of the preaching and whoever believes the Gospel has that life. The day of judgment is not yet, but it is coming, and the Judge shall be the once despised and rejected Son of Man. The Father and the Son in unity of action raise up the dead and quicken,

but the Father does not judge; all judgment is committed to the Son, because He is the Son of Man. He has been despised and set at naught by men, but God will see to it that He shall have from every creature equal honour with the Father.

But the judgment has no terror for the believer. He has found refuge in Christ, and in the work accomplished for his salvation on the cross. He has boldness for the day of judgment, because as Christ is, so is he in this world. The judgment is past. Neither

his sins, nor that evil life from which his sins proceeded, enter into his accountability to God. He is the workmanship of God, no longer of the old and corrupt order of flesh, but of the new order in Christ, in His life and nature, and in His relationships with His God and Father, and object of the love wherewith the Father loves His Son. And this is his eternal place and portion. The fear that hath torment has no place in his heart. The love of the Father and the Son has for ever dispelled all that kind of fear, and in that love our souls live.

Chastening and Fruit.

"But no chastening at the time seems to be [a matter] of joy, but of grief; but afterwards yields [the] peaceable fruit of righteousness to those exercised by it" (Hebrews 12. 11, N.T.).

THE summer showers are falling. The poet stands at the window watching them. They are beating and buffeting the earth with their fierce downpour. But the poet sees more than the showers that are falling before his eyes. He sees the myriads of lovely flowers which shall soon be breaking forth from the watered earth, filling it with matchless beauty and fragrance. And so he sings:

"It isn't raining rain for me, it's raining daffodils;
In every dimpling drop I see wild flowers upon the hills.
A cloud of gray engulfs the day, and overwhelms the town;
It isn't raining rain for me: it's raining roses down."

Perchance some one of God's chastened children is even now saying: "O God, it is raining hard for me to-night. Testings are raining upon me which seem beyond my power to endure. Disappointments are raining fast, to the utter defeat of all my chosen plans. Bereavements are raining into my life which are making my shrinking heart

quiver in its intensity of suffering. The rain of affliction is surely beating down upon my soul these days." Withal, friend, you are mistaken. It isn't raining rain for you. It's raining blessing. For, if you will but believe your Father's word, under that beating rain are springing up spiritual flowers of such fragrance and beauty, as never before grew in that stormless, unchastened life of yours. You indeed see the rain. But, do you see, also, the flowers? You are pained by the testings. But God sees the sweet flower of faith which is upspringing in your life under those very trials. You shrink from the suffering. But God sees the tender compassion for other sufferers which is finding birth in your soul. You see the disappointments, but God sees the sweet submission to His Divine and perfect will which is growing out of the very same. Your heart winces under the sore bereavement. But God sees the deepening and enriching which that sorrow has brought to you. It isn't raining afflictions for you. It is raining tenderness, love, compassion, patience and a thousand other flowers and fruits of the blessed Spirit which are bringing into your life such a spiritual enrichment as all the fulness of worldly prosperity and ease was never able to beget in your innermost soul.—(Selected.)

THE ALL-SUFFICIENCY OF THE SON OF GOD.

Matthew 17. (*Continued.*)

(INGLIS FLEMING.)

HAVING come down from the mountain, a multitude of people are found in evident distress and difficulty. A grievous sufferer had been brought to the disciples who had remained at the foot of the mountain. They had been unable to heal him. Now the father of the afflicted lad comes at the first opportunity to Christ, and casting himself on his knees before Him cries, "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is lunatick and sore vexed: for oft-times he falleth into the fire and oft into the water, and I brought him to Thy disciples, and they could not cure him." The Lord was enough on the mountain's brow and He is enough at the mountain's base. He was enough to fill the mind of His loved ones on the highest height, and now He is proved enough to meet the need of His stricken creature in the lowest depth.

"Bring him hither to Me," He said. If there was not sufficiency in His apostles there was in Himself. With them prayer and fasting had been lacking, and not laying hold of His power they had been found weak in the presence of the foe. But *He* was all that was needed at this juncture as at every other.

What comfort we have in this! We may have failed, in dependence and self-judgment. We may have been lacking in drawing from the almightiness of His resources. But He remains for us to bring to Him the cases which we have found too hard for ourselves. He may have to show us the source of our failure, but He will meet the need and answer the longing cry of the distressed.

"And Jesus rebuked the demon and he departed out of him and the child was cured from that very hour."

There is nothing too hard for Him. No case is too difficult for Him. No problem for which He has not the

solution. He is all-sufficient and sufficient for all and at all times. We find ourselves in a world where Satan's power is put forth. Clearly or craftily he works on every hand. And in ourselves, we are no match for him whether in seeking our own spiritual well-being or that of others. But Christ abides faithful. Amid all the breakdown in our own lives or in those of others He has not failed nor ever will fail. We can turn to Him ever, and we shall find in Him all that is required.

Oh, for simple faith to take a firm hold of His omnipotence at all times.

"Bring him to Me," He says of any soul, saint or sinner, whose blessing we seek. It may be that in the case of some loved one, parents and preachers have been unable to help. Then bring him close up to the Master. Let no one intervene. The Saviour suffices for the sinner and the saint alike and they cannot dispense with Him. None other will do to meet the crying necessity. But He will do. He has met the requirement of every one who has come to Him in the past, and what He ever has done He is able to do for each and for all who turn to Himself.

And may we not apply the words, "Bring to Me," to every matter of trial and difficulty we encounter while on our earthly way? He would have us come to him in all circumstances. And may we not say, indeed, that He orders the circumstances that we may prove Him to be a necessity to us?

He loves to be used by His own and brings to pass events so that we may turn to Himself.

* * * * *

"I had no one to turn to but the Lord," said one who had found that only He could give the succour called for. The answer from her fellow believer was, "That was a mercy,

for if you had had anyone else you would have turned to him."

Alas! is it not so? that instead of making our Lord and Master our immediate refuge, we flee in times of storm to this one or to that one, and only when these fail do we seek His aid. And yet He upbraids not but ministers according to His abounding fulness, satisfying our every want.

Coming to the city of Capernaum, Peter is challenged as to whether his Master pays the tribute—the tax for the support of the temple. At once Peter replies, "Yes!" He does not refer the matter to the Lord, but blurts out his assurance that the levy is met.

The Lord shows His omniscience, in that when they had come into the house the Lord anticipated any remark Peter might make or any question he might ask, by His enquiry, "What thinkest thou, Simon?—of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? Of their own children or of strangers? Peter saith unto Him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free." The Son was there. One greater than the temple was in their midst and His glory as Son had but recently been declared upon the holy mount. The disciple had bungled. And was it so that in the bag that Judas carried there was not enough to meet the demand? We know not. But in Christ was all-sufficiency. He is omnipotent. The fish of the sea are at His bidding. All creation is under His command. He who bade the ravens supply a seer's hunger, who opened the mouth of an ass to rebuke the folly of the prophet, who stopped the mouths of lions in the den of Darius, who prepared a great fish to shelter, and a worm to discipline, an erring servant, He will direct now a fish of the sea to find and furnish the necessary piece of silver.

And His grace towards and thought for a failing disciple are seen in the provision the Lord makes. He says,

"Notwithstanding lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea and cast an hook and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth thou shalt find a piece of money: that take and give unto them for Me and thee."

What perfections are here!

"*Lest we should offend them.*" He would not have the work hindered. He would not have a stone of difficulty put in their way, sinful and perverse though they had shown themselves to be. What perfection of mercy!

"*Find a piece of money,*" and that in a fish's mouth, and that fish the one that should first come up, the creature hastening to the hook, as it were, to obey the Creator's call. Perfection of power!

"*That take and give unto them for Me and thee.*" It was a *stater*, a piece of money of sufficient value to pay the impost for *two*. He, the Lord of all, will link with Himself His foolish follower as He pays the temple tribute, and lays the fish of the sea under tribute to provide the necessary sum. Perfection of grace!

* * * *

Thus in all His sufficiency is seen, and in the display of it He has given a picture of the greatness of His goodness towards His own. He associates them with Himself.

And as we may now say, not by an act of might or word of command to a creature but by the infinite sufferings of Calvary. He was alone in His glory, but gave Himself in order to secure many companions. He went into death that we might be with Him in life. He descended into the depths that we might be with Him in the heights. He endured the cross that we might enjoy its consequence. The darkness was His that light might be ours. The distance immeasurable to the finite mind was known by Him that nearness ineffable and eternal might be known by us.

A STUDY OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

A Summary of Chapters.

(G. J. STEWART.)

Chapter 8. The chief point in the argument in the previous chapter is: "We have such a High Priest, Leitourgos of the Holy Places"; with a double ministry like that of Melchisedec, toward man and toward God (1, 2).

A Divine and heavenly Priest, He must have somewhat to offer. But having done with sacrifice, He awaits GIFTS that He may offer them to God. This was shadowed in the Aaronic priesthood, who served after the example and shadow of heavenly things. He has obtained a more excellent ministry (leitourgeia) than they, by how much He is the Mediator of a better covenant, which is established upon better promises. Here we see **THE PRIEST IS READY TO OFFER GIFTS** (3-6).

This more excellent ministry conveys to them the blessings of the new covenant, though it is not yet entered upon; the law is put into their minds and written in their hearts, that is to say, it is understood and loved. The veil is no more upon their hearts when they read it. Jehovah is their God and they His people; and their sins and iniquities are remembered no more for ever. They are thus prepared for a free-will service (latreia); **THE WORSHIPPERS ARE READY TO OFFER GIFTS** (7-13).

True, Christ's own work ever goes up to God a gift of perpetual incense. It must, however, come up from Spirit-filled hearts; a continual voluntary of thanksgiving and praise.

Chapter 9. The first (covenant) had ordinances and a sanctuary (figure of a holy universal order). It had a tabernacle which was divided into two parts, "The Holy," and the "Holy of Holies." The first was typical of the Jewish system of worship; the second of the Christian

system. In the first they entered into nothing; they never reached beyond the veil and did not know what the vessels and external forms meant. They were but figures of what is true at the "present time," until the day of putting things right. The way into the **HOLY PLACES** was not then made manifest (1-10).

But Christ, being come and having through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, has entered into the **HOLY PLACES** once for all. He has obtained *Eternal* redemption; a purged conscience; and the promise of *Eternal* inheritance. His blood ratifies the new covenant, cleanses from defilement and procures remission of sins (11-22).

He has not entered into **HOLY PLACES** made with hands, but into *heaven* itself. Nor will He offer Himself often, as the High Priest entered into **HOLY PLACES** every year with blood of others. But now once, in the consummation of the ages, hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. He will appear a second time, without sin unto salvation (23-28).

Heaven is thus shown to be part of our holy places. Here—

THE PLACE IS READY FOR THE WORSHIPPERS.

Chapter 10. Christ's perfect sacrifice constitutes those who **APPROACH**, worshippers with no more conscience of sins. His prepared body substitutes the oblation and thank-offering; as doth His death, the burnt-offering and sacrifice for sins. There is no more offering for sins, but the other offerings remain as gifts in all their efficacy. God's will is established in the place of all the offerings (1-9).

THE GIFTS ARE READY FOR THE OFFERERS.

Those who approach are sanctified and perfected for ever, by the sacrifice of Christ, by the will of God and of this the Holy Spirit is the Witness. There is no more sacrifice for sin (10-18).

We have therefore liberty to enter into the **HOLY PLACES**. The Great Priest; the worshippers; the place and the gifts, all are ready. Let us **APPROACH!** It is to give here; in chapter 4. it was to get. We approach in full assurance of *faith*, doubly sanctified by water and by blood; and fully consecrated. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope—glory. Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works (19-25).

To draw back is perdition. There is no other sacrifice for sins; no other escape from judgment. But remember your former days, hold fast your confidence which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience (26-36).

Yet how little a while and He (no longer "it") that shall come, will come and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith, but if any man *draw back* my soul shall have no pleasure in him. We are of them that believe to the saving of the soul (37-39).

Chapter 11. Here is a whole chapter on **FAITH**, the great and only principle to make good the testimony of the Holy Spirit, in all its details. This is true in all ages, each age having its special testimony. It is not, however, here a question of *being* a testimony but of receiving a testimony.

In Adam's day, creation's work was the subject of testimony, and by faith it was understood that the worlds were framed by the Word of God. This remains to-day. *Relationship* was broken in Abel's day, and by faith he learned God's way of renewing it, obtaining testimony that he was righteous—no more innocent. Enoch was translated by faith. Before his translation he had the testimony that he was *well*

pleasing to God. Faith is the only principle of pleasing God. We must believe in His existence; that He delights in being **APPROACHED**; and that He rewards all who do so. By faith Noah prepared an Ark; saved his house and condemned the world; inheriting the righteousness which is by faith. These verses give the complete range of faith in human relationships with God (1-7).

Then follow details. First the **ENDURANCE OF FAITH** for **WALK** with God, in Abraham to Joseph. By faith Abraham went out; sojourned in the land of promise; obtained Isaac; received him back again from the dead. Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau. Jacob blessed both the sons of Joseph and worshipped. Joseph gave commandment concerning his bones. They knew not, saw not, received not, gave up what they had and worshipped (8-22).

Then the **ENERGY OF FAITH** for **SERVICE**. By faith Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, chose affliction with God's people, esteemed the reproach of Christ to be treasure, forsook Egypt, kept the passover, passed through the Red Sea. By faith the harlot Rahab is brought in (23-31).

Finally, faith triumphs amid professors and apostasy. Here endurance and energy combine in a noble army of whom the world was not worthy. They all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having obtained testimony from God, who foresaw some better thing for us that they without us should not be made perfect.

Chapter 12. We too are compassed with a cloud of witnesses to this better thing, chiefly Jesus a perfect example, who began and finished the course of faith; to whom let us look off from all else, by faith. He has already entered into glory, having obtained it for us, and has taken His seat at the right hand of God.

Consider Him and the path He trod, lest you fail under persecution and chastening; endure by faith. Trials without and within are used as a Father disciplines his sons and yield good results in holiness. Despise it not, faint not; all comes through exercise—spiritual athletics. Remember the throne and fail not of the grace of God, as Esau who preferred seen things to unseen, and for a morsel of meat sold his birthright (12-17).

We have not APPROACHED seen and tangible things, but we have APPROACHED the unseen, intangible, but spiritual realities which constitute the elements of the Millennial kingdom, a kingdom already established provisionally in grace. See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh from heaven. God will finally shake both earth and heaven; there is no escape. Having received a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us hold fast grace (or give thanks) with reverence and godly fear, walking before God acceptably in a free service of worship. Our God is a consuming fire (18-29).

Chapter 13. Continue in love in all relationships; with God, the Assembly,

and the family. He will never leave you. Christ is eternally THE SAME. Hold fast sound doctrine and be established in grace (1-9).

If we eat of God's altar, let us remember that the bodies of those sin-offerings whose blood was brought into the HOLY PLACES were burnt without the camp. Jesus suffered without the gate and this involves His reproach without the camp; while His blood brings us inside the veil, where only true worship is known. Our position is like Abraham's, with a tent and an altar and an abiding city in view. The sacrifice of lip and life bring to us the testimony Enoch had, that we are well-pleasing to God. Obey your present rulers; pray for us (10-19).

Now the God who has established peace through the blood of the eternal covenant, and brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus that great Shepherd of the sheep, make you perfect in every good work to do His will; working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight. Glory be to His blessed name for ever! Grace be with you all! (20-25).

If you put your cares into God's hands, He will put His peace into your heart. This is the meaning of Philippians 4. 6, 7.

The nearer we reach heaven in *hope*, the farther we recede from earth in desire.

It was a sweet speech of a dying saint who said that he was going to change his place but not his company; for he had long lived in communion with God.

“THE GOOD SHEPHERD GIVETH HIS LIFE.”

NO chains of force to Thy rude altar bound Thee,
 Only the cords of everlasting love;
 And when the powers of darkness gathered round Thee,
 Thou wouldst not call Thy Legions from above.

In solitude of anguish Thou didst suffer—
 The anguish of a God-forsaken soul,
 Rough was the way—it could not have been rougher—
 Thy pierced feet passed on to reach Thy goal.

(H. Burton.)

“THEY SPAKE OFTEN ONE TO ANOTHER.”

(EDWARD CROSS.)

“*They that feared the Lord spake often one to another*” (Malachi 3. 16).

THERE is not much to show in these words, but there is much in them. It was the time of the utter decadence of the people: everything worth having was gone; nothing was left but misery and godless pride. What could be done in such circumstances? Yet there were those who “*feared the Lord.*” Anyway, nobody, nothing could take that from those who had it. Then, what did they do? They did not preach, or make public orations; they had no prophet by whose words they could be spellbound for the time being, even though they would not obey them; there was no Elijah, they had to wait for his reappearance to rebuild the altar with the twelve stones of a united people; there was no king to deliver them from the stranger’s yoke; they had no power to recover the position in the world which their unfaithfulness had lost to them; they had no ground of visible encouragement in their distressful circumstances; it was no time to sing the songs of Zion, to proclaim their divinely appointed privileges, or even to call a general prayer-meeting. What then? What could they do? “THEY SPAKE OFTEN ONE TO ANOTHER.” In the informal conversations one member of the company was as good as another, none had anything in which to display his superiority, in which to boast in the time of national humiliation; every voice in the company was formed in the common “fear of God”; and every utterance, however simple or illiterate, expressed that fear. Moreover, it was no mere sabbath-day formalism. Days, hours, times, did not govern their conventions. It was no perfunctory thing to be done, and to be done with. “They spake often one to another.” How often? That depended on the fellowship of the Spirit, and the opportunity afforded them; as it is said, “As often as ye do it . . . until He come.”

EXCEEDING SIMPLICITY, SHORN OF EVERY ADVENTITIOUS APPENDAGE, OF THAT ANCHORWORD TO KEEP THE HEARTS OF HIS DISCIPLES STEADFAST THROUGH ALL THE STRESS OF TIMES, “REMEMBER ME”? NO ARTIFICE OF THE ENEMY, NO FAILURE OF THE CHURCH, IN WHOLE OR IN PART, CAN ROB THE FEEBLEST SAINT OF THAT. IT WAS LEFT BY THE LORD AT THE LAST SUPPER, TO BIND THE HEARTS OF HIS OWN TO HIMSELF THROUGH ALL TIME UNTIL HE COMES. IT IMPOSED NO BURDEN; IT ENFORCED NO DUTY; IT DEMANDED NO SACRIFICE; IT REQUIRED NO POWER; IT PRESCRIBED NO RITUAL; IT SET FORTH NO TIMES; BUT ONLY “AS OFTEN AS—UNTIL.” A WORD WITHOUT A COMMAND; A DIRECTION WITHOUT ENFORCEMENT; A TRUMPET CALL WITHOUT A FIXED RALLYING POINT; A STANDARD WITHOUT A BEARER; A VOICE WITHOUT A CRIER; A RULE, BUT ONE OF LOVE, IT REMAINS BY ITS VERY SIMPLICITY INDESTRUCTIBLE AND EFFICIENT FOR THE GATHERING OF EVERY HEART LOYAL TO HIMSELF EVER SINCE.

And after the same manner of simplicity and efficiency is the picture of Malachi 3. 16, and an immense comfort for us to-day as we consider it. The times are evil and getting more so. How long we shall retain the little we have outwardly, who can say? And the question is becoming more than ever serious. Then when “all hope is gone” (Acts 27. 20) what remains in the face of difficulties insurmountable? “GOD AND THE WORD OF HIS GRACE” (Acts 20. 32). Acts 27. is instructive as regards the dispensation; John’s writings as to what *abides* unto eternal life.

AND IS IT NOT STRIKING, THE

QUESTIONS RAISED BY YOUNG CHRISTIANS.

A Call to Service.

(ANSWERED BY THE EDITOR.)

"What constitutes a call to any particular line of service? How may a young Christian be assured that he has found his work, according to 'To every man his work'?"—D.

THE Gospel call is in itself a call to service. It may not be the first thought in it, but it certainly is in it, for by the Gospel men are claimed for God. Now every intelligent creature in the universe is a servant of God; in the very nature of things it must be so, for all things have been created for His pleasure. Men have rebelled against this and refuse to serve God, but it does not relieve them of the responsibility, and they will be judged upon that ground. The law was given from this point of view. It was the declaration of God's rights over men, but it did not and could not change the nature of men and only made their refusal to fulfil their responsibilities as God's servants the more manifest. But the Gospel comes to men revealing the love of God to them, and when it gets into the heart it changes everything, and the first desire of the heart is to serve God. The first cry from the lips is, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" Thus it was that Saul of Tarsus instantly owned the claims of the Lord and put himself as a bond slave at His feet. The story of the African slave who was rescued from a revengeful chief who meant to slay him, by an Englishman who suffered a severe wound on his behalf, illustrates this truth. He realized that he was free because the white man had bled for him, that his freedom had been purchased by the blood of his deliverer. And weak and wounded himself, he fell at the feet of his friend and cried, "The blood-bought loves and the blood-bought must serve." That is not only our desire and privilege as those who have been redeemed by the blood of Christ, it is our responsibility also. Redemption has restored us to right relations with God, and one of these is that we are His servants created and

now redeemed for His pleasure, to do His will.

If we begin seeking some line of service before this great fundamental fact is felt and acknowledged, it is more than likely that we are seeking for ourselves, seeking something that will please us or make something of us; but if we own that we are the servants of the Lord, to do His will and not our own, to be at His disposal and not to please ourselves, then we may confidently expect that He will give to us that service for which He has fitted us, and we shall be glad to do it because it is His will that we should, and we shall do it unto Him and not for our own glory before men.

The Gospel call then is a call to service, and the Lord has some special service for each one whom He calls. How may we be assured that we are doing our special work? There is no other way that we know of save nearness to the Lord and waiting upon Him. "I will instruct thee and teach thee," are His own words. And He chose twelve that they might be WITH HIM and that He might send them forth to preach. "With Him" was first. It is important too that we should have some knowledge of what He is doing in the world. To serve aright and successfully is to serve in connection with the great work that the Holy Ghost has come into the world to accomplish. He is gathering *out of the world* a people for the Lord's name, and He is gathering them into the one body—the church. To learn something of that is an immense help, and it is often the Lord's way when in the midst of His own saints as their Head and Centre to impress upon the heart His will for us. But whether there or in the secret of His own

presence where no eye but His sees us, we must get our work from Him and not from another. We may help and encourage one another in taking up service, but He only is Lord and Master and we are each responsible to Him and to no other.

It is a happy thing to do the first thing that comes to hand in simplicity and confidence. Some people are looking for work a thousand miles away, when it lies in the very house where they live; some are hoping that the Lord will bid them do some great thing when His will is that they should be faithful in the small things of life.

Finally do not suppose that serving the Lord is confined to what is known

as "religious" work. Hear what Colossians 3. 22-25 says. I quote from J. N. D.'s N.T. : "Bondmen, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh : not with eye service as men-pleasers, but in simplicity of heart, fearing the Lord. Whatsoever ye do, labour at it heartily, as [doing it] to the Lord, and not to men, knowing that of [the] Lord ye shall receive the recompense of the inheritance; YE SERVE THE LORD CHRIST." And that is full of encouragement for those who love the Lord and move in a very humble and restricted sphere, and it may be have arduous and trying duties to perform. These done for Him may be more acceptable to Him than an eloquent sermon that may thrill a multitude.

WE ARE THE LORD'S!

WE are the Lord's! In living or in dying
 We are the Lord's, who once for us was slain.
 We are the Lord's, and on His word relying,
 We shall inherit all in Him, our gain.
 We are the Lord's, His love shall never fail us
 In the dire struggle where all efforts cease,
 Yea, more than victors, though death's darts assail us,
 We are the Lord's! Eternal joy and peace!

SERVICE.

IF you are to serve the Lord, you must first admit that YOU ARE HIS BONDSMAN (1 Cor. 7. 22). That was a title Paul delighted in. He has every right to you. The rights were His because of who He is. He has acquired them also by redemption. He has a twofold title to us.

But He calls us not servants, but friends—YOU ARE HIS FRIENDS (John 15.). He brings us into the closest intimacy with Himself, and that because of the love He bears us. Hence we serve Him not from duty only but from affection.

Next you must be under His direction. YOU ARE UNDER HIS CONTROL (Acts 9. 6). This demands that you wait upon Him to learn His mind, not like an officious servant who is always suggesting, much less running off and doing as you think right, but waiting upon Him for guidance and direction; Opportunity must not be the guide. Philip was taken from a very fruitful field in Samaria to meet one man in a desert. It is not a question as to how you do the work or how you succeed, but have you got the assurance that you are doing the Lord's pleasure?

What the Lord Jesus was in any one place at any one time, He was always and everywhere; so that, if the mirror of the Gospel history were to be broken into a thousand fragments, every fragment would yield the same image of "God manifest in the flesh."