

SCRIPTURE TRUTH

VOLUME XVIII. 1926

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”—*2 Timothy 3. 16, 17.*

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Scripture Truth.

Vol. XVIII "Speaking the truth in love." (Eph. 4. 15)

No. 1

BLOWING THE SILVER TRUMPETS.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

A Message for the New Year.

*"Poor and feeble though we be, Saviour, we belong to Thee!
Thine we are, Thou Son of God, Thine, the purchase of Thy blood."*

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Make thee two trumpets of silver: of a whole piece shalt thou make them" (Numbers 10. 1, 10.)

WHAT is it that we need first and most, if the months that lie ahead of us, if the Lord will, are to be fruitful in the things that are pleasing to God? How are we to fulfil the relationships of life, and in them adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things? What is it that lies at the basis of all spiritual life and service, and without which we can only fail in every sphere of life? With the exercises that come to most of us, as one year gives place to another, we may well face such questions as these, and if we do we shall find that there is but one answer to them, and it is this: What is needed first and most and continuously, and without which we know nothing of the art of Christian living, is **THE FULL AND UNRESERVED ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF GOD'S CLAIMS OVER US.** Without this we build without a foundation, we waste our energies, and live unreal and useless lives. God's claims are paramount; since He is God, they must be, and for our blessing as well as for His glory we must own His claims, and obey the word, **"YIELD YOURSELVES UNTO GOD."**

This great and indispensable truth is remarkably illustrated for us in the

use of the silver trumpets. They figured largely in the every-day life of Israel, for never a day passed when they did not make their appeal to that people. They were blown on God's behalf for the people to hear, and they were blown on the people's behalf for God to hear. It must be noted that they were made of silver, and it is well known that silver in the Scriptures is a symbol of redemption. Every Israelite that was numbered from twenty years old and upward had to bring half a silver shekel as an offering to Jehovah. It was the acknowledgment on their part that they belonged to God, who had redeemed them out of bondage for His own pleasure, and the silver thus offered was devoted to the service of the sanctuary (Exod. 30.).

When the priests blew long and loud upon these trumpets they proclaimed to the uttermost limits of Israel that the people belonged to God, that He had redeemed them and had rights over them that could not be challenged. They were to hold themselves at His disposal. It mattered not with what they were engaged—God's call was imperative, and their own pursuits must take a second place; must be abandoned, in fact, and that

immediately, what time the silver trumpets sounded out their assembling call.

Let us give attentive ears to the truth that the silver mouths of these trumpets proclaim, for their story has been written for our learning. Do we not hear the sound of them in the New Testament in such words as those in 1 Corinthians 6. 19, 20? "What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, AND YE ARE NOT YOUR OWN? FOR YE ARE BOUGHT WITH A PRICE," and again in 1 Peter 1. 19, 20, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye 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." With clarion blast these words call to our souls. Yet there is nothing discordant in their sound to him that hath ears to hear and a heart to understand; for they do not only tell of an insistent claim but of a great love, a love that paid the price and shed the blood, that it might possess us righteously and without a rival.

The words themselves are pure like silver, for "the words of the Lord are pure words: *as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times*" (Ps. 12. 6), and obedience to the words of the Lord purifies the soul; for we read, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit" (1 Peter 1. 22). For practical and continuous purity of heart and life we must keep the great fact that we belong to God before our souls. It is the Word of God to us at the opening of this New Year. The silver trumpet of His Word proclaims His redemptive rights over us, and the way of blessing for us is to respond in a glad subjection to His will.

I. CALLING OF THE ASSEMBLY.

The first use to which these trumpets were put was "for the calling of the assembly." The Tabernacle was the God-appointed centre for His redeemed people in those ancient days, and from that centre His words to them went forth, and to it He summoned them when He would. That was the shadow, the picture; Christ is the substance, the reality; and if we are obedient to the Word of God, Christ will be our one and only Centre. Hear, then, the call of the silver trumpet of the Word in this respect. "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). "This do in remembrance of Me" (1 Cor. 11. 25). If lethargy of spirit has come over us, or if indifference of any sort has crept into our hearts in regard to these matters, may the Word of God awaken us from it! And let each of us take heed to himself and not be influenced by another, for "the manner of some" must not affect us, but the Word, and the appeal that the Word makes to us is a personal one.

Suppose that when the priests at the Tabernacle blew upon the silver trumpets calling the people together to hear the Word of the Lord, they were so engrossed with other matters that they did not heed the call! Suppose that Judah had a quarrel with Benjamin, and they considered their quarrel to be of more importance than the call of God and so did not respond together to it. Suppose each tribe had made a centre for itself, with its own laws, creed, and regulations. Suppose some were too busy with domestic, commercial, or personal matters, to hear

the summons! What then? Would God be indifferent? No. The call would continue until some were aroused by it, and from first one tribe and then another there would come forth those who felt and owned God's claim. And there they would stand at last in the God-appointed meeting place, where He could speak to them and commune with them. Not many, we will suppose, only two or three when compared with the multitude of the people, but obedient to the call of God and united together in that obedience! Would the Lord despise them? Would He refuse to say to them what He would have said to the whole of Israel had they been there? We may be sure that the Word would not be less rich, or the meeting less blessed because not all were there! And so it is and will be as long as God's Word abides, and those who obey it, though but two or three, will prove how faithful He is to it. He cannot deny Himself.

2. THE JOURNEYING OF THE CAMPS.

The people were pilgrims in that great wilderness and they had not to settle down and make their home in it. They were travelling to Canaan, and need was that they should be reminded of this fact. So that when the time came for them to press on, an alarm was blown; the trumpets kept them on the move, and this we need also. How soon we can stagnate and sleep, and forget our heavenly home and calling! Yet God is gracious, and His Word awakens us to renewed spiritual energy. It blows an alarm and says to us: "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light" (Eph. 5. 14). "Set your affections on things above, not on things of the earth" (Col. 3. 2). "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope

to the end, for the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1. 13). In such words as these do we hear the silver trumpets sounding an alarm, lest we should mind earthly things and forget our high destiny and our Father's house.

For these two purposes the trumpets were blown on God's behalf in those times of old, and for us in these last days, the word comes to us saying, "He that hath ears to hear let him hear," and be not hearers of the Word only but doers of it.

3. WHEN IN CONFLICT WITH THE OPPRESSOR.

Then the priests had to sound the silver trumpets on behalf of the people that they might be remembered before God. They had to do this when they were in conflict with their foes, for foes they were to meet, and they were never by their own prowess equal to them, and God made them like that that they might in every time of stress depend upon Him. He was their refuge and resource and strength. When they blew the trumpets in the day of battle it was as though they said: "Oh God, we are Thine, Thou hast redeemed us, undertake for us against the oppressor." And God ever responded to their appeal. And will He disappoint us if we take up this stand in faith? Let us test Him and see. How fierce are the struggles in which some Christians engage! They desire to do right and to be overcomers when sore temptations beset them; they yearn after a victorious life, but they seem to yearn in vain; hope and disappointment have alternated in their experience, and the outcome of it is that finding the foe too strong for them, they are discouraged and ready to give up the fight. Let all such learn to use the silver trumpets. Let the great fact

that they are the redeemed of the Lord get a firm hold upon their souls, and let them tell it out to God. Let their cry be : *"O God, I am Thine, full of failure I am, often defeated I have been, yet I am loved by Thee, and redeemed by Thee, and at so great a cost; I cannot fight this battle, fight it for me, my foes are Thy foes and Thine are mine, I hide in Thee and own that only through Thee can I be more than a conqueror."*

The Christian life is not a life of ease. It is not described in the Word in the language of the bedchamber, but of the battlefield. The world, the flesh, and the devil are opposed to us if we belong to God. If we lose the sense that we belong to Him we cannot prevail in the fight ; but when we blow the trumpets before Him, then will the Word be fulfilled : *"Ye shall be remembered before the Lord your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies."*

4. ON THE DAYS OF YOUR GLADNESS AND ON YOUR SOLEMN DAYS.

These sons of Jacob were to acknowledge God in all their circumstances. Whether they were exalted or brought low, whether they prospered or suffered adversity, whether they rejoiced or wept, the redemption note had to be dominant. How much more do we need this ! How else shall we be kept from independence of God when things go well with us ? How else shall we be kept from despair when sorrows beat upon us ? We are safe in days of gladness if we rejoice *before the Lord*, and own Him as the Giver of every mercy, and if we hold ourselves and His gifts for Him, the Giver to whom we belong. And we are comforted and sustained if we call upon Him in the day of sorrow. If we blow the silver trumpet and say—

LORD, I AM THINE, though sorrows gather round me,
And death's dark shadow thwart my path is thrown ;
Saviour, Divine, Thy outstretched Hand upholds me,
And being Thine, I shall not walk alone.

5. AT THE BEGINNING OF THEIR MONTHS.

The beginning of their months spoke of the constant changes in this life. At every change it is our privilege and our safety to depend upon God and to do His will whose we are. *"Ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that"* (James 4. 15). No change in our circumstances ought to be contemplated, much less completed, without the use of the silver trumpets. *"O God, we belong to Thee. Guide us in all our ways,"* should be our cry. The young man entering business, young Christians forming friendships, associations, new relationships, should let the great fact that they are bought with a price control them, and pour out the joyous notes of this blessed truth in the Lord's ear. Thus will they be spared many sorrows and preserved from great disaster. *"Acknowledge Him in all thy ways and He shall direct thy paths."*

6. OVER THEIR BURNT OFFERINGS AND PEACE OFFERINGS. I

With these sacrifices the people approached unto God. The burnt offering was a type of our worship, and the peace offering of our fellowship ; our worship which has Christ, the beloved Son of God, who went into death, as its subject, and our fellowship which finds its life and its food in Him also. But we cannot approach unto God for worship except as redeemed by the blood of Christ. Vain and presumptuous is the notion of the "modernist" that he does not need this ; *"without the shedding of blood is no remission."* And the blood that

has redeemed us gives us boldness before God, so that we can in holy fellowship unite in worship before Him, but we do it as those who belong to Him. His redeemed ones. Hence we sing the new song unto our great and blessed Saviour: "Thou hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood."

"I AM THE LORD THY GOD," is God's final word in the instructions given as to the use of these trumpets.

He can brook no rival. He must be supreme, for His pleasure we were created, for His pleasure He has redeemed us, and His will for us is good, perfect and acceptable. It is not against us, but for us. It is against all that could do us harm and has nothing but blessing for us, and as we own Him and live as those who belong to Him, as we daily, hourly, blow the silver trumpets, we shall prove that His yoke is easy and His burden is light.

INTIMACY.

THE ties of Divine love which bind the Lord to His own and His own to Him are close and real and living. Whether we view Him as the Head of His body, the assembly, and our oneness with Him thus, as the Spirit shows us through Paul, or as the risen Son of God who speaks of us as His brethren, made known through both John and Paul; or as the Shepherd of the flock of God, so vividly revealed in John 10.; we are assured of the desire of His loving heart that we on our side should enter consciously into the close and vital oneness which actually exists between Himself and us, for it is no mere figure of speech.

In Ezekiel's day the Lord said, "And ye, My flock, the flock of My pasture, are *men*: I am your God, saith the Lord Jehovah" (34. 31). Yes, and when Jesus rose from among the dead, He said to Mary, "Go to My brethren and say to them, I ascend to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God." They too were *men*, to whom this new message of oneness with Himself, in risen life and relationship, was sent. So are we to-day, and He is not ashamed to call us *brethren*. In John 10. 14-16 His words are thus recorded, "I am the good Shepherd; and I know those that

(H. J. VINE.)

are Mine, and am known of those that are Mine, as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. And I have other sheep which are not of this fold: those also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; and there shall be one flock, one Shepherd" (N.T.). Here again the sheep are *men*, but what great and blessed things are said of them!—things not found in the Old Testament!—things that could only be brought to pass by the coming of the Son of God!—by His dying and rising again! Ezekiel spoke much of *bad* shepherds, but Jesus is three times designated the *good* Shepherd in this chapter; in the above passage, and when He said, "I am come that they might have life, and might have it abundantly. I am the good Shepherd. The good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep" (11).

His death as the good Shepherd, and His resurrection as the great Shepherd of the sheep, have secured life, and life abundantly, for His own. That explains how it is we know Him, and hear His voice, and can enter into the things connected with the present oneness. The life and nature for it are ours; and He came in view of our possessing this in abundance; not with undeveloped paucity, but with liberal

profusion. All the sheep and lambs of the flock have life, for He has said, "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand" (28). He can therefore say concerning all, I "*am known of those that are Mine*," however varied may be the measures of that knowledge in the living naturalness of new life—new to us at our conversion, but eternal nevertheless. It has been seen in all its deep perfection in the Son of the Father, and John says we "report to you the eternal life which was with the Father and has been manifested to us" (1 John 1. 2); and again, "These things have I written to you that ye may know that ye have eternal life who believe on the name of the Son of God" (5. 13, N.T.). All this plainly shows the way we are encouraged to an increasing understanding of the living bonds which unite us to Him.

The feeblest believer finds no difficulty when the Son of God says, "I KNOW THOSE THAT ARE MINE" and, "My sheep hear My voice, and *I know them*, and they follow Me!" We are sure that He *knows us*. He knows all things, and all men; and we have an inbred consciousness that He knows and loves His own. This is the blessed assurance and encouragement given to us in 2 Tim. 2., in view of the corrupt practices and teachings of Christendom, when "every one who names the name of the Lord" is told to "withdraw from iniquity," and to "follow righteousness, faith, love, peace, with those that call on the Lord out of a pure heart," for there we are strengthened with these words, "*The Lord knows those that are His*"! What a stay this is to all who trust in Him! Not one of His sheep ever escapes the vigilance of His watchful eyes! Not one is ever

forgotten for one moment by His loving heart! His omniscience, His love, and His omnipotence ever tend the flock for which He died! Yes, He knows us all! Blessed be His name! Blessed be our good and great Shepherd!

But it is equally true that "I am known of those that are Mine." Mark He did not say, "I *ought* to be known by them." No, nor did He say, "I *ought* to know Mine own." He said emphatically, *He knows them*, and just as emphatically, *They know Him*.

The simple explanation of this lies in the new life with its holy desires and capabilities. This life is in the Son of God. We know that He has come, and "has given us an understanding that we should know Him that is true; and we are in Him that is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life" (1 John 5. 20). The sheep of His pasture know Him, and have the Divinely given ability to know Him increasingly. To the new life which is theirs sin does not attach, nor does it turn to the corruptions of lust and pride, for "whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world" (1 John 5. 4) which is made up of lust and pride (2. 16). If a true believer does sin, provision for restored communion is made for him in the advocacy of Jesus Christ the righteous; but viewed as born of God he does "not practise sin, because His seed abideth in him, and he cannot sin, because he has been begotten of God" (3. 9, N.T.). The life that loves what is of God is his. On the other hand, a mere professor has inwardly nothing but the old life and nature. The Spirit uses the types of a dog and a sow to illustrate such, both in the Old and New Testaments. Washed in the waters of religion, and outwardly going in the right way, the dog turns back to his vomit, and the sow to her wallowing in the mire

(2 Peter 2. 22). The very nature of the sheep makes it avoid such things. The dog and the sow are unclean animals, but the sheep is clean.

All have sinned and come short of the glory of God, but this new life and nature have become ours in the Son of God, through His death and resurrection. He could therefore say, I am known of Mine. As we said before, *The measures may vary*, but oh, how wonderful is *the character* of that knowledge—"as the Father knows Me, and I know the Father." This is indeed glorious! The measure of the intimacy between the Father and the Son must necessarily be infinite—the character of it vital and holy and blessed. We could not have the same measure, but the same character of knowledge is ours, blessed be God. No wonder John speaks so often of our joy being full. "This is My beloved Son," the Father said. "No one knows the Son but the Father," said the Son; He alone could fully comprehend that One, who, like Himself, is infinite. Nevertheless His own truly know Him, as He said, even though their measure be limited. And then, what unspeakable love characterizes this intimacy. Could it be greater than it is? Let us ponder the good Shepherd's words. "I lay down My life for the sheep." Could His love for us be expressed more fully? And then He said, "I love the Father," and as He had received commandment

from the Father to lay down His life and take it again, so He did. This supplied a fresh motive for the Father to love Him, as He said, "Therefore doth My Father love Me."

What a circle of life and love we are introduced into! There is the Father's love for the Son, and the Son's love for the Father; the Father's love for us—"the Father Himself loveth you," and the Son's love for us also; and then "we love because He first loved us." It all began with Him, and Divine love produced a response, completing in this way the circle of holy intimacy, in living relationships, of which the Spirit is the power. It takes in all the saints, for Jesus added, "I have other sheep which are not of this (Jewish) fold: those also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; and there shall be **ONE FLOCK, ONE SHEPHERD.**"

If the Holy Spirit of truth through Paul spoke of the one body composed of the out-called from Jews and Gentiles, and of the new, intimate and vital bonds which unite them to one another and to the glorious Head in heaven, of the "great mystery" of Christ and the assembly; here are the same persons seen as the one flock, brought into close and intimate and living relationships with their good Shepherd who died for them, with their great Shepherd who lives and cares for them with ceaseless love—Jesus, the Son of the Father.

Intercession.

A GREAT many people hold doctrinally that Christ makes intercession for them, but have a very poor sense of His love to us. It is a wonderful thing to know that He loves us with a love that must care for us, support us, and make us more than conquerors. He died and rose again for our justification—that we might be cleared of every charge of guilt before God. He lives and intercedes for us that we might live as justified people, that no charge of inconsistency might be brought against us before men, and that we might be overcomers in the greatest trials. If we know the meaning of His intercession, we do not look to the world for support or to circumstances for comfort, but to Him who loves us and cares for us unceasingly.

NOTES ON GALATIANS. Chapter 1.

(F. B. HOLE.)

THE Epistle to the Galatians was written to defend the truth of the gospel against the inroads of error. In this respect it differs from the Epistle to the Romans, which is the orderly unfolding of the gospel, in the way of simple instruction. It also differs from the other epistles inasmuch as it is a letter not to a church, nor to an individual, but to a group of churches comprised in one of the ancient provinces of Asia Minor—"the churches of Galatia" (verse 2).

In the course of Paul's second missionary journey he went "throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia" (Acts 16. 6), and there it was that he appeared amongst these Gentiles preaching the gospel, "through infirmity of the flesh," but this temptation in his flesh they did not despise, but received him "as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus" (Gal. 4. 13, 14). They were evidently an impulsive and enthusiastic people, receiving the gospel he announced with such joy that had it been possible "they would have plucked out their own eyes, and have given them to him" (verse 15).

It is usually the case that the person easily impressed is not very stable, and so it was with the Galatians. Along came other teachers when Paul had departed and these "troubled" them with law teachings constraining them to be circumcised (5. 12, and 6. 12); they were evidently men of the kind we read of in Acts 15. 1. The Galatians swung round and readily embraced these new ideas and started off to make Jews of themselves; if not exactly seeking *salvation* by law, at least seeking *holiness* by law.

These Judaizing teachers came from Jerusalem and, of course, presented themselves as coming with all the authority of that great apostolic centre

behind them. Paul they represented as an upstart apostle, not embraced in the original apostolic band, and therefore lacking full and proper authority. Hence the apostle begins his letter by a certain amount of personal history. In verse 1 he declares that his apostleship is not "of man, neither "by man." In verse 12 he states the same two things, in slightly different words, of the gospel he preached. If not "of men," then men were in no sense the *source* or originators of either his apostleship or message. If neither were "by man," then both were received directly from the Lord, and man was not even the *channel* of their communication.

Paul's apostleship, then, sprang from a higher source than Jerusalem, even from Jesus Christ the risen One, and God the Father who raised Him, and the apostle is careful to add quickly the object before the Lord in giving Himself to death for our sins—"that He might deliver us from this present evil world" (verse 4).

Of old, God did not shelter Israel in Egypt through the blood of the paschal lamb in order to leave them in Egypt. He took them clean out of Egypt and brought them to Himself. That was the type, and the antitype is still more wonderful. To-day God is gathering individuals out of the nations, and not a nation out of the house of bondage, (see Acts 15. 14), and those individuals are thereby brought to God as 1 Pet. 3. 18 says, and consequently they are delivered from the world, as we find here. This is an affecting thought. The great object our blessed Lord proposed to Himself in dying for us was to introduce us to God, His Father, setting us before Him in the nearest of relationships and thus establishing the happiest communion and inter-

course between our souls and Him. Are we really in the enjoyment of this? Do we live in the happy consciousness of the relationship and of the communion?

But here in Galatians the converse of all this is pressed upon us. These blessed links with God being established, we are consequently severed from the world and our old links with it are snapped. To deliver us from the world was equally His object in dying for us. This great truth, alas! we often shrink from. We hanker after the world and its injurious joys and are very reluctant to break our links with it. Consequently our enjoyment of God and His things is but small. We all know that one great secret of harnessing electricity in the service of man is wrapped up in the one word *insulation*. If insulation breaks down and the live wire runs to earth, much electric energy may be generated and yet all is lost. Links with the world and its evil mean a breakdown in the believer's spiritual insulations, and then, as a result, feebleness in his communion with God—and good-bye to spiritual energy and power.

In verse 6, the apostle comes straight to the main theme of his letter. He does not mince his words, but speaks with tremendous energy in denouncing these false workers who were perverting the gospel of Christ. He had tremendous and dogmatic certainty as to the gospel he had carried to them. From verse 11 and onwards he recounts the way in which he received his message from the Lord. His course at the time of his conversion and for years after was such as to preclude any idea of his having sat at the feet of other apostles and having learned his message through them. No! he got what he got direct from God. He was raised up as a fresh and original

witness to the glorified Lord Jesus. God revealed "His Son," not merely "to" him, but "in" him. The revelation made was, as it were, written on the fleshy table of his heart and thus impressed upon his very being—a profounder and deeper thing than merely receiving an external revelation written upon tables of stone.

It is a very certain thing that Paul did not think one gospel as good as another. He was no believer in what is miscalled "charity" in the twentieth century, which exists in an easy-going toleration of any and every theory however false. He knew **THE TRUTH**, he preached it fearlessly, and here he anathematizes all, men or angels, who lend themselves to the propagation of the lies that deny the truth.

Incidentally, we may gather from this chapter what are the marks of the genuine and authentic gospel of God. Let us gather them up ere we close.

First, then, it has God's Son as its theme. He is preached as glad tidings among the heathen (verse 16).

Second, His death and resurrection (verses 1 and 4) are its foundation and "our sins" are in view, not our trials, nor our troubles, nor the injustices of our social systems, or any other of the thousand and one minor ailments that afflict sinful men. The so-called "social gospel" is just another of those "other gospels" which are NOT another real gospel but a spurious deceit.

Third, the true gospel is not "after man" (verse 11). It is not the kind of message that would have originated with man. It does not flatter him nor conform to his standards. Hence the herald of it cannot expect to please men. Those rational "gospels" which men applaud as being so eminently reasonable are not the gospel of God.

Fourth, the true gospel when received has the effect of delivering the recipient *from* the world (verse 4). The false "gospels" invariably have the effect of confirming those who believe them *in* the world; they leave their votaries as part and parcel of the world system. The true believer

is crucified to the world as chapter 6, verse 14 says, and that because he is "crucified with Christ" (2. 20).

With these marks of the true gospel before us we shall have no difficulty in discerning it when we hear it, nor of detecting the false gospels when they are presented to us.

LIGHT FOR ALL.

(H. J. VINE.)

From Notes contributed on December 1, 1925.

PERHAPS nothing has so effectively warped and dwarfed those who have been delivered from the world systems of religion like such expressions as "special light," "more light," "new light," and "the light is with us." This claiming of "light" above others is the cause of pride and hardness of spirit, plainly showing from whence it comes. It is remarkable that in his early efforts to seduce the saints from the simplicity that is in Christ SATAN appeared as AN ANGEL OF LIGHT (2 Cor. 11. 14); not an angel of truth, be it noted; there is no truth in him, and where pride and hardness of spirit are, there is truth certainly lacking—for grace is only found with truth. In view of this let us beware of talk of special light.

THE TRUE LIGHT shone forth amidst the darkness of this world when our Lord Jesus Christ came into it, and it shone for all, but the darkness did not apprehend it. But some discerned it and received Him and such were born of God. They believed on His Name, and the right was given them to take the place of God's children. They came into the true light. This is true of all who have believed. No longer belonging to the darkness, we have been set in His marvellous light, in the light as God is in the light, on the ground of the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, which cleanses us from

every sin. The apostle could write to those who had been reached by the gospel at Thessalonica, saying, "All ye are sons of the light and of the day; we are not of the night nor of the darkness. Therefore let us not sleep as do others."

Our Lord Jesus Christ is the truth as well as the way and the life. He is also the true Light which men who walk in darkness hate. The children of God, however, have received Him, and there is no advance beyond Him. Let it be remembered, however, He shines *for all*, though all do not receive Him. Like the sun in the heavens, He is "the light of the world." It is health—spiritual health—to recognize this. "The true light now shineth!"

The Spirit of God in the writings of John closes us up to Christ, the Son of God, encouraging us to abide in Him whom the world knows not; nevertheless if He speaks of Him as the taker-away of sin, it is the "sin of the world"; as the Saviour, He is "the Saviour of the world"; as the bread out of heaven, He gives His flesh "for the life of the world"; as the sent One, that "whosoever" believes on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life; or, as we have seen, as the true light, He is the light for all, "THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD."

THE WORD AND THE WORLD.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

From an address given at a prayer meeting for the Gospel in heathen lands at Heaton Chapel.

I GOT my message for this meeting through the post this morning. Among some circulars from a publisher was one advertising "Young's Analytical Concordance"—a very good book to possess. In this circular was a report of an address given at a meeting of a Bible Society. The speaker had been looking up the word "Word" in the Concordance, and had been greatly interested by the fact that the word following "Word" was "work" and following work was "worker," and following worker was "world"—a very remarkable sequence of words. There was the "Word" for the "world," but between the two, and indispensable if the Word is to reach the world, are the "work" and the "worker." The speaker said, and very wisely too, that often this true sequence was reversed. That Christians saw and felt the need of the world and decided to be workers, and then asked to be provided with work, and then went to the Word for a message, and small wonder that disappointment and discouragement were the result. The order is not world, worker, work, Word, but Word, work, worker, world. We must keep the sequence right; we must begin with the Word, or we shall be running to the world without a message, as Ahimaaz the son of Zadok desired to run to King David though he had no tidings ready.

When the fulness and blessedness of the Word of God's grace gets into our hearts our mouths must speak, and we shall be like Elihu, who said, "I am full of matter, the Spirit within me constraineth me." "I will speak, I will open my lips." We shall not wait until we are sent to some field of labour 5000 miles away, to communicate what

fills our hearts, we shall find those who need the Word close at hand. We shall understand that the world is one and that the Word is for the world, and that the world—the needy world—is here as well as there. If we are not interested in the souls of those close beside us, our interest in work abroad is of very little value.

But what is the message in the Word? "The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof 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." That is not an exhilarating message. No one would desire to carry that message to men if that were all the Word contained. Thank God it is not all; but it is necessary that it should be told to make way for what follows. "THE WORD OF OUR GOD SHALL STAND FOR EVER" (Isa. 40.). And this Word is good news: it warms the hearts and energizes the souls of those who receive it. It has been said of it, "The essence and glory of the gospel is that it is for all, and he who truly receives it receives it as a salvation for all, and feels himself impelled to communicate it to others. With it comes the power at once to consider and to care for others." Thus do we become the happy channels by which God communicates His Word to the world.

The Word is for the world. We cannot limit it to any smaller sphere. "Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name *among all nations*," said the risen Lord. And the last words that the wondering

disciples heard from the lips of their ascending Lord were, "UNTO THE UTMOST PARTS OF THE EARTH." We here to-night have not been called to fare forth into other lands, but where we cannot go in person we may go in heart, and in our prayers. And as those who pray about the work we are partners in it. Let no one suppose that prayer is a secondary thing; a thing to be done or left undone according to our moods and whims. If the Word is in our hearts we shall pray; we shall labour fervently in

prayer, and thus shall we show our fellowship in the gospel and be partners in the work of God in the world.

What encouragement for us to pray there is in the great apostles' appeal, "Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the Word of the Lord may run and be glorified, even as it is with you." We desire to share with others what we have through grace; we show this desire to-night by our prayers. It is the Word in our hearts that makes us pray for the work and the workers in the world.

CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE AND THE EXPERIENCE OF CHRISTIANS.

(W. BRAMWELL DICK.)

From an address given in Leeds, October 25, 1925.

IT may be asked, Is there any difference between Christian experience and the experience of Christians? Yes; we think there is. For example, we read Romans 7. 24 and inquire: "Is that Christian experience?" Let us read it: "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Every person at once says: "That cannot be Christian experience; if it were, no one would want to be a Christian." That is true. Do we not know some Christians, however—might we not recognize one if we looked in the mirror—who have had that experience? Now by way of contrast let us read that most exhilarating chapter, Phil. 3. "Ah!" exclaims the reader, "there now we have true Christian experience." True, but does it describe the experience of every Christian? Can we place ourselves in that chapter and say, "That is my experience"? The difference between the person described in Romans 7. 24 and the writer of Phil. 3. is that the former was occupied with himself. Everything circled round one large I. He made resolutions only to break them. He had to learn the

humiliating lesson: "In me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing" (verse 18). It was a painful process. So long as he was thinking only of himself he was indeed a "wretched man." The inspired penman in Phil. 3. was full of joy because his heart was engaged with Christ, and all his thoughts circled round that glorious Person. He rejoiced in the Lord (verse 1). He refused everything pertaining to the flesh and warned his fellow-saints [as to this (verses 2-9)]. All that he was as a man was withered up in presence of the glory of Christ. His one desire was to know Him; to follow Him all the way that He went in His path of suffering, His death, His resurrection, and to reach Him where He is in glory (verses 10-14). In the power of this he reminded the saints then, and he reminds us now, that "our commonwealth has its existence in the heavens, from which also we await the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour, who shall transform our body of humiliation into conformity to His body of glory, according to the working of the power which He has even to subdue all things to Himself" (verses 20, 21, N.T.).

LIGHT AND LIFE. No. 8.

(JAMES BOYD.)

Meditations on the Gospel of John. Chap 6.

THE bread of God come down from heaven is the subject of Chapter VI. The Lord had fed five thousand men with five loaves and two fishes, and the people felt that a man who could do a thing like this was not one to be lightly rejected. To have such an one as this for a king would mean that the sweat of the brow and the anxiety of the mind for daily food need exist no longer! He is certainly "the Prophet that should come into the world," and they had better make Him king at once! But not into the hands of the fickle crowd would He who knew what was in man commit Himself. He goes into the mountain to pray. He will take the place of the Priest on high, the place He took up when rejected from the earth, and the place He now occupies.

The crowd who had seen the miracle make diligent search for Him, for in their present mind, to lose Him was to lose an opportunity such as had never previously been presented to them. To escape from the toil with which the children of Adam have to earn their bread has ever been the ambition of the human race. Hence the supposed ease and comfort of the rich have always aroused the envy and cupidity of those who have a constant struggle to make ends meet, not seeing that often the weight of their drudgery is less than the anxieties that wealth is sure to bring with it. It is impossible for the heart estranged from God to believe that only in the knowledge of Himself is true happiness to be found. Yet, "In Thy presence is fulness of joy." Here only is the cup made to run over. Here only is bliss unspeakable to be realized. What a change must necessarily pass over the mind of the poor wandering Israelite, when in

the coming day, the day in which God shall set His hand toward the recovery of His earthly people, the cry shall be wrung from his awakened soul: "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?" (Ps. 42.). At this present moment his heart is set upon the fugacious riches of the nations, among which he is shunned as a leper; and this must continue until the day arrive when their deliverance shall come from the presence of the Lord, and their heart shall turn to Him whom they have so long despised, rebelled against, and forgotten, and then shall their profitless wanderings, their many transgressions, and their soul-destroying folly, like mountains rise before their weeping eyes, and once again shall the heart of the nation repose in the favour of the God of their fathers. Then shall the Gentiles also rejoice with that favoured nation.

"Ye seek Me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you: for Him hath God the Father sealed." Into this life of flesh and blood sin has come, and death by sin, and this present state of our existence is not to be continued. The individual may escape the winged arrow of death for three-score years and ten, perhaps four-score, or even one thousand, if it pleased God; but the end must come, for death lies upon every child of Adam's race.

Why, then, be over-anxious as to our present condition of existence, which

on account of sin must be brought to a termination? The living creatures of the sea, and of the earth, along with the herb of the field, may be made to contribute to the building up of our mortal flesh, and even the food of angels might be laid upon our table; but none of these can give us immunity from death's dread power, and bid the king of terrors stay his hand. If there can be found bread in the universe that is able to place us beyond the might of death, then let us whole-heartedly set our minds and hearts to the possession of this, and for this let everything else be sacrificed.

Why should we be so greatly concerned about the bread that perishes, when the bread that endures to everlasting life is within the reach of our appropriation? "This is the bread that cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die." And this living bread was here in the midst of this death-doomed nation, and yet the bread that perishes was the thing that occupied their whole thought. Here was something better than the tree of life that grew in Eden, which could do no more than sustain the life of flesh and blood, and only as long as the innocent creature was true to the interdiction imposed upon him by his beneficent Creator. This bread was the free gift of God the Father, and was for the life of the world. The failure of the creature could bring down no cherubim with flaming sword to keep the transgressor at a distance. This was given in the grace of the Father's heart, and was for the appropriation of those whose sins had brought upon them the judgment of death. It was not sent down from heaven for the deserving, but for those who deserved nothing from the hand of Divine justice but wrath and condemnation. It was here for the starving and lost sinners of the race of Adam, and for all alike.

It was also for the Gentile as truly as for the Jew, for it was for the life of the world.

"I am that bread of life." In their blindness and hardness of heart they demand a sign, that through Him God had intervened on their behalf, with Himself as that sign before their eyes. Bread had been rained down from heaven for the sustenance of their fathers in the desert; and what more had Christ done than that? Only this, that the manna did not place those who ate it beyond the reach of death, but here was the bread that comes down from heaven, "that a man may eat thereof, and not die." And Jesus Himself was that bread, and the Father was the giver of it.

But they had seen Him and had not believed in Him. As presented to their responsibility, and to be appropriated by them, He was not according to their liking, and therefore was He criticized, contradicted and rejected. That their fathers ate manna in the desert might have been supposed by them to be still casting a kind of lustre upon the rebellious nation, but if the angels' food did not make them proof against the weapon of death, and if now they refused to appropriate the living bread in which was life everlasting, what then was left for them but eternal destitution? And what was God to do when His Son was rejected? Is the poor rebellious worm of the dust to effect his own eternal ruin, and is the guilty race to perish for ever?

"All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me." The fulfilment of His eternal counsels are not to be subjected to the accident of man's acceptance of the One in whom those counsels are centred. "No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him." So antagonistic to God is the mind of the natural

man that only by universal rejection would His Word be met. But the resources of God are infinite, and He has His own way of bringing to pass the beneficent thoughts of His own heart of love. His plans can never be wrecked by the malevolence of the creature, nor can the tranquillity of the Almighty be in the least disturbed by the opposition of a world of rebels: "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision" (Ps. 2. 4). In the end it shall be seen that He has always triumphed, and that the self-will of the sinner has resulted only in his own confusion.

"It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto Me." If no man can come, unless the Father draw him; every one that has been drawn of the Father comes. God must be supreme in His own creation; and either in eternal happiness, or in eternal misery, must this fact be realized by every intelligent being in the universe. Man may rage against the doings of the Almighty, and dispute His ways in the world that He has made, and thus manifest the madness of his corrupt fallen nature, but he does it to his own everlasting disadvantage, and to his unending sorrow. Happy is the man that gladly submits to the ways of God, even when griefs seem to gather upon his pathway, and this valley of the shadow of death seems crowded with unspeakable evils! The believer is in the hand of the Father, and in the hand of the Son, and his body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, and could he be more secure in heaven itself?

But while it is true that no one can come to Jesus apart from the drawing of the Father, it is also true that it is the will of the Father, "That every one that seeth the Son and believeth on Him may have everlasting life"; and that "the Son will raise him up at the last day." It is not only the Jew who may partake of this life; it is as true of the Gentile who sees the Son and believes on Him. He is "The bread that cometh down from heaven, and giveth life to the world." The manna came down from heaven for Israel only, for it was the means by which God sustained them throughout their wilderness journey. But the living bread was not to be confined to one nation; it was free for all.

"I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread he will live for ever; and the bread that I will give is My flesh which I will give for the life of the world." But this only raises a new difficulty, and they say: "How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?" Had they only seen how utterly hopeless their state under the law was, and how their position under the Roman power bore witness to it, they might have been better able to understand the voices of the prophets, and the testimony which they bore to the sufferings of Christ on their behalf, and the word of Jesus would not, perhaps, have appeared to them such a "hard saying." But in the pride of their hearts they imagined their relations with Him were all that they should be, and the idea of the necessity of a ransom for their souls was a thing that never was allowed a place in their minds.

We ought to be prepared to surrender everything—whatever we have in this life, the dearest ties and associations, whatever honour or glory or position we may have—in order to be exponents of the truth which the Lord has given us to maintain.

PRACTICAL PAPERS. No. 1.—SIN.

(A. J. POLLOCK.)

WHY DOES GOD ALLOW SIN ?

HOW often has this question been asked ! And as long as the world stands the question will be asked. Sometimes it is asked fiercely and arrogantly by the bitter sceptic, who imagines that he has asked a question that must annihilate Christianity for ever. But Christianity still exists. It is the old story of the anvil wearing out the hammers. But sometimes it is asked timidly and wistfully by the troubled Christian.

There is only one answer to be given. God is not the author of evil, but He has allowed sin for His own glory. He did not create creatures who were incapable of choosing between good and evil, else He would have created mere machines—ininitely more wonderful than motor cars and aeroplanes, but yet on the same level.

And whilst we give this answer—the only answer that can be given—we are still left with incomplete knowledge on the subject. And this incomplete knowledge will continue as long as we remain on this earth. We may exclaim with the poet,

“Believing where we cannot prove,”
and again, taking in the whole story,

“’Tis darkness to my intellect,
But sunshine to my heart.”

We must begin with God. God is good. Manifested by His beloved Son, we see in the tenderness, love, compassion, yet righteousness and holiness of Jesus what God is. In the light of that manifestation, and especially in the supreme manifestation of Golgotha’s tree, we know that “God is love,” and “God is light.”

Could such a Being be the Author of sin ? Assuredly not. But Scripture does not enlighten us as to how

sin came into existence. We have the history of its first appearance, but we are not enlightened as to the why and wherefore.

Its first intrusion into God’s universe was through Satan. Pride evidently was his sin. We glean this from 1 Tim. 3. 6, where the bishop or overseer in the early church was not to be a novice, lest, being lifted up with pride, he should “fall into the condemnation of the devil.”

PRIDE was the first sin that caused untold sorrow and catastrophe. Ezek. 28. 11–19 seems to hint at the fall of Satan, under the title of the King of Tyrus. The language goes beyond what could be applied to an earthly king.

From other Scriptures we gather that he carried with him in his revolt an immense number of followers of the angelic hosts. These appear to be: (1) Principalities, powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world (Ephes. 6. 12). (2) Perhaps the fallen angels “reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day” (Jude 6, and 2 Pet. 2. 4). (3) Fallen angels, called in the Old Testament “familiar spirits,” and in the New Testament “demons.”*

Intercourse with such in the Old Testament is sternly forbidden ; whilst the activities of demons are outlined in the Gospels as seeking to gain possession of the bodies of men for the destruction of their souls ; as bitterly opposed to the Lord Jesus, but yet subject to His commands, whilst the latter-day revival of their

* Wherever the word “devil” or “devils” occurs in the New Testament, not referring to Satan himself, the translation should be “demon” or “demons.” There is only one devil, that is Satan himself.

activities is prophesied in 1 Tim. 4. 1-3, which is clearly seen to-day in the intensive propaganda of spiritism. Spiritism is purely Satanic and anti-Christian.

Satan, filled with ungovernable hatred against God, lost no time in tempting our first parents. Pride was his fall, and he skilfully appealed to that, which was his own undoing, when he boldly said to Eve, "Ye shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil" (Gen. 3. 5). Satan, the highest creature of God, aspired to more than a creature's place and he fell. Now he tempts our first parents with the same lure, and they fall.

Alas! men are trying to-day to deny the fall. Evolution, the popular idol of the twentieth-century mind, teaches that man has not fallen, but is rising little by little to perfection. The man of sin—Antichrist—will be the apotheosis of this idea—a terrible consummation surely. Those who teach this are living in an unreal world—in a fool's paradise—shutting their eyes and ears to the real meaning of all the sorrow and sin around them.

Our first parents fell. The blue sky of innocence was obscured. The cloud of death like a funeral pall hung over their spirits. Driven out to a cursed earth, to thorns and thistles, to the sweat of the face, to sorrow in conception and in childbirth, and to death, sin was indeed a terrible reality.

It has cursed, sterilized, and blighted the whole scene from that day to this. The world is one great graveyard, full of disease, pain, sorrow, anguish, tears, and death. But is God defeated? Is Satan triumphant? Assuredly not. Here comes the wonderful story, and we begin to see how sin can be allowed by God for His glory. There is only one word in Hebrew for sin and sin-offering.

In this is enshrined a great thought, that of the wisdom of God in turning man's sin to His own glory. We get the fulfilment of it set forth in one of the most blessed yet most solemn verses in the Bible: "For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5. 21).

It is passing wonderful that the Eternal Word, the Son of God, should become Man, on purpose that He might undo the works of the devil, make atonement for sin by taking the place of the guilty sinner and satisfying to the full the righteous claims of Divine righteousness. How close is the connection between sin and the sin-offering, that the same word is employed for both, and yet it is just because the One who could become the Sin-offering was perfectly sinless, that He could take the sinner's place and receive all the judgment that sin deserved.

And now that blessed Saviour is risen and ascended, and the ground is laid for the universe to be cleared of sin. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1. 29).

True, there will be the everlasting doom of the unsaved in the lake of fire, but there shall yet rise a new heaven and new earth where there shall be no more sorrow or sin or pain, or crying or death, "where the former things are passed away" (Rev. 21. 4).

* * * * *

We have very briefly indeed indicated how sin came into the world, how it has been met by the death of Christ and how God will triumph. A few words as to the nature of sin are necessary.

Sin is lawlessness. So the real translation of 1 John 3. 4 tells us:—"Everyone that practises sin practises also lawlessness; and sin

is lawlessness" (N.T.). It is most unfortunate that this verse is so badly translated, for the right definition of sin is most important. Everything that comes from the hand of God is under law. The planets must keep to their orbits, apple trees must bear apples, and apes beget apes, and so on throughout the length and breadth of creation.

But man in the realm of action has some choice. He may conform fully to God's laws for him, or he may not. When he diverges from the will of God and exerts his own will it is sin, and "sin is lawlessness." Sin is missing the mark. Transgression is trespass, or overstepping the mark, breaking a positive command. Iniquity is perverseness, a deeper shade of guilt.

Then we have certain terms used in Scripture—"sin," "the flesh," "the old man."

"Sin" is used in two ways. First as an actual act, and second as the sinful nature from which the act springs. In the second sense we read of the believer, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1. 8). Conversion does not remove from us the sinful nature.

"The flesh" is used in two senses. First, as descriptive of our bodily condition, and in that sense it could refer to our blessed Lord. "In the days of His flesh" (Heb. 5. 7). Second, as describing what is moral, what is irremediably bad. "They that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. 8. 8). It is a condition that describes fallen sinful man. "But ye [believers] are not in the flesh but in the Spirit" (Rom. 8. 9).

"The old man" is that which the believer puts off. Ephes. 4. 22 reads, "Having put off according to the former conversation [manner of life]

the old man corrupt according to the deceitful lusts." The old man is the sum total of all the activities and habits of the sinner as such.

"Sin" is like the spirit; "the flesh" like the body in which it is clothed, and "the old man" like the clothes which are worn. One person is not sufficient to set forth in entirety the old man, it takes the whole human race to do so.

The Christian is warned against lying, pride, corrupt communication, bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, evil speaking, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, emulations, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, etc. What a list! And each one the Christian, if not watchful, is capable of committing.

How serious is sin in the believer! He sins against the light and grieves the indwelling Holy Spirit. If unjudged he will surely come under the chastening hand of God. "Judgment must begin at the house of God" (2 Pet. 4. 17).

But if we would avoid the chastening of the Lord, self-judgment is the way. "If we would judge ourselves we should not be judged" (1 Cor. 11. 31). But if we are chastened it is in righteous love for our good, for the Scripture just quoted continues, "But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world" (verse 32).

That the sinning saint should be brought to repentance and confession we believe the Lord exercises His advocacy, as outlined in 1 John 1. 8-10, 2. 1, 2. The word for Advocate is also used for the Comforter, and means "one called alongside to help," and is sometimes called Paraclete.

COMPLETE REST.

Notes on Ps. 37. 3-7.

(JAMES HOUSTON,
Albacete, Spain.)

"*TRUST in the Lord.*"—The Heb. verb *batach* literally means "to throw oneself upon another." People, as a rule, complain when we throw ourselves upon them. On the contrary, God invites us to do so. Have you returned from a long, wearisome journey, and on reaching home you felt you could do nothing but just throw yourself down? Have you felt so weary with the load of care that you could not go one step farther, and were compelled to throw yourself on your knees and pray to God? By throwing yourself and your care on God, you obtained rest—that is trust.

"*Delight thyself also in the Lord.*"—"Softness," "delicacy" and "delight" are words closely allied in Heb. The verb *anag*, translated into English, "delight," means "to live softly." The word indicates a state of soul (far beyond boisterous joy, which is often superficial and transitory), characterized by deep, placid, calm joy. The finest notes of music are necessarily soft; so also the finest feelings of the soul. And to have those in peaceful harmony (no jarring carnality), fully satisfied, with the all-absorbing object, which is God Himself—this is delight. Mr. Darby has expressed the thought beautifully in the following lines:—

"Yet deeper, if a calmer, joy
The Father's love shall raise,
And every heart find sweet employ
In His eternal praise.

Nor is its sweetness now unknown,
Well proved in what it's done;
Our Father's love with joy we own,
Revealed in Christ the Son."

It is said, "Still waters run deep"; and I would add, "Deep joy flows softly."

"*Commit thy way unto the Lord.*"—Our "way" is just our life in activity,

whether it be looked at as our whole moral walk, or as the whole sphere of our service. It may be past, present and future. As to the past, there may be regret; as to the present, there may be occasion for care; as to the future, there may be reason for anxiety. By rolling all this on God, we have rest of mind. The word *galal* means "to roll." This particular load is not like the load of sins, which can be thrown down; it requires another to bear it, not in an expiatory sense, but as "a very present help." The cares of life cannot be got rid of by simply dropping them. We have to think, deliberate, act, provide, and so on. But this load can be rolled on to Another, who undertakes for us.

A huge stone was being transported to a building. The trolley on which it lay gave evidence of breaking down. Another trolley, stronger and more suitable, was run alongside, and the stone was "rolled on" to it. This illustrates, I think, the meaning of the word *galal*. Our "way" is not dropped as if it were nothing (for, in reality, it is *everything*), but rolled on to God, who is our "very present help." The business man, workman, house-wife, teacher, etc., all have their "way"; and if they roll this on God, as He desires them to do so, they will walk along with light and joyful step.

"*Rest in the Lord.*"—Here we come to what I would term the *summum bonum* of bliss. The word *damam* means "to be still" or "to be silent." In this state or real, genuine bliss, we are speechless. The soul adopts her own language, which is silence, and is, so to speak, entranced with the goodness of God. Every human faculty is suspended, and in silent worship the soul rests in the presence of God.

SOME MESSIANIC PROPHECIES—II.

(R. McCALLUM.)

THERE are few passages more remarkable than the prophecy of Balaam, found in Numbers, chapter 24. Here is a gospel declared by a dead soul—the kingdom preached by a rebel heart. “I shall see Him, but not now; I shall behold Him, but not nigh, there shall come a Star out of Jacob and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel and shall smite the corners of Moab and destroy all the sons of Sheth.” Certain it is that Balaam had in view a *person* and not a *people*. “There shall come a Star out of Jacob”—a glittering orb set in the canopy of night bringing cheer for the oppressed people of God in their hour of darkness; “a sceptre out of Israel” which speaks of Kingly rule and most assuredly looks on to His triumphant reign set up upon earth when the oppressors of His distressed earthly people have been smitten and destroyed. Now this One who is to wield the sceptre is to be a Prophet also, for in Deuteronomy 18. we read the words of Moses, “The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me, unto Him ye shall hearken.” Here again the One promised is to be very man. He shall hide His glories in a tent of clay. We may approach Him and He will gladly impart counsel. But He shall be a man, distinguished from His fellows, like Moses; and yet as much superior to him as the Son is to the servant. There are some interesting points of resemblance and of contrast. No peaceful cradle received the infant Moses. The tyrant king had doomed him to the grave, but his life, in the providence of God, was spared. When Christ was born, Herod plotted for His life—the innocents were murdered that the heaven-sent Babe might not be spared. Moses in God’s appointed time goes forth from Egypt. The parents of the heavenly antitype flee

there for refuge with the child Jesus, and so in course it was fulfilled, “Out of Egypt have I called My Son.”

Forty years were spent by Moses in the solitude of the wilderness, and many years did Jesus spend in the deep seclusion and obscurity of Nazareth. But when Moses was brought forth by God, mighty wonders authenticated his commission. Very nature was subject to his touch of power. And of Jesus we read, “Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs which God did by Him in the midst of you.” Moses was the mediator of the Law, Jesus our Lord the Mediator of a better Covenant, that of Grace. Moses delivered his people from the bondage of Egypt, the One to come, like unto him, was a Deliverer from a sorer bondage. Moses was the founder of a new dispensation, that of Law—the Antitype is Founder of the Dispensation of Grace. Now you remember that when John the Baptist was preaching, there were certain men who came to him and said, “Art thou that prophet, or do we look for another?” It was clearly understood that in the interval between Moses and John the Baptist no one had come who had fulfilled this prophecy. But our Lord Himself could say, “You did not believe Moses, for if you believed him you would believe Me, for he wrote of Me.” Philip, too, said to Nathanael, “Come and see Him of whom Moses wrote, Jesus of Nazareth.” The woman at Sychar’s well discerned Him to be a prophet; to her He revealed Himself as the Messiah.

The next passage to which we turn, 2 Samuel, chapter 7., shows us that the promised Seed is of the House of David Jehovah’s Covenant established with David is immutable. Even sin on the part of David’s posterity would not

involve the abrogation of this covenant, but perpetuity is promised unconditionally. Disobedience was to be visited "with the rod," as it was in the captivities and dispersion, nevertheless, "My Covenant will I not break nor alter the thing that is gone out of My lips. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before Me." The Covenant was renewed by the Angel Gabriel, to Mary, "Thou shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Highest, and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: And He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever and of His kingdom there shall be no end." Peter in his sermon at Pentecost reveals that it was the eternal nature of this Covenant which led David to say, "I foresaw the Lord always before my face," and to discern in faith that it would be established in resurrection. "Moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope because Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption." It was to this promise that the Psalmist turned in thought as he lay dying. "These be the last words of David—Although my house be not so with God: Yet He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure."

Let us consider for a little now, Psalm 22. This is the wonderful Psalm of the Cross, which opens with the atonement cry, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" The second verse is suggestive of the alternation of light and darkness which marked the Cross. Hebraists tell us that there is not in the Original a completed sentence, but that the Psalm is a Psalm of sobs. A more graphic portrayal of the sufferings of the One, who was exposed to the shame and contumely of men, is inconceivable. "They shoot out the lip," they are

scornful towards him, they taunt him saying, "He trusted on the Lord that He would deliver him; let Him deliver him seeing He delighted in him." Then we see him, alone in awful agony. There is the profusion of sweat caused by the intense suffering: "I am poured out like water"; the bones are out of joint; the heart is affected, "melted like wax in the midst of my bowels." The intense thirst accompanying crucifixion is set forth: "My tongue cleaveth to my jaws"; the hands and the feet are pierced and his bones are out of joint. They "look and stare" upon him. There is portrayed the furious mob, insatiate for his blood. "Dogs have compassed me, the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me"; and then there is the seeming paradox, "They part my garments among them and cast lots upon my vesture." From the New Testament we learn that for the outer garment, all in one piece, and which they valued, the soldiers sat down and cast lots, but the under garments, these they divided among them. Every detail found its literal fulfilment at Calvary. At verse 22 the Psalm turns from the crucifixion to resurrection: "I will declare Thy Name unto my brethren; in the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee," and in verses 27 and 28 we read, "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship Thee. For the kingdom is the Lord's and He is the Governor among the nations."

In tracing the line of the promised Seed, we have been limited so far to a descent that is purely natural. On turning to Isaiah's prophecy, however, in chapter 7., verses 13 and 14, we are confronted with a prediction of tremendous import. The words are spoken to the house of David, and it is announced that this will be a sign to that

house : " Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His Name Immanuel," a name which, as we know, means " God with us." This is clearly nothing less than the plainest prediction of the Immaculate Conception, of the virgin birth. The mystery of the Incarnation is that One who was perfect man, was at the same time " God with us," having both natures perfectly blended in one unique personality. In the first chapter of John's Gospel we read, " In the beginning was the Word," telling of His eternal existence, " and the Word was with God," affirming His separate existence, " and the Word was God," asserting His essential Deity. " The same was in the beginning with God," and therefore no mere manifestation of God—but this One " became flesh and tabernacled among us "—" Immanuel, God with us," the woman's seed and yet the Son of God. In Isaiah, chapter 9., we have at least suggested this duplex nature in these familiar words, " Unto us a child is born," speaking of His human descent, " unto us a Son is given," suggesting—does it not?—His Divine nature. " The government shall be upon His shoulders, and His name shall be called *Wonderful*," He is going to be unique, a wonder throughout all ages, " Counsellor "—the One who will enter into the eternal purposes of God and bring them to glorious fruition, " the mighty God," manifested in flesh, " the Father of eternity," " the Prince of Peace "—the One who will bring to this groaning creation that for which it sighs—joy and peace.

Then when we come to chapter 53. of this prophecy, we have a chapter which was necessarily enshrouded in deepest darkness and mystery until Christ had come. It is a chapter of 12 verses, and yet some fourteen times over the truth of vicarious suffering, so boldly denied to-day, is asserted, " Surely He hath borne our griefs and

carried our sorrows ; yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed." And so right through the chapter, the works of this blessed Substitute are emphasized. Here is One, too, rising out of a dry ground and yet bearing fruit. One sent from God and yet men count Him of no esteem. Without offspring, yet shall He have a glorious seed. Here is One to be cut off in the midst of His days, and yet His days are prolonged. One to make His grave with the wicked and yet to be with the rich in His death. How absurd these paradoxes would seem, had we not the sweet light of the New Testament ! But consider Him " who gave His life a ransom for many," and marvel at the Spirit-breathed prophecy, yet to be appreciated by the blinded nation Israel.

There is more than the pointing out of the One who would come. The very time of His birth was a matter of prophecy, for in Daniel, chapter 9., verse 25, we read, " Know therefore and understand that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks and threescore and two weeks ; the street shall be built again and the wall even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for Himself ; and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary." The time is clearly fixed thus. The Messiah must come and be cut off between the time of Daniel's prophecy and the destruction of Jerusalem which we know took place in 70 A.D. Since the year 70 there has been no sanctuary in Jerusalem. The 70 weeks of Daniel, or 70 sevens of years as all students of prophecy know, are divided as follows

—seven or 49 years in which Jerusalem would be rebuilt in troublous times; sixty-two or 434 years, after which the Messiah was to come—this was fulfilled in the manifestation of Christ; and 1, 7 years yet to come when the church age has ended. Whatever else may be obscure, this at least is clear, the Messiah must have come between, say, 538 B.C., when Daniel prophesied, and 70 A.D., when Jerusalem was destroyed. Sir Robert Anderson has shown that from the time of the going forth of the Commandment to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, 14th March, 445 B.C., to the triumphal entry of Christ into Jerusalem on 6th April, A.D. 32, was, allowing for leap years, a period of 173,880 days. This is precisely what is obtained by the product $7 \times 69 \times 360$ (360 being the number of days in the Jewish year).

And further, not only is the time of His birth given, but the place is foretold. "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from old, from everlasting." These words could have reference to no mere man. Not merely

are "His goings out" from antiquity, but "from of old, from everlasting." The place of His birth is Bethlehem, and since the name means "the house of bread," the particular Bethlehem is specified—it is Bethlehem Ephratah of the land of Judah. Now it seemed improbable in the highest degree that this should be the birthplace of our Lord. The mother of our Lord lived in Nazareth, but a decree that the whole Roman world should be taxed caused her on the eve of "the primal sorrow of her sex," to take a long journey, over dusty roads and under a scorching sun, to register at Bethlehem, and at the very moment defined by prophecy. How can it be doubted that Scripture is given by inspiration of God or that Jesus was the Christ, the Messiah? His day of sorrow is for ever past. His day of manifestation will assuredly come. The resurrection is the connecting link between the Messiah's death and the Messiah's manifestation in kingly splendour, and the second advent of our Lord will supplement the first and complete those wonderful prophecies of the Old Testament. While we look on to that day of glory, may we be loyal to our absent Lord and waiting His return for us.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Has the Church been commissioned to preach the Gospel?

"Was the commission which the Lord gave to His disciples in Matthew 28. 16-20 intended for the church to-day? Some tell us that the church has no such commission. Are they right or is this a cloak for their inactivity?"—ROTHERHAM.

THE church has received no commission to preach the gospel. There was no church to be commissioned when the Lord addressed His disciples in Matt. 28. It did not come into existence until Acts 2., when the Holy Ghost came down from heaven and baptized the believers into one body. The idea that the church is the preacher is not a

Scriptural one; it has to be a *hearer* and not a *preacher* (see Rev. 2. 11, etc.). The commission to preach was given to the *servants* of the Lord, and while it is the privilege and responsibility of the churches to have fellowship with the servants of the Lord who do preach (Phil. 1. 5; 4. 15) and to make prayer for them (Eph. 6. 19; 2 Thess. 3. 1), yet

the responsibility of preaching must not be taken from the shoulders of the servants; they are *individually* responsible to the Lord who has commissioned them, and must fulfil their commission whether the churches are interested in their work or not. The commission that holds good for to-day is that given in Luke's Gospel and is surely urgent enough and wide enough for anyone. That in Matthew's Gospel will have its complete fulfilment after the church has been taken out of the world. We are not discipling and baptiz-

ing all nations now; that will be the effect of the preaching of "the gospel of the kingdom" (Matt. 24. 14). Now the gospel is gathering *out of the nations* a people for God's Name (Acts 15. 14).

But while the church has not been commissioned to preach, it has been set in the world as a witness, to shine as a light in the darkness (Phil. 2. 15), to show the life of Christ, and to uphold the truth of the gospel and of Christ (1 Tim. 3. 16), and in this, alas, there has been a great failure.

Letters of Commendation.

"What is the idea of a letter of commendation when one goes to a different town or meeting from that to which one is in the habit of going? Is it to prove that the one who gets it is not telling a lie? If so, then where does the Scripture 'love believeth all things' (1 Cor. 13.) come in? Paul in 2 Corinthians 3. 1 needed no letter; he says some do, but there is no command that always and in every case one must have a letter. I would like a direct Scripture showing that it is necessary if it is so."—GLASGOW.

IT was evidently the custom in apostolic days to carry letters of commendation when saints moved from one place to another. Paul did not need such a letter to Corinth, for the existence of the church there was the result of his labours, so that they themselves were his commendation. But the fact that he excepts himself for this reason, shows that with others going from place to place and unknown in the place to which they were going, it was customary to use such letters. The Epistle to the Romans was a letter commending Phebe (chap. 16. 1). And the brethren commended Apollos to the churches in Achaia (Acts 18. 2).

Phil. 2. 19-23 is a commendation of Timothy to the brethren in that city, and in 1 Cor. 16. 10, 11, Paul commends him to the Corinthian assembly. In 2 Cor. 8. 23, Titus is commended to the Corinthians.

Paul learnt the necessity of commendation when, as a young convert, he assayed to join himself to the brethren in Jerusalem. It was only upon the personal commendation of Barnabas that they received him, which was of course the same as though Barnabas had given him a letter.

We should not say that these letters are necessary to prove that the bearers

of them are not telling lies, that is altogether too low a ground upon which to put them; but they make questions unnecessary and remove any suspicion there may be in the minds of those who receive; they create confidence in those carrying them, and assure a hearty, Christian welcome for them. They are also a vehicle for the expression of unity, fellowship and love between the saints in various localities. The salutations at the end of Paul's epistles are to us a pattern of this interest and love in saints who are known to be faithful in the Lord. And for these reasons it would be a loss to those who love and desire to walk in the truth not to use them. Then, "it is not he that commendeth himself that is approved" (2 Cor. 10. 18). This is a passage that might be aptly applied.

Finally, if we are to preserve the truth and fellowship in it as far as we are able, we must have a care as to who are received. Those who deny the doctrine of Christ, or who associate in fellowship with those who deny it, must be excluded (2 John), for they share one common guilt, and "evil communications corrupt good manners." Letters of commendation are useful in this, for they guarantee, as far as that is possible, that those carrying them are sound in the faith and fit persons for Christian fellowship.

DISCIPLES CALLED AND TESTED.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

LEANING ON THE LORD'S BOSOM;
STANDING BY HIS CROSS;
FOLLOWING HIM WITHOUT BEING TOLD;
AWAITING HIS COMING AGAIN.

An Address at Glasgow, January 2nd, 1926.

THE great purpose of the coming of the Lord Jesus into this world was the REVELATION of the Father, but along with that, and without which the revelation would have been in vain, He came to secure a RESPONSE in the hearts of men to the revelation. The New Testament might be called the Book of the Revelation and the Response. Only the only-begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father could make the revelation and only He could secure the response. He secures the response by making disciples and they were made, and are still made, as He is magnified. I feel that I can speak but poorly on discipleship, but through grace I can say a good word for our Lord and Master, and no good word spoken of Him can be in vain.

Now the Lord is magnified in all the Gospels. Each writer, as instructed and empowered by the Holy Spirit, has fashioned a crown for His sacred head, but John unfolds for us as none other the blessedness of His person; in his Gospel Jesus "*manifested forth His glory; and His disciples believed on Him,*" (chap. 2. 11). The Gospel of John is the Gospel of the glory of the Son of God, but it might well have as a supplementary title, "Disciples Made and Tested." In the first chapter some of His glories pass before our eyes. He is the everlasting God who broke the silence of eternity by His creatorial word at the beginning of the chapter, and He is the Son of Man at the end of the chapter who will reconcile creation to God, binding heaven and earth together in one, and subjecting

all to the will of God. Between the two He is proclaimed "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," and again this testimony is borne to Him, because in it we have the foundation of all blessing—without it there is none—"Behold the Lamb of God!" To that witness to Him there is an immediate response in the hearts of two young men. That title proclaims Him to be the great Redeemer, and it tells of love that surpasseth all human thought. It was this testimony that made disciples of these young men; it is this that is making disciples to-day. Threefold was the result of the words of the Baptist on these young men:

(1) They followed the Lord;

(2) They abode with the Lord;

(3) They witnessed for the Lord. No man is a "disciple indeed" of whom these things are not true.

The sincerity of discipleship is tested when the Lord and Master is rejected. Many were ready to follow Him when they saw His miracles, or did eat of the loaves He fed them with. They never had had such a satisfying meal before. He was popular then, and these fair-weather disciples loved popularity; but when His words indicated that the way He led was not such as they thought it would be, they turned from Him and walked no more with Him, until at last, in chapter 13, they are reduced to twelve men, and of those twelve one was a traitor. But this crisis revealed the basis of true discipleship and what it is that can keep the disciple true

until the Lord's return. Mark how the Spirit shows the Lord to us here. "*When Jesus knew that His hour was come that He should depart out of the world unto the Father, having loved His own which were in the world He loved them unto the end.*" His time for departure had come, and He knew all the shame and unspeakable sorrow that was bound up with that departure, and it was all to be borne for the sake of His disciples, and for our sakes, but He loved them not one whit less on that behalf. Nothing could alter His love to them, it was greater than the waters of judgment and death—*He loved them unto the end.* Bind together these two things—His departure out of the world by the way of Gethsemane, Gabatha and Golgotha, and His unchanging love for His own through it all, for in the true knowledge of these things lies the secret of true discipleship. It is not the sacrifices that we make for Him that make us "disciples indeed," but the knowledge of the sacrifice that He has made for us; it is not our love to Him, but His love to us that constrains us to follow Him.

But the Lord knew more than the fact that the time of His departure had come. He knew that "the Father had given all things into His hand." How great is His glory as thus revealed. Reach up to the highest height of the purpose of God and down to the deepest depths of His judgments, and embrace if you can the vast range of His will—all has been put into the hands of Jesus. He will command angels, He will bless men, He will judge devils; He will subdue every hostile force to the will of God and fill the universe with His glory. Such is the confidence, the absolute trust, that the Father has in Him that all things have been put into His care. nothing has been withheld from Him: that is the measure of His

glory. Knowing this, and also "that He came from God and went to God," that He was God's sent One, What does He do? He lays aside His garments and girds Himself with a towel and stoops down before His disciples to wash their feet!

The most glorious Person in the universe renders a slave's service to His disciple!

Let that indescribable grace, let the love that was in that great act affect us rightly as we ponder over it!

There was more in that act than appears on the surface, but in searching for its inner meaning, don't let us miss the beauty of it. The Lord will yet fill the universe with the glory of God, but will He ever be greater than when girded with a towel He gave to His disciples an example that they should walk in His steps? No, it was when He stooped that the glory of His Person appeared, when He became the servant of all He was the greatest of all. But what was it that brought Him into this place of service? It was His unchanging love. But what was its object? That they might have part with Him? He desired that they should be brought into and maintained in the most blessed intimacy with Himself. I cannot at this time speak of the inner meaning of feet-washing in view of that, but I want to press the fact that He loved His disciples so ardently, and us also, that He cannot endure any distance or coldness. He must have us near to Himself, enjoying the holy intimacy that His love affords. And one of those disciples realized this, and realizing it all reserve was cast out of his heart, and HE LEANED UPON JESUS' BOSOM. It was an immediate response to the love that had expressed itself so blessedly, and it must have given a wondrous joy to the sorrowing and troubled heart of the Lord. As

leaning upon the bosom, he could speak of himself as "the disciple whom Jesus loved." The love of Jesus became the dominating factor in his life, and all true discipleship begins, continues, and ends there, it finds its spring and its power in the love of Christ. Here, in John's attitude, we see the renunciation of all self-confidence. Peter was self-confident. It was as though he said, "Lord, you may trust me, I will not fail you; all others may, but not I: rest in my love, lean on my bosom." We know the end of that. John's conduct stands out in contrast to Peter's sincere but vain boasting. It was as though he said, "Lord, I cannot trust my love to you, but I can trust your love to me; the place of my confidence and rest is your love, your bosom."

The next time we see "the disciple whom Jesus loved" he is "STANDING BY." He was not hiding away in shame and fear as Peter was, nor setting himself to some busy service of his own devising, but "standing by." And note well where it was that he stood: it was BY THE CROSS. He stood there in the face of the world. Three women were there, for devotion and faithfulness to Christ regardless of what others did and thought always did show itself in these women who loved the Lord; but John was there also—he stood by the cross. It was as though he said, "O world, the Man whom you hate and have crucified is the Man I love. He is my Lord and Master." He would not have been there at all if he had not leaned on his Lord's bosom, and if the Lord's love had not been to him the supreme thing in his life. But he was there, the pattern disciple, and being there he indicates our place in regard to the world and Christ. Paul stood by the cross when he cried, "*God forbid that*

I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world" (Gal. 6. 14). But what was it that put him there? He also knew that he was the disciple whom Jesus loved, for he said, "*The Son of God loved me and gave Himself for me.*"

We must *stand by the cross* to-day; we are not true disciples unless we do, for the cross is despised and rejected by the religious world. Men want a Christ without the cross, and a gospel without blood. As of old they taunted the Lord and said, "*Come down from the cross and we will believe,*" so now they clamour for a Jesus, who is a great personality, a fearless reformer, a teacher of ethics. There is no such Jesus except in their darkened imaginations. He came to be the Saviour of men, and He could not be the Saviour apart from the cross. It is to the Greek foolishness and to the Jew a stumbling block, and the reproach of it has not ceased, for it still strikes at the foundation of all man's boasting and pride, but to us who are saved it is the power and the wisdom of God. Hence we stand by the cross. It is to us the supreme manifestation of the love of Christ, the revelation of God's heart to us. There our sins were swept away, there the cup of our judgment was drained, there the hatred and sin of men were fully exposed, but there the love of God shone out to us in all its splendour. To be "disciples indeed" we must stand by the cross and let its meaning move our souls, as we do so we shall be consciously the disciples whom Jesus loves, and we shall respond to His love in faithfulness and praise.

And now see what came of John's faithfulness. "Jesus, therefore, saw His mother and the disciple standing by whom He loved." Who can tell the solace it must have been in that dark

hour to Him to see John there ! " He saith unto His mother, Woman, behold thy son ! Then saith He to the disciple, Behold thy mother ! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home." The Lord was able to trust John now ; He could commit to him a precious legacy. And John was faithful to the trust. And He desires to trust us, to have us as His friends upon whom He can rely. Do you not desire that ? What privilege could be greater than that ? To have the Lord say to you, " I want you to care for some who are precious to Me. I want you to look after My interests on earth during My absence." Nothing could be greater or more desirable than that ; and that is within the reach of us all. We have but to lean upon His bosom and stand by His cross and the Lord will commit to us some charge to keep for Him.

It is remarkable that in the resurrection chapter, when Peter and John run to the empty grave and return to their own homes, John does not speak of himself as " the disciple whom Jesus loved." The news of the resurrection comes to him by that name in verse 2, but afterwards he speaks of himself three times as " that other disciple " ; but when he sees the Lord, in chapter 21, when all doubts had disappeared, he returns to the precious epithet. As the Lord stood on the seashore and addressed His disciples in words of tender solicitude, and brought the hitherto reluctant fish to their nets, John recognized Him, and henceforward he followed Jesus, and he did it without being told. Peter had to be told to follow the Lord, but not John in this Gospel. He is introduced to us at the beginning of it, following the Lord without being told, and the last glimpse we have of him in it he is still following without being told. He

followed because he could not do other ; the treasure he had found in the Lord's love made him a disciple. He was attracted and not commanded, and in that lies true discipleship.

Peter turned about and saw him following, and said, " Lord, what shall this man do ? " But that was not Peter's business. It should have been enough for him that the Lord had given him a path in which to tread, and the Lord rebukes him for his officiousness, but at the same time clearly declares what pleases Him. " If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee, follow thou Me." Then went the saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die — note that the disciples were brethren ; in following the Lord they followed together and had a brotherly interest in one another ; they belonged to one family. But the Lord did not say that he should not die, and His words are repeated as if to give them emphasis : " If I will that he tarry till I come." What did He mean ? I believe that He meant that He would have that kind of disciple here when He comes again. What kind of disciple ? The disciple who leans on His bosom, stands by His cross, and **FOLLOWS HIM WITHOUT BEING TOLD**. Ah, that is the sort of disciple we should all like to be. Thank God, we may be just that sort of disciple.

Discipleship is a very individual thing. John had to follow for himself, and Peter for himself, and each of us must follow each for himself ; but for our full development in the blessed traits of it we need each other. We must have a Master to follow, and brethren to follow with. " By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if you have love one for another," He has said. What He is to us we must be to one another, for

He has left us an example that we should do to one another as He has done to us. In this true fellowship is secured, true, vital fellowship according to God. Neither rules nor regulations can secure this, and to make rules and restrictions is to go back to the age of law, and to be transgressors (Gal. 2.). But to be dominated by the love of Christ and to be showing His love one to another, to be walking in love, is to be walking practically in the light and in the truth, and therein lies true fellowship.

Now it is by the way of discipleship

and fellowship that a full response to the revelation of the Father is given; for worship which the Father seeks is in its highest phase collective. "I will declare Thy Name unto my *brethren*, in the midst of the church will I sing praises to Thee." When fellowship does not exist there is not this character of responsive worship to the Father's Name, and love and fellowship of this sort can only be enjoyed and practised as we lean on the Lord's bosom, stand by His cross, and follow Him without being told, **AND WAIT FOR HIS COMING AGAIN.**

HOMEWARD-BOUND.

(JAMES BOYD.)

CALLED by the grace of my Saviour on high,
 Leave I this world without even a sigh,
 Called to a kingdom and glory above,
 Bars of brass broken by infinite love,
 Fetters of Satan, sin's service, death's fears,
 Gone with the griefs of rebellious years.
 Free as the bird that hath broken the snare
 Wakes with its music the slumbering air;
 Thus to the glory my glad way I wend,
 Thus the cords tender of nature I rend.
 Hold me not, country, companion, nor kin,
 Loss shall be gain for the Christ I shall win.
 Guarded by grace thro' an enemy's land,
 Strong-made the might of fell foes to withstand,
 Fit made to fight thro' their forces my way
 Right to the porch of perpetual day,
 Where an inheritance fadeless and fair,
 I with my risen Redeemer shall share.
 Gone is what creatures of natural birth
 Count in this world of unrighteousness worth,
 Gone for my soul in the cross of my Lord,
 Gone in the power of His Spirit and Word.
 Blind me, O Lord, to earth's profitless joys,
 Deaf make mine ears to the spell of its voice,
 On to the glory my feeble feet guide,
 Kill in my soul carnal passion and pride:
 Be Thou my object as Thou art my life,
 Cover my head in the pitiless strife,
SON OF THE FATHER, MY LOVER AND FRIEND,
BE THOU MY GLORY AND GUIDE TO THE END.

PRACTICAL PAPERS.

(A. J. POLLOCK.)

No. 2. Death.

DEATH needs no explanation. Its activities and ravages are too sadly familiar to everyone. Yet there is only one book in the world that boldly reveals to us its origin, and that book is the Holy Scriptures. Every other ancient book is dumb as to this, and there are not wanting present-day efforts to explain it away. The Spiritist hides its true character by calling it a new birth into a larger life. The Christian Scientist evades the point at issue by teaching that there is no such thing as matter, or disease, or pain, or sin or death—that these things are pure imagination; whilst “the man in the street,” indifferent to eternal things, will call it “the debt of nature”—all these are the lies of Satan to do away with the real point at issue.

But the Bible describes death as “the wages of sin” (Rom. 6. 23), and tells us that “the sting of death is sin” (1 Cor. 15. 56). Death came into this world by sin, so we read, “By one man [Adam] sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (Rom. 6. 12).

Our first parents took of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and thus disobeyed God’s prohibition. The penalty was death—“in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Gen. 2. 17). The marginal reading is “*HEB. dying thou shalt die*,” that is to say, the process of death began the moment sin was committed, just as if you plucked a flower in your garden, that moment it begins to die. You may put it in water and retard the process, but it is true of that flower “dying it shall die”—surely and slowly death ensues.

Now death ensues in three stages :—

- (1) *Spiritual Death.*
- (2) *Physical Death.*
- (3) *The Second Death.*

Spiritual death is the most important of the three, for the other two are the consequences of the first.

When our first parents sinned, they broke away from God, the source of life; it was like the plucking of a leaf from its stem, and death was the penalty of that act of disobedience, and its process began there and then. Man, as created by God, must surely have been a magnificent creature. He had no inherited weaknesses as we have to-day, after the world’s history of six thousand years of sin. Adam lived to be 930 years, *but he died.*

How serious is spiritual death. Many speak ignorantly of a Divine spark in every man that only needs to be fanned into a flame, but the Bible speaks of the sinner as “*DEAD in trespasses and sins*” (Ephes. 2. 1), of “being alienated from the life of God” (Ephes. 4. 18), and presses even upon a religious man like Nicodemus the necessity of the new birth, even as the Apostle Paul speaks of the believers being quickened with Christ. Doubtless the latter is a more advanced thought than the former, but evidently both lie in the domain of God’s sovereignty, for a man can no more produce his second and spiritual birth than the first and natural birth, and no man can quicken himself. The power of producing life lies alone with God.

But spiritual death led to physical death, and we all naturally shrink from physical death. It comes to all alike. We need not linger on this point, for all are familiar, sadly so, with physical death. The moment

the breath leaves the body we make arrangements to have it removed and put out of sight—an empty casket hastening to corruption. It is well to recognize, however, the real meaning of physical death.

Man stands in contradistinction to the beast in many ways, and in none more than in his knowledge of his approaching death. Why is this? The animals do not need this knowledge, for they are not morally responsible and die outright when they die! They cease to exist.

But man knows that he must die, for it is the fixing of his sin upon him and with it the knowledge of existence beyond death. These two pieces of knowledge are universal. Heathen tribes, who have had no Bible or gospel preaching—tribes in absolute unalloyed heathen darkness—are found to have this knowledge. For instance, the Chinese have the worship of their ancestors and the Red Indians the belief in their happy hunting grounds in the next world.

Why, we ask, is this knowledge intuitive in all races of mankind? Why should there be the knowledge of impending death, the shrinking from it, and the belief in the fact that the soul does not die? It is reserved only for the present-day apostates of Christendom to deny that the soul does not die. Why then is this belief in immortality universal, even among heathen tribes? We hold that this belief is implanted by God.

And why should God implant this knowledge? For two reasons: (1) to convict men of their sinful condition by fixing responsibility upon them, and (2) surely to show His own nature—love—in the way of repentance and remission of sins, that the gospel proclaims, and of the offer of eternal life that it makes.

The second death is revealed in the Scriptures as consequent on the resurrection of the mortal body and its being re-united to the never-dying soul, and the future of the unrepentant, unbelieving sinner is clearly laid down in the Scriptures as being doomed to an eternal existence under the wrath of God. "These shall go away with eternal punishment" (Matt. 26. 46), and "death and hell [*hades*] were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death" (Rev. 20. 14). The resurrected persons, whose bodies before resurrection were held by death, and whose disembodied souls were held in *hades*, with that entire condition and bondage, are cast into the lake of fire. The second death is not annihilation any more than the first.

Why does God hold back the veil and disclose to us the far end of sin? Why did He pronounce the penalty of death on our first parents in the Old Testament so as to indicate spiritual and physical death; and draw back the veil in the New Testament to tell us in warning language of the second death?

Surely it is to prepare us for the disclosure of His own love in the gospel. It were meaningless to give man the knowledge of his future doom, if there were no escape from it; it is mercy to give him that knowledge if only it will prepare his mind to receive the gospel.

What, then, is the gospel? In presenting it the Apostle Paul wrote, "I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ DIED for our sins according to the Scriptures (1 Cor. 15. 3). It is the meaning and the results of the death of Christ that constitute the gospel.

It is surely the turning of the tables, when death meets and conquers death. Death is the penalty of sin. Death meets the penalty of sin. In the

nature of things it can be seen at a glance that a forfeited life could not take up the penalty of a forfeited life through sin. It is the laying down of a life upon which death had no claim that could meet the claims of death, and this is just what has happened in the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now we see the why and wherefore of God making man intelligent as to the penalty of his sin, its consequences in this world and in eternity. It was surely to prepare him for the reception of the good news—of the gospel.

True it is that the preaching of the Cross is to them that perish foolishness, but so long as there is conviction of sin, so long will there be the perception of the meaning of the atonement and its acceptance.

No wonder that the Apostle Paul, writing in 1 Cor. 3. 22, could triumphantly assert that "death is ours."

The acceptance of Christ as our Saviour has turned our worst enemy into our best friend. We owe all our sorrows to sin—death and all that lies in its train; we owe all our blessings

to death, even the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. Death is now for the Christian "*mors, janua vitæ*"—the gate into life. Christ could claim to be "the Resurrection and the Life" (John 11. 25). "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might LIVE through Him" (1 John 4. 9).

What a different complexion the death of Christ has put upon everything for the believer. "To die is gain" (Phil. 1. 21) wrote the Apostle Paul. What a reversal of things! "The sting of death is sin" (1 Cor. 15. 56), but the sting is gone for the believer. Death is henceforth the messenger of the Father to His child, summoning him to the "far better" (Phil. 1. 23) portion.

Finally, "the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (1 Cor. 15. 26), and that by Him "who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality [incorruptibility—N.T.] to light through the gospel" (2 Tim. 1. 10).

What a story of man's sin, of God's love, of Christ's work, of the believers' deliverance, of final triumph!

The Unity of the Spirit.

SOUND in doctrine we must be, and of course there could be no true unity apart from soundness of doctrine, but doctrine is not the bond of perfectness, but love is, and we want a unity of love. It is possible to be orthodox as to doctrine and lacking in love. The unity of the Spirit cannot be kept apart from love, the love that rejoices to serve another and clothes itself with humility in order to do it. It is kept in the bond of peace. What is there to disturb the peace when love has its way? It is the flesh that causes disturbance—the flesh with its selfishness, envies, jealousies and hatreds—but the Spirit is in us to keep down the flesh, and to keep us under the influence of the love of God and so to make it natural to us, and a joy, to love one another and to keep the unity of the Spirit.

THE ANTIDOTE TO INTELLECTUALISM.

(T. OLIVER.)

WE may well have every sympathy with Christian parents whose minds are torn between two considerations. On the one hand they wish to give their children all the benefits which education confers as to this life, and on the other hand they are apprehensive as to the detriment which may befall the souls of the young people in the process. The seminaries of learning have now openly thrown overboard every vestige of belief in the Bible as the Word of God, and most philosophers have turned away after Theosophy, New Theology and similar empty speculations.

There is an increasing call from young Christians for a lead as to their conduct in relation to the strong current of modern thought. We can only refer them to the despised old Book, in the perusal of which we are not astonished to find a complete solution of the problem, thus testifying to its prophetic character as a lamp shining in a very dark place to give certain guidance, and the darker the place, the brighter the light appears to be. The light of philosophy is very much like the *ignis fatuus* or "will-o'-the-wisp" which vanishes before one can fix its place. At one period we are given the assured results of philosophic research and lo, ten years later the whole system is changed.

In reading the Epistle to the Colossians we cannot fail to observe the striking parallelism between the conditions obtaining in the first century and those existing in the twentieth century. There is nothing essentially new under the sun, history is constantly repeating itself. Before considering the main features of the epistle it may be well to review the conditions which called for its being written.

The circumstances which prompted

the apostle to pen the Epistle to the Colossians were briefly as follows:—Epaphras, a Colossian who had been the agent in founding the Church at Colosse, had brought news of a heresy which was mainly philosophic. His zeal for the apostle led him to become his fellow-prisoner. The Colossian heresy circled round a subtle error, Gnosticism, a false mysticism, to which only the privileged few could be initiated. It accounted for evil and creation. God is good, matter is evil, God and the universe must then be connected by a descending series of angelic orders (principalities and powers), and the consequent dethronement of the Son of God, with the accompanying worship of angels (Chap. 2. 18).

The practical outcome of such speculation was one or other of two conditions of life, either: (1) Rigid Asceticism, "touch not, taste not, etc." If matter is evil, then abstain from contact with it, or (2) Unbridled Licence. If matter is evil then it can be abused with impunity. The apostle met the "intellectual exclusiveness" by showing that the gospel is for all (Chap. 1. 23, 28)

He met the "mystic speculation" by proclaiming the deity of Christ. (a) Who contains the fulness of God-head. He did not share this with successive angelic orders, no matter how high in dignity these might be (Chap. 1. 19: 2. 9). (b) Who created and sustains all things, even angels (Chap. 1. 16). (c) Who is head of the natural as of the spiritual creation (Chap. 1. 17, 18). (d) Who is in vital union with His Church as Head to the Body (Chap. 2. 19).

He met the "ascetic rigour" by proclaiming the Christian's living association with Christ risen (Chap. 2. 17). The Jewish rules, although

devised by God, were only a shadow of coming things (Chap. 2. 22) ; while these Colossian rules were of human device, and thus worthy of far less credence.

He went further and took up the very terms of the philosophers giving them a Christian significance, e.g., *πληρωμα* (pleroma), fulness, *επιγνωσις* (epignosis), knowledge, *σοφια* (sophia,) wisdom, *μυστηριον* (musterion) mystery, *τελειος* (teleios) perfect, etc.

Even the casual reader must have observed the striking resemblance between the Epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians. There are few literal identities, but there are numerous parallel passages with characteristic expressions. The truth, common to both, however, is treated with a wider scope in the Ephesians, but there is a personal touch in the salutations in a specific letter to a local company which is lacking in an encyclical letter like that to the Ephesians.

The main difference between the aspects of truth unfolded in the epistles is that to the Colossians the central idea presented is the majesty of the Head of the Body, the Church. To the Ephesians the aspect which is emphasized is the unity of the Church of which Christ is the Head. In the Colossian epistle there are but few references to the latter, while the Ephesian epistle contains a magnificent description of the Church in the eternal counsels, e. g., "the union of Jew and Gentile in one body," "the habitation of God through the Spirit," and so on.

In the Ephesian epistle, the saints are viewed as in Christ for blessing, and the obverse side of the truth presented in Colossians is that Christ is in us for the display of His character as set forth in the words "Christ in you, the hope of glory." This is not in an individual sense. No individual can

display completely the character of Christ. Some features are displayed by one and some by others, and in the aggregate there is a reproduction of the heavenly Christ in the service and testimony of the saints as one body.

The Colossian epistle has seven structural elements which blend into one harmonious whole. The first twelve verses form the introduction. The next ten verses, forming the second section, present the glories of the person of Christ in language which is unsurpassed for majesty and range in all Scripture. There is first a seven-fold presentation of His essential glory, in His Eternal Being which shines forth like a constellation of stars of first magnitude in the hemisphere. These are mainly in relation to created things. They are as follows :—

1. "Son of the Father's Love." In pre-creation as during creation, He was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him (Prov. 8. 22).

2. "Image of the Invisible God." No man hath seen God at any time. The Son hath rendered Him visible. Adam was created in the image of God and was thus, in measure, the representation of the invisible God. In 1 Cor. 15. those who are heavenly in constitution and origin, do not yet bear "the image of the heavenly," because, when that is effected, all that they are as heavenly will be displayed to the universe. However, the Second Man from heaven is, in the final sense, "the image of the invisible God."

3. "First-born of Creation." This is not in point of chronological order, but in respect of pre-eminence. This usage is illustrated in the Old Testament in various types, e.g., Manasseh was Joseph's elder son, but the Scriptural record is, "Ephraim is my first-born." Again, of Solomon (although he was one of David's younger sons)

it was said, "I will make him my first-born higher than the kings of the earth"—although this passage awaited its complete fulfilment in one who was greater than Solomon. Thus, in point of right, dignity and power, Christ has pre-credence over all.

4. "He is before all things." He could say, "Before Abraham was, I am."

5. "All things were created by Him."

6. "All things subsist in Him."

7. "All things were created for Him."

These passages tersely state that He is the Preceder, Author, Sustainer, and Purpose of every created thing.

In verses 18–22, there shines out another sevenfold presentation of His glories, but composed of those which have come to Him in resurrection. It is necessary that in this hemisphere of display also He should have undisputed pre-eminence. They are briefly as follows:—

1. "Head of the Body," the Church, which takes inception from Christ's death and resurrection.

2. "The beginning of the creation of God," i.e., of the new creation.

3. "First-born from the dead."

4. "All fulness is pleased to dwell in Him." Thus He is not a mere emission of radio-activity from the God-head.

5. "He has made peace by the blood of His Cross," which is the central feature of His redemption glory.

6. "By Him all things will yet be reconciled." The earnest expectation of creation waiteth for the revelation of the sons of God. . . . The creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. (Rom. 8. 19, 21).

7. "But even now He has reconciled us in the body of His flesh, through death." In the human idea of reconciliation, there is removal of discord and the establishment of harmony, but this is consummated in the person of a new Man, Christ Jesus, after the complete removal of the man of sin and discord from God's sight.

So that in the hemisphere of redemption, the display of glory is as perfect as it is in the hemisphere of creation, and there is the reinforced interest, that whereas creation is mainly relative to things, redemption is focused on persons.

The third section deals with the dual ministry of these glories with reference (a) To the gospel (Chap. I. 23), (b) To the Church (Chap. I. 25).

The fourth section deals with the essential presentation of the mystery as the central truth of Christianity, round which all others revolve, viz., "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Chap. I. 27). The sense is not collective, not "among" you, as some commentators read, but "in" you. There is a corporate display of Christ's character.

The fifth section of the epistle shows the complete position of the saints as related to Christ, and thus they do not require supplementary knowledge from the philosophy and vain deceit of men. The sixth section shows that the perfect understanding and relationship of the saints to Christ entail certain responsibilities—responsibilities which should and will be maintained as the truth is apprehended. The concluding section, comprising the larger part of the last chapter, expresses the apostle's loving care for those bound up with him in the bundle of eternal life.

Thus we find that even as the antidote to intellectualism in the first century was a fuller knowledge of

Christ, so in the twentieth century the only influence which will render us immune from the diseases which are apt to be contracted through contact with philosophy, is the warmth of soul which flows from communication with Christ in glory. However improbable

the Christian revelation may appear to the philosophic mind, faith substantiates things as yet future, and establishes the unseen on an irrefragable basis in the soul of the one who knows God in Christ.

ADVOCACY AND PRIESTHOOD.

(W. BRAMWELL DICK)

IN one sense the work of Christ is an unfinished work. When He, on the Cross, said, "It is finished" (John 19. 30), that indicated the completing of the work by which He glorified God, met our need as guilty sinners, and on the ground of which He carries on His present service as Advocate and Priest on behalf of His own; and on the ground of which also He will accomplish the great work of clearing the universe of every taint of sin, and will bring in a new order of things where God shall be "all in all" (1 Cor. 15. 28).

His present service, as we have noted, is that of Advocate and Priest. The former is occasional, the latter is unceasing. The first is called into exercise when we sin. The second indicates the Divine support that is at our disposal at all times in our infirmity. In 1 John 2. 1, we read: "My little children, these things write I unto you, *that ye sin not*. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." That we do sin is sadly true, and to those who say they "have no sin," and "have not sinned," chapter 1. verses 8-10 has something serious to say. That we should not sin is equally true, and that when we do sin we must be unsparing in our self-judgment is clear. The very injunction, "*that ye sin not*," makes it apparent that we may sin. What, then, are we to do? Confess it instantly. Not simply say, "Pardon our sins," but confess, which shows

that we have judged the sin. What happens then? We find that our Advocate has been to the Father about it, and it only required our confession for us to have the assurance of forgiveness.

His Priesthood He carries on by day and by night. He now appears in the presence of God for us (Heb. 9. 24). He succours us in time of temptation (Heb. 2. 18), and supports us in our infirmity (Heb. 4. 14-16). He can do this because He, as man in this world, "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." *He* has been in *our* circumstances. "*He* knows what sorest trials mean, for He has felt the same." He has trod the path, has run the race, has reached the goal, has "passed through the heavens." His Name is "JESUS," all sympathy is His; He is "the Son of God," all power is His; He is in the presence of God, the place of intercession is His. Because of all this, *His* succour, *His* sympathy and *His* support are ours. To obtain it we come to the Throne of Grace. There all is dispensed with a bountiful hand by Him who is there. All this has in view the grand climax in chapter 10. 19-22. All distance gone and we rendered superior to our circumstances, we are free to enter the holiest, to delight in the One who fills that holy place, and worship Him into whose presence He Himself has introduced us, and where He Himself maintains us.

THE SINLESSNESS OF THE LORD JESUS.

From a Letter.

(JAMES BOYD.)

WHEN we speak of a person not being able to sin we do not mean that the person is so weak that he is unable to do the act which would be a departure from right, but that his nature is such that it would be impossible for the notion of that which is sinful ever to rise in his heart or mind; and that, when presented to him by way of temptation from without, it causes infinite loathing and unspeakable agony, so that death is preferred to the act, no matter in what shape that death might present itself.

The reasoning of the writer of the letter you send reveals the fact that he has not seized the truth as to the Person of our Lord. He seems to have two persons in his mind, one who could sin, and one who could not. He says: "In Jesus' sinlessness is a necessary part of His Divinity; that Jesus could sin is an equally necessary part of His humanity." Have we then here the absurd anomaly of a Person who can sin and yet cannot? He has forgotten that what our Lord was as a man was begotten of God, and that no taint of the fallen creature entered into that "Holy Thing."

But he adds: "Wherein otherwise would lie the virtue of His sinlessness?" May I not ask another question: If God cannot lie, wherein lies the virtue of His truthfulness? I have said before, and I say again, If Jesus can sin I have no Saviour that I can trust; for He may yet sin, and then, like the fallen race of Adam, His race is doomed to death and destruction. Neither can the blessed Lord sin, nor any of His saints *viewed as begotten of God* (1 John 3. 9).

Your correspondent tells us that "A Christ who is sinless because He could not sin can never command the allegiance of sinners in search of a

Saviour." I can only say in answer to this that the fact that He cannot sin is one great reason why He commands the allegiance of my heart. If it were possible for Him to sin, I would never have a moment's peace of mind, for I would not know when I might have to face the report of His overthrow and mine also. Everyone who entered His presence when here felt what sinners they were; but He could demand of them: "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" (John 8. 46). Even the demons had to confess Him to be "The Holy One of God."

It is sometimes said that Adam was without sin in his nature, and he fell, and therefore the fact of a person being sinless does not of necessity guarantee that he shall not fall. That is so, for God has never yet made an imperfect being. But, nevertheless, as far as I see from Scripture, every being that has been set on the footing of responsibility has fallen. The devil fell, demons are fallen beings, angels also have fallen, and yet all were made perfect. Adam fell, and he was made perfect. Every being must be maintained by the power of God, and where one has to keep himself in the position in which God has been pleased to set him, and that by his faithfulness, is sure to fail, as all such have fallen. Christ alone could stand under the most trying temptations, and under the most dreadful circumstances, even when forsaken by God; yet He glorified God perfectly, and finished to His satisfaction the work that was given Him to do. But no other has ever done that.

Let us never fear. We have a perfect and all-powerful Saviour: One who never has failed, and who never can fail. Blessed be His holy Name for ever!

THE GOSPEL FOR THE POOR.

WONDERFUL is that word in the sixty-first chapter of Isaiah, which the Lord definitely shows was spoken of Himself 700 years before He came: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek. He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted . . ." Not to the Scribes and Pharisees did He come; His words had no appeal to them.

"Not to the rich, the proud, and to the Ruling (Men full of meat, whom wholly He abhors).
Not to the fools grown insolent in fooling
Most, when the lost are dying at their doors."

He came to the meek and lowly: Wonderful Deliverer! He came to the broken-hearted, and to those that mourn. Tender-hearted Saviour! Not to our intellectual capacity and self-contented sufficiency does He address Himself. To those who boast in what they know and what they are—

He speaks in an unknown tongue; such shall not recognize one syllable of His gospel; it will shoot over their heads as light not meant for their darkness. But, if in our hearts there is a consciousness of need, of sin; if we be the broken-hearted and the contrite of spirit, of whom the prophet speaks, then every word that He speaks will be for us, the very word we need, the only word, as it would seem, that the heart could possibly understand. Oh, how suitable is the Lord Jesus, and what comfort there is in His words to those who have no goodness, no riches, no power! But to those who are puffed up, proud, self-contained, unconscious of guilt, without compunction or contrition, His gospel is an idle talk, to its music they are deaf. "The Son of Man is come, not to call the righteous, but to seek and to save the lost." "To the poor the gospel is preached."

GUARDED LIPS.

(R. NELSON.)

"**S**ET a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips." So wrote the Psalmist. He could not trust himself in this matter; and if idle words were to be disallowed an exit, the Lord must be the door-keeper. "The tongue can no man tame," wrote the apostle as inspired by the Spirit of God (James 3. 8). And again, "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man" (chap. 3. 2).

Perhaps we err more in this respect than in anything else. Let your speech be always with grace seasoned with salt.

Prophetically it is written of Him, who is our example as well as our Saviour, "Grace is poured into Thy

lips." "Never man spake like this Man." As the Man ever dependent and obedient, His ear was opened morning by morning to hear as the learned, that He should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary (Isa. 50). Hence "gracious words" seasoned with salt were spoken to men, insomuch that they marvelled (Luke 4.).

If we are to be well-pleasing to our Lord and Master either in public testimony or in ordinary conversation, we must be like Him in this respect, and as our lips are not holy naturally as His were, we need, like Isaiah, to have them touched by the live coal from off the altar. This seems to typify the teaching in Rom. 6. 11.

If we are in the good of this, we shall be enabled to yield our members (including the tongue) as instruments of righteousness unto God (Rom. 6. 13). Love to one another would make us faithful to one another, speaking the truth in love; but in Rev. 2. and 3. we have in this respect a great pattern set before us; before a word of rebuke is uttered, the commendable things are taken notice of by Him whose eyes are as a flame of fire.

But out of the fulness of the heart the mouth speaks and no man's words can be better than his thought, so we are exhorted to *think* on the things that are lovely, pure, and of good report. (Phil. 4). The outcome of thus *thinking* will surely be that we shall *speak* of these things; and if we see unlovely things in any of our brethren in Christ let us speak to the Lord about these rather than to each other.

NOTES ON GALATIANS. Chapter 2.

(F. B. HOLE.)

IN the opening part of this chapter Paul continues the story of his early years of service with the object of showing how little contact there had been between himself and the other apostles. In the providential ordering of God, no less than fourteen years elapsed between the fifteen days he spent with Peter, a few years after his conversion (see 1. 18), and the visit to Jerusalem with Barnabas and Titus. This is, of course, the visit of which Acts 15. speaks, and hence during those fourteen years had come his time of service at Antioch (Acts 11. 25, 26), and his first missionary journey (Acts 13. and 14.). Hence when he went up he was no mere novice who wished to be instructed in what he was to preach, but rather a well-trying apostle with a definite and original message.

Yet, as Acts 15. shows, the contention that arose at Antioch, and necessitated this journey to Jerusalem, all raged around the gospel which he preached. It was just because there was in his preaching a note which was barely audible, if not altogether absent, in the preaching of the twelve that the dissension arose.

In those early years at Jerusalem there was the fullest possible proclama-

tion of forgiveness and salvation in the name of the risen Christ, and the preaching was powerfully blessed of God. From the beginning thousands believed and gladly identified themselves with the rejected Messiah without cutting their links with "Judaism," i.e., the whole system of things instituted through Moses, which was a shadow only of "the good things to come" (Heb. 10. 1). We read, for instance, such things in the Acts as "a great company of priests were obedient to the faith" (6. 7). "Certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed" (15. 5). "Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law" (21. 20). Doubtless these believers, whether priests, Pharisees, or zealous lovers of the law, were in the main true souls with sincere faith in Christ, yet nothing that they had heard in the gospel to which they had listened had made them feel it to be inconsistent to link up the faith of Christ with priestly service in the worn-out and desolate temple or with Phariseism, or with zealous law-observances. They had listened to the gospel melody, indeed, but the note which involved their being lifted up and out of all these things had not as yet clearly sounded in their ears.

Now it was just that note which the Apostle Paul fearlessly and distinctly struck. If we read the first eight chapters of the Epistle to the Romans wherein he gives us an orderly exposition of his gospel, we shall see. He proclaimed both Jew and Gentile equally "guilty before God," shutting both alike up to God's mercy. He proclaimed God's righteousness as unto *all* and upon *all* who believe, irrespective of their Jewish or Gentile origin. He further declared that now the fundamental cleavage on racial lines amongst men was not as to being of Abraham's seed or not of Abraham's seed, but as to being in Adam or in Christ; and that this being in Christ involves identification with Him in His death, and consequently the crucifixion of "our old man"—the judgment of all that we were as men in the flesh—and the finding of both new life and power in the Spirit of God now given to all who believe.

Here was doctrine, to the Jewish mind, of a most revolutionary order! It cut at the roots of all their ancient prejudices. It showed the whole Mosaic economy, in which they so boasted, to be but "a shadow," a provisional system introduced whilst awaiting the arrival of the substance in and through the Lord Jesus Christ. It consequently aroused bitter hostility from some "Christians" who were no true believers at all—"false brethren unawares brought in" (Gal. 2. 4)—and even opposition from those who were true believers.

In our chapter Paul makes it plain to us, firstly, that he took up a most inflexible attitude in regard to the matter, for he knew that in it the whole truth of the gospel was at stake (verse 5); and secondly, that in conference with other apostles and leaders, they were not able to add anything to him,

as though he were deficient in his teaching or had omitted any detail. Rather they gladly recognized the grace given to him of the Lord, and the special sphere of his service, and gave to him and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship. Acts 15. bears full witness to this, for in the circular letter issued by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem at the close of this conference they maintained the liberty of grace as declared by Paul's gospel as against the Jewish bondage advanced by others, and spoke of "our beloved Barnabas and Paul."

In verse 11 of our chapter Paul proceeds to relate what happened at a later date, when Peter was visiting Antioch. The liberty of the gospel had been clearly established *in principle* by the decision reached at Jerusalem, yet under the pressure of contrary opinion Peter fell into a snare brought by the fear of man. Wishing to stand well in the eyes of certain who came from Jerusalem, he denied *in practice* what he admitted in principle. Others followed his bad example, until even Barnabas was carried away, like an anchor which begins to drag. Paul, however, proved himself to be the sheet anchor and stood firm. He withstood Peter to his face.

Formerly Paul had firmly withstood the Judaizers, "that the truth of the gospel might continue." Now he perceives that Peter's action was "not . . . according to the truth of the gospel." Hence in rebuking Peter and convicting him of his inconsistency, he takes care to make very manifest the *truth of the gospel*, both doctrinally and experimentally.

We might almost call verse 16 "the gospel in a nutshell," and that particularly as it presents itself to a Jew. It begins by exposing the utter futility of law-keeping for justification. No

flesh is justified by the works of the law. (The next chapter, notice, carries the point a step further, and shows that all flesh under the law is under the curse, verse 10.) Justification is only possible by the faith of Christ, and we Christians have believed in Jesus Christ that we might be so justified.

But in the last three verses of the chapter the apostle shows the working out of the truth of the gospel in an experimental way, and hence he speaks in the first person singular. He drops the "we" of verses 15, 16 and 17 and adopts "I." The truth experimentally realized comes to this, that "I am crucified with Christ." In my case crucifixion was richly deserved, and was but the carrying out of the just sentence of the law. But then, in thus dying under the law's sentence I have died out from under its power, and that in order that I may now live *unto* God; that is, with God as the great End and Object of my every thought and movement.

All this, however, involves a paradox which the apostle states in verse 20. "I am crucified," says he, "nevertheless I live." Crucifixion has reached me, yet has it left me a living man. It has reached me in identification with Christ, and its effect is the displacing of *self*, the old "I," in favour of Christ; so that He, vitally in us now by His Spirit (see Rom. 8. 9 and 10), may live in us characteristically—that is, that His character may be seen in us.

Such a life is not possible apart from instant and continuous dependence upon Himself. If Christ is to live in me, and consequently be displayed as to His character by me, He must be abidingly my Object. Hence Paul adds, "The life which I now live in the flesh [that is, in *the body*, as a man in this world] I live by the faith of the Son of God." By-and-by, when out of the

flesh, and in bodies of glory, we shall live by the *sight* of the Son of God; now we live by the *faith* of Him. Faith makes Him a living, bright reality to us, and that which acts as the motive force in it all is His *love*. "The Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

Thus Paul speaks to us of that which was livingly and experimentally true to him at that moment. He does not say, "I *was* crucified with Christ," as referring simply to what was accomplished at the Cross. That would have been perfectly true, and is what he virtually says in Romans 6. 6. It is "I *AM* crucified with Christ." The great fact wrought outside him at the Cross was a living and present reality in the experience of his soul.

In conclusion, notice the way in which verses 19 and 20 may be summarized by the prepositions used:—

1. "I . . . live *unto* God."
2. "I am crucified *with* Christ."
3. "Christ liveth *in* me."
4. "I live *by* the faith of the Son of God."
5. "Who . . . gave Himself *for* me."

Each preposition has its own peculiar force:—

"Unto" expresses the *end* in view.

"With" expresses *association* or *identification*.

"In" expresses *life* and *character*.

"By" expresses *object*.

"For" expresses *substitution*.

How happy for us each if we can simply say: "Christ the Son of God became my Substitute in His mighty love, that, identified with Him in His death and with Himself in glory before me as my Object, He might be livingly displayed in my life, and thus my whole life and existence have God and His glory as its end."

ADMINISTRATION & RECONCILIATION. (H. J. VINE.)

ADMINISTRATION and reconciliation differ in their activities and are distinct in the results they attain, but their importance is great and evident if we judge by the large place that the Holy Spirit gives to them in the inspired writings. Both are necessary for the fulfilment of eternally blessed counsels of God and to secure His ultimate glory. The one is outward and the other inward, generally speaking, and they are secured in the work and in the Person of Christ Jesus our Lord.

In the matters of nations and of families these two things are necessary, for no measure of governmental or social order could be maintained in a sinful world like this without them. But in regard to God's wonderful counsels of glory and love, all will be established in Divine perfection to the praise of His glory on the one hand and to the eternal satisfaction of His holy nature on the other, and that in spite of man's sinfulness and enmity with which He must deal.

Administration is prominent in Ephesians 1. and the reconciliation in Colossians 1. We read of the good pleasure of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, "which He purposed in Himself for *the administration* of the fulness of times; to head up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth; in Him, in whom we have also obtained an inheritance, being marked out beforehand according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His own will" (Ephes. 1. 9-11, N.T.). Also, In Christ "all the fulness was pleased to dwell, and by Him to *reconcile* all things to itself, having made peace by the blood of His Cross—by Him, whether the things on earth or the

things in the heavens. And you, who once were alienated and enemies in mind by wicked works, yet *now* has it *reconciled* in the body of His flesh through death" (Col. 1. 19-22, N.T.).

While Ephesians 1. tells us of the centering up of all things in Christ for the future universal administration, we are told in chapter 3. 2 and 8, of the present administration of grace in view of the blessing of sinners who believe on our Lord Jesus Christ even now; as Paul says: "The administration of the grace of God which has been given to me towards you, . . . to me, less than the least of all saints, has this grace been given, to announce among the nations the glad tidings of the unsearchable riches of the Christ" (N.T.). And, as we have seen, both the future and the present aspects of reconciliation are given in Colossians 1. It is a glad day for our souls when we stand upon the first mountain peak of the Roman epistle, and experience the elevating truth of chapter 5. 11, as we joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ by whom "*we have NOW received the reconciliation*" (N.T.) And if, even here, upon this height of justifying and redeeming grace, we rejoice on the principle of faith in the invigorating and healthful benefits of sound doctrine, what shall it be when glorified with our Lord Jesus Christ amidst scenes of Divine majesty, we behold the royal radiance of thrones, lordships, principalities and powers, all reconciled by Him on the ground of the peace He made by the blood of the Cross?

"Then, Lord, through endless days,
Where all Thy glories shine,
In holy, happy strains we'll praise
The grace that made us Thine."

If administration be chiefly for outward blessing to the praise of God's grace and glory, if reconciliation be

more for inward blessedness for the pleasure and satisfaction of the heart of God ; if the first has order, government and glory mainly in view, if the second brings into favour, rest and rejoicing—then the activities and the results reached by each may clearly be distinguished. The ministrations in grace now and in glory soon, resulting from the economy or administration established by God in the Man Christ Jesus—who tasted death for everything and who is now exalted above all—not only bring salvation to sinners, but sets those who believe in corporate, collective and vital blessings now, preparing them, too, for the glorious day when as Christ's co-heirs they participate with Him in that whereby the benefits of God FLOW OUT from Himself through Christ and the assembly to all in heaven and on earth. On the other hand, the activities of the love of God in and by Christ now and in the future—as the result of the pleasure of the Godhead fulness to dwell in Him, and of the peace made by His blood shed at Calvary—secure the reconciliation for persons now and positions of dignity soon ; so that, subsisting in a state of favour, joy and satisfaction—all being rightly adjusted to the fulness residing in the Son of the Father's love—the Head of the assembly in resurrection and ascension—deepest and richest blessing is known INSIDE before and with Himself. Both the one and the other are to the pleasure of our God, and if the first yields praise to His grace and to His glory, the second brings rejoicing and satisfaction to His heart.

* * * * *

It is important for us to see that even the preaching of the gospel has this latter in view. It is the outcome of the deep desires of His heart of love ; and if, when we believed the word of truth, the gospel of our salvation, we

learned that though we were enemies, we “ were reconciled to God by the death of His Son ” (Rom. 5. 10), it is nevertheless a great stride forward when we discover that, though we get the blessing, God Himself finds joy and satisfaction in our being reconciled. The pleasure of the returning one would only be deepened when he beheld the satisfaction and joy of his Father as described in Luke 15. The feasting, the music, the merry-making and the dancing, all tell eloquently the good pleasure of our God. He desired the reconciliation—and wrought in righteousness for it—when we did not ; we needed reconciling—who were at enmity against Him—when He did not ; for there was no enmity with God in regard to us. There could not be. Man needed reconciling, not God, blessed be His holy Name ! He *desired* the reconciliation truly and He secured it through the death of His Son, and by means of the gospel He brings sinners to receive it, even as Paul writes, “ God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, not reckoning to them their offences, and putting in us the word of that reconciliation. We are ambassadors, therefore, for Christ, God as it were beseeching by us : we entreat for Christ, BE RECONCILED TO GOD. Him who knew not sin He has made sin for us, that we might become God's righteousness in Him ” (2 Cor. 5. 19–21, N.T.). The “ WORD ” of that reconciliation is therefore proclaimed consistently with the character of a holy God, who is also a God of perfect love.

There is also the “ MINISTRY ” of that reconciliation as well as the “ Word ” of it, for those who have in faith received the proclamation need the unfolding to them of that which is enfolded in the Word they have believed. The new things in Christ are opened out to us, therefore, by this ministry ; so we read, “ If any one be

in Christ, there is a new creation ; the old things have passed away, behold all things have become new, and all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and given to us the ministry of that reconciliation (2 Cor. 5. 17, 18). If on our side, therefore, we are to be maintained in the rejoicings, the satisfaction, and the deep, holy blessedness of reconciliation to God even now, before the glorious day of reconciled positions of real dignity in heaven and on earth, we need to read the benefits of this ministry, and not to grow slack as to it, lest we become lean in our souls and our gladness Godward be lost, and our songs of praise be silent. All believers are made meet for the portion of the saints in light, but all are not in the present enjoyment of Divine love and favour as God desires them to be.

All of us should be awake as to this matter, and even those servants who rejoice in the results seen from the proclaiming of the word of reconciliation—though they cannot presume to be the appointed “*ambassadors*”—are often found greatly lacking in their inward joy in God Himself, through neglecting the benefits of the ministry of the truth for their own souls. Service shuts out soul prosperity when pursued at the cost of attention to sound teaching. One mourned of old, “They made me the keeper of the vineyards, but mine own vineyard have I not kept.”

Furthermore, the enrichment of our souls Godward would deepen in us His own desires for the reconciling of sinners to Himself through our Lord Jesus Christ, giving us greater longings for the spread of the Word. And then, too, we should seek that not one of His own, as far as we are concerned, should walk in estrangement and alienation from the rich benefits of reconciliation which belong to all. As we see how

God has wrought, we shall not be daunted by the difficulties in this regard.

Who could be more irreconcilable than a religious Jew and a loose Gentile? Yet Christ is their peace (where there is true faith in Him) and both are made one, to fully “reconcile both in one body to God by the Cross, having by it slain the enmity” (Ephes. 2. 16). What a triumph of love Divine! What glory for Divine grace! Both in reconciliation now, they have access together by one Spirit to the Father. This is what pleases Him, and it is what the Divine nature (which is ours) ever desires for every brother in Christ. As it is enjoyed truly by ourselves, we shall desire this increasingly for others.

How earnestly God’s ministers at the beginning besought the brethren not to “receive the grace of God in vain,” for He had heard them in the well-accepted time, in the day of salvation. And how diligent they were themselves to give “no manner of offence in anything that the ministry be not blamed” (2 Cor. 6. 1–3). Would not a little more of their “beseeching” and their carefulness for the good of others become us to-day?

Ah, beloved brethren, the universal administration soon to be seen in unfading glory flowing out through Christ and the assembly will know no failure, and the reconciliation to the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in the Son of the Father’s love will abide in eternal perfection and blessedness. May we then be powerfully affected practically by these things even now, and may both administration and reconciliation, which are according to God’s good pleasure, give character to us increasingly before the day of heavenly glory dawns!

“Soon Christ will come for all His own,
And place them with Him on His throne,
His reign and joy to share.”

LIGHT AND LIFE. No. 9.

JAMES BOYD.

Meditations on John's Gospel. Chapter 6.—*contd.*

He was the bread of God come down from heaven, the giver and the sustainer of the life He gives. But though an object of interest to the crowd that followed Him, He was not believed in but by a very few. The common people might hear Him gladly. The brainless multitude might desire to make Him a king; and if the leaders were to make Him prisoner, they must do it in the absence of the populace. Every one had his own opinion regarding Him. Some said: "Of a truth this is the Prophet." Others said: "This is the Christ." But it was nothing but their opinion, based upon their observance of Him. There was not an element of faith in it. And of what value is the opinion of the creature regarding his Creator? It is of neither more nor less value than is the opinion of the philosopher regarding the Holy Scriptures, and that is simply of no value at all.

As to why the gospel is in certain cases believed, repentance wrought in the soul, and Christ received as Lord, may be hard for even a true follower of the Saviour to determine. When our Lord was here on earth some believed on Him, and some believed not; and it was the same with regard to the gospel when preached in the power of the Spirit after His resurrection, and it is the same to-day. Yet in the majority of instances the man that believes has no better opportunity of settling the question than has the man who rejects. Nathaniel confessed Him as the Son of God, the King of Israel; and Jesus says to him: Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? Some will say, That was poor ground for faith to rest on. From a human standpoint this may be reasonably concluded, but it

altered the whole tenor of the man's life. Peter confesses Him as "The Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16. 16); and the reply of Jesus to this is: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven." And here we get from the Lord Himself the Divine solution of the question: Peter had heard and learned of the Father. It was no *opinion* with Him, the light of the Godhead of the Son was shining in his soul. There is no one left without sufficient light from God, that his wandering footsteps may be guided back to his beneficent Creator; but if men refuse to follow the light given to them, preferring the darkness, they cannot complain against God, if He in His sovereign and eternal might secure for His own glory a remnant out of this rebellious race, that they may be to the praise of that glory in the day of its display.

The flesh of Christ must be eaten, and His blood must be drunk; that is, His death must be appropriated. He gave Himself for us, for us He suffered; and are we to reject the sacrifice He made on our behalf? Are we to go in the way of Cain, and say that we are not under the judgment of death, that there was no need for blood-shedding in our interest? Can we thank God for the good things of this life, acknowledging that they all come from Him, and yet require no one to bear judgment for us, nor we see any righteousness in making the innocent suffer for the guilty? Are we to say as men do say, Though we may not be all that we would like to be, yet we are not on the low level of our forefathers, and Jesus and others like Him have set us good example, which if we follow we

shall find that perfection that we would all like to reach ! Therefore we need not despair, nor go back to the darkness of the barbarous age in which the bloody sacrifice was invented ? How early in the history of the church was the voice of Divine displeasure sent forth : " Woe unto them ! for they have gone in the way of Cain " (Jude 11.). That is the Divine answer.

His flesh was given for the life of the world. I have the privilege, given to me of God, of making that death mine, and thus reckoning that all that I am as under the judgment of God is gone in that judgment that fell upon my Saviour when He gave Himself to bear it, that I might go free. It is the only way of salvation, but it is all-sufficient. I appropriate that death. I eat His flesh and drink His blood, and thus eat and drink death to all that I am as of the old and sinful order of fallen man. I have eternal life. I dwell in Him, and He dwells in me. He is my life. I have none other, and as possessor of this life I look to be in the resurrection of life ; that is, if my Lord has not come before I pass away from this scene. If I do pass away before then, He shall quicken this mortal body by His almighty power, and fashion it like His own, in the day when He shall rise to subdue all things to Himself.

But at the risk of a certain amount of repetition, though I trust not wearisome, I will come back to the first chapter, where it is said : " The Word became flesh." Our word is the means by which we make known our thoughts to others, and the Word of God is that by which He manifests all that He has to say to us. He comes a Man amongst men. I was on the point of saying—the most accessible Man upon earth ; but that will not do, for He was with respect to other men

neither comparative, nor superlative : what He was He was *absolutely*. What He was He was incomparably. How could it be otherwise with regard to Him, for " *The Word was God* " ? Such words of grace as flowed from His lips had never been before heard within the limits of the vast creation.

In this way He drew near to men, and on this account the vilest of the fallen human race could draw near to Him. His words sounded the deepest depths of the human heart, and laid it bare in all its utter loathsomeness, but the words that did this came warm from the fountain of eternal love, so that men felt that it was the Friend of sinners who was talking to them. No one could bring to light and condemnation the cursed pride that, like a fell weed, dug its deadly fibres into the heart of Job, as Elihu could, but to no one else could Job have given such a ready and attentive ear ; for though Elihu did not spare him, as one would to whom the gravity of his empty pride was of little importance, yet the poor afflicted patriarch felt that the one who most mercilessly condemned his erring words was not against him. How very forcibly this spirit of grace and truth made itself felt in the words and ways of Jesus !

But that the Word should be made flesh was a necessity, because in the ways of God this must be, if the counsels of eternal love were to be righteously fulfilled. The One who could take the position of life-giving Spirit toward men who lay dead in sins must be One whose life, given as a ransom for all, would be of such value that it would meet the requirements of a righteous God, and efface the dishonour that had been done to His holy name and character. If He is by His quickening power to bring souls out from moral death, then must He bear

the judgment that lay upon them. This could only be done by His becoming flesh. It can only be a Man that is able to meet the claims of God, and bear the judgment which lay upon those whom He is to bring out of death, making them live to God. Hence He is spoken of as the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. This has opened a way of salvation for rebellious sinners, glorifying God who approaches men in grace, and which eventually will be the ground upon which the whole sinful scene shall be cleansed from the presence of that which is so hateful to God, and bring in a new heaven and a new earth in which shall dwell righteousness.

Therefore His becoming flesh was a Divine necessity. "Forasmuch as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. 2. 14, 15). The anti-christs in the days of the apostles denied Christ thus come, and against them the saints are warned (1 John 4. 1-6; 2. 7): "Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God." The reader will notice here that the passage is not speaking of *persons* but of *spirits*, though surely it is by means of persons that these spirits speak. Still, many a person willingly subscribes to orthodox views who has no part in the blessings of the gospel. But if one is speaking by a spirit he will not confess Him as come in flesh, nor will he call Him *Lord* (1 Cor. 12. 3), because it is really the spirit that is speaking and not the man.

The denial of either the Godhead or the Manhood of Christ is the denial of Christianity root and branch; and for a professing Christian to deny either is to prove himself apostate from Christ, and to place himself outside the pale of Christian charity. Let us see to it that these two great truths of Christ's Person are not only held fast by ourselves but by everyone to whom we extend the right hand of fellowship. At the same time let us whole-heartedly acknowledge all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruption (Ephes. 6. 24).

John the Baptist points Him out as "The Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world." It is not the *sins*, but the *sin* of the world: that evil principle that was begotten by the devil, and to which Adam opened the door for its entrance into the world: that shall be taken away by the Lamb of God. A day is coming in which there shall not be a single trace of it left either in heaven or on earth. We look for a new heaven and a new earth in which righteousness shall dwell (2 Pet. 3. 13). Sin and its attendant consequences shall then have disappeared for ever.

But the very fact that it is the Lamb that shall do it conveys to our hearts the right impression, that it shall not be done without a sacrifice on His part by whom the sin shall be done away. The Lamb must first of all be slain, and a way opened up in righteousness by which God shall be glorified and sinners saved. The Lamb is the Word become flesh, the incarnate Son of the living God. In the love of God He came in flesh that He might be the propitiation for our sins, and that we might be brought back to God in righteousness and love.

With the Bread that endures to everlasting life in their midst how eagerly

they ran after the bread that perished ! They say : " Lord, evermore give us this bread," but they could view it in no other light than as bread for the support of human life here in this world. When they saw it was not this, it lost its interest for them. To appropriate a dead Christ, in opposition to a living Messiah after the flesh, was not to be thought of by them. Words that were to the disciples words of eternal life were to the carnal-minded crowd " a hard saying," not to be listened to. When they had eaten of the loaves and fishes they were convinced He was the prophet that should come into the world, and they would at once make Him a king. But if they have to do with God about their sinful and ruined state, and if they must own that death lies upon them as the just judgment of God on account of their sins, and also that their Messiah must shed His blood on their behalf, as atonement for their many transgressions, then they can see no gospel for them in that. Israel was placed under a ritual that bore the most powerful testimony to the fact that man was a sinner, and therefore under the judgment of death, and that there was no way back into acceptance with God except on the ground of the death of a victim, which had personal excellency, and which died in his room and stead ; and not only that, but the prophets bore united testimony to the sufferings of Christ on their behalf, yet who among them in that day of Christ's appearing believed that He must suffer for sin on their behalf ? The life of flesh has a powerful hold upon every one of us, and it is only when we get some clear understanding of God's way of deliverance, and the liberty and joy that is ours by means of that

deliverance, that we can be truly thankful for it.

Of that deliverance the Holy Spirit is the power, and apart from Him it is impossible to be realized. It is necessary to know the doctrine, but the knowledge of this is not sufficient, I must have power to appropriate the doctrine to my own case, and only the Spirit can enable me to do this. How many saints are trying to reckon themselves dead to sin and alive to God, and yet are finding this doctrine altogether contradicted by their practical experience ! Along with the knowledge of the truth regarding this most important subject we require to be indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God, who is the " Spirit of life in Christ Jesus " (Rom. 8.). The life of Christ cannot be separated from the Spirit, and it is the law, or principle, of that life in us that sets us free from the law, or principle of sin and death.

And of that Spirit we believers are partakers. Not only is Jesus pointed out by John as the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world, but also as the Son of God who baptizes with the Holy Ghost (John 1. 32-34). This great gift is given to dwell in all who believe " the gospel of their salvation " (Ephes. 1. 13). By Him we know that we are in Christ beyond the reach of condemnation. We are in the One who bore the condemnation, and who glorified God in bearing it, and now that we are in Him we come into all the results of the work accomplished by Him when made sin for us. All this is infinitely precious, but can only be understood as we enter into our new position in Him, and only by the Spirit can this position be intelligently entered into.

THE HOLY CITY.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

Rev. 21. 9-27 : 22. 1-7.

An Address given in Edinburgh, on January 7, 1926.

THE last time I addressed you my theme was the church as the wife of the Lamb—what the church is to Christ, how it will fill His heart with satisfaction and joy, satisfaction and joy which shall be eternal. To-night I desire to speak on the church as the holy city—not so much what she will be **TO** Christ but what she will be **FOR** Christ. In the first aspect of the church the great thing is **LOVE**, the love of Christ known by the church and responded to, fully and without reserve. When I come to speak of the church as the new Jerusalem, the holy city, it is not so much *love* as **LIGHT**—light for the nations. For if you have followed the reading of these verses carefully, you have noticed that the nations are to walk in the light of that holy city. There is love Christward, there is light manward: love Christward from the church and light manward shines through the church.

THE BRIDE, THE LAMB'S WIFE.

Notice how she is introduced. The angel said to John: "Come, and I will show thee the Bride, the Lamb's wife." When the church is all that she ought to be to Christ, which this description of her indicates, then she will be all that she ought to be as light to man, and the measure of her love to Christ will be the measure of her light to men. I want to give these things a present and practical application. It follows if what I say is true, that just in that measure in which we love Christ now, are we really a witness for Him here below. Our light in the midst of the prevailing darkness is measured by our love to Christ and our love to Christ is measured by our knowledge of His love to us. If we keep ourselves in His

love, if we keep ourselves near to Him, separate from those things that can mar us for His pleasure, we shall enjoy His love, and we cannot enjoy His love without responding to it, and just in that measure that we respond to His love, so shall we be witnesses for Him in the world. Our light manward is measured by our love Christward.

It is an inspiring thing to look onward and see the glorious destiny that lies before the church and to know ourselves as part of it. Every redeemed soul indwelt by the Holy Ghost is part of this which is to appear as this holy and glorious city. It will be, of course, consequent upon the catching out of this world of the saints when the Lord comes for them. He is to descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God and in an instant the saints of God, living and dead, will respond to his triumphal shout, and as one united and blessed company we shall be for ever with the Lord (1 Thess. 4).

HAVING THE GLORY OF GOD.

First we enter the glory, made meet for it by the Father's grace and the blood of Jesus, and then we come out of the glory, having the glory of God, to shed the light of that glory upon the earth during the millennial reign of Christ upon the earth. She comes out from God, and is the vessel of the glory of God. What is the glory of God? The glory of God is the display of His own blessed nature. He has been able to reveal what is in His heart. How has He done that? He has done that in the person of His beloved Son, and having done that the great fact has come into evidence that **GOD IS LOVE**. That is the glory of God,

You would not know it by simply scanning the heavens. They declare His handiwork, His wisdom, His divinity, His power. Men did not learn this great fact at Sinai. This great and blessed revelation was made by the beloved Son when He came into this world, and the light that He brought into the world is to be contained in the holy city, and that light will radiate from it to the utmost bounds of creation, and all creation will rejoice in the fact that God is love.

Each heart its praise outpouring
To Him all praise above,
Each voice in strains adoring
Re-echoes—"GOD IS LOVE."

This should be our Christian testimony to-day, for this surely is the fact that has changed us, but how has it been manifested towards us? "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4.). The love of God has been made manifest in relieving us of our liabilities and removing the load of sins that oppressed us, and by bringing us into love and light and liberty; it should be, indeed, the joy of our hearts that God is love, and this is the witness that we should bear to the world. What a glad witness is this! What a wonderful word of life is this, that God is love, and that He has so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son. That is the gospel that we have to preach. That is the light we have to bear in the darkness. That is the glory that will shine from the new Jerusalem and in the light of which the nations shall walk. They will get an entirely new conception of God, even as we did when first we were enlightened and learned that God is love. They will learn what

wisdom and righteousness in administration are, and every national and international question that can arise will be solved in the light in which they walk, but this will be the glory that excelleth—"God is love."

FOUR-SQUARE AND EVER-OPEN GATES.

The city will be four-square, facing without fear or shame every point of the compass. It will be equal on every side, and on every side will be three gates. Gates that shall not be shut at all by day, and there is no night there. I must link together the four-square city and the 12 gates in the walls of it. It is the city that is equal in every part of it that can open its gates to every quarter of the wide earth. But what for? A great city like London keeps its gates open perpetually, for it is dependent upon every part of the earth for its very life. From North, South, East and West supplies are continually pouring into it, but the gates of the holy city will be opened, not for supplies to flow into it, but for blessings to flow out of it, blessings for the whole earth. This city of the glory of God will look out in every direction, and wherever it looks it will pour out its blessing. It is a great thing when a Christian is marked by that four-squaredness now. And in view of what we are to be we ought to be this now. But, alas! how often it is otherwise with us. A man may be intelligent in the Scriptures, and even prominent in meetings and in service, and be different in his home or business. He is not four-square, and just in that measure in which he lacks in this he is enfeebled in his testimony, and as a channel of blessing to men.

Suppose I act in an unchristian, ungracious way in the home or business or in the presence of unconverted men. On that side at least the gate is closed and the blessing cannot flow out; I am

ashamed, and my mouth is closed ; but if I keep myself in the love of God and maintain a conscience void of offence before God and man then am I four-square, unashamed, and can face men and bless them. This our Lord was in all the holy perfection of His Person. He was all that He said, and none could convince Him of sin.

The names of the twelve tribes of Israel are upon the gates, because according to promise Israel is to have the honour of administration on earth, and whatever blessing flows to the nations from the heavenly city will flow through Israel as the channel of it to the nations.

And every gate is a pearl. The pearl is not an Old Testament figure, it does not belong to Israel. It is a New Testament figure, and is a similitude of the church taken out of the sea of the nations. The merchantman sought goodly pearls, and finding one of great price, sold all that he had to possess it. Christ is the merchant man and the pearl is His church. In His eyes it is pure, precious and one. The church is to have this character in all her outgoings in witness and blessing ; the gates of pearl emphasize what I have already stated, that when the church is what Christ would have it to be then is it the centre of blessing for all.

THE STREET OF GOLD.

And in the midst of the city was a street of gold, not streets of gold as some of our poets have sung, but street, a street of gold like unto transparent glass. Here is gold of a new sort. There is nothing so opaque, nothing so blinding to the eyes as the gold that men crave after, but this street will be transparent gold, there will be no defilement there. And who will walk on this street ? It is laid for the feet of God, when He walks there must be a street of gold, a righteousness which is

of Himself and where He can display His character in all His ways. A man is known by the way he walks, and where he walks, and God will make known His character when He walks in this street, and there will be nothing hidden and dark in it, it will be like unto transparent glass.

It has always been His desire to walk with men. He came down into the garden to walk with Adam in the cool of the day. But there was no street of gold there, and Adam hid away in his fear of God behind the trees of the garden. He was a sinner and God could not walk with him. And when God gathered Israel out of Egypt and brought them to Himself in the wilderness He desired to walk with them, but there was no golden street in the midst of them. His commandments were on the lips but not in their hearts, and He could only be with them in the angel of His presence behind the veil in the tabernacle, there was no liberty there either for Him or for them. But when we come to the New Testament we have some wonderful words at the end of 2 Corinthians 6. The saints of God are commanded to be separate from evil things, to come out from among them, for there could be no communion between Christ and Belial, between the believer and the unbeliever, between the temple of God and demons, and then come the wonderful words, "God hath said, I will dwell in them, and WALK IN THEM." Not only dwell in them, we often stress that, but walk in them, "form and find within them a street of gold where I can walk, and show my character through them."

We may know little of this now ; alas, that we should know so little, but in the day of which this vision of glory speaks it will be known in its fulness, and we shall walk where God walks, for we shall be like Him in character and

walk with Him. A street is for common use, and in holy communion with Him, delighting in the display of His own character, ourselves the vessels for the display of it, we shall abide for ever; for in the ages to come He will show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us through Christ Jesus.

GOD IS THE LIGHT AND THE LAMB THE LAMP.

God gives light to the city, but all that light is in the Lamb, for He is the lamp, as the word should be. There is no light, no knowledge of God apart from the Lamb of God. No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father He hath declared Him. So John tells us in the first chapter of his gospel. Yes, but when public witness was borne to Him it was "Behold the Lamb of God." He was the Light of the world, but to be this, and so that the light could reach us, He had to come as the Lamb.

What blind fools men are when they refuse the cross of Christ. They desire a gospel without a sacrifice, without the blood. God has no such gospel for men. He can give no light nor blessing apart from the Lamb, the Lamb is the lamp, all the light of God abides in Him and shines forth from Him, and that light is for the blessing of men.

THE PURE RIVER OF THE WATER OF LIFE.

And from the throne of God and the Lamb the pure river of the water of life flows forth. This is blessing unrestrained in the power of the Holy Ghost, but it flows from the throne. The throne indicates God's supremacy, but the Lamb is there; hence what a sight for the world in which the Lamb was crucified when He appears in the throne of God! A cross of a malefactor on earth, the throne of God in

heaven! But that cross and His place in that throne secure blessing for men. The pure river flows forth from the throne and its streams of grace carry refreshment, and life and healing wherever they flow, and God in the supremacy of His grace, enthroned in righteousness, will be acknowledged as the source of all good. And if any ask how God who is eternally and supremely just can bless from His throne a world that had sinned so foully against Him, the answer is—*the Lamb is there.*

THE TREE OF LIFE.

The tree of life is Christ—the food of privileged dwellers in that city, and He is enough for them. None will hunger there, nor will they tire of that heavenly food, for there is no monotony in Jesus for the heart of one that walks in the Spirit. And He is enough now. He brings forth His fruit in His season now. He is able to meet every fresh need, every fresh longing of the soul now. He is enough the heart and mind to fill. We shall not tire of Him there. May we be satisfied with Him now, and sit under His shadow with great delight and find His fruit sweet to our taste. Fruit is God's food, it is for His delight.

We shall share for ever God's joy in His beloved Son, and that upon which He feeds, if I may say it reverently, on that we shall also feed. We shall share God's thoughts of Christ, and this will yield us joy and satisfaction for ever.

And, then, there is to be no more curse,—God and the Lamb shall be in it. The Lamb bore the curse. Thorns the earth was to bring forth, as the product of the curse, and thorns were placed upon His sacred brow. He bore the curse that He might remove it. And His servants shall serve Him—they shall see His face and His name shall be

in their foreheads. What a prospect ! Especially for those of us who feel how feeble our service here is ! But there His servants shall serve Him. Love cannot be satisfied unless it is serving, and the Lord will give His servants the joy and opportunity of serving Him in all the power of the Holy Ghost—without any faltering or failure.

THE LORD GOD GIVETH THEM LIGHT.

“There shall be no night there and they need no candle neither light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light and they shall reign for ever.” We shall have no need of either natural light or artificial light in that holy city—God will be enough. The light we shall need—the light of our lives for ever will come from God Himself. It is what God is that will fill that scene with radiance and fill our hearts with joy. And He would be that now. He gives us natural blessings—so full of tenderness and mercy is He ; and what He gives is ours richly to enjoy, for having spared not His own Son, will He not with Him freely give us all things ? And these natural gifts in a certain way are light to us. But, friends, if those things were removed, what then ? Suppose every natural joy, every comfort, every earthly ray of light were removed, could we say, “The Lord God giveth us light—He is enough” ?

I heard of a Christian who was in very affluent circumstances. Suddenly with one sweep, he was beggared, and in explaining his experience afterwards, he said, “When I was well-to-do, I saw God in everything, and now that I am beggared, *I have got everything in God.*” I heard of a wealthy American who was very glad he had wealth, not for his own sake but for the sake of his wife whom he idolized. This lady was a Christian of a meek and gentle spirit.

Her husband did not understand the secret of that quiet, happy life, but he greatly admired it, and was glad he could give her the comforts of life, for she was a delicate person. As time went on, the wheel of fortune turned and left him with scarcely a penny. He was very distressed about it. He had to leave the mansion and go into the somewhat mean flat, and he wondered how it would go with his wife. But he found she was able to sing, “Oh ! The peace my Saviour gives,” just as sweetly without the grand piano. The Lord God was her light. Oh ! is it so that He is able to do that for us ? Were every earthly light removed and every prop gone and every comfort taken from us, would He be enough ? Yes, we should find Him to be enough. The Lord God is our light. Beloved Christians, what a God we have got ! And the day is coming when the vast number of those who inhabit that holy city will find everything in God, and when they find everything in God, there will be no night. The best things on earth change, they wax and wane, rise to their zenith and set. But when God is everything there is no night.

The Lord Himself speaking to His servant, says, “These sayings are true and faithful.” Let us lay hold of them and cherish them. Let us hold to them as the very sayings of God, true and faithful—not the fallible words of men the fruit of a darkened imagination, but the true and faithful sayings of God. Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book. In view of the Lord’s speedy return we ought to understand this book of Revelation. If we keep the sayings of this book, we shall be kept from the pollution of this world, and be those who are ready, watching, and saying in unison with the Holy Ghost, “Even so come, Lord Jesus.”

THE RETREAT OF DIVINE LOVE.

(W. BRAMWELL DICK.)

JOHN 5. 18 shows us once more the ceaseless hatred and the relentless persecution that followed our blessed Lord throughout His public ministry in this world. Verse 20 lets us into the secret of where, as Man, He ever found His retreat, and where He rejoiced in the knowledge of the love of the Father. The opening words of this verse, to which alone we refer, might be read: "The Father *fondly* loveth the Son." Here He found His home, and in the consciousness that He was the Object of the Father's special affection, His soul delighted. Here surely it was that that of which He spoke later as "My peace" (John 14. 27) and "My joy" (John 15. 11) was known by Him in a very real sense.

Now turn to John 16. 27. The Lord Jesus had been showing His disciples that when He was gone, His place of rejection here would be their place, and the hatred that had been heaped

upon Him would be meted out to them. In the midst of all this, however, His retreat would be theirs. The same word seems to be used here as in the previous quotation: "The Father Himself *fondly* loveth you," and that because, in His great grace, the Father gave them credit for having a special affection for the Son. So that amid the hatred, persecution and tribulation (John 15. 18, 20; 16. 33) which would be their portion in the world, the retreat for those disciples in their day was, and for us in this day is, in the conscious knowledge and happy enjoyment of the Father's love. How wonderful, indeed, is this, that we should be permitted to draw from the same resource and retire to the same retreat as Himself; that we should be able to turn from the hatred of the world to the enjoyment of the love of the Father and there find the home of our souls.

Leeds, October 18, 1925.

"FREE," YET "SUBJECT."

(H. J. VINE.)

[T is often just this lack of true balance which brings in disaster upon the path of service. Liberty is claimed and subjection refused, or subjection is pressed and freedom in service disallowed. "*Am I not free?*" asked the apostle in 1 Cor. 9. 1. I am "free from all" (19), he said, in regard to the work with which he was entrusted, though he made himself servant of all for their good. Nevertheless he was truly subject: "not as without law to God, but as *legitimately subject to Christ*" (21, N.Tr.). No servant enjoyed greater freedom! Indeed, some sought, he tells us, "to spy out our liberty

which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage" (Gal. 2. 4); yet he served the Lord in a consistent manner, for he knew that one "is not crowned unless he contend lawfully" (2 Tim. 2. 5). It is the Son who makes us "REALLY FREE," for the Son is free; but He took upon Him the form of a servant, and said Himself, "I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment even so I do." When we meditate upon both His freedom and His wondrous subjection, we learn what is acceptable to God.

HAS THE CHURCH BEEN COMMISSIONED TO PREACH?

SOME correspondence and questions have arisen out of our answer to this question given in the January issue. And our attention has been drawn to remarks on the subject by the late J. N. Darby, in *The Synopsis*, vol. v, pages 177, 178. They set forth what the church's relation to the truth would have been if she had been faithful. We give our readers the benefit of them.

"It is important to remark the assembly's part when faithful. She receives, she maintains the truth in her own faith; she guards it, she is subject to it, as a truth, a revelation, which comes from God Himself. She is not the source of the truth. As an assembly she does not propagate it—does not teach it. She says 'I believe,' not 'Believe.' This last is the function of ministry, in which man is always individually in relationship with God by means of a gift which he holds from God, and for the exercise of which he is responsible to God. This is all-important.

"Those who possess these gifts are members of the body. The assembly exercises her discipline with regard to all that is of the flesh in them, in the exercise, or apparent exercise, of a gift as in all else. She preserves her own purity without respect to persons as to their outward appearance, being guided therein by the Word (for this is her responsibility); but *she* does not teach, *she* does not preach.

"The Word goes before the assembly, for she has been gathered together by the Word. The apostles . . . and a thousand others have proclaimed the Word, and thus the assembly has been

gathered out. It has been said that the assembly was before the Scriptures. As regards the written contents of the New Testament this is true; but the preached Word was before the assembly. The assembly is its fruit, but is never its source. The edification even of the assembly, when it is gathered together, comes direct from God, through the gifts which He has bestowed; the Holy Ghost distributing to each according to His will. . . .

"We have thus in the ways of God respecting this subject three things closely united, yet different; ministry, the assembly, and the Word of God, that is, the written Word; when it is not written, it belongs to the order of ministry.

"*Ministry*—as regards the Word, for this is not the only service—preaches to the world, and teaches or exhorts the members of the assembly.

"*The Assembly* enjoys communion with God, is fed, and grows by means of that with which its different members supply it. It preserves, and in its confession bears witness to the truth. It maintains holiness, and by the grace and presence of the Holy Ghost enjoys mutual communion; and in love cares for the temporal need of all its members.

"*The Written Word* is the rule that God has given, containing all that He has revealed. It is complete (Col. i. 25). It can, because it is the truth, be the means of communicating the truth to a soul; the Holy Ghost can use it as a means; but at all events it is the perfect rule, the authoritative communication of the will and mind of God to the assembly."

"THE UNIQUE CLAIM, THE UNIVERSAL APPEAL, AND THE UNCHANGEABLE CHARACTER OF CHRIST."

(DAVID ROSS.)

An Address to Young Men given in London, December 18, 1925.

LOOKING through my notebook on the way to this meeting from Edinburgh to-day, I was struck with these lines, which I will read to you :—

I do not wish to see my sins more plain ;
But this to know, Thy love without a stain.

I would not see the vileness of my heart ;
But this would know, how pure and true Thou art.

I would forget my paltry life so small,
And know Thy greatness, Thou, my all in all.

Oh teach me not how deep my spirit's night,
But flood me with Thy beams, O perfect Light !

To-night I want, as God may enable me, to bring before you Christ in the beauty and glory of His Person, so that when we hear Him say, "Follow Me," we may leave all and follow Jesus. I will read John 8. 46, Matt. 11. 28-30, Matt. 28. 18-20, Heb. 7. 24-26. A year ago this passage in John 8. came before me with great force, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" Here is a Man who stands up before enemies who were watching every act of His life in order to get something by which they might accuse Him, and He boldly says, "Can any one of you convict Me of sin?" Now as far as I have read history that claim is unique. There have been many founders of religions, but none of them ever claimed to be sinless. Take Judaism, founded humanly speaking by Moses. A wonderful man was Moses, and a man who made God's law and God's righteousness the central teaching of that religion. Does he make such a claim? No; he does say, when the people had sinned, "I will go up to the mountain and speak with God; *peradventure* I may make atonement." But Moses

soon found that he needed an atonement for himself. He failed to reach the land because he lost his temper. Moses was the meekest man that ever lived, and yet he failed in his strong point. Jesus says, "I am meek and lowly in heart," and never once do you find Him failing there. There was no "peradventure" with the Lord Jesus Christ. Moses needed an atonement for himself, but this Man, the perfect, spotless, sinless Son of God can offer Himself up as a ransom *without spot* to God. Millions of people are adherents of Confucius. He never claimed perfection. He says, "As a man of letters I make a claim to be equal with any man, but to the character of the perfect man, carrying out those things He enjoins upon others, I make no claim." And if history is correct, Confucius was like many another teacher, a cantankerous individual. Millions of people follow the beliefs of Mahomet. You read the book he wrote, and you will find that man is enjoined to pray for the forgiveness of his own sins. So I may go on. Take the man whom our modern critics tell us founded Christianity, the Apostle Paul. If I have a hero, my hero is the Apostle Paul. I do thank God for the wonderful grace that wrought in that marvellous man. But the gulf there is between the Apostle Paul's life and that of our Lord none would be more ready to proclaim than Paul himself. In one of the last letters he wrote he says, "I am the chief of sinners."

But what do the friends of Jesus say of Him? You read the four Gospels, which bring His life before you. The

knowledge we have of the Lord Jesus Christ's life comes from these disciples, who I believe were inspired by the Holy Spirit of God to write what they have written. What kind of men do they show themselves to be? Just a blundering, foolish, faltering set of people, yet nothing but perfection in the Man with whom they companied in intimate fellowship for three and a half years. Peter later on, as an old man, looks back, and says, "He was a Lamb without blemish." You may say they were prejudiced. Well, call His enemies. When the officers were sent to arrest Him, He was speaking those words which have brought comfort to so many hearts: "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink," then out of him shall flow rivers of living water. "The words I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." And they went back to those who sent them and said, "Never man spake like this Man." Those lynx-eyed Pharisees who hated Him without a cause brought a charge against Him, and the only charge they could make up was that of being disloyal to Cæsar. Pilate, who should have known, said that charge was false. What else did they say? That He was a friend of publicans and sinners. We thank God He was that. The very charge they brought against Him was His glory. His enemies, seeking the very worst they could find, could only fix on those things which we now see to be merits and virtues. Then what about Judas? Dr. Joseph Parker was once asked by someone why the Lord chose Judas. He said, "There is a greater mystery that is perplexing me, and that is, why did the Lord choose Joseph Parker." The testimony of Judas is as valuable as the rest. Have you ever done anybody a wrong, and tried to minimize it by finding out something in that person that would justify you. I

have tried it. Here is a man torn with remorse which sends him to a suicide's grave. Can he justify his crime from his intimate knowledge of Jesus? No, he says, "I have betrayed innocent blood." Judas was three and a half years with Christ, and he could find no flaw in Him to excuse his base treachery. Pilate hated the Jews. They were a nuisance to him. They plagued the life out of him. Yet that cynical, sceptical, sneering Pilate is profoundly impressed with a Man who in outward form is one of those despised Jews, and he does all he can to save from the cross the One he knew not, the sinless Son of God.

Just consider some of His claims. The Lord Jesus inculcates upon His people the need for self-judgment. He says, "Before you take the mote out of your brother's eye, get the beam out of your own." There never was any suggestion of any beam or any mote to take out of His eye. He could stand up and denounce the sins of the Pharisees without the reservation that He was a sinner. He never makes excuses for Himself. If you and I had been invited to the deathbed of Lazarus, a beloved friend, and we had not gone, we should have begun to make excuses. The Son of God makes no excuse. He never explains His actions. He does not apologize. He never acknowledges any mistake. There is a mystery there. Who is He? The old Latin Fathers used to say, "Si non Deus, non bonus." Mark that. There are people who will tell you that Jesus was a wonderfully good man. But, as the Latin Fathers said, if He was not God, He was not good. He made claims, He issued challenges that none but God could issue, and when you read the whole of the gospel stories you will find His claims are amply backed up.

I must move on to the universal

appeal. Thank God, I had a Christian mother and father, near to whom I could kneel and say :—

Gentle Jesus, meek and mild,
Look upon a little child.

Think of the appeal that this Man makes to little children ! But we are no longer little children. What is supposed to characterize a young man is strength. We can say to Him—

Strong Son of God, Immortal Love !

Consider the appeal Christ made to different classes in His life. Take the soldiers. There is a centurion at Capernaum. What is it about Christ that appeals to him ? He speaks with authority. He is no soft, weak person. He is strong. His words are powerful words. Young men, He is strong for you, and He is worthy to attract your heart, the Man who could speak to disease and cause it to flee, and before whom even death bowed. Someone has contrasted the death of the great Greek philosopher, Socrates, with the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. Socrates was condemned to death by an easy method, to drink a cup of hemlock. He dies with a kind of flippant jest upon his lips, telling his friends to sacrifice a cock to *Æsculapius*. Look at Jesus. He dies the most painful and shameful death that ever wicked man invented for his fellows. He dies surrounded by His foes, with a prayer of forgiveness on His lips, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." You and I may be willing to die, but there is not one of us who can will to die. The Lord Jesus Christ was not only willing to die, but He willed to die. He dismissed His spirit. He did not die through weakness as you and I will have to die some day unless the Lord comes. He died because He dismissed His spirit ; and looking on at that death a strong, probably hardened, Roman soldier said : "Surely this man was the Son of God."

Take Matthew, another type of man. They tell us that we Scotch people are fond of collecting money. Perhaps we are, but I think the Jews can beat us. There was one of these Jews, a man who had braved public opinion—because it was an unpatriotic thing to be a tax-gatherer for Cæsar. He was ostracized by his own people, but he did it all for the love of gold. Gold has a mighty power on the hearts of men, but one day there came along this Man, Jesus. Matthew is sitting there with his money, when Jesus says, "Follow Me." And the gold lost its power ; he left all, and followed Jesus. There is something wonderful for you. Here is a man who can appeal to little children, to strong soldiers, to prosperous money-earning business men. Look at Peter and John, hard-headed fishermen. They left the finest catch they ever had and followed Jesus. Look at Martha and Mary, women whose hearts were after the truth. They are drawn—one of them to the feet of Jesus, and He makes Himself so much to that woman that she takes her chiefest treasure, breaks the box and pours the ointment upon His head.

Here is another woman. Look at her creeping into the house of Simon the Pharisee, the last house in the city she would have gone near. Simon scowls as this wretched, sinful woman comes in. She does not heed Simon's frowns. She is not thinking about Simon, but Christ. Perhaps she had heard those words, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

But He does not appeal to men in His lifetime only. Think of the wonderful appeal that the Lord Jesus Christ has made to men all down the ages. This week I was reading in *The Christian* an article by a medical man, who was telling how he went to Cambridge and

spoke to one of the greatest medical professors, Sir Clifford Allbutt I believe his name was. This professor, one of the heads of his profession, said, "I owe everything to Jesus." He had also been in Central Africa, and had spoken to a little black girl, not even intelligent as a black girl, and he said the same words fell from her lips, "I owe everything to Jesus." All down the ages this wonderful Man has made His appeal. Have you caught some glimpse of the greatness and the grandeur of the Lord Jesus Christ? What appealed to you as little children, perhaps, does not appeal to you as young men. What appeals to you now will, perhaps, not appeal when the hair grows grey and the limbs become feeble. I want to bring before you this wonderful Man, Jesus, Strong Son of God, eternal Lover of our souls, whose power can meet the need of every stage and every age, every generation and every class. Thank God, I have found in Christ all that my heart needs. Do you doubt my feeble witness? Come and see for yourself.

You will find Him the centre,
The very truth and life,
Resplendent resolution
Of the endless doubt and strife.

Are you a Nathanael with sincere difficulties? Philip could not answer Nathanael's question. It was a poser. What did he say? "Come and see."

You will find in Him a fitness
For your highest, deepest thought,
In Him the fair ideal
So long you vainly sought.
In Him the great reality
You never knew before,
In Him the Lord that you must love,
The God you must adore.

Consider the universal appeal. We never think of Jesus as a Jew. Take the great names of religious and social philosophers. Whatever they were, their race clung to them. Think of

John Knox. He was a Scotsman to the backbone. Think of Martin Luther—a German in every fibre of his being. John Calvin was a keen-witted Frenchman. St. Augustine was a Roman. They were limited to their race, but whoever thinks of race in connection with Jesus? Paul, with all his broad-mindedness, and with all his wonderful proclamation of the glorious liberty there is in Christianity, was a Jew none the less. Here is One who was only thirty-three and a half years old when He died, who was never outside the limits of a little land which you could just drop into this country of England, itself not a very big country, and yet He has an appeal that is world-wide. There was a Japanese gentleman who used to think that if God would only send someone to tell him about Him He would believe. One day he came across a little copy of John's Gospel, and read about the sent One of the Father, and that man's longings were satisfied. Then there was a brutal murderer in Greenland. This man was intent when they read the story of the cross. He said, "Oh, tell me that again! I, too, want to know Jesus."

Whose Son is He? He is the Son of God. Oh, young men, have your hearts bowed in the presence of that adorable Lord? You read through the Gospel of John, and mark the progress of souls in the knowledge of Christ. Take as an example chapter 9. Here a man gets his eyes opened. His first testimony is, "*A man that is called Jesus opened my eyes.*" As he keeps true to the light he has, he gets more light. Then he says, "He is a *prophet.*" He is getting on. Then as the opposition deepens he begins to think over the thing, and he says, "He cannot be a sinner. He must be *of God.*" The Pharisees cast him out, but the man who was true to his light

got more. Jesus comes along and says, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" He says, "Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him?" And to him Jesus unveils His glory. Shall we not bow with him to-night, and say, "Lord, I believe." He worshipped Him. Then there was doubting Thomas. This is a day of doubt. There are sincere doubters. I have had my doubts and difficulties, and they are not all solved, but I have had a glimpse of the glory of the Son of God, and like doubting Thomas—or I should say, believing Thomas—I can say, "MY LORD AND MY GOD."

Now a word on the unchanging character of Christ. David Livingstone got to know the Lord Jesus Christ, and with a heart filled with the love of Jesus he went away into the unknown heart of Africa among savage tribes, thus braving terrible dangers. Underneath this text I read to you, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age," he wrote: "This is the word of a perfect gentleman." What is a gentleman? A gentleman is one who keeps his word. I have not been much in foreign lands, but I have been enough to feel terribly lonely and homesick. I remember years ago being in France on a Sunday morning, and I had not a Christian friend. I went up to my bedroom because there was nobody with whom I could have fellowship, when suddenly that verse came into my mind—

"But God is round about me,
And can I be afraid?"

The sense of the Lord's presence filled me with such joy that I began to have a meeting all to myself. When I came downstairs the lady said, "You must have been very happy. We heard you

singing." David Livingstone lived at a village called Blantyre. He had to walk to Glasgow to catch the boat. He read that wonderful Psalm—Bishop Hannington called it his travelling Psalm—Psalm 121. and bade good-bye to his friends. You remember how that Psalm ends: "The Lord shall keep thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth even for evermore."

Young men, you are going in and out. As you go out to business, do you commend your going out and your coming in to this One who never changes? A godly Jew does that. He touches a little thing at his door, called a Mezuzah, and repeats that text. There will come a day when you will go out not to come in again. Do you know what it is to say, "Though I pass through the valley of the shadow of death"? None of us have been through the valley of death yet. Will you be able to say, "I fear no evil, for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff comfort me"? David Livingstone's last words were addressed to that One on whose promise He relied: "Lo, I am with you always." Did you ever think of the claim in that verse? Here is One who claims omnipotence—all power is given unto Me; One who claims eternity, the attribute of God—I am with you always to the end of the age; One who claims omnipresence, for His disciples were going all over the world. Is there one here that does not know Him? Let me repeat Frances Ridley Havergal's lines:—

Awake! O thou that sleepest;
The Deliverer is near.
Arise, go forth to meet Him;
Bow down, for He is here.
Ye shall count your true existence
From this first blessed tryst,
For He waiteth to reveal Himself,
The very God in Christ.

NOTES ON GALATIANS. Chapter 3.

(F. B. HOLE.)

HAVING thus vindicated the truth of the gospel the apostle appeals to the Galatians in a very forcible way. Their folly was very manifest in the light of what he had just stated, and he brings it home to them by a series of rapid questions, appealing to what had already been accomplished in their midst and in their hearts. Christ crucified had been set forth among them, and they had believed in Him, and received the Spirit of God, and suffered for their faith. Had all this been ministered to them, and even miracles wrought in connection with it, by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith? and on which of these two principles had they received it all?

There was but one answer possible. It was all by faith and not by works, and the apostle might well clinch his argument by crying out, "Are ye so foolish?—having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" Again there was but one answer, No. God's ways with us are not haphazard, nor the subject of caprice. They are based upon His own determinate counsel, and what He starts with that He continues with. If He saves us by the hearing of faith, on that principle He will continue with us to the end, and we shall not be made perfect by the flesh.

Before leaving these early verses notice two things. First, the way in which the *law* and the *flesh* are linked together, as also *faith* and the *Spirit*. The law was originally given that it might curb the flesh (that is, the sinful nature which attaches to man as a fallen creature) and act as a corrective, and hence in result it made very manifest the true nature of the flesh,

which is "not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8. 7). Still the law recognized the flesh and assumed for the moment that it might be capable of improvement. Faith, on the other hand, fixes its gaze altogether upon God and His work, and recognizes the condemnation of the flesh in the cross of Christ, and the Spirit is given as the seal of faith.

Secondly, notice that the question in verse 3, "Are ye now *made perfect* by the flesh?" infers that the particular error which was troubling the Galatians was *not so much justification by the works of the law, as holiness by the works of the law*. They had been beguiled into thinking that though justified by Christ and by faith, they were to reach sanctification by law-keeping. Still sanctification involved justification, and hence the apostle proceeds to go into the whole question of justification, and to show the place that the law held in the ways of God.

He begins with Abraham in verse 6. He believed God and was accounted righteous in virtue of his faith, and the true children of Abraham are those who are "of faith," that is, believers. But this blessing of Abraham by faith had in view what God would introduce many centuries after, what is being verified amongst the heathen to-day, and all who have Abraham's faith are blessed equally with him, whoever they may be (verses 8 and 9).

After Abraham came the law, but 430 years had elapsed, as verse 17 points out; and when the law was given no man was justified by it in the sight of God (verse 11). Verse 10, however, goes further than this in stating that to be under the law is to be

under the curse, for the curse of the law rests on everyone who fails in the least of its demands.

Verses 13 and 14 bring us to the two great realities which characterize Christianity, viz., redemption accomplished in the death of Christ and the consequent gift of the Holy Spirit. It will be for our soul's good if we lay hold of these things in a very clear way. The blessing of Abraham was *righteousness*, so that he stood before God a justified man. This blessing of his was to extend even to the Gentiles, as the Scripture had foreseen. But presently the law was given through Moses, and all who came under it fell under its curse. The Lord Jesus Christ appeared and wrought redemption, not only from sin and Satan but also from the law and its curse. As a consequence, the blessing of righteousness comes to all who believe, even though they be Gentiles; and further, they receive the Spirit who also had been promised before. Into what a wonderful place of security and privilege we Christians are brought! How great the folly of the Galatians in turning back to law-keeping, even for holiness, in the light of this.

The rest of the chapter is taken up with a further developing of the effect of Christ's advent and work as regards the law. The effect of the gift of the Spirit is dealt with in the early part of chapter 4.

There was this definite promise to Abraham which centred in Christ, for He was "the seed" contemplated (verse 16). The coming in of the law in no way nullified this earlier promise. It might then be asked, What was the object of the giving of the law? The answer of verse 19 is very striking. It was not given to men as a possible way of getting to heaven. It was not given

to enable men to inherit even the earth. "It was added because of transgressions," or "for the sake of transgressions." Men had from the beginning been sinners, but the coming in of the law made their sins positive transgressions, and hence they stood convicted in a degree impossible before. Moreover it was given provisionally "till the seed should come." It was, as verse 24 expresses it, "our school-master" up to Christ.

The fact is, under the law before Christ came, the choicest saint that lived was treated as a child under age, and hence was kept under the school-master, convicted of sin and shut up to the faith to be revealed by the coming of Christ. Now faith being come, inasmuch as Christ, the Object of faith, is revealed, we are taken out of our tutelage and take our place as sons in the Father's house. We are "all the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (verse 26).

Such is a very brief outline of the contents of this wonderful chapter. May every reader of these lines enter into the blessedness of this place of relationship which is ours through the work of Christ.

Do not omit to notice how, in verse 16, the Apostle Paul founds his argument as to Christ being the "seed" of Abraham upon the word in the Old Testament being in the singular and not in the plural. By that slight difference the Spirit of God indicated His real meaning. Paul evidently believed in the full and verbal inspiration of Scripture, an inspiration extending to so minute a matter as that.

Let us stand with Paul in this vital matter of the verbal inspiration of Scripture.

PRACTICAL PAPERS.

(A. J. POLLOCK.)

No. 3. *Hades*.

THE present is a grossly materialistic age. The masses are bent on pleasure and money-making, and are careless to an incredible degree as to their souls or their eternal future. Religiously, the trend is likewise in the direction of materialism. God, having created all things, is judged to be tied by His own laws, and unable to do anything out of the common. Hence miracles are denied, even to the length of denying Christ's resurrection—that great miracle on which broad-based the whole fabric of Christianity rests.

And yet, in spite of all this there is an unquenchable desire on the part of men to know what lies in the great beyond. Gross materialism cannot altogether silence the imperious questioning of the soul, demanding to know what lies before it when the present life is done. Every now and again something comes along to stir men's minds to inquiry.

To meet this strong desire to know what lies beyond the veil spiritualism makes a big bid, and many are drawn into this terrible snare of the devil. The right name for spiritualism is Demonism. Satan transforms himself into "an angel of light" (2 Cor. 11. 14). He is too crafty to present himself in his true character of that old serpent, a liar and murderer from the beginning.

The sum total of the claims of spiritualism is to prove—

1. *A life beyond.*
2. *The life here fits for the life there.*
3. *Progress there is made from happiness to still greater happiness.*

As to No. 1 the Bible has all along affirmed that there is a life beyond.

That is nothing new. Spiritualism has made no discovery in this respect.

As to Nos. 2 and 3, they sound attractive to the man in the flesh, and present what he would like to believe, but they are exactly the opposite of the truth, and are as false as the person such lies emanate from, the father of lies.

A short inquiry as to the scriptural meaning of *Hades* will help to nail these lies to the counter.

Sheol (Hebrew) in the Old Testament and *Hades* (Greek) in the New Testament mean exactly the same thing. In the Septuagint version of the Old Testament—the learned translation by Jews from the Hebrew to the Greek—the scriptures from which our Lord quoted when here on earth—*Sheol* is always translated *Hades*, so that what applies to *Hades* applies equally to *Sheol*.

Hades is a **CONDITION** and is not a place, just as death is a condition and not a place. We must be clear on this point. Most writers speak of *Hades* as a place, but a little reflection will prove this to be quite erroneous. Such writers are misled by misunderstanding such a verse as "In hell [*hades*] he lift up his eyes, being in torments" (Luke 16 23). They say "IN *hades*" surely means a place.

We answer, does "IN *death*" mean a place, or is it a condition? You can be *in* a condition as well as in a place. You can be *in* a temper, or *in* an ecstasy, or *in* trouble, and these are conditions, and not places.

IN *death* is the condition of the body without the soul.

IN *hades* is the condition of the soul without the body.

The one is the counterpart—the correlative—of the other.

An examination of Rev. 20. 14 will amply prove this. We read: "And death and hell [*hades*] were cast into the lake of fire [= *gehenna*]. This is the second death." Now to make death a condition and *hades* a place, and the lake of fire also a place (as this most certainly is), is to exhibit clumsy and illogical thought. But the true explanation fits perfectly to the circumstances, as the wards of an intricate lock do to the key.

Rev. 20. 12 speaks of the second resurrection,—“the resurrection of damnation” (John 5. 29)—the resurrection of the wicked dead.

When God’s mighty voice of power summons all the unbelieving dead from their graves, or wherever their bodies may have found their last resting-place, or whatever they may have become, dust thrown to the four quarters of heaven it may be, then every dead body will be re-united to the long-severed soul.

Every dead body which constituted the condition of death and every disembodied soul which constituted the condition of *hades*, in the persons of the resurrected ones, represent death and *hades*, and in consigning the wicked dead to their eternal doom it can be said that “death and hell [*hades*] were cast into the lake of fire.”

This leads us to the inquiry as to what the condition of *hades* is for the departed, whether believers or unbelievers.

Peter, on the day of Pentecost, quotes from Psalm 16. 10, “He [David] seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that His soul was not left in

hell [*hades*], neither his flesh did see corruption” (Acts 2. 31).

It is evident that our Lord could not go to a place of torment, but it is evident that His soul was disembodied whilst His precious incorruptible body lay in the grave those memorable three days. Seeing the Lord was perfectly sinless, we can understand how His blessed holy body saw no corruption, for corruption is the effect of sin. Seeing that the blessed Lord had effected the full settlement of the question of sin by his atoning death on the cross, death could have no further claim upon Him. When sinful bodies die, death holds its sway and the process of corruption sets in at once.

In the verse before us the incorruptible body and the disembodied soul of our Lord were not to be left in the conditions of death and *hades*, but body and soul being re-united the third day the glorious resurrection of our Lord took place—the proof of the completeness of the finished work of redemption.

Where, then, was the soul of the Lord when in *hades* condition? We are left in no doubt, for He said emphatically to the dying penitent thief, “To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise” (Luke 23. 43).

Some writers believe that Paradise is in the heart of the earth and has two compartments, one for believers and the other for unbelievers. This idea has no foundation in Scripture. 2 Cor. 12. 2 and 4 identifies Paradise with “the third heaven”—the immediate dwelling place of God, whilst Rev. 2. 7 speaks of it as “the Paradise OF GOD,” where the tree of life is.

Now what is *hades* for the believer? Scripture tells us that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord, and when the believer is

absent from the body he is at home with the Lord. The thief went the day he died into companionship with Jesus. There is no such thing as soul-sleep, but death is gain, and introduces the believer to the "far better" portion. The moment the breath leaves the body of the believer his spirit, conscious and happy, goes to be with His Saviour, there to await the resurrection day, which will end for his soul the condition of *hades*, as it will end the condition of death for his body.

How happy is the triumph of the gospel! How cheering the teaching of Scripture in this respect! How immeasurably superior to Raymond's supposed message from beyond the veil to his father, Sir Oliver Lodge, telling him of the possibility of whisky and cigars beyond death. Can any

sensible man be duped by these lies of the enemy of our souls?

And what about *hades* for the unbeliever? Luke 16. tells us that it is a condition of torment, the lost soul conscious of his approaching inevitable and inexorable doom. We are not told where these lost souls are, there is no need to satisfy curiosity on this point. No good would accrue to any from this knowledge, but we know the resurrection day will end the conditions of *hades* and death for each unbeliever, and then the lake of fire must be his eternal doom. Oh! may God stir us all up to more zeal in the gospel, to more fervent prayer, to more earnest diligence in seeking the salvation of the lost, for "behold, now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6. 2).

ARE WE SAYING, "COME"?

(JOHN DUFF.)

"*And the Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come.' And let him that heareth say, 'Come.'*" (Rev. 22. 17).

[IN this book of Revelation we learn that our Lord Jesus Christ has been given the outside place not only by the world (chap. 1. 9) and the Jews (chap. 11. 8), but also by the Laodicean church (chap. 3. 20).

But He is the delight of heaven, and the Spirit is here to bring hearts into accord with the mind of heaven. He has come to bear witness to the glory of Christ, and to secure a bride for Him—one upon whom He can lavish His affections, and who will be responsive to His love. Has the Spirit succeeded in His mission? How encouraging to know from this verse that He cannot fail. While it is most appropriate that our blessed and beloved Lord should drop all official

titles when He is about to speak to the heart of the one He loves (verse 16), yet it is remarkable that just at the close of the Canon of Inspiration there should be such a simple and emphatic statement as to His deity and humanity, "I am the root and offspring of David." He is the maker of all the promises made to David, and inheritor of all the glory promised. He then adds, "the bright Morning Star," and immediately He presents Himself in this character there is a response. Where does this response come from? It is not from the world; neither is it from Israel; nor yet is it from the professing church.

This response is not from the Spirit alone, but "the Spirit *and* the bride say 'Come.' " How blessed and encourag-

ing to know that, in spite of all the breakdown and faithlessness of the professing church, outlined in chapters 2. and 3., the Spirit has achieved His purpose, so that there are those on earth who love the Lord, and who are longing for His return. Nothing will satisfy them but the presence of Jesus. How sweet and precious to the heart of Christ to hear that sweet word, "Come," ascending from His loved bride, taught and led by the Spirit. This is the fruit of the Spirit's work viewed in its totality.

But the verse does not say, "He that heareth says, Come," No, but "*Let him that heareth say, Come.*" This is very individual and personal. It comes home to each one of us, and withal it is very testing. It is as though the Spirit said, "Awake, O sleeper; let no heart be silent. Let all say, Come." If we have read the book of Revelation aright, and come under the power of what is there unfolded, we shall indeed be looking heavenwards, and be saying to Jesus "Come." May it be so with each of us, for His Name's sake. Amen.

LIGHT AND LIFE. No. 10.

(JAMES BOYD.)

Meditations on John's Gospel (Chaps. 6. and 7.).

[TURN again to John's first epistle.

In chapter 2. he says to the babes: "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things." So in the gospel: "He shall guide you into all the truth" (chap. 16.). And in the epistle again: "The unction which ye have received from Him abides in you, and ye have not need that any one should teach you, but as the same unction teaches you as to all things, and is true and is not a lie, and even as it has taught you, ye shall abide in Him." And again: "Hereby we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit which He has given to us." And again: "Hereby we know that we abide in Him and He in us, that He has given to us of His Spirit." The things of God can only be entered into and enjoyed by the power of the Spirit. Christianity is wholly spiritual, and only by the Holy Spirit of the living God can we touch even the fringe of it. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2. 14).

In connection with this sixth chapter of the Gospel I turn to chapter 5. of the epistle, where we have the three witness-bearers and that to which their witness refers. "This is he that came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood; and it is the Spirit that bears witness, for the Spirit is truth." The water and blood came out of the side of Christ dead upon the cross (John 19. 34, 35). The importance of this is manifest in the emphatic way in which the apostle draws attention to it: "One of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true; and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe." Nothing more concerning this comes to light in the gospel, but here in the epistle we have the blood and water called up in support of the testimony of God regarding the gift of eternal life. The Son of God has come by water and blood, that is, in the power of expiation and moral purification; and the Spirit is the witness by whom we are able to

take in the import of the witness of the other two. He came down from Christ risen and glorified, the mighty witness that life is only in the Son of God for men, and to be in the believer as the Spirit and power of that life, giving the believer the consciousness that he has that life in present possession, while the infinite fountain of it resides in the Son. To Him are added the testimony of the blood and water, which speak to us of the value of the *death* of Christ. The blood is that which expiates our sins, and the water that which cleanses morally. Here they are viewed as witness-bearers, not as agents accomplishing the work, but bearing testimony to that which the death of Christ has accomplished. In that death our sins are gone ; and in that same death the life of flesh is gone, and thus is gone in the condemnation of the cross the man that committed the sins : " 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 " (Gal. 2. 20). The Spirit, who is the power of that life, indwelling us gives us the consciousness that we partake of that life ; and by His power whatever we may find within which may seem to contradict it, we know that our sins and the evil nature from which the sins sprang are both gone in the judgment of the cross, so that not only are our consciences cleared and set at rest, but we " are every whit clean " (John 13. 10).

Now if we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater ; for this is the witness of God which He hath witnessed of His Son. The declaration of God regarding His gift of eternal life to the believer is supported by three witnesses, and the witness of the three tend to one point ; and that point is, " That God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He

that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life." Life is only in the Son of God, and it is received by faith in Him : " He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in Himself." He has the Spirit who gives him the consciousness that he lives to God in that life that is in the Son. Living men have the consciousness that they are alive ; and this is no less true of the one who lives in the life that is in the glorified Son of God. And these things are written to believers that they may know that they have eternal life.

All this is utterly unacceptable to man as a child of Adam, who, though he may have some qualms of conscience, some sense of the need of forgiveness, and of being in happier relations with God, must have everything so adjusted that he will be left in his old relations both with God and men, the old affections undisturbed, and the distance between himself and God, in which he now is, maintained. To escape the penalties attached to his rebellion against the authority of God, and, if he must needs die, to be raised again and reinstated in the old conditions of life apart from the griefs and sorrows that now afflict him,—this would be to him the highest conception of bliss. To have to do with God, to be brought near to Him, to have no joy but that which the knowledge of the love of God gave him, to be in a pure and holy atmosphere, to be with the Christ whom man could not tolerate on earth, to see all the joys and pleasures in which he now delights pass from his vision as completely as though they never had been : between this state of things and the hell of the damned he might hesitate to choose, for in his estimation the misery of either would be unbearable.

" From this time many of His dis-

ciples went back and walked no more with Him." The life of flesh was everything to them, and a law that appealed to the flesh, though it might curse them for their failure to fulfil its demands, was more acceptable than the words of eternal life that flowed from the lips of the incarnate Son of God. The glad tidings that He preached had no charm for their godless hearts. The seed had fallen upon the rock; the Word had not been understood by them, and when it came home to their carnal hearts in its true character, setting before them the cross as the only way of salvation, the discovery was made that the Word had never taken root, and therefore was it withered away. The glamour of His fame, and the power exhibited in His mighty works, had turned their volatile footsteps for a little after Him, but when the test came their faith was seen to be only skin-deep, they had never heard and learned of the Father, and His Word had therefore no place in them.

But whatever grief this may have been to His tender heart, His confidence in His Father remained unshaken. Already He had said: "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me," and He desires no more than these. He will even now tell His remaining twelve that He has closed no door behind them, but has given them opportunity to go back to that which they had left to follow Him. To them He says: "Will ye also go away?" Peter, ever ready, answers for all: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." And yet one of these twelve was a devil.

IN CHAPTER 7. we see His unbelieving brethren would have Him show Himself to the world. Apart from His death and resurrection this

could only be judgment to all, and nothing could have been saved out of the judgment to which all men were liable because of their guilty condition. If He gives His flesh for the life of the world then the time for His showing Himself to the world had not come. His brethren, impatient in their unbelief with His humiliation and self-renunciation, desire Him to bring to an end His path of comparative retirement. Man's time is always ready, but His time was not yet come. Therefore He says: "I go not up yet unto this feast." Afterwards, when His brethren had gone up, He also went up, not openly, but as it were in secret. When He has received the kingdom He will show Himself at the feast of tabernacles, but until then He does not publicly take a place at this feast.

But He will in the meantime give something greater than this feast can afford. He says: "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." It is not only, as in chap. 6.: "He that drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." Here it is not only that one's own thirst is for ever quenched, so that he thirsts no more, but he becomes a mighty channel of refreshing in this weary Rephidim. He makes the valley of Baca a well. The feast of tabernacles satisfied no human heart; for were they not under the oppression of the proud Roman, their throne and their glory trodden in the dust? He who showed Himself well able to reinstate them in the glorious position which they occupied in the reign of David and of Solomon, yea, in a grandeur infinitely greater than was

theirs during the reign of those two divinely anointed monarchs, was there in their midst despised and rejected, while the leaders of the people were plotting His murder. What an empty feast they were celebrating ! And what a multitude of thirsty souls must have that day been gathered together in Jerusalem ! With what sorrowful hearts those who came from distant places must have surveyed that city, destined to be the joy of the whole earth, now policed by the arrogant Roman soldiery, the throne of Jehovah overturned, an Edomite their crowned king, their temple left desolate, and their strongholds ruins ! Well was it for those who could see in the desolation of Zion the just consequences of a long-continued course of insane rebellion against a righteous God, who had showed such unmerited favour to their thankless nation !

What part could the rejected Messiah have in these empty festivities ? The pride that lifted its presumptuous head in the hearts of the hypocritical leaders, the hellish hatred that surged there ready to break forth in His murder, and the changeful, vacillating, and conscienceless interest of the thoughtless crowd, were all well known to the lonely and heart-broken Son of the Father. How empty, formal, and lifeless such a feast appeared to the gaze of heaven, and above all to the eye of God, for whose glory it was ostensibly held ! How could He identify Himself with such a state of things ? If He went up to the feast it was not to participate in the festive joys of a people now on the brink of destruction, but in the knowledge that there were a few souls among them who were anxiously looking for something better than these things were calculated to furnish ; and such cannot be neglected.

Therefore : " About the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and taught." The Jews are astonished at His ability to teach, and say : " How knoweth this man letters, having never learned ? " His answer is : " My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me." Here, as everywhere else, He keeps before His hearers the important fact that they had to do with God. He spoke the words of God ; and the words He spoke became a test of their spiritual condition, as to whether they were in any measure disposed to hearken to God's voice, and to do the things He commanded. He says : " If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak from Myself." But after all, what were they but transgressors and murderers ? And their inconsistent verdict against Himself only proved themselves to be judges having evil thoughts. They condemned Him for speaking a word that made a man every whit whole on the Sabbath, and yet practised circumcision on that day, that they might keep the law of Moses. Their lifeless ritual was of more importance to them than were judgment, mercy, and the love of God. But, as He tells them in the next chapter, they were of their father the devil, though their vain boast was that they had one Father, even God. He spoke that which He had seen with His Father, and they did that which they had seen with their father ; they came out in his characteristics. He was a liar and a murderer, and so were they.

Children bear the moral impress of the parent who has begotten them. The devil was the first liar, and he was a murderer from the beginning. In the first epistle of John we read : " He that practises sin is of the devil, for the devil sinneth from the begin-

ning"; that is, from the beginning of sin: he originated sin, lying, and murder. The one born of God does not practise sin; for His seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In his practical life down here the one begotten of God does not practise sin; that is, he is not characterized by it, because viewed as begotten of God, apart from his mixed condition on earth, he cannot sin at all. A believer can sin, but is exhorted not to, but "begotten of God" only takes in the work of God in his soul, and sin can never proceed from this. "Like father, like son" must ever be true.

But among those who were listening to His words there may have been thirsty souls, those who wanted something better than could be found in lifeless forms and ceremonies. For these He has all that would meet the need, and more than the need, of their souls. The Spirit of God was the gift that was to be bestowed upon the believer. But for this the work of redemption must needs be accomplished. In His cross sin must receive its judgment, and it must be judged in flesh, where it had its seat. No other than Himself could take the place of the sin-bearer, for the victim must be without blemish and without spot.

Sin, sins, and the flesh in which sin reigned, have received their judgment in His holy flesh, and the flesh forms no part of the believer in his relationship with God. It is still in him, and shall be in him as long as he is in a mortal body; but he is not in it, but in the Spirit, if so be the Spirit of God dwells in him. The holy oil was not to be poured on man's flesh (Exod. 30. 31, 32), but on the blood (Lev. 14. 14-17). When the gospel of our salvation is believed we are sealed with the Holy Spirit, for all true believers are in the value of the blood of Christ before God.

The Spirit is given from a glorified Christ. He was given in answer to the intercession of Christ. He is the Spirit of Truth. He testifies of Christ. He takes of Christ's and shows His things to us. He is the Spirit of sonship, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. He bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. In John's first epistle He is said to be the One by whom we know that Christ abideth in us. He is also one of the three witnesses given in support of the testimony of God, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. Everything connected with true Christianity is in His power.

Take Heed to Thyself.

DO not trust yourself; be especially distrustful of what you feel to be your strong points, for there you are most likely to fail. God's biographies of men teach us this. Abraham, the man of faith, broke down just there, and in his distrust of God told lies to save his own skin. Moses, the meekest man on earth, broke down just there, and grew hot with rage in the presence of the people and dishonoured God.

Solomon, the wisest of men, broke down just there, and died as a fool dieth. Peter, the most courageous of men, broke down just there, and played the coward before a servant girl. Beware, beware! If you think you are strong on any point, be watchful and self-distrustful there, and seek that the grace and power of Christ may displace your fancied strength, that the sad history of others be not repeated in you.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The New Translation by J. N. Darby.

"I have recently heard that J. N. D.'s translation is not a real translation, but only a re-translation from the Greek New Testament, and that he had not access to the MSS. at the British Museum as Weymouth and Moffatt had. Can you give me information as to other translations: Newberry's, Weymouth's, Moffatt's, Scofield's, Authorized and Revised?"—WHITEINCH.

J. N. DARBY translated the Bible from the original texts into German, French and English. If you possess the Second Edition of his New Testament you will see from the preface that he had access to not less than twelve of the oldest MSS., including the "Siniatic" and the "Vatican," the former which had been discovered and the latter published since the issue of the First Edition of his Testament. Not only had he access to these MSS., but he had also the scholarship and the perseverance, as well as the spirituality necessary to make the fullest use of them. If you have his New

Translation for your private study and the Authorized for your public service, you need no others.

Scofield's is not a new translation. The value of the Bible that bears his name lies in the references, which are helpful, and the notes, which for the most part are good and clear. The Authorized Version has been signally owned of God and is superior to the Revised Version, which has not superseded it as was intended. Steer clear of Moffatt's, which has nothing to commend it, and has a decided modernist bias.

The Bride of Christ.

"Can you set my mind at rest as to who the Bride of Christ will be? There has been some controversy about it. Is it a Jewish Bride? I always thought it was the church, but it is said to be the great multitude that come through the tribulation in Revelation."—NORWICH.

EPHESIANS 5. 22-33 should definitely settle this question for you. In speaking of the marriage relationship the Holy Spirit unfolds most blessedly what the church is to Christ, and it is shown there that the church is the antitype of the woman being brought to Adam after being taken out of him while he lay in a deep sleep. "This," says the Scripture, "is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church." Again the figure is taken up in 2 Cor. 11. There the apostle tells the Corinthian saints that he had espoused them to one husband, that he might present them as a chaste virgin to Christ; and going back again to the first great type he expresses the fear that as Eve was beguiled by Satan, so were they in danger of being corrupted. Those who understand the truth of Christ and His church cannot doubt that that

church alone can answer to the description of the bride, the Lamb's wife, that is given to us in Revelation 19. and 21. A note on Rev. 19. from Scofield's Reference Bible is helpful: "The 'Lamb's wife' here is the bride, the church identified with the heavenly 'Jerusalem,' and to be distinguished from Israel, the adulterous and repudiated 'wife' of Jehovah, yet to be restored (Isa. 54. 1-10; Hosea 2. 1-17), who is identified with the earth (Hosea 2. 23). A forgiven and restored *wife* could not be called a virgin (2 Cor. 11. 2, 3) or a bride."

Israel will stand in relation to Jehovah as a wife, entirely for His pleasure in earthly things, during the Millennium, but the church will be as a bride adorned for her husband. She will be the Lamb's wife for ever, for in Rev. 21. 2. we have eternity.

Christians and Strong Drink.

"I was greatly exercised in reading in January 'Scripture Truth' the article written by A. J. Pollock on 'Sin.' He said that the Christian is warned against lying, strife, murders, drunkenness, etc., and each one the Christian, if not watchful, is capable of committing. This question came before me—Is it a sin for a follower of Christ to take strong drink either as a beverage or otherwise, or to frequent wine and spirit shops? Why I ask is because professing Christians have told me that God has given us all things richly to enjoy (1 Tim. 6. 17), and then they have quoted 1 Tim. 5. 23, 'Take a little wine, etc.,' and I failed to agree with them."—WHITLEY BAY.

WE do not think that any true Christian would frequent wine and spirit shops unless he had seriously backslidden. The company he would find there alone would prevent him from so doing, for what communion can a believer have with unbelievers?

Drunkenness is a grave sin, but it is the abuse and not the use of wine that makes the drunkard. If any have a weakness for it and lust after it, the exhortation, "Flee also youthful lusts," would definitely apply to them. But to take up the attitude of "touch not, taste not, handle not," and to enforce it upon Christians is to bring them under ordinances, and against this we are warned (Col. 2. 20, 23).

If it were a sin for a Christian to take strong drink at all, then Paul told Timothy to sin, and he was inspired by

the Holy Ghost to do it, which of course would be impossible, and that passage answers the question. The word is "Take a *little* wine." He had not to go to excess in it, and it was evidently a necessity in his case. It has been tritely said that "many love Paul's remedy who have not Timothy's weakness," and to come under bondage to anything is to sin.

There is Christian liberty in this matter, but that liberty must not be used to stumble another, so that we read, "It is good neither to eat flesh nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak" (Rom. 14. 21). Rom. 14. and 1 Cor. 8. are important passages of Scripture bearing on the subject. They show that the Christian is not under law but has liberty, but that liberty has to be used for the good of others and not for their harm.

The Time for Prayer.

WE pray for one another when we are broken-hearted; we gather round those who are crushed and down-trodden, upon whom sorrows roll, and we pray God to bless and comfort them, but is that the time when we most need each other's prayers? No, it is not. We need each other's prayers when we prosper, when we don our snug robes, and when the music of success is

beating and throbbing in the air; for then are we in danger of thinking that we stand, and forgetting that a fall follows pride as night follows day. Ah, then, for spiritual friends who see the danger we forget, and pray for mercy for us; and who can bring God's word home to us, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

FROM a Letter. I remember J. N. D. saying he would never be one of a party to resist evil. Party spirit is a most insidious thing, because your conscience may tell you you are quite right in opposing evil, while all the time you may be quite wrong in the way you do it.

WITHIN "THE HOLIEST."

(J. T. MAWSON.)

Address at Cockenzie, New Year's Meetings, 1926. Heb. 10. 17-22; 9. 1-6.

WE are invited by God, as His forgiven and reconciled saints, to have our affections set upon things above, and these things are not shadowy, or mystical, or unpractical: things that will not be of any benefit to us in the ordinary affairs of this life. No. Christ is the sum and substance of them, and God delights in Him and we are invited to delight ourselves in Him, in whom God Himself delights.

We shall all readily admit that all that is in Christ is of the greatest possible blessing and help to us. We have been told to-day that the Tabernacle in the wilderness was a pattern of the things in the heavens, and was full of the most blessed typical teaching, and that is true. That Tabernacle was pitched to cover the Ark of the Covenant, a golden box that was set in the Holiest where God's presence was. The Ark speaks to us undoubtedly of the Lord Jesus Christ; the gold that covered it of His Deity, and the wood of which it was made of His humanity. But it was not an empty box, a mere shell; within it there were three things, things that delighted the heart of God, and we are invited to share with Him His joy in these things. The things that were put in the Ark of the Covenant were the golden pot that had manna, Aaron's rod that budded and the tables of the Covenant; and these three things speak to us in type of the life and love and faithfulness of the Lord Jesus Christ in three different sets of circumstances in which He serves God and us with a holy and perfect service.

The Manna speaks of Him as humbled here in this world. It tells of the time when He made Himself of no reputation, but took upon Himself a

bondsman's form, a Man upon earth for the service of all. Exodus 16. is an instructive chapter, for it is where the manna first appears, and we find in connection with it that the glory of God appeared in the wilderness. Those whose eyes were anointed saw in Jesus here God manifest in the flesh, Emmanuel, come near to us to bless us. And to us who believe He has become our food, food that fits us to meet the trials of our wilderness life.

"Jesus! Thou art enough,
The mind and heart to fill;
Thy patient life—to calm the soul;
Thy love—its fear dispel."

That is the manna. The wilderness was the place where the people had no resources except in God, and such is the world. The Lord Jesus was in wilderness circumstances, tried in all points as we are tried, but, oh, the meekness and the lowliness of Him! How perfect He was in His dependence upon God, in His obedience to God! In all these circumstances that tried Him He was never found wanting. Never was He taken by surprise; never did He hesitate as to what He ought to do. And that because He was as to His holy manhood in absolute dependence upon God, in perfect obedience to His will. He did the right thing at the right time and manifested perfect meekness and lowliness in everything that He did. He made Himself of no reputation in a world where every man sought his own glory, and lived for God where all others lived for self. Here was a Man different from every other man; a Man of a new order, the heavenly Man in earthly circumstances. Here was One who had come from the glory into the wilderness of this world, altogether

according to God, and it is the contemplation of Him that will enable us to endure temptation. If we are to be patient in trial, if we are to go through testings, and overcome, we must have Him as our Pattern, and feed on Him as the Manna. We cannot be strong unless we feed, and the food with which the Spirit strengthens us in the inner man unto all patience and long suffering with joyfulness (Col. 1. 11). is Christ as the One humbled here; the manna must be our food; it is the food of the mighty, as the Psalm tells us. In Christ there was the manifestation of everything God could desire in a man upon earth, and that meant blessing for others wherever He went. Men did not think much about Him, but the fact of His being here in dependence upon God meant blessing for man. There was blessing for everyone when Christ was here. The blind got their sight, the deaf heard, broken hearts were comforted. Wherever He went there went with Him the grace of the Father's heart, for He was the full manifestation of grace here below, and that grace was manifested in wilderness circumstances. It was declared and made known amid the trials of this life below. He, the Christ of God, humbled here below, was delightful to God and He was here in blessing to men, the faithful PROPHET of God.

The children of Israel in the wilderness got tired of the manna. It was a mystery to them in the beginning and it was distasteful to them in the end. They "loathed this light food." So it was when Christ was here. There was no form nor comeliness in Him, no beauty that men should desire Him. He was despised and rejected of men. Not only rejected but loathed! The things that delighted God found no place in the hearts of men, but rather provoked them to hatred and opposi-

tion, and that is the man that once we had our links with. We were of the fallen, corrupt race that loathed the Son of God. Beloved Christians, may we not thank God that the death of Christ has broken those links? Once we belonged to Adam's race, and that race loathes JESUS. Are we not thankful that the Cross has severed those links, and that God, in His infinite grace, has transferred us from Adam to Christ and now we are in Christ and have the capacity, the power, the nature, that can find delight in Him?

But if Israel loathed the manna God said to Moses, "Fill a golden pot with it and set it before Me. Put it in the Ark of the Covenant, it shall be then before Me for ever." What does this mean? It means that God will never forget, nor will He allow to be forgotten, that lowly life of Jesus here. It was a short life as men speak—thirty-three and a half years, not more. A short life, but the glory of it is going to fill eternity. In the language of the type, the manna has been put in a golden pot. God has taken the One whom men despised and loathed and set Him in the very midst of His glory and crowned Him there with glory and honour. And yet, when God raised up His beloved Son to that place of eminence He did not add any glory to Him, He was only setting that which is infinitely glorious in the only place suited to receive it. As a diamond is put into a golden setting because it is the only setting worthy to receive it, so Christ has been set there above all principalities and powers, and might and dominion, and every name that is named. He has been set there to control everything for God, but that is not the thought typified in the manna being put in the golden pot, but it is the expression of God's pleasure in the

lowly life of Jesus here. The glory is the only place that was worthy to receive Him. Infinite grace disclosed itself in His lowly life, and now exalted and in its true setting God invites us to enter into the Holiest, His own presence, and share His joy in what Christ was to Him when humbled here below. To learn in His presence what that Man is to Him; to learn in His presence what kind of a man delights His heart. Then strengthened by feeding upon Him we can go out and be like Him, we can walk in his steps. That is the direct effect of entering into the Holiest and feeding there upon the perfections of Christ as they came out in His life below. Not a word or act of His will ever be forgotten, and all that is recorded for us is for our joy and strength now.

Then *Aaron's rod that budded* was there, and the story of Aaron's rod is very instructive. Rebellion had broken out in the camp (Num. 17.). The people had been marked by murmurings from the very beginning. I do not believe from the time they sang by the Red Sea to that moment that God had heard a note of praise from them. Murmuring all day and every day, so ungrateful were they, so little did they know the God who had brought them out of bondage to Himself. Now that state of things was to be met by priesthood. Aaron's rod was the symbol of priesthood. The twelve dry sticks were set up in the Tabernacle in the evening, and the following morning there were eleven dry sticks and one had leaves and blossoms and almond nuts. The almond is a figure of resurrection. It is the first tree of the year to blossom. It sets forth Christ in resurrection. Christ as our great HIGH PRIEST. There is one intensely interesting word on God's part in regard to the budding of Aaron's rod. God said, "I will clean take away from

before Me the murmurings of the children of Israel." Let us consider this, and what it means to God and to us. Because we have a great high priest it is possible for us to go through wilderness circumstances without a murmur upon our lips. Instead of murmuring there may be thanksgiving and praise to God. How is it made possible? There lives on high the great High Priest who also makes intercession for us, and through the supplies of grace that He gives He takes away the murmurings from the people of God, and fills their mouths instead with the songs of overcomers. Now the Lord is carrying on this service. He has not ceased to be God's Servant. He came down into this world to be God's Servant, and in the lowly circumstances of His earth-life He was the PROPHET, making known what God is. He has gone on high above every principality and power, and He is now serving God as PRIEST. You say, But how is He serving God? Surely as Priest He serves us. Yes, but in serving us He is serving God. Who are we? Well, you say, of not very much account. Is that so? I tell you that the angels in glory have not a greater dignity than we have. We are sons of God, and He is bringing us, His many sons, to glory (Heb. 2.). We are the sons of God now and the glory is our destiny and Christ is our Leader, He will lead us through wilderness circumstances to our glorious destiny. Our great High Priest is serving God, whose sons we are. A simple illustration will help. Here is a little girl, and she has wandered from her mother and she is lost in the crowded thoroughfare of the city, and stands frightened and weeping. A friend of the mother passes by and, seeing her, takes her by the hand and leads her safely through the traffic, and when she is tired carries her, and if she is hungry feeds her, and at last

brings her safely back to the mother's home. Oh, you say, what a great service that to the little girl! Yes, a very great service, but how great a service to the mother! Our great High Priest is taking us safely to the home of our Father. We have been committed to His care; He is carrying us safely through, because able to save us to the uttermost, and in doing this He is serving God whose sons we are. But are we getting the full benefit of His service, beloved friends? This service that the Lord is rendering is delightful to God. Aaron's rod that budded was set in the Ark of the Covenant in the Holiest. Are we entering there and learning what this service means to God and to us? He would have us so to do.

When we are oppressed, when circumstances are trying, when we find ourselves full of infirmity, when we are disappointed and discouraged and cast down, when difficulties appal us and sorrows surge around us, what then? Then how great the comfort, the support, that comes to us from the One who intercedes for us with a ceaseless intercession. How blessed to know that His intercession is a prevailing intercession; our faith will not fail, He will carry us through. I remember receiving a letter from a weak Christian. He said, "I cannot understand how the Lord can be thinking about me and caring for me and interceding for me when He has so many to think about. I am nobody. I cannot understand it." And because he could not understand it he had got right down into the Slough of Despond, and there he was discouraged and miserable and self-occupied. My answer was a very simple one, it was this, "Neither can I understand it. It is far too great for my tiny mind to comprehend, but I believe it and I get the joy of it. I know that He thinks of me." He is

thinking of you, and if you read in Romans 8., you will find that because of His intercession for us we are more than conquerors. He wants His saints to be more than conquerors since it is for His glory that we should be. But how can we be more than conquerors? Only through Him that loves us. He died that we might be free of every charge of sin before God, He lives that we might be maintained as God's sons in this world, more than conquerors in every trial in spite of the flesh within and the devil without. And at last we shall all reach the glory. We shall stand there a blessed, ransomed triumphant company, without spot before Him in love. Do you think when the Lord's service as Priest towards the people of God is finished God will forget the service He has rendered? No. The memory of Christ as Priest will abide for ever. It will abide in the glory of God forgotten, unforgettable. God will remember it and we shall remember it. He will delight in it and we shall delight in it. We shall feed upon the hidden Manna, shall share God's thoughts about Christ in humiliation, and rejoice with God in the perfection of His service as the great High Priest.

But that won't be the end of His glory, nor the end of His service. He will still be God's Servant. He took upon Him the form of a servant, and will He ever lay down that form? He certainly will serve God in the age that is coming, for these *two tables of stone* that were also put in the Ark set forth God's will for man, and that will is yet to be done on earth. But that will be when Christ is KING. What a golden age it will be when He sits upon the throne as King and sways the righteous sceptre and rules with equity for the meek of the earth, so that throughout His Kingdom the will of God will be done, and the glory of God

will fill the earth as the waters cover the sea. As Prophet He served God, as Priest He is serving God, as King He will still serve God throughout His reign on earth. And then, when He shall have given up the Kingdom to His Father that God may be all in all, what He was as Prophet, Priest and King will be remembered for ever.

But we come under His sceptre now. We come under His dominion; He is the One to whom we have bowed; He is our Lord, blessed be His Name, He exercises His authority over us in perfect grace. Grace reigns to-day. The throne upon which He sits is a throne of grace, and He ministers to us from the throne of grace what God is. We could not rightly pray, "Thy will be done on earth," if we were not desiring as believers to be doing His will now, and that which will be revealed in a day that is coming surely should be true of the sons of God in this day. We come under the dominion of Christ now, and the law which will be fulfilled then is fulfilled in us who own Him as Lord. As we come under His influence we become like Him. As we enter the Holiest and behold God's beloved One and are occupied with Him and feed upon Him we become like Him, and

in our daily lives we shall be subject to the will of God.

These things were in the Holiest. When the priest went in there everything he saw was gold. The gold typifies the glory of God. Everything was gold save one thing, and that other thing was blood. The blood that was sprinkled before and on the Mercy Seat spoke of the blood of Jesus, the blood that is equal in its value to the full shining out of the glory of God, and if we come into the Holiest, into the presence of God, and are able to have our minds set upon those heavenly things, upon Christ Himself, it is because of the value of the precious blood. We shall not forget that for ever. We shall remember His love on earth, we shall remember His service in heaven, we shall remember throughout all eternity the glory of His kingdom. But we will never forget the value of the precious blood. It is Christ first, Christ last. God presents Him to us. Not merely doctrine, not creed, not tradition, not rules nor regulations, but Christ. Apart from having Christ before the soul, there is neither fellowship nor worship, but as He fills our hearts we know what true, holy, happy fellowship means, and in holy, happy fellowship we worship God.

The Enabling Christ.

PAUL speaks of an enabling Christ.

He had proved Him in many a vicissitude and in the most extreme infirmities, but Christ had enabled him. He had given him ability, and more ability and still more as the days came and went, until at last he was able to cry, "I have strength for all things in Him that gives me power" (Phil. 4. 14. N.Tr.). His strength was in Christ, not

in himself; the enabling came from above and did not lie in Paul's brain, or will, or untiring energy. He says, "Christ enables me." Great lesson is this for us to learn, that when we are weak in ourselves then do we prove the strength of Christ. When we are set free from self-confidence we wait without disappointment on the Lord, and so we change our strength.

PRACTICAL PAPERS.

No. 4.—“Spirit, Soul and Body.”

APART from the Scriptures man would never have known that he possesses a tripartite being—“spirit, soul and body.”

It is true that men have differentiated between the material body and the animating principle indwelling the body. To see the breath leave the body, a moment before alive and conscious, and behold ! it becomes lifeless, all knowledge departed, all functions suspended, corruption immediately setting in, is patent to all. Even where the gospel has never penetrated this difference has ever been recognized, and more than that it is deeply engraved on men's minds that this animating principle, call it spirit or soul, survives the death of the body, as witness the North American Indians' belief that the dead brave has departed to the happy hunting grounds of his forefathers.

There is one great text of Scripture that settles for the Christian the truth of man's tripartite nature—

“And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly ; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ ” (1 Thess. 5. 23).

* * * *

It will be well to give the words in the originals for spirit, soul and body, with their meanings :—

Spirit = (Hebrew) *ruach*, spirit, wind ; (Greek) *pneuma*, spirit.

Soul = (Hebrew) *nephesh*, animal soul ; (Greek) *psuche*, animal soul.

Body = (Hebrew) *beten*, belly ; *ge-viyyah*, back ; (Greek) *soma*, body.

The late F. W. Grant points out that *ruach* and *pneuma*, equally with *nephesh*

and *psuche*, are derived from words which both signify “to breathe.”

* * * *

There must ever be mysteries unsolvable by us on this subject, as there are in all God's works. We do well, however, to glean what information Scripture gives us on the subject, for God has given us in His Word sufficient information for our guidance and well-being. Beyond this we have no right nor ability to go.

Evidently the soul is like a *liaison* officer in an army. For instance, the French and British armies were fighting on one front in the late great war. Britishers, who knew no French, and Frenchmen, who knew no English, would find themselves in an impossible position for intelligent co-ordination. But there were officers appointed—British officers who knew French well, and French officers who knew English—who acted as intermediaries, passing on orders, instructions, information, as needed. The *liaison* officer was in that way connected with and indispensable to both armies.

This may serve in some measure as an illustration of the soul as the connecting link between the spirit and the body. The soul is the animating principle of both man and beast. When the beast dies it ceases to exist—soul and body. When man dies, his body dies, but the soul survives.

Evidently the arresting act of God in the creation of man conveys this thought. We read, “The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life [*literally* lives, plural] and man became a living soul.” It is true that beasts are living souls, for it is

predicated of "every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth," that "there is life" [margin, *there is a living soul*] (Gen. 1. 30). But it is never said that God breathed into the animals' nostrils the breath of lives, but that they became living souls.

It may be pointed out that Solomon wrote of the spirit of the beast: "Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward?" (Eccles. 3. 21). This is the only passage in the Bible where spirit is attributed to the beast, but when we read the whole passage we find Solomon, the wisest of men, unable by his wisdom to penetrate the mysteries of the future life, and coming clearly to the erroneous conclusion that man has no pre-eminence over the beast.

Yet even in this passage Solomon speaks of man's spirit going upward, as in chap. 12. 7 he distinctly believes that the spirit will return unto God who gave it, and on the other hand avers that the beast's spirit goes downward to the earth, that is, to extinction.

The Divine mind superintended the placing of Ecclesiastes in the sacred canon. The book is deeply instructive as setting forth the conclusions of a wise man in his attempt to gain satisfaction "under the sun." We must not confound Solomon's groping after the light with God's revelation. Scripture nowhere as God's revelation affirms that the beast has a spirit.

To return to our illustration of the soul being like the *liaison* officer in the army, it is clear that the soul and body are closely connected. That needs no elaboration. The soul consists of the feelings, emotions, desires, affections that animate the body. Man has fallen, and these feelings,

emotions, desires and affections are poisoned. Man is a sinner, and governed by his soul he is led to many excesses and wrong-doings.

The passage that shows the intimate connection between the soul and spirit is Heb. 4. 12, where we read that "The Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit."

The spirit is the highest part of man, distinguishing him from the beast. It connects itself with reasoning powers, conscience, discernment, judgment, reflection, and the like. So we read, "The spirit of man is the candle of the LORD, searching all the inward parts of the belly" (Prov. 20. 27), that is, of the soulish desires. It stands in the position of mentor to the soul. In unconverted man the spirit is clouded by the fall, but in converted men it recovers its place and power as instructed and illuminated by the Word of God, and empowered by the Spirit of God.

Have we not all at times been sensible of a contest between our spirit and our soul? The latter has led us in desire in certain directions, and the spirit has stepped in, and, with conscience at work and by the illumination of Scripture, forbidden the soulish desire. Whenever the soul governs, there is disaster and a low level of conduct. Whenever the spirit controls, the soul is kept within bounds.

The soul of the beast carries out its desires through its body without any check. It shows itself in the gratification of its desires and well-being without any thought of all else. The beast is incapable of the thought of God, of the knowledge of right and wrong as right and wrong; it lives for itself and its offspring, instinct being strong in this direction. But fallen

man's soul renders him the prey of many sinful desires. Abstractly not all the soul's desires are wrong. For instance, "natural affection" is a right emotion, yet sin has come in and poisoned everything. Yet the spirit in man is ever in the place of mentor and conscience, and checks soulish excesses if listened to.

Scripture speaks of God as "The Father of spirits" (Heb. 12. 9), never of souls. Angels are called "spirits"—"Are they not all ministering spirits. . . ." (Heb. 1. 14)—never souls, and demons are constantly spoken of as "unclean spirits" (Mark 3. 11)—never souls.

Man in Scripture is spoken of as having a soul and being a soul. The context proves in which way the word is used. For instance, we read, "All the souls of the house of Jacob, which came into Egypt, were three score and ten" (Gen. 46. 27), meaning seventy persons. We use the word in common language when we say that a certain vessel foundered at sea and every soul perished.

That the soul is distinct from the body is clearly seen in Matt. 10. 28, which tells us that man can kill the body and not the soul, that God alone is able to destroy both body and soul in hell. Note, too, the word *kill* is applied to the body and not to the soul, whilst the word *destroy* is applied to both body and soul. But *destroy* does not mean to kill—it does not mean annihilation, but the thing destroyed ceasing to exist for the purpose for which it was made. For instance, the same word is used in the following passages: "Found My sheep which was *lost* (Luke 15. 6). If the sheep had been annihilated it could not have been found. Again: "The bottles shall *perish*" (Luke 5. 37), that is, the new wine should burst the old bottles,

and they were rendered useless for the purpose for which they were made. Again: "The world that then was, being overflowed with water, *perished*" (2 Peter 3. 6). The world certainly was not annihilated.

Then again the question is often discussed, "Is the soul immortal?" and there is no verse in the Bible that affirms it in just those words, though Matt. 10. 28, mentioned above, asserts it in other words. Clearly, however, the Scriptures take for granted that the soul exists for ever, and in that sense is immortal. But, says the objector, does not 1 Tim. 6. 16 tell us that God "only hath immortality"? Yes, that is so, God only has immortality *inherently*, it belongs to Him in His nature. J. N. Darby has a fine sentence in this connection: "It is God in the abstraction of His essence, in the proper immutability of His being, in the rights of His majesty, veiled to all men" (Synopsis, Vol. V, page 158). But this does not and cannot hinder God from conferring immortality, that is, conferring life that is for ever, as His gift and sustainment. If this passage is pressed, "Who only hath immortality," as some press it, it would perforce make the angels mortal, and deny to the believer the gift of eternal life. It would prove too much. God would be left in absolute solitude.

Whilst Scripture in so many words does not affirm that the soul is immortal, it certainly does not affirm that it is mortal. We can point to passages that declare that the body is mortal, but there is none that declares the soul to be mortal. Man is able to kill the body because it is mortal; but he cannot kill the soul, and Scripture is careful not to suggest that God will kill the soul, but uses the word "destroy," which, as we have seen, does not mean annihilation.

We read of "the souls . . . that were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held" (Rev. 6. 9), yet evidently the bodies were beheaded, for men cannot kill the soul; and their souls survived, for they cried out with a loud voice and were bidden to wait for God's time for judgment to be meted out upon their enemies.

It remains now to quote one or two Scriptures which will clearly indicate that the soul is connected with desires exercised through the body. Though the soul of man is greater than the soul of the beast, yet man and beast have souls in common; whilst spirit, which the beast has not and distinguishes man from the beast, connotes higher qualities, and links man up with God, so as to have a sense of God and what is suitable to Him.

Hear the longing of Lot, pleading to be allowed to go to Zoar: "Oh, let me escape thither (is it not a little one?)

and my soul shall live" (Gen. 19. 20). Evidently his soul desired what was a small edition of what he had lost in Sodom, and was a mere soulish desire and not for his good. What a contrast to Mary, who said, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour" (Luke 1. 46, 47). Do we not see how soul and spirit act in unison in connection with a saint of God, and the aspirations and emotions Godward, lofty and pure?

Of course it is the general way in which soul and spirit are used that helps us to a right conclusion. It is impossible to separate spirit and soul in every case, they are so intimately connected, but we can distinguish in this general way.

Enough has been said for a brief article, but the earnest reader can search the Scriptures on the lines indicated, and their perusal will amply repay for the labour expended.

THE DEW OF HERMON.

(T. OLIVER.)

"As the dew of Hermon that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing—life for evermore" (Ps. 133. 3).

ALTHOUGH doubtless this psalm refers primarily to Israel, the state portrayed is aptly descriptive of God's thoughts for His people in every dispensation, and is one which we may earnestly desire as being in accord with "the way of superlative excellence" shown by the apostle in 1 Cor. 13. and of the diligent keeping of the unity of the Spirit in the co-bond of peace (Eph. 4. 3).

The unity of the Spirit is the power by which the Holy Ghost harmoniously associates very diverse elements in God's work relative to the church. This is a hidden power, not recognized by the world, but is rendered evident

by God's people exhibiting peace as the uniting bond. The world cannot see or understand the unity of the Spirit, but the maintenance or rupture of peace is readily observed. So the abstract truth of God is concretely illustrated by those who profess to belong to Him. All the subtlety of the enemy is directed against this desirable end being attained, therefore there is a call for diligence.

The unity of the Spirit is marked by perennial freshness. Zion means a "high and very dry place," but the dew of Hermon descending upon its mountains was the only means afforded for changing its character. So the only

influence which will keep our souls fresh is the power of the Spirit, causing us to own practically the headship of Christ, and to enjoy God's favour, manifested to our souls and bodies in unceasing goodness and mercy.

"That all Thy gracious favour
May to my soul be known ;
And, versed in this Thy goodness
My hopes Thyself shall crown."

In this refreshing process our souls expand in the atmosphere of God's love, and we experimentally prove the meaning of the song of Moses :—

"My doctrine shall drop as the rain,
My speech shall distil as the dew,
As the small rain upon the tender herb,
And as the showers upon the grass."
(Deut. 32. 2).

And also the song of the Psalmist :—

"The people shall be willing
In the day of Thy power,
In the beauty of holiness,
From the womb of the morning,
Thou hast the dew of thy youth."
(Ps. 110. 3).

Physically, at the end of the millennium, the saints of God constituting the holy city, the new Jerusalem, in spite of the flow of time, will be marked by the dew of youth, "As a bride adorned for her husband."

But at present we have the benefit of the same revivifying power for the maintenance of freshness of soul. No mere high place of privilege, no mere association where the truth is known, will maintain us in that delectable state. The mountains of Zion, although high, were naturally very dry, but the dew of Hermon produced a rich crop of smiling verdure.

Subjection of spirit to Him, who is the Head, will alone enable us to exemplify the unity which He wishes to see in His saints. United by the living link of the Holy Spirit to our Head in heaven, living in the light of the knowledge of God, fully revealed in the face of Christ, we shall apprehend,

maintain, and express the unity of the Spirit in the co-bond of peace. Every effort of the enemy to bring in dissension and disruption will then fail. The conditions will exist for the collective as well as the individual enjoyment of eternal life, the *summum bonum* of God's blessing.

Note the presence of the adverb "there" in the third verse of the 133rd Psalm. It is in the condition of unity that the Lord commands the peerless blessing of the experimental enjoyment of eternal life, which, the Apostle John informs us, is the knowledge of Him that is true—the true God and His Son Jesus Christ. We shall thus be enabled to dwell together in unity to the glory of God, and morally suitable to Him who has saved us and called us with a holy calling.

We must feel sorry for those who allow themselves to be defrauded out of their birthright as children of God, i.e., the present enjoyment of eternal life. The incessant quibbling about points which are frequently forgotten ten years later, is somewhat like the waters rushing down the narrow gorge of the Jordan, carrying much solid matter in solution into the great depression of the Dead Sea, which is nearly 1300 ft. below sea level. Hence no water can escape by outlet drainage. But the sun's rays falling on the surface of the lake change the liquid water into vapour, lifting it high above the sources of the Jordan, and in course of time the winds cause part of it to become the dew of Hermon, which revives the verdure of the mountains of Zion. However, observe that not one solid particle is lifted from the sea by this process. The Dead Sea becomes gradually saltier and the solid matter accumulates.

Does the above process not exemplify conditions which are not unfamiliar

amongst the people of God? Wrangling factions tumble down the gorge of fierce dissension into a Dead Sea of absolute futility, in which the spirits of men become salter and more bitter in the deadness for God. The only remedy is in the objective presentation of Christ. We need positive ministry. The light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ alone

will lift us above the dissensions and will cause our thoughts and speech to distil and condense as the dew of Hermon spreading refreshment instead of discontent wherever we go. In doing so, we leave those who choose to shut out the light of God to continue in the lake of bitterness, which will mean loss now and at the judgment seat of Christ.

"IN THY PRESENCE."

(H. J. VINE)

FROM the darkness and the perils
Of a world by Satan swayed
Peace we find in God's own presence,
Where our minds on Him are stayed;
Leaving thoughts that once distressed us,
Holy themes our tongues employ;
Grace and truth are known in Jesus,
By Whose blood we are brought nigh.

Gone the heaviness and mourning,
Now the Unction from on high,
With our Saviour's peerless glories
Fills our souls with deepening joy;
Thence ascending sweetest incense,
Fragrant offerings to His praise,
Joyful in His presence, bless we
God our Father for His grace.

Loved with love none e'er can measure,
As the Father loves the Son,
We respond from hearts that treasure
Wonders love Divine has done;
And the Saviour comes to take us
To the Home prepared above,
Where, in presence of His radiance,
Song outflows inspired by love.

The Love of Christ.

CHRIST at the right hand of God makes intercession for us—for all His own.

He represents us there in the highest place, the highest court in the universe. But why does He do it? Because He loves us. This is a point of immense importance. We are supported by His love. In the trials, distresses, and vicissitudes of life we are loved and cared for by Him in the highest heavens, and nothing can separate us from His love, and through Him that loves us we are more than conquerors.

NOTES ON GALATIANS. Chapter 4.

(F. B. HOLE.)

[N the previous chapter the apostle had likened the position of the believer under the law of Moses before Christ came to that of a child of noble parentage kept under a schoolmaster. To this figure he reverts in the opening verse of our chapter.

Whatever a child may be, even if he be the heir, yet is he kept in a place of subjection and under rules and regulations, so that in that respect he differs nothing from a servant. He cannot as yet be entrusted with the freedom of his father's house. When, however, he comes of age all is changed. He then leaves the nursery régime behind, and the time of his tutelage is over. He takes his place as a son, in the liberty and nearness which befits that intimate relationship.

So it has been for us, as the apostle indicates in verse 3, "we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world." The "we" here indicates the believer of Jewish stock; and the apostle speaks impersonally, as though there had been wrought out in the lifetime of one saint what actually transpired in a period covering many generations. Such, in their days of "childhood" under the law, were in bondage to the elements or principles of the world. It is worthy of note that according to this the principles on which the law was based were the principles of *the world*. This helps to explain why, in spite of the curse it pronounces, the law and the root principle of it, viz., all our blessing or otherwise depending upon what we can be and do for God, is so persistently clung to by sinful men. The law does not totally condemn and displace the world. It recognizes it, and assumes it *may be* of some worth by its very recognition.

The great divide between the old dispensation and the new was when Christ appeared. Then was the "fulness of time" and the Lord Jesus came "made of a woman," i.e., really and truly *Man*; "made under the law," i.e., come of the chosen stock of Israel, who were by Divine appointment under law's dominion. He came under the law, not that He might keep it for us, and atone for our failure to keep it by so doing, but that He might redeem those that were under it. How He thus redeemed has been told us in verse 13 of the previous chapter. It was by "being made a curse for us," that is, by bearing the penalty which the law inflicted. This is redemption by death or by blood, after the type of Abel's offering. The idea that disobedient sinners can be redeemed by another producing the fair fruit of obedience on their behalf is more after the type of Cain's bloodless offering.

By death, then, we are redeemed from the curse of the law. Chapter 4. 5, however, carries us on a further step. We are redeemed not only from the law's curse but also from its dominion. We are set free from the reign of the schoolmaster and from schoolroom régime, in receiving the "adoption of sons." We leave the schoolroom for the liberty of the son of full age, who knows the mind of his father and moves without restriction in every apartment of the house.

But not only are we redeemed by the death of Christ and brought into sonship as knowing the Father, but God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts. The Holy Spirit is here spoken of as "the Spirit of His Son" because just as the Lord Jesus took up His place as God's Son, even as Man in this world (see Luke 1. 35),

in the energy of the Spirit, so is that same Spirit the source and energy of the life and thoughts and feelings of a son of God in each believer whom He indwells. By Him we cry "Abba, Father." He gives us the consciousness of the relationship and a suitable response to the Father's love. A wealthy philanthropist might lift a poor child out of some charitable institution and legally adopt him as his son. He could not, however, beget within him the proper feelings of a son of his, nor create a suitable response on the child's part. That might be forthcoming in some degree from the child, or it might be almost totally lacking to the distress of the benefactor. What man cannot do, God has done.

The Divine order is—first the relationship established as the fruit of redemption; then the consciousness of, and response to, the relationship as the fruit of the Spirit's indwelling, and work in our hearts. We have received the Spirit *because we are sons*, and not *vice versa*.

Notice in passing that in verse 5, it is "we"—only those believers who were of Israel's race could properly be spoken of as redeemed from the law, and Paul, the writer, was one of them. In verse 6 it is "ye," for the Galatians were Gentiles and they as, redeemed (though not exactly from *the law*) had equally with the Jews received the Spirit of God. The Christian, whether Jew or Gentile, is no more a servant like the saints of the bygone dispensations, but a son, and even an heir of God through Christ.

What an astounding dignity! What unparalleled relationship and privilege! We read and write the words, but how little do we take it in. What holy elevation would it give us if we did, and how should we appreciate the warm and

almost indignant expostulations of the apostle which follow in verses 8 to 18.

Once the Galatians had served false gods (verse 8) and now they had been brought thus to know and be known of the living and true God, and known of Him in such wonderful fashion as this. Were they, after this, going to turn back to the old order of things which he characterizes as "weak and beggarly elements"? Strong language this, yet not too strong. The law was holy, just and good, yet just as the moon is a weak and beggarly affair in the presence of the sun, so is the law in the presence of the grace and power of the gospel. In the language of the great parable of Luke 15, the Galatians had been received into the Father's house and set in the son's place and not among the hired servants, and here they were with false humility going back, not exactly to the care of the swine in the far country, but to the drudgery of menials in the kitchen, as though *that* were the way to retain the love which the Father had showered on them!

Yet, apparently the Galatians were guilty of no very great lapses. The apostle specifies here only the matter of observing "days and months and times and years"; a thing which we might have considered beneath notice. It was, however, a symptom of a deep-seated disease. The Apostle James has told us that though a man keeps the whole law save one point which he breaks, yet he is guilty of all. On the same principle a man may wish to have the benefit of grace, but if he takes up the law in regard to one point, he must be under it in regard to all; as indeed verse 3 of Galatians 5. explicitly states. This is something that we must bear well in mind. We cannot put a patch of grace on the old garment of law, nor put the new wine in

the old bottles. In our relations with God we must be either altogether under law and its curse, or under grace and its blessing. But then grace makes absolutely *nothing* of us, and *everything* of Christ.

The Apostle proceeds to recall how the Galatians had at first received him, and now, alas! they had swung round and almost treated him as an enemy. But all this came to pass under the influence of these false Judaizing teachers. In verse 17 the apostle alludes to them, though he does not name them. They were very zealous in their attentions to the Galatians but with no good intent. They simply wished to exclude them from the apostle Paul so that they might become zealous partisans of themselves. This is always the way of the false teacher. He does not aim at attracting souls to Christ, but to himself. The true servant of God, on the contrary, is like Paul, and travails in an agony of spiritual desire that CHRIST may be formed in those amongst whom he labours. The false servant aims at placing his own impression on the plastic heart of the convert; the true servant labours that Christ may be formed there.

As a closing argument, Paul goes back to what the law itself recorded in an allegory. The Galatians seemed so enamoured of the law that perhaps they would listen to it. In the history of Hagar and Ishmael, of Sarah and Isaac, we have an allegory. Abraham's first son, born according to the flesh of the bondwoman, was a figure of the legal system and its bondage. Isaac, the child of promise, born by resurrection-power of the free woman, typified grace and those who are under it. In this allegory furnished by the law, the first was superseded by the second. The legal system had to go that grace and the children thereof might be supreme. Even in the law itself there were these intimations that it was only a provisional system and to be set on one side when God introduced that which had been His thought and purpose from the beginning.

We Christians whether formerly Jews or Gentiles are "children of the free-woman," children of grace and not of law. We are not "servants" but "sons," as the earlier part of the chapter stated. No credit attaches to us in connection with this wonderful privilege. It is all, from first to last, the grace of God.

PLEASING MEN.

(H. J. VINE.)

IN seeking to avoid being a man-pleaser, some fall into the opposite evil of becoming exceedingly displeasing. The apostle sought to "*please all men in all things*" in view of their profit (1 Cor. 10. 33). Nevertheless, when the truth was in question, he wrote, "Do I seek to please men? *If I yet pleased men*, I should not be the servant of Christ" (Gal. 1. 10). On the one hand he sought in his walk and ways to commend himself "to every

man's conscience" (2 Cor. 4. 2), and on the other he laboured "to be agreeable" to God; on the right hand and on the left he was therefore well equipped for the fight of faith. He became all things to all men that he might save some, yet he upheld the truth of the gospel "not as pleasing men, but God, who trieth our hearts" (1 Thess. 2. 4). That is what will preserve us from falling on the one side or the other—*being pleasing to*

God! We are exhorted "not to please ourselves," but that every one please his neighbour for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not Himself (Rom. 15. 2); nay, blessed be His Holy Name, "I do always those things that please" the Father, He could say; and the Father said, "Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well pleased." Enoch walked with God and was taken

away before the flood; so the saints will be translated from the earth to be with the Lord before the flood of world-wide judgment—"the wrath to come." But meanwhile may we so walk that Enoch's testimony may be ours also, "for before his translation he had this testimony, that HE PLEASSED GOD" (Heb. 11. 5).

GLORIES.

(W. H. WESTCOTT.)

A Meditation on John 17.

THE position of the 17th chapter of John's Gospel is well known. In the twelfth chapter Jesus closes His public ministry among the Jews, for it says, "He did hide Himself from them" (verse 36); "they believed not on Him" (verse 37). The mass became judicially hardened, as had been prophesied by Isaiah; and although many among the leading men were persuaded of the Divinity of His mission, all their influence on the mass was nullified because (for fear of the Pharisees) they would not confess Him. Christ's words at the end of the chapter state the issue; even if judgment did not fall there and then, the rejection of Him and His words meant judgment at "the last day."

Hence from chap. 13. He occupies Himself alone with His disciples down to the end of chap. 16., showing them definitely what His going away meant, and indicating how on the one hand intimacy with Him in the place He was to reach would be maintained, though they remained on earth; and on the other how they would be supported here in peace, fruitfulness, and testimony during His absence.

This service having been rendered to His beloved followers, His prayer to His Father is recorded for us, and was

spoken in their hearing that they might have His joy fulfilled in themselves (verse 13 of chap. 17.). They were permitted to hear His intercourse with the Father that they might know the place they had in His own, and in His Father's, affections, and have the joy that flows from it. Into this intimacy and joy we—even we—are introduced, in verse 20. I commend the examination of these verses to my readers, familiar though they be.

In this prayer we find five glories referred to. The first and earliest glory in point of time is that mentioned in verse 5. It is clear that this is

DIVINE AND ETERNAL GLORY;

"the glory that I had with Thee before the world was." He addresses the Father in all the calmness of known intimacy and as having calculated the bearing of His words (for He prayed as being conscious of His listeners, and with a view to their joy); and goes back to that eternity of companionship with Him in glory, antecedent to the creation of temporal and material things. We are earlier here than Gen. 1. 1. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. There was an Antecedent to the heavens and the earth, and that Antecedent is

Elohim—God. In the third verse of that chapter in Genesis, which commences the written revelation of the Godhead, the Spirit of God is the first of Divine Persons to be separately referred to. But in John 17. 5, the Father and the Son are shown to our adoring hearts in the glory proper to Divine Persons, themselves uncreate.

Three great Scriptures suggest themselves in this marvellous revelation of the glory of the Lord Jesus. The first chapter of John is a contrast to Genesis 1. and goes back into an immeasurable eternity. Evidently there is vast difference between "in the beginning God *created*" and "in the beginning *was*." The former relates the beginning of that which did begin; the latter refers to that which existed and had being when everything else that began did begin. The Word never did *begin* to be the Word; in Him we see eternity of being, though our finite minds stagger in the contemplation of it. The Word was distinguishable in His own Personality from eternity, for He was *with* God. He is not the same as the Father, nor is He the same as the Holy Spirit. He was not an emanation from the Father, He did not become the Word by either creation or evolution, or birth in some remote point of time in the past eternity; otherwise He Himself would have had beginning, which is a contradiction of what is stated in the first three verses. For at the time of the beginning of anything that *began*, He *was*. The glory He had with the Father before the world was, was Divine and eternal glory: the Word was God.

But as the Word in the Godhead, He is the One in whom Godhead ever could and did express itself. For illustration we may say with reverence that the Father remains invisible, and the Spirit (though assuming at times emblematic

forms as dove or flame) does not take personal form. But the Son became man, the Word became flesh. In what way the Godhead expressed itself to itself when Godhead alone existed and nothing else *was*, we cannot of course say. No one knows the Son but the Father. It cannot surely grieve us that there are glories deeper and grander in the Son uncreate than we created beings can comprehend. But in whatever way and at whatever time God gave expression to Himself, the eternal Word was that Person in the Godhead in whom He did it. Hence, for example, when the Godhead willed to express itself in creation, all things were created by *Him*, and without Him was not anything made that was made. It may be difficult to utter the meaning of that wonderful verse; but we may glean from it that everything, from highest to lowest and from greatest to the least, came from the hand of *the Word*, and was intended to be, each thing in its measure, an expression of the glory of the invisible God. (See Rom. 1. 19, 20; so also Ps. 19. 1.) Not merely that it was created, nor merely that it was created by the agency of the Son (both of which remain true), but that when it was so it took its form and function as part of a vast creation intended to give expression to the eternal power and Godhead of its Creator. It is thus possible to find in nature—in its laws, its forms, its colours, its minerals, its forces—illustrations without end of Divine realities. Material things themselves are not the great ultimate reality, but they serve as vehicles to convey to intelligent creatures the great reality that lies behind them.

Thus also, as in creation, so in providence, in incarnation, in redemption, in resurrection and in glory, and in the coming days of rule and government as well as in final and eternal

judgment or blessing, Christ is the One in whom God is ever pleased to express Himself.

A second great Scripture which refers to this glory of Jesus is the 1st of Hebrews.

The dignity of the Son appears to be the theme of the writer, along with the grandeur of everything He has introduced and established. We have *substance* in having Christ. Type and shadow, illustration and prophecy, had existed before; partial disclosures of the thoughts and will of God, each suitable for its time and place of utterance. But in the end God has spoken in His Son, who in the fulness of intelligence, power, and dignity has completely revealed Him; and by focussing in Himself the fulfilment of every type and shadow, has rendered all the former system of ritual and law not only unnecessary, but weak and unprofitable (chap. 7. 18).

But all this hinges on the dignity of the Son. He is greater than angels (chaps. 1. and 2.), than Moses (chap. 3.), than Joshua (chap. 4.), than Aaron (chap. 5.), than Abraham, or the Melchisedec who blessed Abraham, or the Levitical priests who were in Abraham's loins when the less was blessed of the greater (chap. 7.).

It is not only that God says of the Son, "Let all the angels of God worship Him," or that He contrasts the honour of Moses, who was faithful *as a servant* in all God's house, with that of Christ, who *as Son* is over God's house; but in the second verse of the 1st chapter He reminds us that *as Son* He was antecedent to all the ages, and that in all the ordering and formation of succeeding ages He was the Agent by whom God has introduced or will introduce them. So that in knowing Christ we are in living contact with One whose dignities and glories as Son in

the eternal Godhead were before all ages; we are, in fact, carried back to the glory which He had with the Father before the world was. In the epistle to the Hebrews, however, it is not so much the unfolding of the Father's grace and love (which is John's theme) as the establishment of a new system of nearness and approach to God, the very antithesis of that which had gone before in the old tabernacle system of distance and imperfection. The latter was but provisional: that which Christ the Son has brought in is eternal. As Son, He had not beginning any more than as the Word; His Sonship is a glory which He had with the Father before the world was. He was competent in the dignity and glory and greatness of His Person to hold counsel with the Father as to doing His will and bringing about a system of blessing in which God could find pleasure, having His people in happy and holy nearness to Himself.

A third Scripture also brings Him before us, connected with His glory with the Father before the world was. It is Colossians 1. Christians are said to be translated into the kingdom of the Son of His love (verse 13). The very thought of "kingdom" brings in the idea of *sway*. We are not saved to be lawless, of course, but to come under the sway of the Son. Everything is regulated from the full height of the Sonship glory of Jesus. He it is who is supreme in this realm, and over our lives as the lives of those brought into it. But behind all His authority and dignity is His Father's *love*; He is the Son of the Father's love. Greatness of itself might be cold, formal, official. Greatness in this case is connected with warmth, and the sweetest warmth of all—that of holy love. The Father loves the Son; and, as fruit of an affection which designs the greatest pleasure and honour for Him, brings us

into a realm where He—as Son of that love—can exercise His blissful sway over us, body, soul, and spirit. The greatest influence in the world is not that of matter, nor even of mind ; it is that of love, the love of God. The Son is that wondrous Being in whom the Father's love doth rest ; He is in every way competent to be the Object of it, whose dignity and moral loveliness mark Him off beyond every other in the Father's eyes. He is, moreover, the One in whom responsive love delights God's heart, who loves His Father as His Father loves Him, and who is competent and resourceful for God's will as He is worthy for God's affection. He it is who is God's accredited Representative, who adequately presents Him to all the vast creation. Invisible as God must be in His infinite and essential Godhead, we are no losers thereby, for all that God is, is brought into vision in Christ. He is God's image. To make an image of Christ is, of course, ridiculous : we do not require the image of an image. The living Christ, alive as He is in resurrection to-day, is the veritable image of God. He is representative of Him in moral glory and fulness ; and also in the way of direction and authority. Other authorities and powers there are, but all are derivative from and subordinate to Him ; they have a place in the ordering of creation, but only as created by Him and for Him ; they only subsist as subsidiary to Him, having their spheres appointed at His will, and all their character of rule and resources of supply being in Him. The created "all things" in the which they serve, and the form and character of their service and authority, and the measure of their power, are all amenable to His law ; He is supreme among them all, Firstborn of all creation, because He created all. He is the Former of all things ; however far back

they may be dated in time, be it perhaps millions of years, *He* is before them all ; and in Him they all hang together. We are carried back before the times of all authorities and powers, lordships, and principalities, and find one great Figure, outstanding and glorious, the Son of the Father's love. We admit that disorder and even enmity has come into the time-scene ; but He it is who is entrusted by the Godhead to bring about deliverance from Satan's power, and to reconcile things to Itself. But before the disorder came in, whether in the visible or invisible world, He it was who, in Godhead glory, was subject of His Father's eternal affection. He it was who, being designated Head of all things in manhood, created all the spheres of authority in which His supreme sway and infinite Godhead fulness might be (and in the redeemed creation will be) fully realized. He will impart His own character to the whole creation, and bring everything into subjection to, and accord with, God, in heaven and in earth.

But the reason of it all is, the greatness of His Person before any of these things existed at all. In Him all the fulness was pleased to dwell ; every element in Godhead fulness and majesty, all of authority and power, all of character and activity, all of wisdom and knowledge, all of God's very nature of love, is set forth and made available for man. When the disciples were relieved in the storm by the stilling of wind and wave, they were impelled to exclaim, "What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the waves do obey Him?" The more we ponder His words, "the glory which I had with Thee before the world was," the more our hearts must be subdued in worship and praise before Him. He is the Word in whom God is ever expressed ; He is the Son eternal, whose

dignity is greater than that of any created being, and who according to Divine counsel was to become man, and bring many sons in nearness and relationship to glory; He is the Former of all things, who, being God's Representative, could be Creator and Upholder and then Reconciler of all things and all authorities to God.

The second glory in order in John 17. we must describe as

MORAL GLORY.

It is found in verse 4, "I have glorified Thee on the earth." This does not mean a physical or material display of glory or splendour such as would affect the human senses. There are qualities of character which draw the heart and affect the mind more than the pomp of outward display. A Nero may command the display of colour and the pageantry compatible with the might of Rome, while the heart that has sense of moral worth may feel the utmost contempt and repugnance for the very Cæsar who is the centre of it all. To find moral perfection, to become intimate with some One who is everything that can be desired by the most perfect and happy beings, to know a Person in whom rectitude and affection, mercy and happiness, are fully realized, and not only are made available for others, but are reproductive of their own kind in those who are attached to Him,—this is far beyond outward show.

In the Lord Jesus as Man here was expressed all the moral character of God. Everything that can rightly be connected with the thought of God is found in its perfection in Jesus. Do we speak of holiness? He was holy in His very conception and birth, and holy in life and ways. Do we speak of mercy? When did the appeal for mercy fall unheeded or unanswered on His ears? Of truth? Of righteousness? Of tenderness? Of humility?

Of obedience? Of faithfulness? Of confidence in God? Of authority? Of power? Of wisdom? Of love? All these things are seen in Jesus. Not *some* goodness or obedience, not *some* mercy or humility, but these very things themselves in their essence, in their essential perfection. The renewed mind never reaches to the end of His perfection as though it had a limit; far as we may travel in our thought along the line of any one grace, there yet appear depths unfathomed and heights unclimbed; the story may ever be told, but never be fully told. His language is simple, the incidents in His life story are but few in number as recorded, a hundred and twenty pages or thereabouts are all that Divine wisdom has deemed necessary for the four-times-told gospel by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John; yet apostles and prophets, saints and servants, have been digging in those mines for nigh two thousand years, and the marvel with all is that, though we know enough to fill our hearts with unfeigned and adoring worship, there remains enough to fill them for all eternity. It is not only that the greatest apostle to the Gentiles almost plaintively, certainly yearningly, cries, "That I may know *Him*" (Phil. 3. 10), but the greatest apostle to the Jews voices the same interminable and illimitable delight: "Whom having not seen ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory." Knowing and loving—these sum up the twofold testimony to the matchless worth of the Lord Jesus Christ. To know Him is to love Him; to love Him is to want to know Him more. We would like to be in His company for His own sake. Such was the spell that acted in the fishermen and others who followed Him in days of old; such is the attraction that draws us still.

But what shall we say when we come on to the close of His life here? What of His cross and shame? What of His suffering and death? What of His obedience to God's will, and His devotion to God's good pleasure? What of His love?

How can we speak of His bearing God's judgment upon sin? Of His being *made sin* on the cross? Of His facing death as our penalty, and as the awful limit of Satan's power?

For in all these ways have His perfections been tested and proved. It is not only that in Jesus we reach One who is perfect, but One who has been tested in circumstances whose character had never been experienced before. The best of other men break down somewhere, Jesus nowhere. The heart in its craving for a perfect object reaches finality and enjoys unchanging rest in the Son of God, while the conscience has its abiding rest in His atoning work. Here, indeed, God is glorified; glorified not only in the exhibition of every moral beauty in perfection's highest height, but in respect of all His holy claims as to sin and the sinner. For this word of the Lord Jesus, "I have glorified Thee on the earth, I have finished the work Thou gavest Me to do," must surely have been uttered anticipatively in view of His death. It covered all His life down to the moment He uttered it: this we know. But the whole of the section, chaps. 13.-17., anticipates His going out of the world to the Father, and speaks of the conditions which would obtain when He had thus gone. At the close of chap. 16., as a summary of His own pathway, and looking over to its assured close, He says, "I have overcome the world." As surely as this includes the final hours of testing, so surely does "I have glorified Thee on the earth" look on to and include

His death where His journey on the earth was ended.

But after all the point in our Lord's words which we are considering is "I have glorified THEE." It is tantamount to saying, "I have made *Thee* glorious." In this Gospel in particular we have the Lord bringing to light in His own life and testimony who and what His Father is. So that while we behold the Son in His own unique perfection and glory, and are necessarily drawn to Him, we are to transfer our thought and affection likewise to the Father. Christ remains, but the Father is so identical with Him in character, in grace, in love, that he that has seen Him has seen the Father. Such is His own word to Philip in chap. 14. Is Jesus superlatively attractive and admirable in our eyes as enlightened by grace? Such also is the Father who sent Him. Though the Father be separately invisible, yet we know Him, know Him lovingly, know Him reverently, know Him adoringly. He has been fully revealed in Christ, and every feature in His character, every attribute of His Being, every depth in His nature, awakens responsive affection and worship in our hearts. Every ray in this glory speaks its own wonderfully blessed language to us; we are thankful that ever we were created to know such a God. The grace that recovered us from our sin has brought us so near that the Father's house has become the home of our hearts, the Father's love the delight of our spirits. What we have said of the Son we must say of Him also; to know the Father is to love Him; to love Him is to want to know Him more. To be morally like Him becomes the hope, as one day it will be the realized portion, of every soul that has learned the Father in the Son.

(To be concluded next month, D.V.)

LIGHT AND LIFE. No. 11.

(JAMES BOVE.)

Meditations on John's Gospel. Chapters 8 and 9.

CHAPTER 8.—The Pharisees bring to Him a woman taken in adultery. What was He to do? Condemn her and deny the grace in which He approached the sinner? Justify her, and show His disrespect for the law of Moses? Stone her? They could do that themselves, so they might think; but could they? But Jesus stooped down, and with His finger wrote on the ground, as though He heard them not. The finger of God had written the demand of God on two tables of stone, but He was here tracing upon the dust of this earth, in His walk and in His ways with sinners, unfathomable grace. This He indicates by His writing on the ground. "So when they continued asking Him He lifted up Himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And again He stooped down, and wrote on the ground." He was not to be interrupted in His work of grace by their wicked hypocrisy. But can their self-righteousness bear the test that He applies to it? No. The oldest must first go, but the youngest cannot remain. The only One who could have thrown the stone at her had come to call sinners to repentance. He does not condemn her, but tells her to sin no more.

In chapter 9. the spiritual condition of man is figuratively presented in the blind beggar. All his life he had been in darkness. "Truly the light is sweet and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun." But that sweet pleasure had never gladdened his eyes. Yet the fault lay not in the sun, but rather in the man himself. The light of that glorious orb was as free for him as for any other, but he had not power to take in its comforting beams. He

had been born blind. But He, who made the sun for the blessing of the earth and all in it, now crossed his path, and in His infinite mercy wrought a work in him by means of which he became able to take in the light, and enjoy its brilliant rays.

"As long as I am in the world, I am the Light of the world." But the light had been shining in the midst of this darkness, and the darkness apprehended it not. Man was morally blind. This light was the light of God, for He who was the light was God manifested in flesh. But from the outset He was rejected. This light had an irritating effect upon the men of this world. Like the clay put upon the blind eyes, it did not make him see. One may be confident that it was physically a great relief to the blind beggar to have it washed from his eyes, but having washed in the pool of Siloam he received sight.

That the presence of Jesus on earth among men was a source of great irritation to the natural man is very forcibly brought out in the treatment He received from the hands of all but a few. We see in the previous chapters how nothing but the restraining hand of God kept them from stoning Him. It is not that there was anything in His ways with men to call forth anything but heart-felt adoration and worship; but on account of the deadly hatred of the human heart to all that is of God, the presentation of God before their eyes in Him, who was God manifested in flesh, awoke that hatred in a way in which it never had previously been aroused, so that nothing but His murder would quiet the rage that filled them. Had they washed in the pool of Siloam; that is, had they

believed on Him as the Sent One of God, they would have met Him with the thanksgiving and the praise justly due to His unfathomable grace. But trusting in their own ability to judge of everything that came before them, and unaware of the treacherous character of their own hearts they, urged on by the power of darkness, precipitated themselves into conflict with God, whom they professed to serve, but whom truly they knew not. "If ye were blind, ye should have no sin; but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth."

They flattered themselves that they were in the true light of God, but their rejection of Jesus manifested the sorrowful fact that they were in darkness, and walked in darkness, nor knew whither they were going. Had they admitted their incompetency to receive testimony from God, and that that incompetency arose from their fallen sinful condition, it would then have become a question of what was in the heart of God for them, and whether He would take them into His own hand, and make them all that He desired them to be, and this question would have been solved in the salvation of their souls. The man whose sins are forgiven, and to whom God will not reckon sin, is the man "In whose spirit there is no guile": He is before God in the confession of his sinfulness.

This blind man in chapter 9. confesses Him as a prophet, and as the greatest

of all prophets, for he says: "Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind." For this confession the leaders of the people excommunicated him, and thus another sheep was transferred from the fold to the hand of the Son and the Father. In his isolation the light that to his unspeakable joy illuminated his soul is wonderfully increased, he learns that the Prophet he so boldly confessed is the Son of God. In this way the light was severed from the darkness, and the children of God from the children of the devil.

The Pharisees might think they were victors in this poor engagement with one who had no pretension to learning or lawyer-like cleverness, but the hitherto blind beggar had overcome them. They were still in the darkness without one beneficent ray to guide their footsteps, and he was in the clear light of God. He had overcome the world in which they still were slaves; for: "Who is he that overcometh the world but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" He had passed out of darkness into light: out of death into life. A few bright rays of the light, that with its overpowering beams now filled his vision, had been too strong for the eyes of the proud leaders of the people, and had maddened them against this fresh luminary, created by the revelation of God in the person of the Son.

"Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established."—Prov. 4. 26.

BEWARE of going to places where Christ is "disallowed." Don't you think it argues very badly for Christianity when a believer fancies it needful to go down to the world's level to get an hour or two's enjoyment? Let them see, rather, that our joy in

Christ is so much superior to what they have that we are spoiled for anything besides. Your time is coming—have patience. In the meantime, do not be where Christ would not be welcomed, and where it would seem out of place to speak of Jesus.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

"The Firstbegotten."

In Hebrews 1. 6, it speaks of God bringing "the firstbegotten into the world," and in verse 5 it says, "This day have I begotten Thee." Do both these Scriptures refer to the Lord in resurrection, or to when He was born into the world as a babe? Further, would it be correct to say that to be born again and to be saved were one and the same thing?—NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.

THE passage from Psalm 2. quoted in Heb. 1. 5 refers to the incarnation. "That holy Thing" born of Mary was called "the Son of God." The same passage is also quoted in Acts 13. 33, and in that verse the word "again" should not appear. By incarnation God has raised up Jesus to fulfil His promise: the resurrection is mentioned in the next verse.

In Heb. 1. 6 the term "firstborn" is practically equivalent to "heir." This is seen by comparison of the verse with Psalm 89. 6. The point of the verse is not the time when the action takes place, but that when God does introduce His Heir into the world all the angels are called upon to do Him homage. This has been fulfilled at His first advent as

Luke 2. 13 testifies, and it will be fulfilled on a much grander scale in connection with His second advent as indicated in Rev. 5. 11, 12.

Between new birth and salvation there is a fundamental connection, yet they must not be confused as though they were one and the same thing. New birth is that which is wrought IN us by the Spirit of God and the Word of God. Salvation is that which is wrought FOR us, the mighty deliverance from every foe and every peril effected by the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. In the New Testament salvation is presented as past, present and future, but new birth could never be spoken of in that threefold way.

Colossians 1. 21-23 and John 13. 1-15.

Please give help as to why the "if" at the commencement of Colossians 1. 23, making the preceding verses conditional: also as to why the feet-washing of John 13. seeing that verse 10 suggests that the Lord's work makes clean every whit.—NEWTONGRANGE.

CONTINUANCE in the faith is the great proof of reality. The real saint perseveres, the false sooner or later gives up. Hence to say "If ye continue" is equivalent to saying "If you are real." When we are viewed as born of God, the subjects of Divine workmanship, such an "if" could have no place, but viewed in our responsibility as professed Christians it is very much in place. We are reconciled and to be presented ultimately before God in holiness, unblameable and unprovable, *if indeed we are real*.

The tenth verse of John 13. really presents us with a key to the understanding of the feet-washing spoken of in the passage. Two verbs are used in the original, though they are not distinguished in our Authorized Version.

The first means to bathe rather than to wash. "He that is washed all over needs not to wash save his feet, but is wholly clean" (N. Tr.). This is clearly an allusion to the bathing of the priest at his consecration on the one hand, and to the washing of his hands and feet every time he entered the sanctuary on the other: the one never repeated, the other frequently repeated.

All the disciples save Judas were clean, as the end of verse 10 shows; yet they needed the cleansing symbolized by the feet-washing. The Lord was going out of the world unto the Father, and if they would enjoy part with Him they must come continually under the cleansing action of the Word, and so must we.

"The Earth Abideth for Ever."

Could you explain "The earth abideth for ever" (Eccles. 1. 4), and also Psalm 104. 5 and 119. 90, in the light of our Lord's words, "Heaven and earth shall pass away" (Matt. 24. 25) —NORTHAMPTON.

THE verse that you refer to in Psalm 119 says, "Thou hast established the earth, and it abideth. They continue this day according to Thine ordinances." This gives us the standpoint of the speaker. We must remember that the Bible is a Divine book, but in human language; and that it therefore conforms to the ordinary usages of language. From our point of view, being creatures of brief lives, with change and decay around us, the earth becomes the obvious symbol of what is stable and abiding. Generations

come and go, but the earth, as far as our observation goes, abides for ever. Speaking thus, we use the words for ever as indicating what is abiding and continuous, and not as claiming absolute eternity for the earth as we know it. Other verbal contradictions can be found in our English Bibles which can only be made into real contradictions by denying to its language that flexibility which we allow without difficulty in every other department of human speech and writing.

After the Church is Gone.

During the seven years between the coming of the Lord and the appearing of the Lord, who are the Jews that will preach the Gospel of the Kingdom? Is it not Scripture that during this day of grace there is no difference between Jew and Gentile, that all will be damned "who believed not the truth" (2 Thessalonians 2. 12). There seems to be so little time that it appears as if these Jews must live in the Day of grace. If this is the case, then surely they must be prevented from hearing the gospel in some way, as it is to be preached to-day to all men. Then, again, if there are Jews living who will be used after the Lord's coming they must certainly be refusing the light of the New Testament, and this is surely sufficient to condemn them.—DULWICH.

THERE is no Scripture that limits the years that intervene between the Lord's coming for His saints and His appearing with them to sever. We do not see ourselves how it can very well be less than seven, but it may very well be considerably more. God, we must remember, is not in such a hurry as we are, who are creatures of but a brief hour, as regards our earthly existence.

It is true, of course, that at the present moment God is dealing on the same terms with both Jew and Gentile, and the Jew who hears the gospel and does not believe it will fall under the strong delusion as surely as the Gentile. Yet we gather that there will be many left when the Lord comes for His saints who have never heard the gospel; and these, Jews as well as Gentiles, for the former are

scattered all over the earth. Again there will be many when the Lord comes who have not arrived at years of responsibility, though not far below that point, and what is to prevent the Spirit of God working mightily amongst such?

God never has left Himself without witness and we may be sure He never will, though it may not be easy to see just how He will raise up His witnesses, seeing we are not told. Such will not be refusing the light of the New Testament. They will surely know that the era of the church is over just as we now know that the age of the law is over: they will find, too, in the New Testament, as well as in the Old, the light they need to instruct them in the will of God for their dispensation.

We do not maintain the truth merely by clinging tenaciously to the terms of the truth, but by being ourselves exponents of it.

A FINAL WORD.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

A Farewell Address given on March 11, 1926, at Detroit, Michigan, U.S.A.

"He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen." (Rev. 22. 20-21.)

I THINK our farewell words to you, my dear friends, to-night, may well be upon these closing words of Scripture. They give us the last word from our Lord Himself to His church on earth; the response of the church to that last word; and thirdly the final benediction of the Holy Ghost.

It is exceedingly interesting to see that the last words of the Lord to the church on earth are "Surely I come quickly." It is equally interesting to see that the first message from the glory after the Lord entered into it was about His coming back again. Before ever the glorious truths that are unfolded for us in the epistles are given to us, we have this message from the glory. The disciples had seen their Lord caught up from them. They lost sight of Him, for a cloud received Him out of their sight. But from the very gates of the glory into which the Lord had entered there came two angels upon swift pinion to tell them this: "He is coming back again!" The first message from the glory after the Lord entered into it was that He is coming back again, and His words are "Surely I come quickly."

Why did the Lord Jesus Christ utter these as His last words, and why was this His first message from the glory? It seems to me that it is very much like a mother who has to leave her children for awhile. Her last words to them are "I will be back soon, my dears," and then if she has the opportunity of sending them a message from the distant place where she has gone, this is the message "I am coming back soon." Why does she send a message

like that? She knows right well that no message will please them better. She knows that it will appeal to their hearts, but it seems to me that there is a greater reason than that. She longs to be with her loved ones, and when she says, "I am coming back soon," it is her own heart that is finding expression. So in these words of the Lord His tender heart finds its expression saying, "I come quickly." Yes, He loves you, dear Christian, even though your heart has grown cold towards Him, and nothing will satisfy Him but having you with Himself in that glory, and with that end in view, He is coming back.

It will be a wonderful time, will it not, when you see your Lord? Then the brightest moment that you have ever known in your Christian life will be infinitely exceeded by the joy that will be yours when you see Him face to face, who laid down His life for you. We are told very plainly how He will come. We are told that "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."

Wonderful words those, are they not? And we can put no construction or interpretation on them than that which they plainly bear. Actually, the Lord is coming and every saint shall respond instantly to that shout as His one happy, united company; every difficulty and division that ever harrassed

them disappearing in a moment. Somebody has said that these difficulties and divisions will take a long time to settle. Dear friends, I declare unto you the truth when I say they will disappear in the twinkling of an eye. "And so shall we ever be with the Lord." We shall pass into His glory with triumphant hallelujahs on our lips; to be His bride, the Lamb's wife forever.

He is coming with a shout. Why will He shout? His will be a shout of victory. And I want you to notice the sort of victory it will be. Ephesians says very plainly that Satan has his seat in the heavens—the throne of his power is there, from thence he controls the world's kingdoms, and exercises his malignant sway over men. And in that very spot Christ is going to meet His church. If there is one thing the devil would like to do to-day it is to keep your heart out of heaven. He labours hard to keep your hearts from heaven, and how successful he often is. He keeps some of you chasing the dollar, going after pleasure, and thinking of yourselves. And if he could, he would keep you out when the Lord comes. What a triumph it would be for him if he could thwart the Lord in His determination to have His church, if he could rob the Lamb of His wife. But he cannot do it; in the very seat of Satan's power, Christ will meet His church. I can understand those evil principalities, those powers that serve the devil, and that, as Ephesians 6. tells us, are in the heavenlies, shrinking back into their native darkness to let the church go through. Not a hand or voice raised against it. The ransomed church and her Lord and Redeemer meeting there in the air; Satan, with all his power and subtlety, beaten and baffled and unable to hinder that glorious meeting.

The Lord will shout an assembling

shout to which all the saints of God shall answer, both dead and living. Why does He shout? The Scripture speaks to us of *the patience of Jesus Christ*. What does that mean? It means that He is waiting. He has been waiting with great patience for nearly two thousand years. Waiting for what? Waiting to throw the arms of love around His blood-bought bride and to have her for Himself without a rival. It is the love of His heart that finds expression in that shout. It will be a shout of love—pent-up gladness and love. Thank God, it is this that we are waiting for. And the devil will not be able to hinder it, though now he tries to rob the saints of this hope. The world derides it. You will find men of light and learning in this world laughing at it, scoffing at it. Not very long ago, a pamphlet was sent from this country to me across the Atlantic, and the writer of it took up this very subject. He was one of the leading professors at one of your great universities. He said that the early Christians believed that they would be suddenly translated from earth to heaven. I am glad that he admitted that, that was something gained. But, said your learned professor, they were ignorant of the sciences; if they had only understood things that we understand now, they could have been under no such delusion. For instance, he said, the law of gravitation would make such a thing as that impossible.

But the law of gravitation is not so great as the voice of the Lord! Listen to these thrilling words: "Our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our body of humiliation that it may be fashioned like unto His body of glory, *according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself*" (Phil. 3. 20, 21). Yes, the power of the Saviour

will subdue all things to Himself, even the law of gravitation. And the law of gravitation—what of it? Suppose I have a piece of steel and I throw it on the table there; it is held in the grip of the law of gravitation. It has no power in itself by which it can release itself from the law that holds it. But if I took a powerful magnet and held it above the steel, what would happen? The steel would spring to the magnet. The working of magnetic attraction would set it free from that other law.

Do you know the great Magnet? Yes, surely you do. The great Magnet is Jesus. Why, He has already drawn your heart. It was once held in the grip of the law of sin and death. You were a hopeless captive. But your eyes of faith beheld Him. And His voice reached the depth of your heart, and He became the great Magnet to you. Your soul bounded to Jesus. He set you free from the law of sin and death. What He has done for your heart, my friends, He will do for your bodies. And in a twinkling of an eye you will be for ever with the Lord.

But the learned professor did not read his Bible, or, if he did, he did not understand it. Scripture says we shall be changed. These bodies of humiliation—these natural bodies—will be changed into spiritual bodies, into bodies of glory. I can well understand natural laws, such as the law of gravitation, affecting natural bodies, but what natural law can control spiritual bodies? Natural laws for natural bodies by all means, but spiritual laws for spiritual bodies. Natural laws are good for natural bodies, and the law of gravitation is a beneficent law for us while we have natural bodies; without it we should be all flying off at various tangents into space. But when these bodies are changed into spiritual

bodies, then they will no longer be held by natural laws. They will then be controlled by spiritual laws, and the greatest of these is that Christ is the centre of God's universe in deed and in fact, and He will draw us to Himself and hold us there for ever.

But it is not the event we are looking for so much. It is the Person who is coming. It is Jesus. In this chapter He speaks of Himself. "I, Jesus," he says. And it is wonderful to find that after the unfolding of all the terrible judgments that are to be—after He has been presented to us in all His majesty and power as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, the great Judge of all—He speaks to the hearts of His saints saying, "I, Jesus." He knows well that that Name will reach your heart. He knows well that that Name will send a thrill through your soul. "I, Jesus," He says, "have sent my angel to testify these things." And he that testifieth these things saith, "*Surely I come quickly.*"

What is our attitude towards Him? Reference has been made to the twelfth chapter of Luke's Gospel. The Lord speaks there of His servants waiting, watching and working, and happy indeed it will be for us if we are found in that threefold attitude towards the Lord. Waiting implies readiness; watching implies expectation; working implies that our hearts are interested in His interests. I will illustrate: There is a mother, she has been away for a little while, and at last the day has come for her return. The children don't know just what hour she will arrive. Mary has gotten up in good time. She goes about with great zeal putting the house in order. She says: "We must all be ready for mother." And at last all is in order. They are waiting. But they keep running to the window and to the door to look

out, what for? They are watching, they are expectant. They could scarcely be expectant unless they were ready. And then look at Mary! She goes into this room and that to see that everything is straight, though she has been there a dozen times. And then she takes the children and looks them up and down and sees that they are just what mother would like them to be. She is working. Her mother's interests are hers. Ah, would we like, when the Lord comes, to be like that? To see all our brethren and sisters just as the Lord desires them to be? Are we so interested, so concerned in His thoughts about His saints that we seek earnestly that they may all be just like He wants them to be when He comes? The Lord grant that it may be so, that we may be waiting, watching and working. Then we can truly say, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." You see it is first the cry from His lips, "I come quickly," and then there is the response from His saints' hearts, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Oh, is it so with us? Is that cry breaking from our yearning hearts? What a triumph for the grace of God, that we should have Christ as our Object! Christ who is not in the world; but who is coming again. That we should be looking for Christ and saying, "Come, Lord Jesus." When He comes, that will be glory for us. He came down to sorrow and shame, to the deep woe of Calvary in order that we might be with Him in glory.

But what have we in the meanwhile? That brings me to the Spirit's final benediction. The Spirit has infinite love for all His saints. And in winding up the Holy Scriptures He says: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all the saints," for so it should read. Thank God, the saints of God have a wonderful heritage now. And that

heritage is the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all the saints." What music there is in that expression, and it has a familiar sound about it, hasn't it? The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ! We have heard those words before somewhere. Where is it that we have heard them? Our hearts are carried back to the beautiful verse in the eighth chapter of Second Corinthians: "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich." I want you, dear friends, to get hold of this. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all the saints. What is it? It is something that we know. "*Ye know* the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ." But how do you know it? You know it by the way it has manifested itself. How has it manifested itself? He who was rich for your sakes became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich. Oh, wonderful and blessed word is this. Wonderful benediction, this! The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is all the love of that blessed Person active towards us for our blessing, for our joy, for our enrichment. He became poor that we might be rich. He was rich, and yet for your sake He became poor.

He was rich. What words can tell the greatness of His wealth! Think of His riches. Think of His power! The mighty Creator! The eternal God! The Only begotten which is in the Bosom of the Father! The Lord of angelic hosts! How rich was He! Yet for your sakes He became poor. He was here upon earth a poor man. He cast the stars before Him as the silver pathway for His feet, and yet He trod the filthy streets of those Eastern cities, without

a home. He trod that rough way to the cross and was forsaken by all His friends, and was nailed thereon as a malefactor and no voice was raised in protest. In that dark hour no light shone upon Him from above. No comfort reached Him from beneath. He was alone ! Why was the Lord of glory so poor ? Why did He suffer thus ? It was for your sakes. He became poor that you might be rich. And the wonderful grace that brought Him down to Calvary's Cross is the grace that will be with us until we see Him in the glory. Don't you see, beloved Christians, that in this there is everything we need ? I don't know what your needs are. There is within every human entity a secret chamber into which no other mortal being can enter. The nearest and dearest to you cannot understand your deepest feelings. You may say, "Nobody understands me," and it is true that we are not fully understood by any fellow mortal. There may be a bitterness in the centre of your soul that you cannot express to your dearest friend. But Jesus knows ! That wonderful grace that brought Him to death on your behalf gives Him the right to enter your innermost being. He can fill that secret chamber in your soul with a sense of His love, and He can make you rich, though stripped of everything that men may value ; rich in the knowledge of Himself. We are put into contact with heavenly supplies. Sometimes we run hither and thither in our folly for help, and we try to manage for ourselves. The Lord wants you to pour your trouble in His ear. And there are heavenly supplies for all earthly needs. Individually you may have the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and be rich, though you possess nothing. And in the family life you may have His grace. I would like to see the grace

of our Lord Jesus Christ coming down into all your domestic circumstances, and smoothing the difficulties, and binding the family together. There is grace to make your family a harmonious, a united family, from which ascends praise to the blessed Lord. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ could come down into your homes and do that.

And do not let us get narrow in our vision of the saints of God. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is to be towards all the saints. And we should be manifesting this grace towards them. This grace must form us and characterize us, and it must shine through us in our dealings with one another. Oh, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ ! What was it that He said to His disciples ? He said, "I am among you as He that serveth." That was the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Uncouth and illiterate men were they, and with them was the Lord from glory, with all His blessed, perfect human sensibilities. For not only was He God, perfect in His Godhead glory, but He was Man also, perfect in His manhood. Not only were the attributes of God ever His, but all the sensibilities of man, apart from sin, were His also. And when He came into contact with that which was uncouth and rough and uncomely, He felt it. These men were all that, and yet He was their servant ! "I am among you as He that serveth." If there was one task more menial than another, that fell to His lot. Oh, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ ! See Him gather the children to His bosom and bless them. See Him speaking to the outcast sinners that no Pharisee would own. See Him stretching forth His hand, touching the leper from whom all men shrank. The grace of our Lord Jesus

Christ! And the marvellous thing is that that grace may be in you and in me, and be manifested in our conduct one toward another.

It comes out beautifully in the third chapter of Colossians where we are called elect of God, holy, beloved. We are to put on lowliness of mind, meekness, longsuffering, forgiving one another, even as Christ also forgave you, so also do ye. That is the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Forgiving! Forgiving! Oh, if you can forgive, that is the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. But somebody says: "That is what I can't do. You don't know what harsh things she has said about me, or how badly I have been treated." But if you forgive, that will be the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Hear what Peter has to say about it. He had been listening to the Lord, and he was conscious that the Lord was saying things to him that he had not been used to hearing, and his astonishment found voice in his question: If my brother sin against me seven times must I forgive him? "I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven," was the Lord's quiet answer. And Peter might well have said, "Impossible." But I can understand the Lord replying: "Peter, I am not asking you to treat your brother in any other way than the way I am treating you." Ah, that makes it easy. It is the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. That is the way He is treating me. He is forgiving me seventy times seven, and if I cannot forgive my brethren the same way, my heart has lost the sense of His grace.

Oh, beloved saints of God, what peace, what harmony and what fragrance for God there would be if this grace of our Lord Jesus Christ were active in the midst of the saints! And

remember it is the parting, the final benediction of the Holy Ghost. It is as though the Holy Spirit of God, having before Him the whole volume of truth, selects this as the most blessed of all benedictions. Let these precious words sing their music to your souls.

Before morning we may be in the glory. Before morning we may see His face. His promise to come may be fulfilled. If there is anybody you have not forgiven, you had better do it to-night. If there is any saint of God against whom you have a grudge, you had better straighten it all out before you sleep. If the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is with you actively, you will.

Whatever you do, let the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ shine through you. If it shines through you, it will bless others. You will go forth in the fragrance and power of it. There is nothing so mighty as grace. What has grace done? Grace has subdued sins. Where sin abounded—where it rolled like the Atlantic billows—grace rose higher than all and did much more abound. Grace has saved us—hard, reprobate, sinful wretches, rebels against God; grace has reached us and saved us. There is nothing so great, so mighty, as grace. That grace is to be in you and me.

And while grace is mighty, oh, it is tender. There is an infinite softness about it. It moulds and fashions the spirit. How blessed it is to meet a man who is moulded and fashioned by grace! Somebody said to a dear servant of the Lord—someone who was of a very socialistic turn of mind—"There will be no gentlemen in heaven." "I beg your pardon," was the reply, "there will be nothing but gentle men there." Let us be gentle men in our dealings one with another;

kind, tender-hearted, of lowly mind, forgiving one another.

May the hope of the Lord's coming, may His last message from the glory, have a place in our hearts. May there be the response, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus," and then let us with

confidence wait for Him, confident that the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, inexhaustible and all-sufficient as it is, will be with us from day to day. The Lord grant that for His Name's sake.

PRACTICAL PAPERS.

(A. J. POLLOCK.)

No. 5. Proverbs.

WHEN we sit down to consider how the Scriptures are put together, we cannot but be greatly struck by the Divine wisdom with which this has been done, so that "the man of God may be thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3. 17).

One way of considering this is to imagine the Bible minus a certain book, say the Book of Proverbs.

What a miss it would be! What a guide it is to the Christian man of business! No other part of the Bible covers the same ground. A Christian man is getting immersed, swamped in business, or a young man is starting in life and has certain temptations to face; such will find the reading of the Book of Proverbs a real tonic. Or Christians in danger of getting into trouble in the use of their tongue will find the study of Proverbs very safeguarding.

We have heard of business men, who read a chapter of the Book of Proverbs every morning before going to business and find it helpful. There are thirty-one chapters in the Book, and thirty-one days in the longest months in the year, so the book is practically read once a month by this method.

With the exception of the last two chapters the Proverbs are by Solomon,

King of Israel. When he succeeded to the throne he was a young man; in his own words and in view of the greatness of the task, he was called upon to shoulder in governing Israel, he said, "I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in" (1 Kings 3. 7). We are told that "Solomon loved the Lord"; and God appearing to him in a dream, said to the youthful monarch, "Ask what I shall give thee" (1 Kings 3. 5).

Solomon chose wisdom, and so pleased was God at his sagacious choice that he not only gave him wisdom, but also riches, and honour. Solomon was the wisest of men, yet his life only emphasizes the message that he himself gives: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding" (Prov. 3. 5). Wise as he was; wonderful as his judgment was in the matter of the babe and the two mothers, who each claimed it; wonderful as was his erection of the temple, that most gorgeous building the world has ever seen, yet at the close of his days how he stands like a beacon warning us not to lean unto our own understanding.

We find Solomon importing horses for warlike purposes from Egypt, and multiplying wives, till he had 'seven hundred wives, princesses, and three

hundred concubines, and his wives turned away his heart" (1 Kings 10. 28-11. 3), spite of the prohibition in Deut. 17. 16, "He [the King of Israel] shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses . . . neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away." Wisdom did not keep Solomon, nor will it keep any one of us, but cleaving to the Lord will.

Nevertheless wisdom is greatly to be desired, and the reason why Solomon wrote down his proverbs was "to know wisdom and instruction, to perceive the words of understanding" (Prov. 1. 2). And what is wisdom? It is the right application of knowledge, without which knowledge is a dangerous thing.

In this book wisdom crieth aloud, we are exhorted to incline our ear to wisdom, that the man is happy who finds it, that wisdom is better than gold, that the rod and reproof give wisdom. How important all this is.

Yet we are told to "cease from thine own wisdom," which means that wisdom cannot be rightly used save as you "trust in the Lord with all thine heart"—wisdom must not be divorced from real communion with and dependence upon the Lord.

In chapter 1. Solomon addresses his son. How sadly that son needed the exhortation and how little he paid heed to it, is emphasized in the conduct of Rehoboam, whose utterly foolish conduct at the beginning of his reign, costing him the break-up of his kingdom, stands in vivid contrast to the wise conduct of Solomon, his father, at the beginning of his reign.

Is this not a word to Christian young men to pay heed to what Solomon said, even if they do not find wisdom with

their own fathers? The tendency of young people is to belittle the wisdom of their parents and think that *they themselves* know.

The great lesson of chapter 1. is to exhort young people to have the courage to say "No." "My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not" (chap. 1. 10). How vastly important this is, as testified to by the wrecked lives of countless young men, who had not the courage to say "No."

Then Solomon exhorts his son to receive his father's commandments, and to earnestness in the pursuit of understanding. He holds out the blessing of long life to those who keep the commandments to go not in the way of evil men, etc., etc. Indeed every verse is worth commenting upon, but space forbids.

Again and again, and yet again, in solemn and earnest language Solomon warns his son against strange women, warns him of their allurements, and shows plainly how utterly ruined a man is if he fall. How descriptive, how graphic is the language, "He goeth after her straightway as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks till a dart strike through his liver; as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life" (chap. 7. 22, 23).

It describes faithfully what has been the sad fate of many a young man, "And thou mourn at the last, when thy flesh and thy body are consumed" (chap. 5. 11).

And when one recalls the number of families, Christian families, too, who have had to experience the bitter shame of one of their members not paying heed to Solomon's warning, pressed again and again upon his son, one cannot well pass it over. To enter into a conspiracy of silence on these

delicate subjects is not wise, and is certainly not what the Bible does.

Then Solomon warns his son against going surety for his friend or striking a bargain with a stranger. "He that hateth suretiship is sure" (chap. 11. 15). How many business men have smarted by not paying heed to this injunction.

Then we are warned against sloth, lying in bed unduly and laziness. Some men can never prosper on this account. A lazy man no one cares to employ either as master or servant. Laziness is in their very bones, and shame will not drive them from it.

Pride is denounced. What room is there for this! We are nothing and have nothing save as it comes from God. If we happen to have better brains than our fellows, it only imposes upon us the responsibility to help those less favoured than we are in this respect. Have we possessions? We are but stewards for the Lord of all that we have. "The pride of life is not of the Father, but is of the world" (1 John 2. 16). It was pride that first brought sin into the universe when Satan attempted to snatch Divine honours from the eternal throne.

The gracious woman, the virtuous woman is extolled, truthfulness and uprightness and the use of a just weight insisted upon, whilst hypocrisy, tale-bearing, slander, flattery are sternly denounced.

We need to remind ourselves of these things again and again. The flesh is still in the believer and he is capable of every sin we are so earnestly warned against in the Proverbs. Pride marks us all, alas! more or less, and there is always the tendency to drop into the slack ways of the world as to strict truthfulness and honesty. Alas! Chris-

tians often give occasion for stumbling by failure to attend to these exhortations.

Then we are exhorted to be "slow to wrath," to give "a soft answer" to an angry man. "He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding" (chap. 14. 29). How necessary this is. It is not always wise to say things which in themselves may be quite true. What we say may rankle for years in a man's mind and fester mentally like a bad case of blood-poisoning.

And what a place is given in the book to warnings against a misuse of the tongue. The judicial James tells us, "If a man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body" (Jas. 3. 2); whilst he speaks of the wrong use of the tongue and says that "it is set on fire of hell [gehenna]"; the only time the word, *gehenna*, is employed in the Scriptures, other than by the Lord Himself. This is most significant.

We read in Proverbs that "God hateth . . . a lying tongue"; He denounces "the flattery of the tongue"; "a wholesome tongue is a tree of life"; "a liar giveth heed to a naughty tongue"—a good man would refuse to listen; "a perverse tongue falls into mischief"; "death and life are in the power of the tongue"; "a backbiting tongue" is denounced, etc., etc. "Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles" (chap. 21. 23). May we take solemn warning by all this. We all need it, or else it would not have held a place in the inspired Word.

We are exhorted to generous giving. "The liberal soul shall be made fat" (chap. 11. 25). We are forbidden to make a corner in commodities, forcing prices up, and gathering a fortune out of other people's misfortunes. "He

that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him."

We are warned against the free use of stimulants. "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise" (chap. 20. 1).

Then further, "Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth: a stranger and not thine own lips" (chap. 27. 2). We are not to blow our own trumpets. An egotistical man is nearly always an empty man. True greatness and conceit do not run together. Colossal conceit is a mark of a disordered brain. Lunatics imagine themselves to be emperors.

If the book begins with solemn warnings against the pestilential woman, it ends beautifully with "the words of

King Lemuel, the prophecy that his mother taught him" (chap. 31. 1).

He is warned against lust and drink, and then comes a wonderful description of a virtuous woman. Her husband's heart trusts her. She is industrious. She is far-seeing. She rises early and retires late, so great is her energy. "Strength and honour are her clothing." Her speech is wise and kind. Her children rise up and call her blessed. Her own works praise her in the gates.

What a wonderful book! Where every verse is a gem, we can only give a very bare and scanty outline, but if our readers are thereby persuaded to give more time to the reading of it, especially business men and young men, the writing of this article will be well rewarded.

AARON'S BEARD.

(T. OLIVER.)

*"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!
It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard,
even Aaron's beard; that went down to the skirts of his garments (Ps. 133. 1, 2).*

EVERYTHING in Christianity tends to express unity, even as the same principle was true of God's earthly people. But if this was a desirable end in the old dispensation, how much greater significance must we attach thereto when the Holy Spirit is present uniting every member of the body of Christ to the Head in heaven. Hence the unity of the Spirit must result on earth. We may walk in the Spirit as individuals, but the unity of the Spirit involves relationship to others.

Unity is not by Lordship which relates to the individual. Christ is Head not Lord to the body, although individual obedience will help to express

the unity. But all unity is in and by the Spirit. The unity of the Spirit is an abstract idea. Rupture of intercourse between the saints of God will not invalidate the unity of the Spirit, but such a regrettable incident will hinder this unity from being practically expressed or illustrated.

Most difficulties amongst Christians arise from giving undue prominence to natural considerations and also through lack of apprehension of the nature of the unity of the Spirit. For a brief period after Pentecost we have a clear view of how the unity of the Spirit is maintained, when all who believed continued with one accord in the temple (Acts 2. 46) and the multitude

of those who believed were of one heart and one soul (Acts 4. 32).

Although the truth has been covered over with the dust of centuries, whenever there has been a response to the light of God's revelation, something similar, if on a smaller scale, has followed. Personal, social, ecclesiastical and national distinctions have been obliterated, and Christians have taken up their responsibilities as still living in this life, but in the light of another world ("The age of ages," Ephes. 3. 21, N. Tr.). They viewed their responsibilities in their correct perspective, and as subservient to the heavenly calling. The holiness of God's house was maintained, and hearts were united in devotedness to the interests of an absent Lord in glory, who was still rejected by the world as much as when He was here.

In the psalm the fact of "brethren dwelling together in unity" is likened to the holy anointing oil put on the head and running down Aaron's beard. This truth finds its substantiation in Christ as the One who is anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows, and who as the Holy One ministers to us the unction or anointing which abides in us and teaches all things to us.

But this anointing recognizes nothing of the flesh, "Upon man's flesh it shall not be poured" (Exod. 30. 32). Ever since the first attempt relative to the erection of the tower of Babel, man has sought to establish a unity of his own device, but God has never allowed such to last for a long period. He has always introduced a circumstance which wrecked a man-made unity. The best-laid schemes continually miscarry. Mere organization will not hold Christians together in peace. The only security lies in allowing the Spirit of God to have His way with us. There

will then be a display of the love of God and we shall give expression to what will obtain uninterruptedly throughout the universe in a future day.

"Oh, what a home ! there fullest love
Flows through its courts of light ;
The Son's Divine affections flow
Throughout its depth and height."

The composition of the holy anointing oil was not to be imitated. Ananias and Sapphira were the first who sought to simulate the action of the Spirit of God when they professed to give the whole proceeds of the sale of their property to the Lord's service and incurred the judgment of God. God is sovereign and must punish any infringement of His rights.

So that mere natural fervour in God's service, no matter how commendable it may seem to be in the eyes of men, will only meet with the Lord's scathing rebuke. Moreover, it will mar the dissemination of the fragrance of Christ. We can only contribute to the advancement of God's interests according to our apprehension and appreciation of the excellencies of Christ. In spite of the specious pleas usually advanced, every imitation of the unity of the Spirit is bound to fail ultimately.

The upholding of a Christian's social status is a great hindrance in keeping the unity of the Spirit, because there is no respect of persons with God. An early example of grit getting into the mechanism is shown when the Grecian Christians thought that the Hebrew widows were getting an advantage in the daily ministration (Acts 6.). But observe the magnanimity of the apostles who invited the murmurers to choose seven men of honest report and full of the Holy Ghost to look after the business. Strife soon ends when one of the two elements disappears. Abram could put the question of pasture unreservedly to the choice of Lot,

because he had his eye on the future which rested on the stability of God, and not on the precarious nature of human choice. The sequel showed that he was endowed with long-sightedness.

For the above reasons the precious ointment on Aaron's beard stopped at the skirts of his garments. Man would have argued that good would result by allowing it to reach the ground, and so to give the desert the benefit of the oil. Following the type, God does not communicate his Spirit to a stranger nor to the world. The garments speak of the display of the heavenly character of Christ, and this can only be effected by the saints of God in the power of the Holy Ghost, and so it stopped at the limit of God's requirements.

Recently we listened to a scientist discoursing on the lubrication of wool preparatory for manufacture. He stated that the finest wool hair had a diameter of one two-thousandth part of an inch, and thus one pound weight of such wool had the immense surface area of 1100 square feet, and more wonderful still two ounces of oil were spread over this surface in a film less than one forty-thousandth part of an inch thick. These are marvellous facts brought to light by modern scientific measurement. But following the Scripture illustration, the Christian knows a much more intangible film than the wool hair lubrication. The Spirit of God typified by the oil on Aaron's beard transcends any physical anointing and, moreover, can only be appreciated by an intuition which does not come to any in virtue of possessing human descent, but in consequence of being born of God, linked with the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.

The process summarized as "being diligent in keeping the unity of the

Spirit in the bond of peace" is previously stated in detail as walking worthy of the calling with—

1. *All lowliness* which is descriptive of the Christian's normal state before God and is consequent on being consciously in the presence of God.

2. *Meekness* relates to our conduct towards other people and will follow on true humility. If there be a proper sense of our nothingness and being in the presence of God, there will not be any cause for complaint on the score of arrogance and superciliousness towards our brethren.

3. *Long-suffering*. This will eliminate all harshness from our dealings. What is so natural to us is excluded by the Spirit's power, producing a trait which was so prominent in the Lord's life while here. Who but He would have borne with Judas Iscariot until the moment he went out into the darkness of the night unable to bear the presence of infinite Light and Love?

4. *Forbearing one another in Love*. We frequently "bear" or suffer those whom we cannot expel from our company, but that is not the meaning of the term. Forbearance has the force of "suffering gladly." The apostle averred that the Corinthians suffered fools gladly (using the same word in 2 Cor. 11. 19): a procedure not commonly observed among men.

"O patient, spotless One!
Our hearts in meekness train
To bear Thy yoke, and learn of Thee,
That we may rest obtain."

While we appreciate the great accession in apprehension of light during the last generation, the question arises as to whether the light has been received so as to become formative in our souls, and to what extent we have been led consciously by the Spirit into what is characteristic of Christianity.

GLORIES.

(W. H. WESTCOTT.)

A Meditation on John 17. (continued).

THE third glory in John 17. is

DIVINE GLORY IN
RESURRECTION.

It is conveyed in the Lord's request in verse 5; "glorify Thou Me with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." May we humbly seek out the meaning of this wonderful demand. For it was uttered by a lowly Man, by One often referred to as Jesus of Nazareth. It was said when to all intents and purposes He was scornfully rejected by all that stood as having religious authority, and despised by such as stood high in the world's social scale. He was about to be condemned as a blasphemer and a malefactor by the Jew, and executed as a rebel by the Gentile. He was shortly to taste death, to be buried in His grave. He was ere long to be the sport of soldiery, the jest of passers by, the Object of mockery to chief priests and elders, the deserted Leader of His most intimate disciples; and above all was about to become the Victim for sin, the Target for all God's infinite judgment upon it, a Curse under the Law which His people had broken. He was to touch that awful thing which His spirit revolted from, to have contact with that sin of man which necessitated banishment and wrath.

Yet placing Himself anticipatively on the other side of it all, in view of a work finished and His God glorified on earth, He—He, the Despised and Rejected of men—looks up into His Father's heaven, its blue purity taking its character from the purer blue of His own Divine and heavenly glory, and says—as *Man*—"Glorify Thou Me with the glory I had with Thee before the world was." Quickening out of death,

and resurrection were implied; for in departing out of the world and going to the Father, He went by way of death; and to glorify a Person who has died, in any real way, He must be raised from the dead. But these words of Jesus are not a mere request for honours; He demands now as a Man that glory which eternally belonged to Him as the Son with the Father. If Jesus were not eternally Divine, never was blasphemy or falsehood so awful; if He be the eternal Son, never was truth so splendid, or glory so grand. Come from above,

The Son of God who dwelt in light
Unreached by mortal eye,
Came forth as *Man* the foe to fight
And won the victory.

As *Man*, and for men, He died; as *Man* He arose. A hundred insistent voices on the pages of inspired Scripture proclaim it. The Corinthians questioned the reality of His resurrection only to be countered by the mighty phalanx of witnesses marshalled in 1 Cor. 15. The Jews bribed the Roman soldiers to hush up this tremendous reversal of their rejection of their Messiah; but the real, personal resurrection of Jesus was the irrepressible testimony of all the apostles of the Lord. The Lord Himself showed Himself alive by many infallible proofs, and in His own inimitable way chided those hearts who thought the facts were too good to be true. He says in Rev. 1. 18, "I am the Living One; and I became dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore." He it is of whom it is written, "by *Man* came the resurrection from the dead." He is the Son of *Man* to whom and not to angels, not to *spirits*, is put in subjection the world to come whereof we speak. It is because He is

"of one" with His brethren and they with Him, that He can be Captain of our salvation and High Priest of His people. Not less true is His Manhood to-day than His Deity from eternity.

But let us examine the bearing of this unparalleled demand of the Lord. There is a verse in the 13th chapter of this gospel of John which throws light upon it. When Judas had left the company in the supper chamber, "Jesus said, Now is the Son of Man glorified and God is glorified in Him. *If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him.*"

Thus we have three things:—

1. God glorified in the Son of Man.
2. The Son of Man glorified in God.
3. The Son of Man straightway glorified.

The first we have been considering. The second is what we are considering now. The third shows us that the glory with which God would respond to the work of the Son of Man would be immediate, not delayed.

We find it more easy to understand the thought of God glorified in Man, because it comes down to us-ward; it brings the glory of God within our view as fully represented and expressed in a Man among men, though it require opened eyes to see it. But—*Man glorified in God*—a Man—*Son* from all eternity indeed, yet as *Man*—passing from circumstances of lowliness, humiliation, desertion, weakness, death, in this world, up to the Godhead glory and the Father's throne—this is marvel among marvels where all is marvellous. It is always wondrous that God, infinite and eternal, Love, Light, and Spirit, should be able to express Himself absolutely and adequately within the compass of Manhood; it is—dare we say it?—almost more wondrous still

that a Man, *this unique Man*, should require Godhead position and glory to adequately express Himself. The fact is there. If any reader should ask the writer to explain himself further, he would have to reverently stand and own, "No one knows the Son but the Father."

Yet at least we may study what is revealed. Jesus is not only crowned with *honour*, but crowned with *glory*, and that, too, in the presence of *God*. He is not only advanced above everything and beyond every created being that possesses a derived and God-given name (Phil 2.) but to Him *as Man* will that homage be rendered which God has sworn shall be rendered to Himself; for "in the Name of Jesus shall every knee bow," while "every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, *to the glory of God the Father.*" To Him *as Man* has been accorded that place which belongs exclusively to Deity, for He is seated at the right hand of God. He has overcome, and is seated in His Father's throne. No one else will ever sit there. Marvellous advantages accrue to us, but the position is His alone, He is unique.

Four times over in Hebrews is this position affirmed. "When He had by Himself purged our sins, [He] sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on High" (chap. 1. 3). "[He] is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens" (chap. 8. 1). "He sat down on the right hand of God" (chap. 10. 12). "[He] is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (chap. 12. 2).

Shall we for a moment consider the first of these four passages? The height—dizzy height for *our minds*—to which the Son laid claim and which He re-took at the end of His service here, is obviously that of Divine, Godhead glory. It is that of which He had

said, "glorify Thou Me with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." There are assuredly thrones and dominions, principalities and powers, in the earth, or in the intervening heavens, which are quite enough to make our heads dizzy by their height or grandeur; but this Person has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God. He is above and beyond them all, and they are all made subject to Him. *They* were created, each to represent God in the way of authority in the limited spheres of His appointment, whether in the heavens or the earth; *He*, who is indeed their Creator, yet become Man, has passed as Man to the height supreme from which He descended; Man in resurrection glorified in God. The language of Heb. i. is extraordinary, especially if we read it in English as it is stated in the Greek. "When He had made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become by so much better than the angels as He hath inherited a more excellent name than they." This latter clause "He hath inherited a more excellent name than they," is gloriously explained in verses 2 and 3, and covers His eternal Deity; while the first clause, "Having become by so much [or "Taking a place by so much"] better than the angels," shows the resumption by Him as Man of His position in Godhead glory, after the accomplishment of that work which He wrought as Man when He made purification for sins. Never did He cease to be Son even here; never will He cease to be Man there; but the Son is the Man, Christ Jesus, and He has carried Manhood into Godhead. That part of His glory is incommunicable, it is His alone. Yet its light and influence thrill our hearts, for this is the One who bore our sins and made purification for them. Where, then, are the sins? Gone. Gone for ever. Whose sins are

gone? Mine, and those of every believer, thank God. The presence of Jesus there in the unstainable purity of the throne, and in the unsullied splendour of the Divine glory is proof enough that our sins, our sin, are gone from God's sight, gone by His atonement and death for them.

The fourth glory in John 17. is

REDEMPTION GLORY.

"The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them." This is different from the preceding. It is not this time such glory resumed as He had with the Father before the world was, in which others could have no part. Yet all that His love could share with us He imparts; and He deliberately speaks of this to the Father in the hearing of His disciples that they might have His joy fulfilled in themselves. The things of which He speaks were a joy to Him.

"That love that gives not as the world, but
shares

All it possesses with its loved co-heirs";

found its pleasure in this *largesse* of grace. He could not leave them ignorant of this grand destiny of bliss. Though He had drawn them around Him as those given to Him of the Father, and would love them to the end, yet their dowry of blessing was to be won for them by His sweat and passion, by His conflict and death. It was to be shared by them when He was past the cross and in resurrection; for again let us remember that this prayer places Him in spirit on the further side of His death. Until He died He abode alone; alone, of His own order; grand in moral glory, but alone. To have others, His like, He must as the Corn of Wheat go into the ground and die. He must first suffer, and then enter into His glory, if that glory were to be shared by them. First the walk and work in humiliation alone; then the

resurrection answer, with His loved ones brought on to the same platform of triumph and blessing with Himself. First the cross, and then the crown; first the shame, and then the splendour. First the Son in Manhood, meeting all the claim of God in respect of sinful men, abandoned, in loneliness, working out redemption, His life taken, His blood shed; then the Son in resurrection, alive as Man to die no more, Head of a new race, Pattern of a new order, able to speak to His brethren of His place and relationship as theirs too now. (John 20.)

For though Deity is incommunicable, yet Christ became Man, that through death and resurrection He might share all that can be shared by Man with believing men. He as the risen One, the last Adam, breathed on His disciples, thus imparting life of His new order, life characterized as Holy Spirit; and assured them of their place with Him in the same favour before His God and theirs, and of their part in the same relationship as Son in manhood before His Father and theirs. (See John 20. 17 and 22). Relationship, favour, and life—these are given to His loved ones, these are given to us.

That these things are all to be displayed in glory is true, blessedly true. But these things are true now, and are to be enjoyed by us in the power of the Holy Spirit. They come out in the way of character even here. The world knows us not because it knew Him not. Now are we children of God. Yet we are "incognito" here, and what we shall be is not yet manifested. The people of the world see us and do not know who we are. When He shall be manifested publicly, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And *they* shall see too, and the world will know that the Father sent the Son, and has loved us as He loved Jesus.

We are made participants in the love which the Father has for the risen Son, and in the glory which is the fruit of His work for men. Life eternal, victory over death, deliverance out of the world of Satan's power, the heavenly calling and inheritance, relationship with the Father, association with Christ as His brethren, the Father's name and heart made known, and His counsels revealed to us—all this has been opened out and set forth to us in Christ in resurrection; it is glory that has been given to Him as Man (who is Son) in resurrection, and He has given it to us. And He has given, too, the Holy Ghost that all these things may become consciously and intelligently ours. We are not, as paupers, begging our way from door to door of this world's charity, nor asking its smiles and favours or applause; we crave not its company nor its pursuits; we are sons of God, to walk with satisfied hearts in dignity and intelligence here, with power and wisdom unknown to men, holy dispensers of heaven's rich bounty to the need around. *He* has given largely, freely; we, too, freely give. Such were the disciples, such are we who through their word believe on Him. We have access to the Father, we are in the light of what He is doing in the midst of this world's confusion, we have the key to its present miseries, we know the solution to its problems. The rejection of Christ has postponed its deliverance; its peace awaits His return. The whole creation will only be delivered from its bondage at the time of the manifestation of the sons of God (Rom. 8. 19). But when He does appear in glory these will appear with Him as sharers of it all. We co-suffer; we shall be co-glorified. For the glory the Father has given Him, *He* has given us. We do not want glory while He is absent; we shall have it, share it with Him, when He comes.

The fifth glory in John 17. is
GLORY OF PRE-EMINENCE.

"Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which Thou hast given Me." This glory is referred to in the same terms as the preceding. That is, it is the glory that is given Him. It is not in this case "the glory which I had with Thee before the foundation of the world." It is glory given to Him as Man subsequent to His path and service on earth, and hence is expressive of the Father's satisfaction and pleasure in all that *HE* was and did here. As to the position won in resurrection, we *share* it as we have seen; as to the glories which will be displayed as the fruit of His redemptive work, we participate in these by His own deed of gift. But He who gives is greater than His gift; and in His personal greatness will always be the Object of wonder and adoration even among those who partake of His favours and love. All the New Testament bears witness to this.

As to relationship, favour, and life, these are shared by the risen Jesus with His believing people. Yet even in stating it He says, "My Father and your Father." He is *distinct* in His personal greatness even in passing on this relationship to them. He says again, "My God and your God." It is favour conferred in association with Himself; yet our hearts gladly accord to Him the homage of His leadership and His distinctive desert of that favour. For we are recipients; He shares it with us truly, but it is He who is the Giver. He says, "Receive ye Holy Spirit," and thus communicates of His risen life to His beloved ones; but it is He who is the last Adam, and not they. We, if asleep through Jesus, shall be raised from the

dead as Scripture abundantly proves; but *He* was raised from the dead *by the glory of the Father*—a distinction indeed which it is our privilege to regard and appreciate. We shall be like Him, for God has predestinated us to be conformed to the image of His Son; yet even so He will be *the firstborn* among many brethren. He is the Lord and the Christ, and not we. He has made us priests, but He is the High Priest. He has made us kings, but He is the King of kings. We are God's house, He is Son over God's house. He brings us into gladness beyond all telling; yet He is anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows. Among all dignities and authorities He shall have the pre-eminence. He is given to be Head over all things to the church, though grace unites the church to Him in that glorious position. God will head up all things in the Christ, both which are in heaven and in earth. The angels, ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, with elders and living creatures, will say with loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."

These are glories we shall behold; and we shall be placed near enough to Him, even where He is, to be able to see them. Wondrously as we are loved, blessedly as we are favoured, we shall every one of us own that, even in regard of those positions in which we are nearest to Him, He has a superlative excellence all His own. The Father's love which had no beginning will secure this transcendent glory for Jesus, even amidst glories which are bestowed upon Him as resultant from His suffering and rejection here. And that same love will secure us to be intelligent spectators of this glory of pre-eminence. We—the many sons brought to glory—shall own Him the

Captain of our salvation ; even as He will say, " Behold, I, and the children Thou hast given Me." Who is there that does not here appreciate the grace that associates us with Him, yet the unique glory which is His alone for us to contemplate it ?

" Lord of glory, we adore Thee,
Christ of God ascended high ;
Heart and soul, we bow before Thee,
Glorious now beyond the sky."

May the reader and the writer learn
to love and praise Him more !

THE MIGHT OF HIS GLORY.

(M. A. THOMPSON.)

THE Colossian brethren were in a very good state of heart and mind when Paul wrote his epistle to them ; he could address them as " holy and faithful brethren," and could give thanks when praying for them because the glad tidings which he had preached to them was " bearing fruit and growing " among them.

This gave him confidence to continue to pray for them that they might become more fully acquainted with the will of God, in order that they might " walk worthily of the Lord unto all well-pleasing, bearing fruit in every good work and growing by the true knowledge of God " (Col. 1. 10, N. Tr.).

Which of us has not often ardently desired the same thing ? And yet we have to confess how little progress we make in the things of God ; how little fruit we produce ; how little practical response to the work of grace in us and for us.

Our desires are good, but we lack the strength to carry them out. And yet we often pray for strength, do we not ? So also did the apostle for the Colossians (verse 11), that they might be " strengthened with all power." And then follows a hint, nay, much more than a hint, as to the way in which the desired power would come to them—*" according to the might of His glory."*

Let us look a little more closely at this passage. Peter, in his 2nd epistle,

chap. 1. verse 3, tells us we have been " called by glory and virtue " ; just in the same way Abraham was called by the God of glory (Acts 7. 2) out of the land of sun worshippers. His faith looked on to a glory brighter than the sun. In later days the Apostle Paul himself was blinded—as to his physical eyesight—by a light brighter than the midday sun. Relating the incident afterwards he said (Acts 22. 11), " When I could not see for the glory of that light . . ." This was but a type, however, of that mighty moral and spiritual glory which thenceforth blinded him to all besides. So mighty was the power of that glory that no suffering weighed with him ; worldly possessions he accounted as filth, and his one soul-absorbing object was " the prize of the calling on high of God in Christ Jesus."

The devil tries to allure our hearts by the glory of this world, even as he vainly attempted to allure the heart of our blessed Lord with " all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them " ; and the measure of our faithfulness to God depends upon the relative attractiveness to our hearts of the glory of God and the glory of this world. Now the only way to increase our sense of the grandeur of the glory by which we are called out of this sin-sodden world is to " have our mind on the things above, not on the things on

the earth " (Col. 3. 2) ; to meditate on these things ; to give ourselves wholly to them ; to give attention to reading. Not the profitless reading of worldly books and papers, but of that blessed Word in which the will of God is revealed to us : to delight our souls in the contemplation of that wondrous realm of glory where Christ is and where all things are of God.

In nature the effect of a light falling upon the human eye, or upon a photographic plate, is directly proportionate to the length of time the eye or plate has been exposed to the light. Also the more intense or unclouded the light, the stronger is the effect.

In the same way we shall experience very little of the " might of His glory " by merely " dabbling " with the things of God. These must be first. " Seek ye first the kingdom of God." Other things, even right things, must take a second place ; and things that are questionable must be laid aside. It

may affect us in our family circle ; } as God said to Abraham, " Get thee out from thy . . . kindred." " He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me." There must be a long and strong exposure to the light.

But is this going to be a hardship to us ? Nay, let us read on to the end of the verse—" according to the might of His glory unto all endurance and long-suffering with *joy* ; giving thanks, etc." (Col. 1. 11, N. Tr.).

With our eyes fixed upon this glory we can joyfully say :—

" O worldly pomp and glory,
Your charms are spread in vain ;
I've heard a sweeter story,
I've found a truer gain."

We become " strengthened with all power according to the might of His glory " and can enter a little into the spirit of the devoted Apostle Paul when he said " for me to live is Christ, and to die is gain " (Phil. 1. 21).

LIGHT AND LIFE. No. 12.

(JAMES BOYD.)

Meditations on John's Gospel. Chapter 10.

In chapter 10. the once blind man is a sheep in the flock of the good Shepherd. His deliverance out of the fold he owes to the intervention of Jesus, who when He putteth forth His own sheep goeth before them. He might have put his expulsion out of the synagogue to the enmity of the Pharisees, but the fold was no place now for a man with the light of God in his soul. And it was Jesus who gave him the light which led to his excommunication. Jesus was the Door out of the sheepfold, and He was the Door into salvation, liberty, and pasture. They are in the keeping of the One who laid down His

life for them. And who could rightly express the intimacy into which He brings His beloved sheep ? He says : " I am the good Shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known of Mine as the Father knoweth Me and I know the Father." This could not be realized until redemption had taken place, Jesus glorified, and the Holy Spirit given to the believer.

So in the first epistle we see that the very babes know the Father. And again He says : " Let that therefore abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye

have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son and in the Father." And with what infinite grace the Holy Spirit calls us to the contemplation of the love of the Father, manifested in calling us into the place of children! No one but the Son could bring God into light, but when He has brought Him to light it is as Father we are to know Him. We know the Son in the way in which the Father knows Him, and in the way in which He knows the Father, and that is in love, and in love that only His death for us could perfectly declare: "Hereby we have known love, because He has laid down His life for us."

It is true that men condemned Him to death, nailed Him to the cross, and in that way became guilty of His murder. But that is not the whole truth, He says: "Therefore doth my Father love Me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father." There would have been no atoning virtue in it had His death been *only* that of a martyr. While there was the surrender of Himself into the hands of sinful men, and while His cross was a mighty witness to the ingratitude of the human heart, and to His incorrigible God-hatingness, this did nothing but increase the judgment that awaited men from the hand of God. Man had rendered himself liable to the wrath of God by means of his many offences; but how greatly increased was the terrible nature of the wrath by the indignities that were heaped upon His Son, and by the death to which He was condemned, what mind can fathom? But what really made atone-

ment was not all this, but that which He suffered from the hand of Divine justice, when God gave expression to His holy abhorrence of sin and His righteous judgment of it in His cross. This was all between Himself and God, while men knew nothing of what was going on apart from their own insane devilry. When all help from the side of God was withdrawn—when all alone the waves and billows of Divine wrath went over His soul—when deep called unto deep at the noise of the water-spouts of vengeance against sin—when He was stricken, smitten of God and afflicted—when for the time being His cry to God could not be heard—when nature's darkness shut Him in, so that He was alone with the Almighty when giving expression to His righteousness, His holiness, His majesty, His truth, His condemnation of that accursed thing that had wrought such havoc in His fair universe—when He was abandoned of God: then and then alone sin received its judgment, and the sins of all who put their trust in Him were expiated. From the pierced side of the dead Saviour flowed out two witnesses, blood and water, the blood speaking of expiation, and the water of moral purification, both found in His death. Not in His holy and spotless life, not in all that men did to Him was either found. His blood cleanses from all sin. Therefore when He had suffered all that was due to sin, He gave up His own life; it was never actually taken from Him by man.

How stupid men are in the things that relate to the revelation of God! And the reason of their stupidity is on account of their natural antipathy to that revelation. The Jews gather round Him in the temple, and ask Him: "How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ tell us plainly." Of what value to these

men would His word have been? A moment later they take up stones to stone Him because He said, "I and my Father are one." They refuse to take His word as to who He is, while asking Him to tell them plainly. The truth is, they did not want to hear. But He says to them: "I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in My Father's Name, they bear witness of Me." We have not on record in this Gospel many of the works of power that Jesus did, and they are not called miracles, but *signs*, and they are recorded that we should believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing we might have life through His Name (chap. 20. 30, 31). Evidently these signs are by the Holy Spirit considered of sufficient power to give assurance to the believer that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God.

The first sign, which is called the beginning of signs, was given in Cana at a marriage, which, figuratively, sets forth Jehovah's resumption of relations with His earthly people, now as a nation long disowned. Here He turns the water of purification into the wine of joy and gladness. Then it will be confessed that the good wine has been kept to the last.

The second sign is wrought in the same place, Cana of Galilee. There the feeble flicker of life in the veins of the nobleman's son is made to bound into renewed activity, and the consuming fever is banished from the wearied frame, and that through simple faith in the spoken word of Jesus; a faint figure of that which He was able to perform for all the people, and a figure of that which He will do for the believing remnant at His coming again, when the blessing of life for evermore shall be commanded from Zion.

The third sign is found in chapter 5.

There the quickening power of the Son of God is applied to a man who had been suffering from an infirmity for thirty and eight years, so that all hope of his getting cured by means of the pool was at an end. He had not the strength required for the appropriation of the healing waters which lay before his vision. The law was all right enough if man had strength to avail himself of the blessing that it held out to him. But here in Jesus was blessing brought near to man, and requiring no strength in man for its appropriation. Jesus says to him: "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk." The bed that was once the witness of man's utter weakness became now the witness of his strength. Immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed and walked. By faith in Jesus any man might well take up his obligations and fulfil all the requirements of the law. The power to do this was ministered by the quickening power of Jesus, as it will be ministered to the remnant at the appearing of Christ under the new covenant.

The fourth sign is found in chapter 6. There He feeds the poor with bread (Psa. 132. 15), and a handful of corn is found on the top of the mountain; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon (Psa. 72. 16). But now in a spiritual sense He Himself was the Bread come down from heaven that was not only for the Jew but for the whole world. The Bread, He says is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. In the world to come everything shall depend upon Himself. It is so to-day if men had but faith in Him.

The fifth sign is found in chapter 9. He opens the eyes of a man that was born blind, so that he is able to take in the light of the sun. A figure of that which He was doing every day in

His grace to men, opening their spiritual sight that they might take in the light of God that was here radiant in His person.

The sixth sign is found in chapter 11. There He raises Lazarus who had been four days dead. In this He gives witness that He is the Son of God, and shadows forth the resurrection of dead Israel, who are viewed as dead, and their bones dry, and all hope gone (Ezek. 37). He is the resurrection and the life. In the day of His glory it will be true actually, as it is now in the day of His rejection, that: "He that believeth in Me though he were dead, yet shall he live; and he that liveth and believeth in Me shall never die."

The seventh sign is in chapter 20. of this Gospel, but indicated in chapter 2. There consequent on His cleansing of the temple they say to Him: "What sign showest Thou unto us seeing Thou doest these things?" He answers: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." But He spoke of the temple of His body. Now in chapter 20. we have the sign in His resurrection. These signs are given that we might believe that He is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing we might have life through His Name. These signs are therefore recorded for our special advantage, but six of them foreshadow what He will do for Israel in the day in which He will take them up again, and establish His throne in their midst on mount Zion.

The other Gospels speak of very many works of power that Jesus did, but those that are recorded in this Gospel of John are written for an express purpose, and that purpose to witness to the Jews the great fact that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and their testimony cannot be ignored

without manifesting most determined and wilful hostility to this glorious truth. No wonder some of the Jews asked the question: "When Christ cometh, will He do more miracles [signs] than these which this Man hath done?"

"But ye believe not because ye are not of my sheep." That was the truth of the matter. They were incorrigibly perverse in heart and mind. To their ears the voice of the stranger was more melodious than was that of the good Shepherd, who says: "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any one pluck them out of My hand. My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and none is able to pluck out of My Father's hand. I and My Father are one." In the first epistle: "They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. We [the apostles] are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth us not. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error." Man's confidence in himself is his ruin. If he would only take his true place in the presence of God, as that of a poor, fallen, erring know-nothing, there might be some hope of him, "For he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." But as long as he holds himself as quite competent to judge of all things that come before him, he must wander in darkness.

I do not think that "I and My Father are one" is, on the part of Jesus, an assertion of His Godhead, but rather that the Father and Himself are one in their interest in the sheep. But while this may be true, no one that is not God could speak such words. What creature could speak of his Creator as

one with himself in any sense? Evidently the Jews took the statement to be an assertion of His Deity, for they took up stones to stone Him:

"Because that Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God," He is indeed "the true God, and eternal life."

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

"The Power of Death."

Hebrews 2. 14, states that our Lord partook of flesh and blood that through death He might destroy him that HAD the power of death. Mr. Darby's translation reads: "that through death He might annul him who HAS the might of death." Are we to understand that Satan still has the power of death? If so, to what extent? In Revelation 1. 18, the Lord has the keys of hades and death.—KINGSTON-ON-THAMES.

MR. DARBY himself stated the object of his New Translation as that of giving the ordinary English reader a translation as literally exact as possible, even though it might mean the sacrificing of more elegant and idiomatic English. Bearing this in mind we do not think that too much stress need be laid upon the difference that you point out. Satan presented himself as he who "has the power of death" at the time of the agony in the garden of Gethsemane, but he had nothing in the Lord (see John 14. 30) and he was annulled in the death of the cross.

In the cross the prince of this world was "cast out" (John 12. 31); he was "annulled," and we believe it would be

correct to say that the power of death was wrested from him. All three things were accomplished in a *judicial* sense.

Yet, on the other hand, he is not yet dispossessed or annulled in a *practical* way as regards the world and its system. He is still terribly active and dominates the whole world system. It may similarly be true that he still wields the power of death over those who are his dupes. We, thank God, are delivered from his power and his fear and know that judicially he is a foe whose power is annulled. Having entered into death and hades, the Lord Jesus is Master of them both, as Revelation 1. 18 states.

A Reproduction of Christ.

Please give a Scripture passage really teaching what is stated in your February issue, page 34, "in the aggregate there is a reproduction of the heavenly Christ in . . . the saints." Is not this dishonouring to Christ? However great our privileges, we are failing human beings, and if you say, the Spirit works it, then He is hindered in us, as He never could be in Christ. We are one with Christ, but He is God and we are not.—BELFAST.

WE should cite the following: John 14. 20; 1 Cor. 2. 16; Col. 1. 27; 3. 1-17. We are living in the day of the Spirit, in which we know that Christ is in the Father and we are in Christ, and He is in us. He is *in* us, moreover, in order that His character may be *displayed* in us, His saints. Hence Col. 1. 27 is followed by verses 1 to 17 of chap. 3., in which we see the working out of Christ's character in detail. In those verses, Christ is everything and *in* all as verse 11 states. Even in verse 15, where in the A.V. "God" is found, "Christ" is really the correct reading.

It is no mere "imitation of Christ," for He is vitally in us by His Spirit. Hence 1 Cor. 2. 16 states: "We have the mind of Christ." Here "mind" is the translation of a Greek word which means "the thinking faculty." Phil. 2. 5, says: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." Here "mind" means "way of thinking." *Having the thinking faculty of Christ we are to be characterized by His way of thinking.* What is this but a reproduction of Christ in His blessed and holy character?

We are indeed failing creatures and as

you rightly say, the Spirit of God is much hindered in us. It will not do, then, to say that we are *fully* or *perfectly* or *adequately* setting Christ forth. When the church is glorified as the fulness or complement of Christ (see Eph. 1. 23), there will be a perfect setting forth of His character in the saints, and John 17. 22-23, 26, will all be fulfilled. Yet even so, though then perfect and complete and adequate in its own measure, it will be *in its own measure*. The church is but *finite*, and He who is to be exposed is *infinite*. This we gladly and fully admit.

We thank you also for your further

communication, from which we quote as referring to the question raised by our correspondent at Whiteinch in our February issue :

“ When J. N. Darby was translating the New Testament my parents were his guests. He kept photographic copies of the original manuscripts always open on his study table, and my mother has often told me how the maid had strict instructions never to touch them, owing to the difficulty of finding one’s place in a MS. without spaces between the words. This is proof positive that he not only had access to the originals, but actually possessed them in duplicate.”

“ Our Old Man . . . Crucified.”

Would you mind giving what is meant by “ the complete removal of the man of sin ” on page 35 of your February issue ? It cannot mean 2 Thessalonians 2. 3, neither can it mean Romans 6. 6. Please give the Scripture that points to it.—FISHERMAN.

THE expression to which you call attention certainly is a little obscure, but the reference we take to be to Rom. 6. 6, though you dismiss this as impossible. If we are able to get before our mind’s eye the whole character of the Adamic race, and then treat that terrible

character as personified, we shall have some idea of what “ our old man ” is. A “ man of sin and discord ” is he in a very pronounced way and, thank God, removed for faith by being crucified with Christ.

We are sorry the meaning was not made more clear in the first instance.

“ This Place of Torment.”

In the article by A. J. Pollock in your March issue, “ Hades ” is described as a condition, which is no doubt correct. But in Luke 16. 28, we have the words “ this place of torment.” It appears that in that passage Paradise is very distinctly a place and that separated from the other by a great gulf. I would welcome further help on this very important subject.—WOLVERHAMPTON.

IT is clear that the soul of the rich man in the parable in Luke 16. is viewed as in a CONDITION—*hades*. Careful examination of the word *hades*, as presented in Scripture, makes it plainly a condition. But the condition of the rich man (an unbeliever) carries with it torment of mind, and it is clear his soul must be in some locality, and this he describes as “ this place of torment ”—some place where the souls of unbelievers are confined till the judgment day and their final and irrevocable doom in the lake of fire.

Between “ this place of torment ” and “ Abraham’s bosom,” a great gulf was fixed. Doubtless “ Abraham’s bosom ”

was a picturesque way of naming Paradise, and one very appealing to a Jew. That Paradise is a place is clearly proved in 2 Cor. 12. 2-4, where Paradise is identified as the third heaven—the first heaven being the atmospheric heaven, which belts our earth, and where the clouds are ; the second heaven being the vast spaces in which the millions of stars are ; the third heaven setting forth the dwelling place of God and the angels. “ The great gulf fixed ” is a solemn symbolism setting forth the eternal separation between believer and unbeliever, good and evil, spiritual light and spiritual darkness.

[A. J. P.]

"EVEN WHEN WE WERE DEAD."

(J. T. MAWSON.)

Remarks on Ephesians 2. 4-7, at Bradford, January 17.

HUMAN love can do great things to serve and save its object as long as life lasts, but when death has done its work the end is reached and it can do no more. And what is the most tragic, the most oppressive, the most heart-breaking thing in death? It is the unresponsiveness of the dead. Love may gather all its treasure and pour them out in the death chamber: they avail nothing. It may plead and agonize for one word from the silent lips—nay, for but one flicker from the still eyelids in response to its yearnings: it is all in vain. The silence is absolute, the breach is complete, love is beaten and death is the victor. But it is not thus with God's love. His love is **GREAT LOVE**—greater than death, and for His great love wherewith He loved us *even when we were dead in sins*, He hath quickened us together with Christ.

We were dead, without a movement, without a pulse of life, towards God; without response to His claims or pleadings, and not dead only but dead in sins. Chains bound us, darkness enshrouded us. There was not only the unresponsiveness of death, but the added enmity of sin; our case was hopeless to all "**BUT GOD.**" How wonderfully those two words "**But God**" break in upon the gloom; and being "*rich in mercy*," the great love wherewith He loves us is not a baffled and hopeless love: He has triumphed over death and quickened us together with Christ, *even when we were dead*. Let us look into the depths of the darkness of death in which we were, and rejoice that God has broken in upon it for His great love's sake, and has gotten us out of death for Himself. What a joy must have filled the widow's

heart at the gates of Nain when she received her son from the dead! Who can describe her feelings? But think of God's joy, the exultation of "the great love wherewith He loved us," when He was able, according to the riches of His mercy and the power of His might, to quicken us together with Christ! And not that only; He could not be satisfied with only delivering us from dark and unresponsive death, but He has raised us up and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ—that is the height of His favour, it is unsurpassable! Man could not be in a higher place than that. How puerile are the thoughts of men, and how empty their highest ambitions when compared with this! And death cannot take this from us. All the hopes of a man in the flesh lie shrivelled and dead beside his open grave; the most eloquent eulogy that can be poured out there avails him nothing: his day is done, he is gone, is buried and will soon be forgotten. But not so is it with those whom God has quickened together with Christ; the present grace by which we are saved is to issue in the coming glory, for in the ages to come God will show the "exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." The consummation of the purposes of God in regard to us will be worthy of the great love wherewith He has loved us, and of the power and rich mercy that has raised us up. Let us consider these great expressions. God is "*rich in mercy*," His love is "*great love*," He will "*show the exceeding riches of His grace*" to all the ages, and this in "*His kindness towards us in Christ Jesus*." It is no wonder that now we, the living, praise Him, He has found the worshippers that He sought.

NIGHT—MORNING.

(W. BRAMWELL DICK.)

"AND IT WAS NIGHT"

—John 13. 30.

IT was indeed night in a very real sense of the word. Such a night as this world had never experienced before. "It was night" for our adorable Lord because that night He would enter Gethsemane. It would not be His first visit there: "for Jesus oft-times resorted thither with His disciples" (John 18. 2), but it would be His last visit, and it would be marked by agony, by sweat "as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground," by strong crying and tears, and that would be but the prelude to the deeper suffering next day at Calvary, when He would drain the cup of wrath to its last dark drop. "It was night" for the disciples, for they were, as they thought, to lose their beloved Master, and to them there seemed to be not one streak of light to relieve the gloom of the dark horizon. "It was night" for the traitor, for he had just gone out to do his diabolical work, and in a few hours he would "go to his own place." "It was night" for the world, for "the Light of the World" was about to be put out. Yes. "It was night." Our blessed Lord will never forget it. The redeemed will always think of it with wonder and with worship, for He delivered them from a night without a morning. Now He has introduced "His own" into a morning that shall never have a night.

"WHEN THE MORNING WAS NOW COME." John 21. 4.

The sorrow of the dread night was over; the anguish of Gethsemane was past; the great work of Calvary was accomplished; the tomb was empty; the Lord had risen, that morning had come, and never had there been such

a morning. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning" (Psalm 30. 5). How great was His joy as He sought the company of His loved disciples, and as He ministered unto them! His last act while still in their midst on that memorable night was to institute "the Lord's Supper." Night and supper we can quite understand. The night will end and the supper will cease; of that more anon. The morning will not end, nor will the feast ever terminate. The disciples were not now in the seclusion and safety of the Upper Room, they were out in the world with its chill blasts and ever-recurring disappointments. But when they reached Him, they found "a fire of coals." Who lit it? The echo answers—"Who?" There was "fish laid thereon, and bread" (verse 8). Who provided it, and cooked it? The echo again answers "Who?" Then the invitation "Come and dine" (verse 12), or, really, "Come and break your fast" (R.V.). Thus they found Him to be the very same Jesus, and as Peter got his lesson, and they heard what the Lord said about the disciple whom He loved, they got the warmth of His love, and feasted upon Himself. This beautiful incident has undoubtedly a reference to the coming day of glory, and presents to us a very charming millennial picture. We want, however, for the present purpose to apply it to ourselves. Paradoxical as the statement may appear, we, who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, are at present in the night and in the morning. The dark night of Christ's betrayal, which commenced well nigh two thousand years ago, still continues. The attitude of the world has not changed. Christ is not here. The darkness deepens, it would seem as if it were "about the

fourth watch of the night " (Mark 6. 48). What have we got? We have "the Lord's Supper," and we are exhorted to go on eating that, in other words, to keep up this remembrance of Himself "till He come" (1 Corinthians 11. 26). How it cheers us through the night, that week by week we are drawn aside from the world that still rejects Him, around Himself to remember Him. Outside all is dark; inside we have the light of His presence, the joy of His company, and we feast upon His love.

In the gloom and sorrow of the night, it is our privilege ever to live in the light and the joy of the morning, and to answer to His gracious invitation—"Come and dine." He shares with us His joy; His triumph; He brings us into untold blessing beyond the veil of death; He introduces us into the Father's presence and sets us down as sons before the Father's face. So that while still in the cold world which can offer nothing to those who belong to Christ, we have the warmth that His presence affords, and we have the feast that His love provides.

The night is drawing to a close, it was about the fourth watch that Jesus

came to His disciples. So now we eagerly scan the heavens for the rising of "the bright and Morning Star" (Revelation 22. 16). How soon the night may end, and Jesus come for His disciples, then we shall no longer require the Lord's Supper (my reader, if He does not come before next Lord's-day morning, do not miss it then—it may be the last time); for we shall have Himself, and the print of the nails in His hands and in His feet, and the spear wound in His side, will ever remind us of the dark night for ever ended. Then the morning without clouds, the morning without a night. Now we understand why we read of "Evening and the Morning" in Genesis 1. There shall be no more evening, but one unending morning. Morning for the triune God. Morning for Him who *was* "the Man of Sorrows," *then* the Man of joy; morning for the blessed Bride who has waited long for her heavenly Bridegroom; morning for Israel whose long night of darkness will be ended; morning for the whole redeemed creation, as God shall tabernacle with men, and God will be all in all.

What a night! What a morning!
What a Christ is ours! Hallelujah!

Our Daily Toil.

IT was when Moses was doing his daily work that God spoke to him from the burning bush. His natural duties did not incapacitate him from recognizing the manifestations of the Lord. Nor need they ever. On the contrary, if rightly entered on, they guarantee assiduity in higher duties. The shepherds watching their flocks by night are the witnesses chosen of

God for recording the greatest manifestation ever made upon earth. *It is one of the greatest proofs of subjection to God, to fulfil our daily toil patiently and perfectly; and yet to have the eye ever ready to observe the ways of God, which I apprehend is the force of the exhortation connected with prayer—"watching thereunto with all perseverance."*

NOTES ON GALATIANS. Chapter 5.

(F. B. HOLLE.)

HAVING unfolded the true place of relationship and privilege in which the believer is set, the apostle exhorts the Galatians to stand fast in it. He speaks of it as "the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free." The law he calls "the yoke of bondage"; and anyone who slips away in his mind from the liberty of sonship before the Father, to the bondage of law-keeping as determining his relations with God, has indeed become "entangled." In his own mind he may intend to take up only one small item of the whole number of legal observances, such as circumcision, but if he touches law-keeping for justification at all, he becomes entangled in the whole system and cannot free himself.

Moreover, he thereby becomes "fallen from grace" as verse 4 says. He takes up a ground before God which practically makes Christ of no effect unto him. The words "fallen from grace" are sometimes wrongly used as though they meant that a believer who once stood in the grace of God has now been ejected from it by God because of his bad behaviour. The point of the passage is rather that anyone who has once taken up his position before God in grace, as these Galatians had, and then abandons it *in his own mind and consciousness* for law has had a bad fall. To step off the grace platform on to the law platform—if we may so speak—involves a descent that amounts to a fall, for the one is far lower than the other. In the case of a true believer being entangled thus, the fall, we repeat, is in his own mind and consciousness. God's grace and the relationship established by grace remain the same, for "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (Rom. 11. 29). In the case of one who has professed

Christianity without being a true believer, he was never in any vital relationship of grace with God out of which to fall.

In contrast to all this, verse 5 gives the attitude that properly marks the believer. We, through the Spirit—given to us as the Spirit of sonship—wait by faith for the hope of righteousness, which is the shining out of the glory at "the manifestation of the sons of God," as Romans 8. 17-19 puts it.

Now the Galatians had once run well. They had been, however, hampered in the race by the adoption of the legal ideas which the apostle is combating. From the point of view of the athlete these ideas were like entanglements, from another point of view like leaven, a little of which leavens the whole lump. Still, Paul, when he thought of the Lord, felt confident as to the Galatians, and regarded their defection as only temporary, and he states that the individual or the men who were responsible for the mischief would have to bear their judgment in due season.

In verse 13 the apostle guards an important point. Liberty must not be taken to mean licence. Christian liberty is not licence for the flesh to act but liberty for Divine love to act. We stand in the liberty of the sons of God and our nature as "sons" is the Divine nature, which is love. The "flesh" is the nature which attaches to us as children of Adam. If we as Christians are living thus in the happy liberty that characterizes our relationship with God, and our hearts are consequently filled with love, we shall fulfil, as verse 14 tells us, what the law demanded but failed to produce from the flesh. Verse 15 seems to infer that,

on the contrary, the Galatians who had turned back to law were far from keeping its demands; they were biting and devouring one another rather than loving and serving one another.

But the Galatian believer having read the apostle's argument thus far might wish to say, "Well, Paul, we thought that the way to repress the lusts of the flesh and promote holy living was by diligent observance of the law. If it is not the way, tell us plainly what is." The apostle answers in verse 16, "This I say then, walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." In verse 17 he adds that there are the two opposing forces in the believer, the flesh and the Spirit. They are contrary and totally opposed, and the Spirit of God is the superior power, so that under His influence we may not do the things that otherwise we should.

Here then we have conflict indicated. Yet while the conflict is *inevitable*, since the nature and desires of flesh and Spirit are altogether contrary, it is not supposed that the conflict is *continuous*; but rather the reverse. The point is that walking in the Spirit one is lifted above the desires and activities of the flesh, and for so long as the believer does walk in the Spirit he is not in conflict but in deliverance and liberty.

What is it to "walk in the Spirit"? Walking indicates activity. To walk in the Spirit is to have one's activities in the Spirit; to have one's thoughts and words, one's behaviour, ways and works springing from the indwelling Spirit as their source, and energized by Him. This is a very exalted standard of practical life, surely, but it is proper Christian living and not something of an exceptional nature to be attained to by only a few. Alas! how little do we know of it in experience and

practice! How little proper and normal Christian living there is amongst us twentieth-century Christians!

Walking thus, however, we should indeed be led of the Spirit, and if so, verse 18 tells us, we are not under the law. We cannot be under both regimes at the same time. It is the privilege of the sons of God to be led by the Spirit and not by the schoolmaster. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Romans 8. 14).

Both flesh and Spirit express themselves in a practical way and at once their totally opposite nature is revealed. Verses 19 to 21 give us "the *works* of the flesh." Verses 22 and 23 "the *fruit* of the Spirit." Those who do the works of the flesh thereby betray their nature and character and such shall not inherit God's kingdom. That nature is excluded thence, and how thankful we may be that it is. It has caused enough havoc in this world. It shall never cause like havoc there!

In contrast thereto is the *fruit* of the Spirit. It does not even say *fruits*, for all these excellent features are considered as a cluster of fruit, all so many varying manifestations of the same life. In nature, fruit is the highest expression and crown of vegetable life. So here the life of the Spirit comes naturally and quietly into expression as love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. When we think of works we have a mental picture of bustle and noise. When we think of fruit we think of the silent processes of nature. There is no law against the fruit of the Spirit. It is rather the very thing which the law approves and desires.

At the end of the chapter we are reminded of two great facts. Firstly, we have only become Christ's as those

who have solemnly ratified in our own hearts the sentence executed against the flesh with its affections and lusts. It *was* crucified in the cross of Christ, whether we realize it or not. The Christian is one who has accepted and consented to that act, and therefore has crucified the flesh so far as he is concerned. Secondly, the Christian lives in the Spirit, as verse 25 indicates. The crucifixion of the flesh is putting the death sentence on the *old* source of life. The Spirit in the believer is the *new* source of life.

Do we all realize this? Have we learned to know and treat the flesh as a condemned and crucified thing? It is only what is normal and elementary in Christianity according to the Bible. If we have, we shall recognize that our life as Christians is in the Spirit of God, and consequently, we are to walk in

the Spirit, as verse 16 has already exhorted us. It is like the process of grafting. When the cultivated rose is grafted on to the wild briar stock it means death to the life of the briar, in order that the plant may live in the life of the rose. To the gardener you would say, "If that plant is now living in the life of the rose let us cultivate and encourage the rose shoots and branches, and let us ruthlessly cut back any attempted shooting forth of the condemned briar stock." Further you cannot have a rose so that it belongs to the gardener and is worth a place in his garden *without putting to death the old briar nature with all its buddings and sproutings*.

We trust the reader can make for himself the application of this illustration to verses 24 to 26 of our chapter.

THE CALL OF THE KING.

"FOLLOW Me." Could any command be more absolute than that? It is the language of high royalty, but it is the way Jesus spoke to men, and still speaks to them. He abolished every mood and tense of the grammarian and shut up human speech into the imperative mood.

It was His way from the beginning. Of old He "*commanded* the light to shine out of darkness," saying, "Let there be light, and there was light," as if the light had been standing behind the chaotic mass, waiting for the word, and could not move without it. Now He speaks to men—men who are bewildered in the darkness, dissatisfied, deceived and disconsolate—and He says to them, "Follow Me." And happy are they who obey Him, as once the light obeyed Him, for His command

is not a grievous one, it is not the utterance of an arbitrary will, but the pleading of a heart that lives for us and that would seem to be unable to live without us. It is a royal command, but more, it is the call of God. And the imperative tone carries a gracious intent, and there is in it the complete assurance of an indestructible purpose, the assurance of His all-sufficiency to meet every need in the human heart in the fulness of His unutterable grace. There is no other way out of the universal chaos but this one way. "I am the way," He said. "Neither is there salvation in any other." To refuse His voice, His way, means to flounder and perish in an impassable slough. To follow Him is to walk in the highway of righteousness and peace, the path of light and life and truth. This is the way for men, and there is none other.

DANGER SIGNALS.

(PERCY H. SMITH.)

Notes of an Address at Philadelphia (March 27, 1926).

Luke 12. 1-37.

HERE we have some warnings, given by the Lord to His disciples, against the things that would harm them, and be a hindrance to them in their spiritual life.

The first is the leaven of the Pharisees. The Pharisees were the religious people of that day, but they were always the greatest enemies of our Lord. But He knew them thoroughly. He understood their make-up, and he speaks very plainly to them on certain occasions. He tells them that it is they who make clean the outside of the cup, but the inward part is full of ravening and wickedness. They were right outside, and very careful about externals, but inside they were all wrong, and God requires truth in the inward parts. He looks not on the outward appearance; He looks at the heart. The Pharisees were hypocrites. And we are all in danger of being that, and so in His great care for us the Lord gives us this warning: "Beware ye," He says, "of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy." He desires for us that we should be absolutely transparent, that we should be six o'clock—straight up and straight down, that we should be exactly outside as we are inside. He would have us absolutely transparent.

In the early days of Christianity, there was a wonderful demonstration of the power of the Holy Spirit and great multitudes believed. They were drawn together in the bonds of Divine affection, and they had all things common. Great grace was upon them all, and there was such earnest desire that the bonds of Christian fellowship might be enjoyed to the very full, that those

who had more than others delighted to share what they had with those who had less. It was true of those Christians, "With Him is all our business now, and those that are His own."

Some had lands and possessions, and they sold them and brought the proceeds and laid them at the feet of the apostles. Ananias and Sapphira wanted to be credited with a devotion that was not really theirs, and most of us are like that. They sold their possessions and kept back part of the price. They were not what they seemed to be, but they could not deceive the Holy Ghost, and we know the solemn end that was theirs. The Lord says, "Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy." Beloved friends, the one thing that will preserve us from this is to change self for Christ, and to live before God more than before men. If we labour to have a good conscience before God and men, and have Christ as the object bright and fair to satisfy our hearts, we shall not be hypocrites, for conscience and heart being right, we shall be right inwardly and outwardly. But let us beware. The Lord flashes out the danger signal. We shall be wise if we heed it.

Then the Lord warns them further. He says, "Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do." Here we are warned against the fear of man. It is a great snare. I believe the reason there are so many backboneless Christians to-day is because they have not come out brightly, boldly, definitely on the side of the Lord Jesus Christ. They have not let everybody know that they belong to the Lord Jesus Christ. We should not fear men if

there were not some self-love in us. We like to stand well in the eyes of men, we don't like reproach, and it is so easy to compromise. The one preservative from this snare is the fear of God.

The Lord Jesus would have us very definitely to confess His Name. Can we be ashamed of His blessed Name? The Name of the One to whom we owe everything? The One who poured out His life for us on Calvary. The One who sacrificed everything in order that He might have us as His own peculiar treasure for eternity? He says, "Who-soever shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also, before My Father which is in heaven." I remember reading a saying of the late J. N. Darby's, "How wonderful it will be to hear my name called out as one who confessed His Name on earth. He will tell it all out in the ear of His Father in heaven." And God is to have the last word about everything—God, and not the man in whose presence you fear to confess the Lord.

Then the Lord warns, "Take heed and beware of covetousness." There was a man present who had evidently listened to the discourse of the Lord Jesus, and who had some vague notion that the Lord was going to set up His kingdom, and put things right in this world, and he wanted to secure His goodwill, and His judgment between himself and his brother; they were both covetous men evidently. The Lord said to him, "Who made Me a judge? . . . Take heed, and beware of covetousness." The purpose for which God has left us down here is not to make a fortune. "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." I suppose more Christians have been wrecked on the rock of covetousness than on any other.

In this country there is a great rush to amass money. Do not forget that Judas sold his Lord and Master for thirty pieces of silver. "The love of money is the root of all evil," which, while some having coveted after have pierced themselves through with many sorrows. My mind reverts to a man in England: a bright, Christian man in his early days. I held many meetings in his house. He preached the gospel on the streets and invited Christians to come to his drawing room for meetings. But one day he set his sails to catch the breezes of worldly prosperity. He did it at the cost of his own soul's blessing. He went right down, and I shall never forget visiting him and praying with him. He said there was no response in his heart, it was as hard as a millstone, and Sunday was the most miserable day in the week for him.

May the word of Paul to Timothy have great weight with us, "Godliness with contentment is great gain, for we brought nothing into the world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out, and having food and raiment let us be therewith content." You have got a God who has numbered the very hairs of your head, and what a God He is! "He watches o'er me night and day, and tells me, 'I am thine!'" The only way in which we can be preserved from this snare is to have God as our portion. If God is for me, and I know it, it is better than all the dollars in the land.

The last warning the Lord gives is to beware of care. It is care that burdens the heart and creates the sighs and grumbles, and many unworldly Christians are caught in this snare. The Lord wanted His disciples to be without care, and gives them four reasons why they should be so. Firstly, He says, "Consider the ravens"—I am

told that the raven is the only bird that doesn't care for her young. God challenges Job about His power, and He asks, "Who is it that feeds the ravens and gives to the young ravens their food?" They would be without food so far as the maternal instinct was concerned, but God from heaven looks down upon them and gives them their food from day to day. "Consider the ravens; for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them." He says, "You are of infinitely more value than the fowls."

Secondly, He tells them about the lilies of the field. "They toil not." God gives them year by year a fresh supply of living leaves and flowers, and if He clothes the lilies of the field, how much more will He clothe you?

Thirdly, in verses 29 and 30, He says, "Seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things." What is characteristic of the world to-day? An exaggerated value of material things. The world is a materialistic world, and men spend all their energies seeking material things; but you have a Father in heaven, who knows what you have need of and will not let you lack, so that you need not be like the world.

Fourthly, the Lord says, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." The great preservative from anxious care is the knowledge of God as Father, and to have the heart set upon His kingdom and righteousness, which are imperishable and eternal, and so infinitely better than the things that moth and rust and thief destroy. If you are on

the Lord's side, you are on the best side, for "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." You may have little treasure here, but if you have Christ up yonder, you have treasure in heaven, and "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

Then finally He says, "Let your loins be girded about"—in readiness for running and service—"and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord." That's how we ought to be. As the world takes account of us, dear friends, do they say, "They are like unto men that wait for their Lord"?

Allow me to tell you a story. A father, a widower, got a holiday—a much-needed one—and went down to the coast with his three boys, eight, ten, and twelve. He was a very busy man, an important man, and after a few days he was telegraphed for; he was wanted back in the city. He said to his boys that he might return that night, or he might be back to-morrow, or the day after. The landlady said they were the most remarkable boys that she had ever come across. Three times a day they went up into the bathroom and washed their hands and faces and made themselves absolutely presentable for the return at any moment of their father. They were anxious to be ready for his return. That's what we ought to be, and I believe if we had the sense in our souls that our blessed Lord, to whom we owe everything, was away, and we were expecting Him back any moment, it would have an effect on our lives like that.

Then the Lord says, "Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching—verily I say unto you, that He shall gird

Himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them."

Beloved friends, we know how our Lord Jesus Christ has served us. He served us on the Cross, and eternity will be too short to utter all His praise, and to show our appreciation of His matchless love. He served us then; He serves us now in the glory. He is unceasingly engaged on our behalf,

interested in our every step of the pathway. He is a real, living Person in the glory of God, whose heart is as full of love as when He went to the Cross for us. His love is unchanging and unchangeable. But the day is coming when He is going to gird Himself and come forth and serve us for ever! What a wonderful Saviour! Surely our hearts desire to be free from those things which would hinder us while we await His return.

THE UNDYING LOVE OF CHRIST. (INGLIS FLEMING.)

"WE have come here this morning just to sit at the foot of Thy cross and to think of Thee."

So it was that a black African Christian expressed himself in praise at the Lord's Supper, as he told out his heart's delight in the Saviour.

And well it is for every believer to sit in the shadow of the cross of Christ in the enjoyment of all that flows to us through the sufferings of the Son of God there, and to contemplate His love and His glory as we repose in the blessed effect of all that He has wrought.

So it is in Rev. 1. 5, 6. His glory and His love are presented. He is "the faithful witness"—the one green oasis in the midst of barren desert. The One "faithful amidst unfaithfulness." The One who witnessed a good confession every step of His way. In the midst of a world where the failure of man in every position has been but history repeating itself, He has been the unfailing, unfaltering witness. In this, as in all else, He has the pre-eminence. Then He is "the first begotten from the dead." He has been into death and has robbed it of its sting and broken its power. The keys of death and hades hang at His girdle of righteousness. He is the victorious One who lives, who

became dead for the glory of God and who now lives for evermore. In this He has pre-eminence also. *His* is the victory, and we who believe are but sharers of the spoils.

Then He is "the Prince of the kings of the earth." He is the coming One who shall reign King of kings and Lord of lords, and all shall be subjected unto Him. Pre-eminence is His in testimony in the past, in victory in the present, and in Kingship in the future.

But as His glories are thus presented, there breaks in, as it were, a choir, praising and adoring Him: "Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father, to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." It is a blessed interruption. As though the hearts of saints welled over as His glories were told, and cried with the bride of old, "This is my beloved and this is my friend."

And mark well: it is "Unto Him that loves us," rather than "loved," as we have it in the Authorized Version. His love is a *present* love. It has been expressed in its fulness at the cross, but having reached its zenith there it never goes down. He loves us to-day "with the same love with which He loved us

at Calvary. As some one has said, "His dying love is part of His undying love." Yes! He loves us. The loving day is an eternal present.

He has cleared us as to our sins. That is past, but the love which led Him to die goes on for ever unchanged and unchangeable. And we should note, too, that His having washed us from our sins—or perhaps we should read it as loosed us from our sins—was in view of what He would make us—a kingdom—priests unto His God and Father. Our sins stood in the way of our being brought into this glorious place—they bound us in our consciences and hindered our freedom in the presence of God. But He has loosed us from them all and sets us down in perfect peace in the light of the throne of God's holiness. As it has been remarked by another, "He satisfies the affections by His love, He has cleared the conscience by His blood, and has put us in such glorious relationships as He stands in Himself to God and the Father." Well may our hearts join the singers of praise and cry, "To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." He has found worshippers for His Father, and at infinite cost to Himself has put down every foe and put away every fear from our hearts and left us in happy liberty to worship.

But His undying love is *active* towards us to-day. Ephes. 5. 25-27 tells the story. "Christ loved the assembly"—the whole of His own to-day—"and gave Himself for it." That again is His love in the past—His dying love. "That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word." Here is His undying love in operation. He sets the assembly apart from the world. He sanctifies it for His own portion and pleasure. And to be suitable to Him-

self He cleanses it with "the washing of water by the Word." As it is pictured for us in John 13. He takes our soiled feet in His loving hands to remove everything which would hinder our having part with Him in His own joys before His Father. And this is ever going on, and *He must wash us* thus or our intimacy with Himself would be impossible. On our side we should put our feet into the basin, as it were; we should read the Word privately and personally and persistently, and also attend the ministry of His servants through whom He may see fit to minister for our good. Thus shall we be cleansed by the washing of water by the Word and taste more fully and more fully yet the blessedness of our relationship to, and association with, Christ.

But that same undying love awaits the day when He will present that assembly to Himself glorious, not in suffering as now, but in glory—a glorious assembly suited in every way for Himself where He is, "not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing"—no mark of defilement or depreciation, no indication of that out of which or through which it has come. His love has removed every trace of these, and resplendent in His beauty, "comely with the comeliness" with which He has made it comely, it will be like Himself, "holy and without blemish." It was for this His loved ones were chosen in Him before the foundation of the world (Ephes. 1. 4). It is this which He brings about at infinite cost to Himself in His dying and undying love. And in the joy of that love His own will rest for ever and ever. The need of the activities of that love will be over, and He will rest in His love and joy over His own eternally, when that love has accomplished all that it set itself to bring to pass.

PRACTICAL PAPERS. No. 6.—Love.

(A. J. POLLOCK.)

LOVE has been said to be the greatest thing in the world, and this is doubtless true, for "God is love" (1 John 4. 16). But we cannot reverse the statement as many seek to do, and say "Love is God," that is to deify love, practically the glorification of that lie of the bottomless pit—Unitarianism—making everything of love till government is dethroned and God cannot punish sin, but all is love, love, love, and nothing else; in reality pseudo-love, not the real article at all. The appeal to the sentiment or poor fallen nature is vastly powerful: how can a God of love condemn sinners to an endless hell?

But surely the death of the Lord Jesus nails this lie to the counter. Yes, "God is love," glorious truth, but "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1. 5). Righteousness must be vindicated in face of a race of sinners. Every death cries aloud that God must and does punish sin. "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6. 23).

There is one death, however, that is absolutely unique. The wise man wrote, "There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death" (Eccles. 8. 8), yet we read of One who could say, "I lay down My life that I might take it again . . . I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again" (John 10. 17, 18). When Solomon wrote there was not one single person but what was under the sentence of death, and when death claimed the victim, willing or unwilling, he had to yield.

But here we have One, the Lord Jesus, whose death is absolutely unique. Death had no possible claim over Him. Why then did He die? What was the necessity? It was this. If Divine

love was to be shown to sinners righteousness must be met, hence the amazing death of the Son of God, for if anything is plain in Scripture His death was an atoning death; and His person, God and man, the Eternal Word becoming a real man, gave character to His death.

So we see LOVE—Divine love—at the Cross expressed in all its fulness, and yet righteousness upheld, as it must ever be if love is really Divine.

Theologians, who are unsound, Modernists, Higher Critics and the like, have lost their grip upon the central facts of Christianity, the deity and true manhood of Christ, and *atoning* character of His death; and we shall have perverted ideas of the love of God unless we maintain a grip on these central truths. Otherwise we shall drag down Divine love to the level of what is merely human, and lose that which Divinely elevates.

It is only as we understand the meaning of the cross of Christ that we shall rightly understand that God is love.

There must be a broad distinction made between Divine love and human love. Human love is the greatest gift of the Creator, surviving the fall, yet vitiated by it. It is the one bit of cement that, as far as this life is concerned, keeps society together. Without it we should have the very pandemonium of hell about our ears. "Without natural affection" (2 Tim. 3. 3) is one of the signs of the last times, classed with blasphemy, disobedience to parents, treachery, etc., and all this under the cover of "a form of godliness" (verse 5).

Human affection is at the bottom selfish. We love because we like. We love those that belong to us. It is

my mother, my wife, my children, my home, my friend, my country.

If the *Titanic* goes down with hundreds of lives it sends a thrill of horror through us, but if *my* son, going out in a little rowing boat, is capsized and drowned, this is a far greater sorrow. And yet put one young life against the hundreds lost in the *Titanic*, and see where the true proportion lies.

The Lord's people should be marked by natural affection, and they can count on the support of the Holy Spirit in the carrying out of natural relationships as is seen in Eph. 5. and 6. and Col. 3. and 4., whether as wife or husband, children or fathers, servants or masters.

But the believer has the Divine nature, and its most characteristic feature is love. Was it not a saying in the heathen world in the early days of Christianity, "See how the Christians love each other"? It is easy to love those that are lovable, those whose qualities please us and draw forth affection, but with Divine love with God it had its propulsive energy in His own nature. There was nothing in man to draw it forth; indeed everything to drive it back.

Moses said to Israel, "The Lord did not set His love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people; but because the Lord loved you" (Deut. 7. 7, 8). He could furnish no reason save what God was in Himself. This is a great comfort, for it puts the love of God on a basis that can never break down.

If we set our affection on an object we think worthy, and find we have been mistaken, our love is likely to evaporate. What a comfort that God expects nothing from us, is thereby never disappointed at not finding what

He does not look for. Love is in the fount of His own being, and it is as we grasp this great fact, that we shall see how we ought to love even when there is nothing to draw love out.

Is this the meaning of 2 Peter 1. 7, "Add to brotherly kindness charity [love]"? Is it that brotherly kindness is shown to brothers we like, but that something higher is our privilege, viz., to show Divine love? Did not the Apostle Paul know something of this when he wrote his second letter to the Corinthian assembly, "I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love, the less I be loved" (chap. 12. 15)? Note the strength of the language, the superlative he uses—"very gladly spend and be spent." He did not love because he was loved, but loved because he was strong in the Divine nature.

Again, how the apostle was concerned even about the saints that "had not seen his face in the flesh" (see Col. 2. 1). Was this not the overflowing of Divine love, unquenchable and fervent?

Alas! how easily it is otherwise with us. I recall with amusement the delineation of a lady's handwriting, "Temper, good if not crossed." Yes, we can all behave ourselves when we are not crossed, when we get our own way.

But how many can be crossed, and yet love? How many of us can walk in relation to our fellow Christians, "With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, *forbearing one another IN LOVE*"? (Eph. 4. 2).

1 Cor. 13. is the chapter *par excellence* on love. It shows how it is possible for a Christian to give the most wonderful addresses, speak with tongue of men and angels, and yet if love is wanting it is only empty sound.

Love will give Divine warmth to the speech, it will anoint the lips with Divine fervour. Again, a brother may be a perfect walking encyclopædia of biblical knowledge, may indeed be gifted with the prophetic gift, be able to unravel all mysteries and be lacking in no knowledge, be filled with faith, and yet if he have not love *he is nothing*, he has no spiritual stature at all.

He may even go to the extent of stripping himself of all he possesses, even to the length of giving his body to be burned, and yet there is no profit in it if Divine love is not the spring of his self-denial and self-abnegation.

Love is ready to suffer, not for a day or a week merely, but indefinitely, *and be kind*.

Love does not envy another's gifts. If Barnabas began as an older servant of the Lord in taking the lead before Paul, the young and freshly converted servant of the Lord, and ended by having to take a second place in relation to one younger in years and in spiritual history, if Barnabas, we repeat, were governed by Divine love he would rejoice. What a test this is, every servant of Christ knows in some greater or smaller measure. Envy is as cruel as the grave.

Then Divine love does not blow its own trumpet. It looks upon the affairs of others. Divine love is no egotist, but its very breath is to express itself in relation to others.

Love is not selfish, quarrelsome or suspicious. It will always put the best construction on any action.

Prophecies will cease, but Divine love is eternal. There will by-and-by be no need for prophecies, but Divine

love never had a beginning and will never have an end.

Likewise tongues, originally the result of man's sin at Babel, will cease for Divine love will triumph, and only one tongue will be its vehicle in eternity.

Knowledge, too, will pass away, for when there is the realization of Divine love we shall know no longer in part, and when all know fully knowledge will have vanished away in the sense of being comparative.

There are the three graces, pre-eminent in the Christian life: faith, hope, love, "but the greatest of these is love" (1 Cor. 13. 13). One glad day, and that soon, faith will cease and give place to sight; hope, the buoy up of our "sure and steadfast" expectations, will give place to happy realization; but love, Divine love, drawn from the eternal fount of God's own nature, will endure for ever in undimmed splendour.

Faith and hope and love may walk with us right up to the golden gate, but faith and hope will drop back, whilst sight and realization will greet our wondering gaze; but love, which sought and found us and held our hands all along life's devious paths, will pass on with us triumphant, for eternity.

Lastly, there is the assembly character of love. "Christ . . . loved the church" (Eph. 5. 25). "But speaking [*literally* holding, N.T.] the truth *in love*, may grow up into 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*" (Eph. 4. 15, 16).

LIGHT AND LIFE. No. 13.

(JAMES BOYD.)

Meditations on John's Gospel. (Chap. 11.)

IN chapter 11. testimony is borne to the Lord as the Son of God, in the resurrection of Lazarus from the dead. He is the resurrection and the life. As the whole human race, and all that it has shown itself morally to be, lay in the first Adam in his fallen condition, so the whole race of mankind, after the new and spiritual order, lies in the last Adam, the Son of the living God. The whole redeemed creation shall be placed on the resurrection platform, and every redeemed soul shall live in the life of Christ. Everything for the eternal blessing of all who come to Him lies in Himself. Those who have not come under His quickening power must be brought to judgment, and all that come into judgment must perish for ever. God cannot bring into judgment those that are of Himself, begotten of Him. And "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the wicked one." Morally the world is of the devil.

"Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." What infinite grace and tenderness lie in the Holy Spirit of God! Who that has read the Gospels would not have expected to find Mary the first mentioned here? Martha is not always in the attitude most approved of by the Lord, and therefore one might have expected Mary to be more prominent in the mind of the Spirit, for her ways are highly approved of. But in thus judging we might find ourselves greatly in error. John lay on the breast of the Lord at supper, and speaks of himself as the disciple whom Jesus loved. But this does not warrant us in thinking that our Lord loved John more than He loved Peter, Matthew, Thomas, or any of the others. Not one of them merited one single look of love from the

Holy Saviour. The love which He lavished on them was all grace. Not one of them would ever have chosen to follow His blessed footsteps had there not been the drawing of the Father. He says: "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you." They were all the gift of the Father to Him, and by Him all were equally appreciated and loved. It may be that some of them were more devoted to Him than were others, and therefore had more insight into His sorrows and His joys. James, Peter and John seem to have been more privileged than others in this way, but we have no reason to assume that they were more loved. "As My Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you," and this is said to all of them. Martha seems to have been ever occupied with serving in temporal things, while Mary occupied herself with the Lord, perhaps realizing some little of the downstooping of His grace, that brought Him here not to be ministered unto, but to minister.

The love He has lavished on us is sovereign, not called out by any virtue He may find in us, for when He set His love upon us there was nothing in us but was obnoxious to His Holy nature, therefore He could not love any one of us in a special way more than another. It is our privilege to behave ourselves in such a way that He will have pleasure in us, and that we may not grieve His Holy Spirit, but His love was set upon us before we thought about pleasing Him. If we do not walk in the Spirit of grace and love we shall have a self-condemning heart, and we shall be lacking in the boldness that should ever characterize our approach to Him, for we know that He is cognisant of all our imperfections, and He has His own blessed way of

giving us to feel how sadly we have grieved Him. But His love is unalterable. Blessed be His Holy Name.

What profound depths of wickedness lie in the natural heart of fallen man! What violence and corruption its unexplored depths conceal! Unexplored! did I say? Yes, unexplored by man, but searched by the omniscient eye of the living God, and all its deep depths of wickedness naked under His eye. The gladness that filled the hearts of two sisters in the town of Bethany has its counterpoise in the plotting of the priests in Jerusalem to put to death him whom the Son of God had brought back from the grave. "But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death, because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus." They would not only murder the Son of God but they would murder His witness also.

What an accumulation of wickedness, heartless cruelty, and stupidity, is to be found in the mind of the willing tools of the devil! The brutality of those men is only equalled by their imbecility; for how could a man who was able to raise the dead be himself put to death? But it has been said that wickedness is never wise; and this is indeed true. "Cain," we read, "was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous." But then: "No murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." How sad it is to see men, professed servants of God, plotting the murder of the righteous.

The family in Bethany, in the bosom of which Jesus ever found a welcome and home, makes Him a supper. And that supper foreshadows the true remnant of Israel in the day when Christ shall take the throne. Martha, whose

hopes all seem to centre on the coming kingdom, is as usual found serving. She gives expression to her faith in the words in which she replies to the question of the Lord, a question, I believe, beyond her power to understand. She says: "Yes, Lord: I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world." This is the faith of the Jewish remnant who will be ready to welcome the Christ at His return. Nathanael, whom the Lord says is an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile, confesses Jesus in the same words or in words that mean the same: "Thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel." Also in Ps. 2., when the decree is declared, the King is the Son of God. It is the faith of the remnant at the coming of Christ.

At the table there is also Lazarus raised from the dead. In that day when He shall have come, the nation's dead who have passed away in faith shall be raised, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God.

The whole heart and mind of Mary is engrossed with Himself. It is not the Kingdom, neither is it the exalted position of Israel as head of the nations of the earth. She feels the atmosphere about her laden with the evil spirit of murder, and that of the One who was everything to her. "Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment." She saw that He must die; whether she saw the Divine necessity of His death for our eternal blessing is a matter of spiritual discernment. That His enemies could not take His life from Him she cannot but have known; for her risen brother was a witness to her, if she had no other,

that He could not be deprived of His life by human instrumentality. But she was not reasoning about it. She knew He was about to die, and she anoints Him for His burial. The disciples, led by Judas, may murmur much about the waste, but He who cared infinitely more for the poor than they did justifies her action, and that was enough for her. What more could she desire than His approval?

His triumphant entry into Jerusalem gives testimony to Him as Son of David. He is acclaimed as the King of Israel that cometh in the name of Jehovah. The Greeks also come to Philip desiring to see Jesus. This leads Him to speak of Himself as Son of Man. He says: "The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified." He was no longer to be presented as a centre for gathering upon the earth. That was over on account of His rejection. The presentation of the Grace of God in Him had been met by complete rejection, and now if He was to have anything out of the ruin in which men lay He must have them after His own order, for man in the flesh will have none of Him. But if He is to have man after His own order, He must bear the judgment under which men lay, that He may be free in righteousness to take up the vilest, and quicken them with the life that lay in Himself. Being righteous in His very nature, approving of righteousness wherever manifested in His intelligent creation, and manifesting wrath against all unrighteousness, He cannot by an act of power show grace to the sinner, as though sin was of no consequence. Therefore whatever mercy may be shown to the erring, the judgment due to sin must not be set aside, but must be executed. Just as

a corn of wheat must die in order to produce others of its own kind, so must Christ die, if He is to have a race after His own order.

But now all that this death would mean to Him comes before His soul. In the infinite perfection of His sinless and holy being He shrinks from the death that rises up before His vision. To be made sin—to be treated as sin—deserves—to be forsaken of God: well indeed may He say: "Now is My soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy name." Let come upon Him whatever must, only let the Father be glorified. The counsels of the Father must be fulfilled, the sons of God brought to glory; therefore let the cost to Him be what it may, He will pay it.

He cannot remain alone in the glory of God, and men will not have Him here. He did not take flesh and blood that He might abide for ever without companions. His delights were with the sons of men; and because they were partakers of flesh and blood He took part of the same; He could not otherwise have died. He must bear the judgment that was justly their due, break the power of death, and annul him who wielded that power to the terror of those under it. Not to continue it did He take flesh and blood, but that in His cross it might be brought to an end, and that in Him we might find redemption out of the whole old earthly order.

Therefore that life in which we lived in flesh has become hateful to us. Not in this world, as men of this world, do we desire to live; but in the Father's world of glory, in the life of the risen Saviour, in the eternal life.

REVELATION AND RECONCILIATION. (H. J. VINE.)

BEHOLD in a far-off city a youth of unhappy countenance. A deep sense of disgrace weighs heavily upon his spirit. He is also struggling against adversity, although in his distant home he has a wealthy, godly father, who loves him dearly. The fact is, he has committed a serious misdemeanour, and through *misrepresentation* he believes his father has turned his back upon him altogether.

One day, amidst his sorrow and suffering, a *revelation* comes to him in a letter from his father, who had discovered his whereabouts. That revelation undid all the misrepresentation and chased the sadness from his life, for it made known to him what he was unable to discover himself: that his father's heart still loved him, and that he desired his return. This revelation changed his thoughts, and resulted in *reconciliation* to his own joy and satisfaction, and more especially to that of his noble father.

Our illustration only serves to show the difference between revelation and reconciliation. The one comes *to us* and the other brings us *to GOD*. But the wonderful revelation of God Himself which comes to man is necessarily beyond all human comparison, for it must be miraculous in that it is the making known of the Creator to the creature who had sinned against Him, having fallen under Satan's misrepresentations and consequently deserved His judgment and not His favour—His frown and not His smile. To such the great and holy God has been pleased in grace to make the revelation of Himself; and that the misrepresentations of Satan might be undone in the thoughts of all who believe, His great love to usward has been made known in His Son and in His atoning sufferings and death for us upon the

cross, so that we might be brought to Him in reconciliation.

Nor has this revelation come to us in writing only, as in the letter of our illustration, though the Bible, inspired of God from Genesis to Revelation, is indeed the perfect written revelation from Himself, a treasure of priceless value, to be prized and studied prayerfully and carefully by all the redeemed; but the final and supreme revelation of God Himself is made in a living Person of whom the written Word tells, in the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Word who was God, who became flesh so that He might be fully made known. In His ways, in His works, His walk and His words, in all that incomparable life and death recorded for our hearts' meditation and adoration in the four Spirit-given gospels, we behold God manifest in the flesh, God revealed in infinite perfection. The works of God in creation, in providence, or in government could but show some of His glorious attributes, but His Son, a real Man amongst men, seen in moral, spiritual and Divine perfectness and power always, revealed the invisible God Himself to us. The Holy Spirit the Comforter, who has been given from our exalted Lord to dwell in us, brings us the written Word, where we behold the wondrous glories of this revelation, which is declared to us in the Son of the Father's love, to whom we sing,

"Thou wast the Image, in man's lowly guise,
Of the Invisible to mortal eyes,
Son of His bosom, come from heaven above,
We see in Thee incarnate, 'God is love.'"

Again, the change brought about in our thoughts by the knowledge of the love of God, was not sufficient of itself to bring us into reconciliation, for, as we have seen, sin, which is such an awful thing in God's holy sight, must

be righteously dealt with. Christ, who knew no sin, was therefore made sin for us, that we might become God's righteousness in Him, and be consequently set before God in reconciliation in the rich enjoyment of His love, in perfect consistency with all the holiness of His character and nature. If in His goodness we were brought to repentance on account of our sins, if our sense of need caused us to think of Himself, if our deep poverty brought us to consider the wealth of His abundance, if the fear of perishing made us seek His mercy, then, His love, told out to us at Calvary, and "commended to us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us," received in faith into our hearts, banished our guilty dread; and thus, believing the truth of God, even "when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son" (Rom. 5. 10). And joy in God in reconciliation follows, as the next verse shows so blessedly.

Neither the perfect revelation nor this wonderful reconciliation was known before the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. They were not found in the Old Testament. We read: "No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" (John 1. 18, N.Tr.). In regard to the second we are told, "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not reckoning to them their offences" (2 Cor. 5. 19, N.Tr.); and, as we have seen, the death of our Lord Jesus Christ was necessary to bring it to pass righteously; thus having put away the sins and the enmity at the cross, He ascended to the right hand of God. From thence He gave gifts to men, and empowered them as appointed *ambassadors* to proclaim the *word* of reconciliation from God, as though beseeching men to be recon-

ciled to Him. He gave to them also the *ministry* of reconciliation, so that the reconciled might be instructed in all the new things which are theirs in Christ, and that they might be maintained in fulness of joy before God revealed as Father in the Son. No one knows the Father but the Son and he to whom the Son is pleased to reveal Him (Matt. 11. 27); nor could any be reconciled to Him save through Christ's death upon the cross.

In revelation God is fully made known to us in Christ; in reconciliation we are set in full favour before God. To us God is brought in revelation; to God we are brought in reconciliation. In the first we have the true and exact representation of God to us, for He is otherwise invisible and beyond the creature's ability to discover, yet in the Son of the Father's love become Man, we behold "the Image of the invisible God"—the perfect representation of Himself—the invisible become visible. In the second we are restored to God through our Lord Jesus Christ for His own pleasure and satisfaction, so that He can now say, "It is meet that we should make merry and be glad" (Luke 15. 32).

In Colossians 1. we have stated the most complete expression of the revelation of God in Christ. In Hebrews 1. 3 we are told that He is the "effulgence of His glory and the exact expression of His substance" (N.Tr.). In John 1. we read of Him as "the Word," the embodiment and expression of God's mind. But it is in Colossians 1. 15 we learn that the invisible God Himself is imaged—perfectly expressed—in the Son of the Father's love. We have there not only His *substance*, and not only His *mind*, but HIMSELF revealed. This, of course, takes us back to the Gospels, where we are enabled by the Spirit to behold Him

who was God manifest in the flesh (1 Tim. 3. 16), Him who came to undo all the evil works and misrepresentations of the devil (1 John 3. 8).

When our souls are at peace with God through the death and resurrection of Christ, when we are brought to know our acceptance in Him who has ascended on high, and as united to Him by the Spirit there we know Him as the Head of His body, the assembly, and also know that all the fulness of the Godhead resides in Him, then we are free in the power of the Spirit of God to go back and behold in the wonderful Gospels the marvellous expression of that fulness in the Man who glorified God on the earth and completed the work He entrusted Him to do. Faith, having followed Him up to where He is as the Man glorified by God on high, goes back to follow Him as the Man who revealed God here below. The Spirit was given when Jesus was glorified (John 7. 39) and it is in His power we rightly appreciate the infinite excellencies exhibited in the Man of the Gospels. In the Acts and in the Epistles (which give us the preaching and the teaching) we necessarily have progress; but in the four Gospels we behold perfection, for God Himself is there revealed in Jesus, in Him who is the same yesterday and to-day and for ever. In keeping with this the meat offering, which so beautifully typifies Jesus on earth, was to be appropriated by the *sons* of the high priest (Lev. 2. 3, 10); strength in the power of the Spirit of sonship being needed to be able thus to appreciate Him. "All the males amongst the children of Aaron shall eat it" (6. 18). On the other hand that which resulted so richly from the death of Christ—"the wave breast and heave shoulder," speaking of His love and His strength, were food not only for the sons, but

also for the high priest's *daughters* (10. 14). This gracious provision of God, foreshadowed in the sacrifices of peace offerings, yields precious communion with Himself for all the saints, whether strong or feeble. We can all feast our souls in nearness to Himself upon Christ who died for us and rose again.

As we thus feed upon Him in the grace and energy of the Holy Spirit, our ability to take in more perfectly the revelation of God is increased. If in that *revelation* we are enabled to see the disclosure of Him to whom we are reconciled through Christ's death, it is in the *reconciliation* we rejoice before God and increasingly value the infinite glories of Him who has been revealed in the Son of His love.

Not confined now to the favoured nation of Israel, this is the time spoken of as that of the "world's reconciliation." Israel being broken off through unbelief from the good olive of promise, we have been grafted in (Rom. 11. 15, 17). The appeal "Be reconciled to God" is sent out now to Gentile as well as to Jew, and in higher and fuller blessing still, those who believe to-day are reconciled in one body to God by the Cross (Eph. 2. 10), and they form the one new man in Christ. They are reconciled to the fulness which dwells in Him now; and eventually all the positions of dignity and honour in the heavens and upon the earth—thrones, lordships, principalities and authorities—the visible and the invisible, will be reconciled by Him, the Supreme One, who holds as the Head of the body, the assembly, the Pre-eminence in every circle of splendour and glorious majesty. Therefore He re-adjusts all for the good pleasure of our God and Father. Having so done with the assembly now "in" Himself, He will subsequently and consequently do so "by" Himself

with all the vast range of positions of dignity which we have mentioned. All enmity and alienation having been removed by His death upon the Cross we are already presented in holiness and without blame in the presence of all the fulness as is well-pleasing to God our Father.

Being reconciled already then to Him who has so blessedly been revealed, we may well rejoice in the new things and the new relationships which are ours "in Christ," where there is "a new creation," where "all things are of God" (2 Cor. 5. 17, N.Tr.). Members now of the one body of which Christ is the Head, fellow-citizens of the saints and of the household of God, sons before Him as alive from the dead, all that is suitable to this is ours for faith to apprehend and appreciate.

The glory and the grace of that which is ours through revelation and reconciliation, the dignity and yet the joy of it, the greatness and yet the satisfaction of it, the holiness and the love of it all, produce a wonderful effect upon us practically as its reality is delighted in.

Even that proud monarch Herod, and that representative of Rome, Pilate, the governor, who were at enmity before, were reconciled at the base *rejection* of Jesus. What shall mark those who are accepted in His eternal acceptance before God? "*Go, be reconciled to thy brother*" (Matt. 5. 24). Has unnecessary estrangement come in between wife and husband? Let her "*be reconciled to her husband*" (1. Cor. 7. 11). Has alienation troubled members of a family where Christ is owned as Lord? Surely the sweetness of reconciliation will be solicited and secured where God's grace is experimentally rejoiced in. How good is the rich blessing of the reconciliation which is of God!—Sinners, at enmity once, now reconciled to God Himself.

Soon, in scenes of holiness, love and majesty, where nought to mar can ever come, the abiding results of the wondrous death of God's beloved Son shall eternally endure. There the reconciled ones shall worship and serve the revealed One. There all shall be to His own good pleasure, to His everlasting satisfaction and joy.

SINGING OR SIGHING.

(W. BRAMWELL DICK.)

WHAT a splendid song was that which Moses and the Children of Israel sang, and which has been recorded for our benefit in Exodus 15. We observe, in the first place, that they "sang unto the Lord"; and in the second place, it will be remarked that the song was all about the Lord. The first word of the chapter indicates the circumstances that gave occasion for the song. "*Then*"—after being sheltered from the terrible judgment depicted in chapter 12; "*Then*"—when they had learned that they were a sanctified people, and that the Lord

claimed them as His Own; "*Then*"—after their marvellous salvation from Egypt and from all the power of Pharaoh; "*Then*"—when they saw the Egyptians dead upon the seashore; "*Then*"—when they realized "that great work which the Lord did"; "*Then* sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord." Four things are prominent in the chapter.

THE PRE-EMINENCE OF GOD.

Their song was not about themselves but about Jehovah; not about the blessing but about the Blessor; not

about the deliverance but about the Deliverer; not about what they had secured but about what Jehovah had secured by "that great work which He did." They might have been pardoned if they had been occupied with their escape from the judgment; their deliverance from Egypt; and the wonderful position that they then occupied; but it was not so. Jehovah was pre-eminent in their thoughts, in their affections, in their praise. What *He* was, what *He* had done, the victory that *He* had gained, the glory that had accrued to Him; what *He* would yet do and the glory that would be His, all produced joy in their hearts, and called forth this magnificent pæan of praise from their lips.

We learn

THE PURPOSE OF GOD.

They must have been Divinely taught, for they seem to have learned that Jehovah had done all this, not simply that they might escape the judgment, be saved from their enemies and be brought into "a land flowing with milk and honey"; but that He might have a people for Himself among whom He could dwell. Thus we find in verses 2, 13 and 17 they sang of His habitation, His dwelling place, His sanctuary. Their joy was the reflex of His joy. In other words, they entering into His thoughts, He made them to be sharers of His joy in that which He had got for Himself.

They sang of

THE POWER OF GOD.

They knew something about that, for had they not seen the mightiest demonstration of it that the world had up to that time witnessed? They were confident that what that power had done it would do. It would carry them through. Just as the complete defeat of the Egyptians was an accomplished

fact, so the utter discomfiture of the Canaanites was certain. Jehovah would bring them in. That power would also be exercised later in universal dominion, for they sang: "The Lord shall reign for ever and ever," verse 18. Reason might ask:—"But how *could* God carry through those six hundred thousand men, not to speak of women and children, and plus "a mixed multitude"? This brings us to what seems like a blot on a charming chapter, and yet it brings out in bright relief

THE PROVISION OF GOD.

After all that they had seen, after all that they had sung, after all their protestations of confidence in Jehovah, before the first test they fell and they murmured. Note! They commenced to murmur when they ceased to sing. We dare not fling stones at them because we have been there ourselves; perhaps some person reading these lines is there just now. The preventive of murmuring is singing, and the cure for murmuring is singing. **WE HAVE GOT NOTHING ABOUT WHICH TO MURMUR**, and every time we do so we play into Satan's hands and grieve the heart of our gracious God and Father.

WE HAVE GOT SUFFICIENT TO KEEP US SINGING FOR EVER.

Let us then bid our murmuring cease and let us attune our voice to sing His praise here and now. The failure of the Children of Israel gave occasion, however, for learning the greatness and the adequacy of God's provision. Praise His Name! That provision never failed them during all their wilderness wanderings. May we heed the exhortations of Ephesians 5. 18-20 and Colossians 3. 15-17, and be kept of His grace, till we see Him face to face:—

SINGING! SINGING!! SINGING!!!

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

"Spirits in Prison." 1 Peter 3. 19, 20.

Will you please explain 1 Peter 3. 19, 20?—BRISTOL.

THERE has been much controversy about these passages and many strange doctrines have been built upon it. The interpretation that has always commended itself to us is, that when Noah preached salvation from the flood through the ark to the men of his generation, it was Christ, by the Spirit, that spoke in him. And all the while that the ark was being built God's longsuffering was shown to those men, and the preaching went on. They did not heed the preaching, and their spirits are now in prison. The preaching was *then*, and God was longsuffering to them *then*, and they were disobedient *then*, and they are in prison *now*. A "second chance," or "larger hope," has been taught with this passage as its basis. It really proves the opposite. In chapter 1. 11, the Spirit of Christ is spoken of as signifying and testifying in the Old Testament prophets. The same Spirit of Christ signified and testified in Noah of the coming flood.

The question may arise as to why this remarkable passage should come in here

without any apparent connection with the subject of the Epistle. We suggest that the Jewish believers to whom Peter wrote were a very small remnant of the nation—"a few souls,"—the vast majority were disobedient to the preaching. They were surrounded, too, by those who thought it strange that they did not run to the same excess of riot and who spoke evil of them (chap. 4. 4)—people just like those to whom Noah preached. In these circumstances they may have been tempted to doubt whether it was the truth that they had believed since so few were obedient to it; hence this ancient bit of history is cited to prove to them that from the beginning it was so. The truth, and those that follow it, suffer in this unrighteous world; the majority love the lie and are disobedient to the truth. But whether in that long-since dispensation or in the present gospel period it is Christ who preaches by the Spirit, hence the rejection of the message means condemnation final and irrevocable. There can be no further hope for those who reject the word of Christ.

"The Disciple whom Jesus loved."

Would you please give a little help in reference to John 13. 23; 19. 26, etc., where the words occur, "disciple whom Jesus loved"? As this is not said of any other disciple, how are we to understand it? We know that He loved them all. Chap. 13. 1.—GATESHEAD.

DON'T let the last sentence in your enquiry slip. The Lord did and does love all His own, and will to the end. But the moment had come in the history of the Lord and His disciples when so much depended upon their realization of this great fact. They had reached a crisis, and were to go through a great test, in which they were to learn that they could not depend upon their faithfulness and love to the Lord, that His love alone

was invincible, in it alone they could rest. John only seems to have grasped this, and from chapter 13. onward it became the dominating thing in his life, not his love to his Master—that was where Peter failed—but his Master's love to him. Hence he takes to himself this beautiful designation, but it was true of them all, and of us all, only we must know it experimentally. A paper on this subject appeared in our February, 1926, issue, p. 25.

Knowledge of each other in Heaven.

Will you kindly say if there is anything in Scripture to show that we shall know our loved ones and friends in heaven ; and shall we feel the absence of loved ones not there ?—M.

NATURAL relationships cease when the natural life comes to an end, and there is no Scripture that indicates that these relationships will be resumed. The Lord's answer to the Sadducees teaches us the opposite (Matthew 22. 23, 33). But that same answer shows that we shall not lose our identity when we pass into the next life. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will be the same persons there as they were here and will be known as such. Paul speaks of the Thessalonian believers being his crown of rejoicing in the presence of Jesus Christ at His coming (1 Thess. 2. 19) ; plainly he will know them then, he will know them and rejoice in them as the fruit of his labour for the Lord in Thessalonica. We conclude from these two Scriptures, and others that could be cited, that we shall know each other in heaven, but it will be according to spiritual relationships and not natural. A mother who has prayed and laboured to bring her children to Christ, and to train them in the nurture and admonition of

the Lord, will see them there as the fruit of her labour, and they will be there as her crown and rejoicing in that sense. And whoever has laboured for the blessing of others and for God's glory will meet the results again there.

Natural relationships give a blessed opportunity of developing the spiritual relationships in which grace has set us. Husbands and wives, parents and children may have communion together in the things of the Lord, and be the means of edifying each other, and all this that is of the Spirit of God will abide, when what is natural decays and dies. So that these relationships ought to be prized and cherished not only because they are ours as God's good gifts to us, but also for this opportunity that they give us of knowing each other in eternal bonds. As to feeling the absence of loved ones in heaven, Scripture, as far as we know, is silent on this side of things, hence we say nothing.

MY SAVIOUR.

(CLARA C. ATWOOD.)

FOR evermore the Same—yet not the same to me !
 Each day new glories burst upon my view,
 I find new cause to love Thee : new notes of praise
 Rise up within me, thrill me through and through,
 And cast me, speechless, at Thy blessed feet !

Yet, as I lie there, rapt, in sweet amaze,
 The joy of loving Thee, a living flame,
 Burns down my bars of silence, too frail this frame
 To cage within its narrow bounds such joy,
 My heart leaps forth to Thee in grateful song.

BUT, Oh ! Thou bounteous Giver of all good.
 Thou art of all Thy gifts Thyself the crown
 Give what Thou canst, *without Thee* we are poor,
 And *with Thee* rich, take what Thou wilt away.

JESUS SHOWING HIMSELF.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

An Address delivered on March 10, 1926, at Windsor, Ontario, Canada.

John 20. 11-31; John 21. 1-14.

JOHN'S Gospel gives to us the resurrection and the results of the resurrection on the very highest possible plane. In each Gospel we see that side of resurrection truth that is in keeping with the character of the Gospel, but John sets the disciples, and us, for they represented the whole Christian company, in an association with Christ, as risen, that the other writers do not give us. It has often been pointed out that on these three occasions in which the Lord showed Himself to His disciples, we have first, a pattern of the assembly—truth specially applicable to the present period of time; then Israel gathered and blessed, as typified in the interview with Thomas; then the gathering of the nations, as seen in the great draught of fishes. I do not for a moment question that that is so, but that is not my line of thought to-night. What I want to press is the way in which Jesus showed Himself to His disciples. It is HIMSELF that I want to bring before you, in the incomparable grace that He manifested here.

In the first instance given to us, we have the Lord Himself in what I might call the most intimate circle—His own circle—the circle of His saints *gathered together*. His disciples ought to have remembered His word, that on the third day He would rise again from the dead, and they ought to have been assembled outside of the sepulchre to greet Him with songs of triumph, as the Victor from the dead. But their faith had all but failed, and their hopes they thought had been blasted, and they were filled with despair. They

were not there, and the Lord had to spend a very busy day seeking them out and restoring their faith and souls in order to gather them together. There was Mary. He had, first of all, to drive the sorrow from her loving, broken heart, to show her that there was no cause for tears, but every cause for laughter and triumph. There was poor, burdened, conscience-stricken Peter. The Lord thought of back-sliding Peter, He knew the shame and sorrow that filled him, and graciously He sought him, for He loved him, and He did not want him to be an absentee at the evening's meeting. There were those two who, disconsolate and discouraged, were returning to their home in Emmaus. The Lord took that long journey with them to bring them back to Jerusalem. What a busy day He spent in His loving service! Think of those nail-pierced feet following those wandering disciples until He reached them, and then think of Him speaking to them with such tenderness and patience, coming down to their ignorance and unbelief to remove it all and to make their heavy hearts to burn. The Lord laboured that day for His own; they were His great thought, and His labour was not in vain, they were ready in the evening, and in the evening when they were ready, He was there with them. Think of Him showing Himself like that to His disciples: and in showing Himself to them He is showing Himself to us, so that we might know what kind of a Saviour and Lord we have. Do not we dishonour and grieve Him many times by doubting Him? Then we often continue to grieve Him by thinking that our failure is too great for His grace.

They were gathered together in the evening of the day. He had made Mary His messenger. To her He revealed what up to that point had not been revealed to anyone else. He found her without the sepulchre weeping, distressed and desolated at His absence, and to that affectionate heart Jesus revealed Himself. Then He imparted to her the most wonderful message that mortal lips ever carried : "Go unto My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God."

We do not get this in the other Gospels. It is the great revelation that John gives us. The Lord had said before His death : "I have a baptism to be baptized with ; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished ?" There were great things in His heart, but He could not speak of these things until after His death. But now that death had taken place, and resurrection was a fact, He keeps nothing back, He makes haste to tell all that is in His heart. "Except a corn of wheat fall to the ground and die, it abideth alone," He had said. If He had not died, He would have been alone for ever—alone as the Object of the Father's love—alone in His Father's bosom. He would have had no companions to share that eternal favour and love with Him. But in resurrection He has brought forth many grains—much fruit. The disciples were the beginning. You and I have come into it. He addresses us and says, "My brethren." That does not mean that He has come down to our level. But that He has brought us up to His. Let no one of us call Him "elder Brother." The only one who is spoken of as "elder brother" in Scripture is the disgruntled and graceless son of Luke 15. We bow down before Him and say, "My Lord and my God," and

yet, matchless grace, He is not ashamed to call us "brethren." That is because He has lifted us up to His level and given us His own life and nature. You, young Christian, you have the same life and nature as Christ, the risen Christ ; He has imparted this to you. The flesh is still within you. Sin is still within you. But you have got that which neither sin nor death can touch. You have got that which is eternal, for eternal life is yours ; it is the life of the risen Christ. This never could have been if He had not borne all the judgment that your old sinful life deserved. It passed under God's unsparing judgment when Jesus died that you might be united to Him in this new life. He looks upon us with infinite tenderness—with infinite love—and He says, "My brethren." That means that His Father is our Father, that His God is our God, as He said, "I ascend to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God." This is different from that which we get in Matthew's Gospel, "Our Father which art in Heaven." There "our Father" had to do with our needs in this world. He is caring for us in our earthly circumstances, numbering the very hairs of our head.

But this is something else. It is not a Father's care that is in question. Here no question of need arises, but we are brought into the very relationship with God in which His Son stands, to find our heart's full satisfaction there. The love of the Father is upon us, and not only upon us, but He would have it to be *in us*—that it might be the deep and continuous experience of our hearts. This wonderful message gathered the disciples together, and there they were in that upper room ; the doors shut for fear of the Jews. Despised people they were — "the things that are not." But to them

Jesus comes, He Himself stands in the midst. And being there He gives to that company His own dignity. The glory had left the Temple, that magnificent structure was of no account in Heaven's eyes; instead the glory was there in the midst of those Galilean fishermen, they were the companions of the Son of God, and though the world did not see it, those simple fishermen gathered there in the presence of the Lord were greater in the eyes of Heaven than the angels. They were His companions, *His brethren*. It is upon this plane that the assembly of God stands. When we come together in the truth of the assembly, we do not come as saved sinners exactly, but we come as the brethren of Christ.

What matchless grace, what incomparable love is here—Christ in the midst of His brethren! His love cannot endure any distance; He wants His loved ones near to Him. The story of Joseph and his brethren illustrates it. Often it has moved our hearts. He said to his brethren, "Come near unto me." So the Lord stretches out His hands to us as His brethren, and He says, "Come near unto Me." And when they came near, Joseph kissed all his brethren, and wept over them. He had no favourites. He treated them all alike. He kissed all his brethren. Then they talked with Him. It seems to me that when we come together and take the Lord's supper together the Lord puts anew the kiss of His love upon us, and makes us thoroughly at home with Him, and we are able to talk with Him. Oh, blessed, wonderful privilege!

He said, "Peace be unto you." It was His first word to them. God is not the author of confusion. He is the Author of Peace. If every eye is fixed upon Christ, there will not be discord, but peace. Where the presence of

Christ is realized, and His supremacy in the midst acknowledged, there will be peace. I would like to press this upon you. He came into the world and the world would not have Him, and Israel rejected His rightful claims as King. He was cast out—cast out of Jerusalem, which was His own city. His rights were utterly denied, but in resurrection life He comes into His own circle. There was a spot where He could be supreme—where His rights were acknowledged. The assembly of God is the place where the rights of Christ are recognized and maintained. If you will show me a company of saints that maintains the rights of Christ, I will show you a company that in character is the assembly of God. The assembly is the spot where His rights are maintained—a circle where He can do exactly as He pleases.

No man saith "Lord" truly except by the Spirit of God. "Then were the disciples glad when they saw *the Lord*," we read. It does not say, "When they saw Jesus." Of course the Lord is Jesus, and Jesus is the Lord, but they were glad when they saw *the Lord*. They recognized His supremacy, and yielded a complete allegiance to Him. Do we recognize His supremacy, not merely in our individual lives, but when we gather together? He is not said to be Lord of His assembly. He is Head of it, but He is Lord *in* it as 1st Corinthians shows us. I have heard of people talking of their right to do this and that in the meetings, their right to take the Supper, to minister, to do what they please and be there when they please; as though the assembly were a great democracy where every man could do that which is right in his own eyes, or where the will of the majority rules. It is not so. It is an autocracy. One mind alone must guide and govern there, and that mind the

mind of the Lord. If you talk about your rights in the assembly, you do not know the first thing about it. No one has any rights in the assembly but Christ Himself. Every heart must be subject to Him, and there can be no practical unity in the truth apart from that, no fellowship according to God. There will be unity in heaven, but why? J. N. D.'s beautiful hymn explains it:

"Every knee to Jesus bending,
All the mind in heaven is one."

And in that company of saints, wherever they are, where every knee bends to Jesus, there is one mind now, and that is not the mind of this leading brother or of that influential lady; it is the mind of Christ.

But how did these disciples know it was the Lord? He showed Himself to them. But how? He showed them His hands and His side. That was how they knew Him. He revealed Himself to them in His love, His wonderful love. He had suffered for them, and He bore in His body the marks of His suffering. That was how they knew Him. He exercises His supremacy in the assembly in perfect love. What is it that gives Him the right to be supreme in the midst of His saints? Those pierced hands and the wounded side! He has the right, of course, to be supreme everywhere, for He is the eternal God, but it is those wounded hands and that pierced side that give Him supremacy in His church beyond all question. He is supreme in His love. Did He not say to His disciples, the one who serves most is the one who loves most, and he is the greatest? Ah, He has served us even unto death, and His suffering and self-sacrificing love gives Him the supreme place. You may be sure that on that resurrection day, Peter was not looking to John,

or John to Peter. Every eye was looking at the Lord, and the disciples were glad, not when they saw Peter restored, but when they saw the *Lord*. None of them would want to be greater than the other that day. He alone would be great in their eyes.

I pass on to the next showing. Thomas was not with the disciples on the first Lord's Day, but when they came together again, he came with them, but it was with a very unbelieving heart. How will the Lord bring that stubborn, faithless disciple into a right frame of mind? He brings him into contact with His wounded body: "Come hither, Thomas," He says; "reach hither thy hand. Behold the wounds in My hands. Thrust thy hand into My side, and be not faithless but believing." It was as though He said, "Those wounds were for you. Come near to them, Thomas, see what My love has done for you. Do not doubt Me. Do not stand coldly by with heart of stone. I want you near to Me to know what I have suffered for you. Be not faithless but believing." Oh, this has something to say, surely, to each individual heart. If you have become cold—if Divine things have lost their lustre and reality to you—if a distance has come in between you and the Lord, and if you are not as warm as you used to be, what do you need? You need to come afresh into the realization of what Jesus suffered for you. You need to reach forth your hand afresh and be brought again into contact with His wounded hands and His side. Say, "The Son of God loved *me* and gave Himself for *me*," and it will bring you where it brought Thomas—prostrate on his face at his Master's feet. It will make you cry as he cried, "My Lord and my God!" The Lord bring Himself before every one of us in this tender, blessed way, and show us

again the story of His love written upon His blessed body—written in the wounds that He still bears and that He endured for our sakes.

Then we have the third time that He showed Himself, and "*on this wise showed He Himself to them.*" Take notice, that the Spirit of God very specially emphasizes this. The disciples went out fishing without any direction from Him, and they toiled all through those long, weary hours, and caught nothing, and when morning began to dawn, Jesus Himself stood upon the shore, and He speaks to them. His gracious voice sounds in their ears. He says, "Children, have you any meat?" "Children!" What does that mean? It meant that He cared for them. Children are dependent upon someone else. Children do not provide their own breakfast, it is there for them when they awake. "Children," He said, "have you any meat?" They said, "No." He said, "Cast the net on the right side of the ship," and the disciple whom Jesus loved said, "It is the Lord." They come ashore, awed and abashed. And to their astonishment they find a fire there, a fire lighted by His own hands, and bread and fishes laid thereon, all ready for them. This is how He showed Himself to them. He knew they were cold, so He lighted a fire. He knew they were hungry, so He prepared them a breakfast. He knew they were timid, so He invited them to come and dine. It was as though He said to them, "Why do you doubt Me? I am just what I used to be." Many and many a time He had prepared their breakfast before His death. He arose a great while before it was day to meet their needs, and when they arose, their breakfast was ready for them, for He was among them as their Servant (Luke 22.). It was as though He said, "My heart is

just the same. I have just the same care for you as ever I had. Death and resurrection have not changed Me." And He showed Himself thus that we might see and know Him. He is the same to us, to you, burdened and troubled believer. Why do you doubt Him? He knows your needs. He knows all the difficulties of the way. Every trial He is acquainted with, and He shows Himself on this wise to you. He is equal to every difficulty. He is alive to every need. Arising up a great while before it is day, He is prepared for your need when it arises. He is up before you, and if you got up hours before you usually do, He would be there! And if your needs began with your waking moment, and were ten thousand times greater than they are, there would still be the grace to meet them. Your need will never get ahead of the Lord and His grace. How blessed it is to see the risen Lord, the Conqueror of death, showing Himself on this wise to His disciples, so that they might henceforth trust Him! That they might say to one another: "These are great difficulties, in which we are, but we must not doubt Him. Do you remember how He lighted the fire, prepared the bread and fish, so that we might be warmed and fed? Do you remember the tender way in which He invited us to sit down, and then served us, our risen Lord? Served us with the pierced hands—gave us the bread and fish, and was our Servant in resurrection just as He was before He died?"

Oh, the Lord grant that, as He shows Himself to us, our hearts may be awakened; that we may be alert; that our eyes may see; that our hearts may adore Him; that we may never doubt Him, but that He may be everything to us! The Lord grant it for His Name's sake.

PRACTICAL PAPERS. No. 7.—Faith.

(A. J. POLLOCK.)

THERE are 'two senses in which the word 'faith' is used in the Holy Scriptures.

1. *As designating all the truths which we connect with Christianity, and which are intended in their collective bearing to set the believer in relation to it and to form him in accordance with it.*

2. *That quality which enables the soul to accept the Divine revelation, especially in accepting Christ as a personal Saviour and entering into definite relation with Him.*

One or two Scriptures will serve to illustrate the former meaning :

"One Lord, *one faith*, one baptism " (Eph. 4. 5).

"Stand fast in *the faith* " (1 Cor. 16. 13).

"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in *the faith* " (2 Cor. 13. 5).

"Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in *the faith* " (Titus 1. 13).

"Thou holdest fast My Name, and hast not denied *My faith* " (Rev. 2. 13).

The use of faith in this sense shows how necessary it is for the believer to study the Word of God, and not allow any part of the Christian faith to be a dead letter, but to receive it in all its parts, and to be exercised about the practice corresponding to it. If this were so, what a difference it would make to many of us.

There are certain great lines to consider in connection with the faith.

There is, to begin with, the truth as to what the atoning death of Christ has effected for the believer in the way of meeting his deep need as a sinner.

We read, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins " (1 John 4. 10).

Secondly, there is the deeper question of our state. Not only have sins been atoned for at the Cross, but sin—the root—has been judged and condemned. "God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh " (Rom. 8. 3). Running all through the Epistles we get this line, pre-eminently in Romans and Galatians, but seen in Colossians, where it speaks of "the circumcision made without hands " and being buried "with Him (Christ) in baptism."

This line is of the utmost importance, for until the believer walks in the judgment of the flesh and the recognition of the new creation line of things, he is not able to take up rightly what we call church truth. How can I walk rightly towards others until I have a right judgment of sin in its nature, and how God is working on new lines altogether in Christ, and applying these things to myself ?

Thirdly, there is dispensational truth, without which the believer will never clearly see the distinctive place of the church, nor his place as separate from this world.

Fourthly, there is the truth as to the church, without which we shall never see our right relation to Christ in glory, the great Head of the church, His body, and necessarily our right relation to our fellow-believers.

Allied with this are practical teachings as to the house of God and the assembly.

Then we have the grand truth as to the Lord's coming for and with His

saints, the believer's association with Christ in His coming reign, the judgment seat of Christ determining the place of reward each believer shall have, and finally we have the truth concerning the great white throne, and the blissful eternal state for the believer—the ending up of this world's history.

This is but a very fragmentary sketch of *the* faith. The believer can fill it in—the priesthood and advocacy of our Lord Jesus Christ and many other things will come to mind.

Nor is it that we learn one truth thoroughly before we begin to learn another. We often learn them all together, and the believer does not wait necessarily till he has advanced to a mature state before he is eligible to have full Christian privileges. Indeed it is in the *inside* place that we learn the most quickly and happily.

May God grant us each exercise that we may be "sound in the faith."

We would now draw attention to faith as a quality, which enables the soul to accept the Divine revelation, and which should be a governing force in the believer's life.

Many people think that Heb. 11. 1 gives us a definition of faith. We read, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," or as another translation renders it, "Now faith is [the] substantiating of things hoped for, [the] conviction of things not seen" (J. N. D.).

It is evident that this is not a definition of faith, but of the effect of faith—that faith makes real to us things hoped for, gives the firm conviction that they shall surely be ours, just as if we already were in possession.

No one can explain the mystery of faith, any more than the mystery of life, or light, or love, or a thousand

and one things. God brings these things into existence, and alone knows their secret. Those of us who have faith can mark its effects, its powers, what it feeds upon, what it aspires to, but as to the thing itself, no one knows. No one knows the secret of life, yet we live and enjoy life. So with faith.

We are told it is the gift of God, as everything that is worth having is. "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2. 8).

That it is a necessity is very evident, for we read, "Without faith it is impossible to please Him [God]" (Heb. 11. 6).

Faith is mentioned 37 times in Romans, and 22 times in Galatians, and 31 times in Hebrews, besides about 150 times in the rest of the New Testament—so important is the subject. We read, "Faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom. 10. 17).

Hearing is by the Word of God—the Word of God is the only Book that brings a positive revelation of God and His truth, and hearing comes by it, not merely the physical act of responding to sounds, to articulate speech, but the *real* hearing of the Word, the receiving of it into the soul. And if hearing is by the Word of God, faith comes by hearing—that mysterious something that gives a link of the soul with God, that sets the soul at a different angle and in different relation to everything it was formerly in relation to.

What a wonderful thing faith is! But one verse (Gen. 1. 1) gives us the original creation of the universe; two short chapters its reconstruction when *cosmos* was evolved out of chaos, and the central place that man has in it all; but no less than fifteen chapters

are more or less taken up with the history of one man—Abraham, and he stands pre-eminently as the prototype of faith.

Hebrews 11. is the art gallery of faith, in which the great "cloud of witnesses" exhibit by their lives faith in different ways, leading us in chapter 12. to the contemplation of Him who is "the Author and Finisher of . . . faith" (verse 1), and thus, looking unto Him, and encouraged by the review of the faith-worthies of the Old Testament, the believer to-day is encouraged to run the race of faith with patience.

First there is faith as to 'God—"through faith we understand that the worlds [the *æons*] were framed by the Word of God." It is not merely the assent that there must be a Supreme Being, but definite faith in God, for the worlds were framed by His Word.

Then we have Abel's faith—typical of faith in Christ and His atoning death, faith lying at the very threshold of our Christian life.

Next Enoch comes in review—typical doubtless of the rapture of the Church. Abel gives us the first expression of faith as to the start of the Christian life, Enoch gives us the end, even the coming of the Lord, for he was translated, even as the church will be one day and that, we believe, soon.

How these two expressions of faith must govern the life, where they are found.

Noah prepared the ark—surely a condemnation of the scene in which he found himself, and a witness to the

approaching doom that hung over the world. Faith in this respect is the antitype of the faith that must walk apart from a doomed world, whose every principle is the negation of God and His truth, and whose greatest crime was the murder of the Son of God.

This leads necessarily to Abraham—the sojourner in a strange land, the pilgrim. Faith in that land to which the Christian belongs must ever make him a stranger in this world and a pilgrim bound for the heavenly country, as 1 Peter 2. 11 describes the Christian.

Finally, we have Sara, whose faith was exercised in the birth of Isaac, an event outside the power of nature, but which lay in the faithfulness of Him who promised. Miracle lies at the bottom of everything for the Christian, and we see it in the antitype of Isaac—even our Lord Jesus Christ, begotten of a virgin at the beginning of His life and raised from the dead at the end of it. Here we get the soil into which faith can push its strong roots, and so well rooted can spring up and bear the fairest flowers to be seen in human life.

We may well ask, "And what shall I more say? for the time would fail to tell of Gedeon and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets" (Heb. 11. 32). The theme is indeed inexhaustible. Perhaps enough has been written to excite the reader to study this entrancing theme.

Remember, "Without faith it is impossible to please Him [God]."

"I heard the Voice of Jesus say: 'My yoke and burden share,
Easy the burden I endure and light the yoke I wear.'
I follow Jesus, and I find His Father's will the best,
And, now, in yielding to that will my soul has perfect rest."

J. S. W.

TO OPEN-AIR PREACHERS.

THE gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation; then let us preach it. Preacher, stick to your preaching. In the great day, when the muster-roll shall be read, those that have been converted through fine music, and church decoration, and religious entertainments, and exhibitions will amount to the tenth part of nothing; but the gospel of Christ shall then be seen to have been the mighty instrument in the salvation of those mighty throngs that shall fill the glory of God with their endless praise. Keep to your preaching; let nothing throw the gospel into the background. In the first place preach the gospel, in the second place preach the gospel, and in the third place preach the gospel—"the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."

We are aiming at a miracle—it is well to settle that at the commencement. We are sent to say to blind eyes, "See"; to deaf ears, "Hear"; to dead hearts "Live"; and even to Lazarus, rotting in that grave, wherein by this time he stinketh, "Lazarus, come forth." Dare we do this? We shall be wise to begin with the conviction that we are utterly powerless for this unless our Master has sent us and is with us. But if He that sent us is with us, all things are possible to him that believeth.

O preacher, if thou art about to stand up to show what thou canst do, it will be thy wisdom to sit down speedily; but if thou standest up to show what thine Almighty Lord and Master can do through thee, then infinite possi-

bilities lie about thee. There is no bound to what GOD can accomplish if He is allowed to work by thy heart and voice.

It is the duty of the gospel-preacher to say: "I might be able to say that very prettily, but then if I did the hearers might get occupied with the way I said it. I will therefore so say it that they will only observe the intrinsic value of the truth that I would teach them." Mere oratory will only create sham and shame in the long-run. It is not our way of putting the gospel, nor our method of illustrating it which wins souls; the gospel itself does the work in the hands of the Holy Ghost. If the turning of a soul be a miracle, God must do it; it is not to be accomplished by our reasoning, or persuasion, or threatening; it can only come from the Lord.

Yet be in earnest; let the fire burn in your soul, let the fire of love for souls be kindled and fanned in the presence of God; and then speak to men as one who knows and feels the power of the things he preaches. If you are not in earnest you had better go to bed than stand up in the street to speak for Christ, for it is better that you should sleep alone than make others to sleep the sleep of indifference by your sing-song lukewarmness.

Learn to talk privately with people. Every true-hearted open-air preacher will keep his eyes open for those who are affected by the word, and it is the quiet talk afterwards that often drives the nail home.

Go on; go on; go on.

"Delight thyself in the Lord, and He shall give thee the desires of thy heart" (Ps. 37. 4). Note thy part and God's part. Do thou "delight," and He will "give." The one who delights in the Lord will have one mind with Him. The Lord's desires and his will be the same.

"IN THE BEGINNING GOD CREATED." Gen. 1. 1.

Readings: Psalm 19.; Col. 1. 9-19.

(SAMUEL LEVERMORE.)

HERE, in the opening sentence of the Bible, are the pillars of Hercules through which we pass from time with all its changes into eternity—a shoreless, changeless sea.

Here are the frontiers of human exploration, beyond which rolls and surges the illimitable ocean of Deity, self-existent and blessed for ever.

"IN THE BEGINNING."—All creatures and all matter had a beginning, God only was from everlasting. "From everlasting to everlasting Thou art God" (Psalm 90. 2). The Bible never argues the existence of God: if any man denies it, it calls him a fool and passes on. The first utterance of the Bible decides that matter is not eternal and *rules out the stupid heresy of evolution.*

The early verses of Gen. 1, and of John 1., respectively agree in substance and may be taken as God's index to His Bible; compare them.

Creation—desolation—preparation—illumination—separation—denomination. With Gen. 1. 1, Heb. 11. 3, and Rom. 1. 20, before us it is positive rebellion to talk of evolution.

There are three beginnings in Gen. 1. In verse 1 the beginning of the material creation, in verse 21 of the animal creation, and in verse 27 of man. One word only is used for each of these beginnings, i.e., "Bara," to which we shall specially refer later. The other two words are "Asah" (to make out of existing material) and "Yatsah" (to fashion, or form, as the potter the clay). All three are used in Psalm 43. 7.

Psalm 19. gives us two books, that of nature and that of grace. We can read the book of nature in the light of

the book of grace. "In Thy light we shall see light" (Psalm 36.). Thus we have light before the sun, (cf. Mal. 4. 2), we can only see the Sun of righteousness in the light of revelation.

"GOD": Postulate God and all is simple. Here we have a plural noun with a singular verb. This is what men call a grammatical anomaly. But that which is foolishness with men is wisdom with God. Some have wondered why the Christ should have so much place in creation in the New Testament and not be mentioned here, but the name Elohim* explains it and lets in Prov. 8.; John 1.; Col. 1.; Heb. 1.; 1 Cor. 15. 28. In chapter 2. we have "Jehovah Elohim," the covenant name. This is He of the wonderful Theophanies of the Old Testament and is mentioned eleven times in chapter 11. He appeared as man before He became man. It is God in relation with man.

RABINOWITCH on Zech. 12. 10, speaking of the controversy which has ever raged over the "whom" and how they will not admit the possibility of Jehovah being pierced, cries: "Imagine my astonishment and awe when I opened to Rev. 1. 7, 8, and read Zechariah's quotation there. The glorified Lord Himself saying: 'I am the Alpha and Omega, the Aleph and Tav—the "El Shaddai," the Almighty. The subject matter of all Scripture—the Controller of all history.' Taught

* NOTE.—Elohim is the plural of Eloah and is used 2300 times in Scripture and about thirty-five times in Genesis 1. The holy name "God" used thirty-five times in accounts of creation are like thirty-five red-hot cannon balls between the eyes of evolution. Before them, like Goliath, it falls to the ground. Only Christ, who is the beginning, could give Nicodemus a new beginning (John 3.).

by the Spirit, I find the Living and Written Word inseparable. In Heb. 4. 12, 13, we get the impersonal written word subtly merged into the personal 'His' and 'Him'. Thus instructed I open the Bible, and as I roam through its pages I keep exclaiming, *ECCE HOMO . . . Behold the Man.*'

Thus in Gen. 11. 7. God takes His stand by man and never leaves him until each member of the human race is either quickened or judged. John 5. 21-29; 12. 31, 33. Christ the beginning and the ending. In John 14. 6, His own distinctive tri-unity—Way—Truth—Life. Without the way there is no *going*, without the truth there is no *knowing*, and without the Life there is no *Living*.

In the beginning "GOD."

Thus our text excludes *ATHEISM* by the fact of God;

PANTHEISM by the distinction between Creator and Creation;

MATERIALISM by creative force at back of everything; and

POLYTHEISM by proclaiming One God in Three Persons.

"CREATED" solemn word "*Bara*" (Heb.). The *only* word, saith the Rabbi Nachman, which expresses the creating of something out of nothing. There is no spontaneous generation—*Omne vivum ex vivo*—all life proceeds from life. My business is not with *COSMOGONY* (the origin of the Universe) nor with *BIOGENESIS* (the origin of life), for these present no difficulty to the sons of light. They have no need of spade, telescope or museum. Noahic or Babylonish tablets neither establish nor destroy their faith. The Bible was not written for geologists or astronomers, but for faith. I agree with *Luther* when he says: "No man sees one iota of Scripture but he that hath the Spirit of God." And *C. H. M.*: "None

but an infidel would seek an argument in proof of the Being of One, who by His own mouth called worlds into existence, and declared Himself the Everlasting God." Thus this phrase is, and must ever be, the doorway of entrance into the knowledge of God. It is the supreme test: pass this and all the rest is easy. It is *Abrahamic faith*. Note the great features of his faith, all duly recorded by the Spirit in the New Testament:—

1. He went out, not knowing WHERE; Heb. 11. 8.

2. He believed God would give him a seed, not knowing HOW; Rom. 4. 3, 17.

3. He believed the promise of inheritance—Gen. 15. 7; Acts 7. 5; not knowing WHEN.

4. He was willing to offer his son; not knowing God's purpose THEN.

Now (Rom. 4. 17) Abraham is the father of us all—i.e., of all who are born again—of all the seed—of all who have the faith of God's elect. Titus 1. 1. These believe not by *investigation* but by revelation. Rom. 4. 16; 8. 8; 2 Peter 1. 1; Eph. 11. 8; Heb. 11. 3, 6.

A DIVINE SYLLOGISM. Heb. 11. 6. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." Rom. 8. 8. They that are in the flesh *cannot* please God; therefore they have not faith and cannot please God. For this faith in the first place "comes" by hearing (Rom. 10. 17); therefore if it cometh to us it is because we had it not. Further this faith cometh by revelation (Matt. 11. 27; 16. 17; Gal. 1. 15). The outward "hearing" must be accompanied by the inward *revelation*. Where human reason ends faith begins—*Revelation is the grave of rationalism.*

"Should all the forms that men devise
Assail my faith with treacherous art;
I'd call them vanity and lies,
And bind Thy gospel to my heart."

Did we require internal evidence of the truth of God's word we have an abundance. Take for example :—

THE HEBREW LANGUAGE is written from right to left. From God's right hand where He doth work is man's departure. Then the Greek language of the New Testament takes him up, a prodigal son, at the remotest distance from God, and brings him back from left to right again. Again, in all occidental languages the verb is conjugated from first person to third. "I," "thou," "he," but the Hebrew is a reversal of human thought, and is conjugated from the third down and back to the first. "He," "thou," "I."

Beginning first with *God*—then my *neighbour*—then *myself*; self-obliterating and beautiful. It is (Phil. 2.) anticipated.

Glance at *God's gospel seen in the names of ten Patriarchs.*

Adam	-	Man in God's image
Seth	-	Substituted
Enos	-	Man in misery
Cainan	-	Lamenting
Mahalaleel	-	The Blessed God
Jared	-	Came down
Enoch	-	Teaching
Methuselah	-	His death will bring
Lamech	-	To the weary
Noah	-	Rest

SEALED BY THE HOLY GHOST.

BECAUSE of the value of Christ's work the Holy Ghost seals and indwells every believer (Eph. 1. 14; 4. 30). In the Old Testament the oil was put upon the blood at the cleansing of the leper—the oil typical of the Holy Spirit—showing us in picture that the blood-redeemed sinner is anointed and sealed and taken possession of by the Holy Ghost.

There has been of late a serious effort to connect the sealing of the Spirit with an advanced Christian experience, or with some great surrender on the part of the one sealed—an exceedingly pernicious error, for it shifts the basis of this priceless gift from God from the infinite value of the sacrifice of Christ to something we do or is done in us, and leads to self-occupation or Pharisaical pride, and robs the heart of its true appreciation of what it owes to Christ.

The truth is, that when our faith lays hold upon Christ, the once crucified but now risen Saviour, who accomplished everything for us by His death, we are sealed by the Holy Ghost. We may have a feeble sense of the immen-

sity of this fact and its consequences, but there it is. And the Lord would use it as a mighty lever by which to raise us out of a life of self-pleasing to live unto God. He did so use it in the case of the Corinthian Christians. They had not advanced at all, they were stunted babes, irritable, rickety children in a Spiritual sense; carnal, selfish, proud, but to them came the word. "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor. 6. 19, 20).

The Holy Ghost would do wonderful things for us if we did not hinder and grieve Him. He would make us practically free from the lust of the flesh (Galatians 5. 6), and would give us the abiding consciousness that we are the objects of God's love (Romans 5. 5; 8. 14-16). The result would be that we should walk every day and all day long in liberty and joy as the sons of God.

NOTES ON GALATIANS. Chapter 6.

(F. B. HOLE.)

WONDERFUL as is all the truth of an experimental and practical nature unfolded in chapter 5., someone might at once say, "But, Paul, you set before us a very exalted life. we are sure to fail in it." The apostle himself recognizes this and so chapter 6. opens with instructions which have failure in view.

The Scriptures never suppose that a Christian is under the power of sin, but the very reverse. The Apostle Paul elsewhere asks, "Shall we *continue* in sin . . . ? God forbid" (Rom. 6. 1, 2). The Apostle John asserts, "Who-soever is born of God doth not commit sin" (1 John 3. 9). The word translated "commit" has the force of "practise"—he does not practise sin,—it is not a habit with him. It is supposed, however, that a Christian may be *overtaken* in sin, as the first verse of our chapter shows. The flesh is still in the believer, and if prayerfulness and watchfulness are relaxed it will break out into open sin.

Now when such a thing occurs, what is to be the attitude of others? Do not let us miss the connection between the last verse or two of chapter 5. and the first of chapter 6. If the flesh is working in others, they, desirous of vain glory, will simply provoke the flesh yet more in the offending brother. If, on the other hand, there are those who are spiritual; that is, those who in their thoughts and affections, and consequently in their judgments and behaviour, are governed by the Spirit of God and not by the flesh—those who are "walking in the Spirit," then these should restore such an one in the spirit of meekness. They may well be meek in the remembrance of their own liability to temptation. In thus humbly getting down alongside the erring brother and bearing his failure on their

hearts they would be fulfilling the law of Christ, which is *love*.

If, on the other hand, instead of acting in meekness a man fancies himself to be *something*, he is sure to be *nothing* and self-deceived. Rather let him test himself and his own work and thus discover his own true value before God, for each must shoulder the burden of his own responsibility. There is no contradiction between verses 2 and 5.

Verses 6 to 13 are occupied with a fresh subject. The believers who receive instruction in the Word of God should remember the temporal necessities of those who devote their time to instructing them. Receiving spiritual things they are to reciprocate in all good things of a temporal sort, and they are not to be weary in so doing, for in due season they will reap the reward of their giving. Further, such giving should be extended towards all men, as opportunity serves; though those of the household of faith have the first claim.

Now it is in connection with this simple and everyday matter that the important principles contained in verses 7 and 8 are enunciated. The apostle knew that such is the natural selfishness of our hearts that nothing would prevail but weighty considerations, which, acting like a powerful lever, would lift us out of a niggardly spirit. We may think we see a dozen good reasons why we cannot or need not give, and thus deceive ourselves, but the law stands that as a man sows he reaps. As a matter of fact he reaps both in kind and in quantity.

That we reap in quantity as we sow 2 Corinthians 9. 6 states, whereas this scripture emphasizes the former consideration. If we "sow to the flesh," that is, indulge the desires of the flesh

and follow its bent and cater for its gratification, we reap its corruption. If we "sow to the Spirit," that is, yield to all those thoughts and desires of which the Spirit of God within us is the source, we reap life everlasting.

Everlasting life, be it remembered, does not only mean a new life within us of which God is the source, and the duration of which is eternal, but it also covers all those blessed relationships, all that communion, and all those joys in which the life expands and expresses itself. If it did only mean the new life within us which we possess as born again, then indeed we might quote this passage to prove that we gain new birth as the result of something which we can do. Rather the life is ours by the gift of God, and we reap the enjoyment of the relationships and communion, which is the life according to this verse, as we sow to the Spirit who is the energizing power of life. It is life in the practical and experimental sense, the sense in which men use the word when they talk of "seeing life" in the world.

This verse then gives us the secret of spiritual prosperity. To gratify the flesh and deny the Spirit is the way of corruption; to deny the flesh and to gratify the Spirit is the way by which we lay hold on the things that are life indeed.

With verse 11 we start the closing section of the epistle. The apostle's final word is in the nature of a home-thrust. He unmasks the real motive which swayed the Judaizing teachers in their opposition. It was not that they were genuinely concerned about obedience to the law, for they themselves did not keep it (verse 13). It was rather that they desired to escape the persecution connected with the cross of Christ, and they desired to glory in flesh. The apostle follows

this exposure by the boldest possible declaration of his own position. For himself the Cross stood as the great line of demarcation between him and the world. Crucifixion was a death of penal judgment and of shame, and by Christ and His Cross the world had died a judicial death of shame in his eyes, and He had died a judicial death of shame in its eyes. The world and Paul mutually reprobated each other. Both were to each other a dead and worthless thing. Mutually they took leave of each other without regrets, glad to be rid of bad rubbish.

The "world" in this verse of course signifies the world system, and not the people in the world as in John 3. 16. But let us pause and ask ourselves whether we are of one mind with Paul in this matter. Is the world experimentally and practically crucified to us and we to it? Or are we finding a part, if not the whole, of our life and enjoyment in the world system, in spite of it being a judged and condemned thing, as John 12. 31 states?

One thing is certain, the world does not count with God. Nor do such things as circumcision and uncircumcision which are outward in the flesh. What does count is "a new creature" or "a new creation." Every true Christian is a part of that new creation as the fruit of God's workmanship (see Eph. 2. 10.) and the great thing is to walk according to that. The Galatians, as we have seen, had been entrapped into looking upon the law of Moses as the rule of their life, and walking as under it. No, says the apostle, the true rule of the believer's life is new creation. We walk, not as servants under a code of rules imposed from without, but as sons of God, a new creation in Christ Jesus, indwelt by the Spirit of God's Son. We walk

according to the principles of that new creation in which we participate.

Upon all such the apostle calls down peace and mercy. These things are indeed their portion. How great the grace that has set us before God in such favour and liberty! He desires also similar blessings upon the true Israel of God's election rather than upon these mischief-makers who had been at work seeking to Judaize the Galatians.

The Epistle ends abruptly. The "marks" or "brands" of the Lord Jesus were on Paul's body, as of old masters branded their slaves. He bore honourable scars in Christ's service, which branded him as His slave beyond all dispute. He could hardly let his affections flow out freely to the Galatians seeing the condition in which they were, but he desired the *grace of the Jesus Christ* to be with their spirit, which would effectually set them free from *the bondage of the law of Moses*.

THE HEART'S LONGING.

"THE more I win Thee, Lord, the more for Thee I pine ;
Ah, such a heart is mine.

"My eyes behold Thee and are filled, and straightway then
Their hunger wakes again.

"My arms have clasped Thee and should set Thee free, but, no,
I cannot let Thee go.

"Lord Jesus Christ, Beloved, tell, O tell me true,
What shall Thy servant do?"

By an Indian Christian Poet.

Let Jesus Christ be Praised.

WHEN morning gilds the skies,
My heart awaking cries :
May Jesus Christ be praised.

Be this, while life is mine,
My canticle Divine :
May Jesus Christ be praised.

When Sleep her balm denies,
My silent spirit cries :
May Jesus Christ be praised.

Be this the eternal song,
Through all the ages long :
May Jesus Christ be praised.

O LORD, no angel for an hour might dream
Of the great riches Thou hast given me—
The glory and the beauty that besem
The heritage of life I have in Thee.
My precious Saviour, mighty God art Thou,
Thy love's a changeless, everlasting NOW.

LIGHT AND LIFE. No. 14.

(JAMES BOYD.)

Meditations on John's Gospel. Chapter 12.

ETERNAL life is the only life that is known in the Father's house on high. This life was promised before the ages of time (Titus 1. 2), has been manifested in the Son down here, and has been given to believers in the Holy Spirit's power: "God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son." Therefore "He that loveth his life [his life here as a living man in connection with this world] shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal." Everything in connection with this world is to be sacrificed in view of the life eternal.

If any one desired to serve Jesus, the way to serve Him was to follow Him. The energy put forth in the doing of something for Christ in that which is often called service has a stimulation that often carries the servant a great deal beyond the power that he may have in the Spirit; but patiently to follow the imperturbable footsteps of the meek and lowly Saviour requires one to have the eye fixed upon Himself, and to walk in continual dependence upon God.

"If any man serve Me, him will My Father honour." How could it be otherwise? The one thought of Jesus when here was the glory of the Father, and surely all that it cost Him to do this is sacred to the heart of the Father. But if for the Son this work meant even the death of the cross, what will not the Father do for the Son's glory? And what will He not do for those who serve that Son of His? And how terrible will the judgment be of those who despise and reject Him!

"Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not

whither he goeth. While ye have the light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light." The light was there. Never in the whole creation had such light previously appeared. Light that revealed the innermost secrets of the human heart was there and then shining for the blessing of the poor creature, who had been wandering in the darkness, and who, alas, loved it. Had they believed in it they would have become children of it. It had the power of producing a generation of God on earth, for the light was the light of life. But it is not only that men did not believe in the light; they hated it. And yet it was the light of Divine love. But it was the light of *holy* love, and it revealed and condemned the thoughts of the natural and corrupt mind of man. And because they were determined to go on in their corrupt ways they rebelled against it. Therefore the light had to be withdrawn.

"These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide Himself from them." Their privileges were now to be taken away from them. "Though He had done so many signs before them, yet they believed not on Him: that the saying of Esaias might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? And to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, and understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them." Now the light was hid from their eyes. One other thing remained for them to do, and that was to quench that light in the blood of His cross; that is, as far as human power

could do it. What a terrible creature man is !

How dreadful a thing it is to contemplate, that the Word that Jesus spoke, which was life everlasting to the one who received it, became to the rejector of it a Word that in the last day would rise up in judgment against him : the Word of life is, through man's obstinacy, turned into a Word of eternal damnation. The rejection of that Word was the rejection of the Father and the Son. Man is not satisfied with his Maker when he sees Him ; the Creator is abhorrent to His creature ! "When we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him." The signs that He wrought fell upon blind eyes. The words that He spoke fell upon deaf ears. Good was met by evil, and love by hatred. In spite of the unspeakable kindness of the heart of God, manifested in a multitude of works of infinite compassion, the heart of man remained obdurate. Henceforth the lips of the Son of God are sealed. He must now await their hour and the power of darkness.

Man's hour was coming, and it was characterized by the power of darkness. The Son of Man is delivered into the hands of men. They could not have taken Him had He not placed Himself unresistingly in their hands. Led by Judas, who was a devil, they come in the night to lone Gethsemane, and there they find Him. And now that they had found Him, how utterly helpless they are in His presence ! "Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon Him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye ? They answered Him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am He. And Judas also which betrayed Him stood with them. As soon then as He had said unto them, I am He, they went

backward, and fell to the ground." In spite of all his wickedness, even when influenced by the dread angel of the Abyss, how utterly weak and cowardly man is ! They have indeed found Him. He acknowledges that He is the Person they seek. But what can they do ? What use to them are their weapons ? They are absolutely powerless in His presence.

But if they cannot take Him He will deliver Himself into their hands, and that for the glory of the Father, and for the sake of His disciples. Again His challenge falls upon their ear : "Whom seek ye ?" And again they say : "Jesus of Nazareth." Had they not found Him ? They had come to arrest Him, and though they had found Him unarmed and apparently defenceless they cannot lay hands on Him. He says to them : "I have told you that I am He. If therefore ye seek Me, let these go their way." He will lose none given to Him of the Father. Blessed Master ! True to the trust reposed in Him ! Faithful unto death !

Here the carnal courage of Peter comes into view, as in that same night his carnal cowardice is also manifested. Who could stand in such a moment as this ? Peter denies Him with oaths and cursing. Pilate is afraid to give a righteous sentence. He condemns the guiltless. Man must display himself. The hatred of his heart to God must be perfectly exposed. The thoughts of many hearts must be revealed. The nation chooses Barabbas. They will have no king but Cæsar. The rulers are afraid He will rise again, and they seal the stone, and set a watch. When they get to know that He is risen, they bribe the watch to say that His disciples stole Him away while they slept. Maddened by their utter discomfiture, incorrigible in their

wickedness, blind as to the consequences of their godless action, and with no fear of God before their eyes, to cover their humiliating defeat they invent a story so impossible that it would not deceive an infant.

In chapters 13.-16. the disciples are assured that though greatly hated and persecuted, they will be very much better off during His absence than they could be while He was with them. In chapter 13. the hour was come when He should depart out of this world, and go to the Father. He had come forth from the Father by the womb of the virgin, and had come into the world; now He must depart out of this world and go back to the Father, but He will go by way of the cross. He will take care, however, that during the time of His absence they shall have part with Him. They had been begotten of God, born by the cleansing efficacy of the Word in the power of the Spirit, so that the Lord could pronounce them "clean every whit."

But if they were born of God, and thus possessors of a new and divine life and nature, there was still in them the flesh, not in the least improved, but as ready as ever to break out in sinful desire and evil overt act. Therefore did they constantly require that which is figuratively set before them in the washing of their feet. They had to pass through a defiling scene, and were liable to pick up that which was morally defiling, and which would hinder their having part with Christ in that holy scene into which He was gone. It has been remarked that Peter by his ready speech often gives occasion for the opening out of truth that might seem rather obscure, and it is so here. He will not at first submit to the Lord taking upon Himself such a menial service as this, and says: "Thou shalt never wash my

feet." Jesus says: "If I wash thee not thou hast no part with Me." Then Peter goes too far; desiring in his ardour to have part with Christ, he says: "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." But this was unnecessary: "Jesus says to him: He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit." The old Adam nature, having received its judgment in the cross of Christ, must be viewed as no part of ourselves, for in our new relationships with God we are only that which grace has made us. We are born of God, and that which is born of Him is certainly every whit clean. But in our complex condition down here in flesh and blood, and therefore part of the old and fallen creation, we have to be taught by the Word of God to distinguish between that which is born of the flesh and that which is born of the Spirit, and walk in the disallowance of any movement of the old nature. When we have learned the incorrigible evil of the flesh, we will be profoundly thankful to God for the deliverance effected for us by means of His work wrought for us in the cross, and for that which He has done in us by His Spirit. In 1 John 4. 4 the statement is made, and that without any qualification: "Ye are of God, little children"; and in chapter 5. 19: "We know that we are of God." That which is born of the flesh, though there, is utterly ignored.

In chapter 14. He is going to the Father, but will come again to take them to be with Himself, that where He is they may for ever be. But He is not going to leave them without protection in a ruthless God-hating world; He will send Someone to take care of them. He will send the Spirit to be with them, never to leave them, and also to dwell in them; and with

the comfort and power of His presence they will be invincible, for "He that is in you is greater than he that is in the world" (1 John 4. 4). The spirit of Antichrist is in the world, the Spirit of Christ in His own, therefore the battle is not a drawn one, but an overwhelming victory for the saints of God: "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them."

On high He has prepared a place for us, and is coming to bring us there. It is now, and during His absence from this world, that we have the privilege of preparing a place for Him. He says: "He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me; and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to

him." But how was He to manifest Himself to His disciple apart from being seen by the world? This is answered in verse 23: "If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him." While this explains Jude's difficulty, the privilege of the obedient disciple is immensely enlarged: the Father and the Son will dwell with the obedient follower of Jesus. What an inestimable privilege is the believer's to have the Father and the Son dwelling with him! This can be realized in the worst state in which the professing church may at any time be found, for the blessing of such a manifestation and presence is entirely individual. Were it not true of another soul on earth it can be true of me.

"The Only-Begotten Son."

WHEN the Spirit of God, by the Apostle John, would affirm the perfect and eternal intimacy and union between the glorious Persons in the Godhead, and the unspeakable and infinite endearment of our Lord to the Father; when He would convey the loftiest possible idea of the majesty of the revelation of the truth; when He would impress upon us a deep sense of the inscrutability of the Divine nature, and the certainty and perfection of the manifestation of God in Christ, He declares, "No man—(*οὐδεὶς*), *nemo*, no being of created mould—hath seen God at any time; the ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, who exists in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" (John 1. 18). When He would exalt to the utmost the glory of the Word in flesh, He styles it "the glory of the ONLY BEGOTTEN with the Father" (John 1. 14). When He would illus-

trate the benevolence of God with highest splendour, He says, "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent His ONLY BEGOTTEN SON into the world, that we might live through Him" (1 John 4. 9).

With a similar purpose is this epithet used by the Lord Himself: "God so loved the world, that He gave His ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3. 16). And, finally, when He would represent unbelief as the last extreme of human guilt, and that which puts a man under the present Divine displeasure He says, "He that believeth not is condemned already, because He hath not believed in the NAME OF THE ONLY BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD" (John 3. 18).

SALVATION AND RECONCILIATION. (H. J. VINE.)

OFTENTIMES when gathered together in assembly character as worshippers in the presence of God, a wonderful sense of His own greatness, and also of the greatness of His salvation, have moved us to sing with glad hearts and with good reason :

“How rich is Thy mercy,
How great Thy salvation !
We bless Thee, we praise Thee !
Amen and Amen.”

We might also continue in our praise-offering to Him—who has not only given us to know His great salvation, but also the marvellous reconciliation secured through the death of His Son—and happily sing :

O God, we delight in Thy love and Thy favour !

For unto Thyself we are reconciled now.
In grace failing never, and for Thy good pleasure :

In deep adoration before Thee we bow.

The Spirit of God makes clear for us in the inspired volume the difference between these two inestimable benefits ; and, in such wise, that the One in and through whom they are made ours, becomes endeared to our rejoicing hearts ; for if the “*salvation* be in Christ Jesus ” (2 Tim. 2. 10), and “*neither is there salvation in any other,*” it is equally true, through Him alone “*we have received the reconciliation*” (Rom. 5. 11, N.T.). In and through the One who came into the world to save sinners—the One who made peace by the Blood of His Cross to reconcile to God—we have both, thanks be to Him for ever and ever !

An illustration might help some to see that which distinguishes the one from the other, and enhance in their souls the sense of the Divine favour which has made each ours. A merchant overtaken by serious losses has got into

distressing financial difficulties. There is one person he knows who could easily aid him, and save him from his trouble, and from ruin. There is a matter, however, which keeps him from turning to his old friend. Some while before, he grievously offended him, and though he had often longed for reconciliation, he felt that it would appear mean to seek it now he was in need, and look as if it were his money more than restored intimacy which he prized.

Without any approach on his part, however, his old friend, having heard of his difficulties, comes at once to his assistance. The deep need of the merchant yields the opportunity to his friend of showing his unchanged love. He saves him from commercial disaster, and the desired reconciliation also takes place. Salvation from ruin and reconciliation to the one he had offended are both his now, and yet they are distinct things. “*God commendeth His love to us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us*” (Rom. 5. 8).

Without any approach from our side, He acted from His own side for our blessing. We had sinned against Him, and He delivered Christ for our offences. We were ruined sinners and needed salvation ; we were the offenders and needed reconciliation ; and we read, “*Being enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son*”—through that death which disclosed God’s great love to us !—the death which met far deeper needs than our illustration speaks of !—the death of Christ which secured eternal salvation and reconciliation for us !

It was in a person the merchant found salvation from his distress. It was in a Person—a Babe received into

his arms—Simeon saw God's great salvation, and he blessed God, saying, "Mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples; a light for revelation of the Gentiles and the glory of Thy people Israel" (Luke 2. 28-32). Though Israel was favoured by His coming to that nation, in the line of King David, yet the salvation of God could not be confined to Israel. Zacharias might speak of Him as "a horn of salvation (or deliverance) for us in the house of David" (Luke 1. 69); but in chapter 3. verse 6, it is said, "all flesh shall see the salvation of God" (see Isa. 52. 10). Even the woman of Samaria was surprised that Jesus—being a Jew in her eyes—spoke to her; but when His words of grace were heard by others of that city, they said, "We know that this is indeed *the Saviour of the world*"! In the first Epistle of John, we also read, "The Father has sent the Son as Saviour of the world"! (4. 14, N.T.). It is truly for the nation of Israel, but it is also for the world. At the present time, however, as we shall see, the call to salvation is not national but personal.

It is spoken of in various aspects in the Old Testament. It is mainly *from* something, whereas reconciliation is *to* the God of our salvation. The first meets our need, while the second meets the desires of God's love. This latter was only unfolded after the work of our Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross was finished, and after He had been exalted to the right hand of God, therefore it is brought out in Romans 5. and 11.; 2 Cor. 5.; Eph. 2.; and Col. 1. In the Old Testament we read of salvation *from* trouble, enemies, low condition, transgression, judgment, ruin, death, reproach, distresses, uncleanness and unhappy circumstances. Jehovah proved Himself to be a Saviour to them

in these things, nevertheless Moses complained of Israel that he "lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation" (Deut. 32. 15). David prays, "Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation" (Ps. 51. 12). We read also, "He will beautify the meek with salvation" (Ps. 149. 4).

This goes beyond being simply saved *from* something, just as we read also of His priests being "clothed with salvation" (2 Chron. 6. 41), and of the walls of the Lord's city being called "Salvation" (Isa. 60. 18). As he contemplates the mercy and goodness of God, Isaiah joyfully breaks forth with singing, "Behold, God is my salvation! I will trust and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song: He also is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation"! (12. 2, 3). All is found in a glorious Person—in El Jah Jehovah!—in God, everlasting and sublime, "which is and which was and which is to come!"

Passing to the New Testament, we find this glorious and eternal God manifested in flesh—we see Emmanuel—"God with us"—in its opening pages. Born of the virgin, as Isaiah had foretold, His Name was called JESUS. This means Jehovah the Saviour. And in connection with that Name, in this very first chapter, salvation is first spoken of in the New Testament, and we are told that this is the reason why the Name was given, "for He shall SAVE His people from their sins" (Matt. 1. 21). Now Israel are the Lord's people, and here, as elsewhere, we find salvation is for the Jew first. It is for "*His people*." Israel are Jehovah's people, and He had come in this way to save them; but, notice carefully, it is "*from their sins*" they are to be saved. Those sins, therefore, necessitated His death for them. His

Blood must be shed for their remission. He must be wounded and bruised for them on the Cross as Isaiah 53. shows. This atoning work having been finished, a day is drawing near when "all Israel shall be saved" (Rom. 11. 26). There will not be one Jew on the earth unsaved in that day! Nearly all of them are now enemies of Jesus, their true Messiah, and they are unsaved; but a change will take place when, as Jehovah said, "They shall look upon ME whom they pierced" (Zech. 12. 10), when He comes again, "having salvation" (9. 9), as their King.

Jehovah their Lord, their King, their Saviour and their God will put them in the full good of the salvation Jesus *righteously* secured for them by His death at Calvary. From their enemies, from their sins, and from all their distresses He will save them; and they will become the means of spreading the benefits of God's salvation to all the nations and to all the peoples of the earth. Israel's *national* salvation having taken place, world-wide blessing through them will follow, even as the Lord Himself said, "Salvation is of the Jews"! (John 4. 22). Their Messiah, the Son of God, is the Saviour of the world, as we have seen. He will save them first, and then "all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our [Israel's] God" (Isa. 52. 10). Our Lord Jesus Christ is the only hope for Gentile or Jew. Already the responsible rulers and elders of the nation of Israel have been told that "*Salvation is in none other*" (Acts 4. 12)! Jehovah is their Saviour!—Where is He to be found? God is their salvation!—How is He to be revealed to them? Their Saviour is their King!—Where can the nation discover Him? He must be of David's royal line!—David's Son and David's Lord!—David's Offspring as well as David's Root! Apart

from Jesus, Israel is hopeless!—Where else can they find one of David's line? They shall "*see*" yet—they shall "*look*" upon their pierced Jehovah, and like Thomas, exclaim in faith, "This is our Lord! This is our God!" He will become their salvation.

If, as we have seen, the salvation of the world awaits the salvation of Israel, it is equally true that the nation of Israel awaits the complete salvation of those who form the assembly, the body of Christ, before her salvation can take place. Those who form the assembly—those who by one Spirit are baptized into one body—must be translated from earth to heaven first, to be with their exalted Head and Lord; all Israel will afterwards be saved, and then all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of God, for our Lord Jesus Christ is truly "the Saviour of the world." At the present time the saving grace of God is offered freely to all, but its call is quite *un-national*. Instead of calling nations as such to salvation, it is rather to call "*out of the nations* a people for His Name" (Acts 15. 14), and the church—rightly rendered *the assembly*—is the *ecclesia*—the *out called*. This is the character of the present work of grace before the day of Israel's national salvation.

Indeed, every circle of counselled blessing awaits the complete salvation of those who are out-called in this day of grace, as we read, "That they without us should not be made perfect" (Heb. 11. 40). We say complete salvation, for, though the true believer is saved by grace, and is being daily saved as he abides in Christ, he is nevertheless awaiting the redemption of his body (Rom. 8. 23). This will be glorified at the coming again of the Saviour and in this sense we understand the Scripture, "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed"

(13. 11). Our salvation will then be complete indeed, and the assembly will be for ever with the Lord—glorified together with Him. In Revelation 21. she is seen as the heavenly city, with which not only Israel has immediate connection (verse 12), but all the nations shall walk by its light (verse 24), for the glory of God shines from it, and so all the earth shall then be filled with His glory. Great indeed is God's salvation.

Meanwhile, the gospel of God's grace, which is truly sent to all, and which is His power to salvation to everyone that believes (Rom. 1. 16), reaches

men and women as individuals, and that in view of their being brought into the assembly—to walk with those who are the out-called—the out-called now from the nations, the out-called soon from earth to heaven (like Enoch of old) at the return of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is important, therefore, for us to understand the present character of the salvation which is brought to us in the gospel. Unlike the *national* character which will yet come to Israel, it is *individual* and *personal* to-day, even though it has the assembly, the collective, in view, now as we have pointed out, as well as the glory to come.

(To be continued.)

The Light of the World.

He could say of Himself that He was the "Light of the World," excluding all other. Light—self-witnessing, as light is: so that rejection of it proved that "men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." And this light was not merely that of His sayings, a message that He brought, a revelation that was committed to Him, though there was that also: but HE WAS HIMSELF THE LIGHT, as He says in the exactest possible way defining this—"As long as I am in the world, I am the Light of the World" (John 9. 5).

"God is light": and here is One who claims to be so absolutely that, that when a disciple expressed a desire to have the Father shown to him, the Lord rebuked him with the words, "Have I been so long time with you and hast thou not known Me, Philip? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father" (John 14. 9).

Nothing could be more absolute in statement that as to God Himself, morally, there was none else to see—there was no one back of Him, who was "the brightness," or, as in the Revised Version, "the effulgence of [God's] glory, the exact image of His person" (Heb. 1. 3), "the image of the invisible God" (Col. 1. 15). —(Grant.)

"By Him and for Him."

"All things have been created by Him and for Him" (Col. 1. 16). BY HIM: the force which has summoned the worlds out of nothingness into being, is His; He wields it; He is the one Producer and Sustainer of all created existence. FOR HIM: He is not merely an inferior workman, as Arianism afterwards pretended, creating for the glory of a higher master, for a God superior to Himself. He is the end of created things as well as their immediate source; and in living for Him every creature finds at once the explanation and the law of its being. For "He is before all things, and by Him all things consist."—(Liddon.)

THE WALLS OF THE HOLY CITY.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

IT is remarkable that more is said of the walls of the Holy City than of the city itself (Rev. 21.) ; there must be an important reason for this. The city is, as we have seen in a former paper (March, 1926, issue), the glorified church and the vessel which radiates the light and blessing of God throughout the universe. The question arose the other day as to what these walls indicate—why are they there? My answer was: They are not there to exclude from that city a single saint of God; for “they that are written in the Lamb’s book of life, shall enter in.” Those walls are inclusive walls; everyone whom sovereign grace has chosen and called to heavenly glory; everyone who has been redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb will have a place there.

“*A garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse,*” says the Bridegroom, in the Song of Songs, meaning that she was all for Him, and it is this that the walls of the city, great and high, teach us; if they are inclusive of all whose names are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life, they indicate that the city is exclusively for God. The city will be for God’s pleasure in the first instance, without restraint and in perfect complacency He will walk in its golden street, and though its gates are opened wide to every point of the compass and will never be closed there shall in no wise enter into it ought that defileth; the gates are guarded gates.

No walls will be needed in the eternal state, when God shall be all in all, then He will dwell with *men*, and His will shall be done on earth as it is

in heaven, and no fresh invasion of sin will ever cause Him to retire behind a veil. But in the Millennial age sin will not be wholly vanished from the earth, and while God will be active towards men in goodness and blessing, there will still be reserve as far as His relations with them are concerned, His temple and dwelling-place will be walled about. But within those walls all will be as He would have it—holy and unblameable shall His saints be before Him in love.

The walls will not be frowning battlements grimly reared for defence or defiance, raised against great foes and manned by intrepid warriors, for from those heavenly places in which the city will appear the foe will have been cast down, and the devil chained in the bottomless pit (Rev. 12. and 20.). The city is the church triumphant, and will fear no attack from without and will be free to enjoy the riches of God’s grace within. It will be God’s enclosure, within it He will show His glory and every created intelligence will learn from it what pleased Him. And through the walls the glory will shine; they will not obscure the glory or hide its beauties, but they shine as a jasper stone; they have the glory of God. And in their foundations are every manner of precious stones, cut by the supreme art of the Divine Lapidary, the all-varied wisdom of God will radiate there, not to repel, but to attract all nations in admiring worship to it.

How great the glory of it will be—the *glory of God*, how great is the grace that has given us a part in it—the *grace of God*.

The Son is true God. He sits upon a throne of Divine perpetuity. He maintains a moral government of matchless and inflexible rectitude. Himself immutable and eternal, He must remain in peerless majesty when the material universe which His hands have made have passed away for ever.—*Hebrews* 1. 8–12.

SALVATION AND SERVICE.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

An Address on "Doing Business for Christ."

THE Lord Jesus was about to enter into the house of Zacchæus, and we read: "And Jesus said unto him, *This day is salvation come to this house, for so much as he also is a son of Abraham. And the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which is lost*" (Luke 19. 9).

Zacchæus was a man with no great reputation. The people complained when the Lord went to his house that He had gone to be guest with a man that was a sinner. He *was* a sinner, and that was the reason the Lord went to his house. Where else should the Saviour have gone? The doctor goes to the houses of the sick, and the Saviour came to seek and save the lost. How strangely blind these people were who found fault with the Lord for going into the house of a sinner! That is the place most suited to Him, where He can show the exceeding riches of His grace. Are there any of you, my hearers, who have not opened your doors to Him yet? I proclaim to you the wonderful fact that, this day He would abide at your house. Don't say you would like to put some things right there first. They never will be put right until He gains an entrance, for He is the only one who can put you and your house right.

What will He bring into your house if you will let Him? He will bring salvation, for He is Salvation Himself, and in having Him you will have it. He will, bring grace and peace and joy. For He will come Himself and abide with you, and never leave you nor forsake you. Sinners should not doubt His love—how wonderfully He has proved it—"He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our

peace was upon Him," and by His stripes you may be healed.

It has often been said that the Lord Jesus saves us that we might serve Him. And that is right. This may not be the highest aspect of the Christian life, but it is a most blessed and important side of it; and whoever makes light of it can know but little of the constraining love of Christ. We are to become witnesses to the grace that has saved us, and to do business for Christ with the wealth that He has given to us. This is our responsibility, and it is set before us in this striking parable of the pounds.

"A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom." I want you first to note how the Lord describes Himself. "A certain nobleman." The One who has saved us and whom we are to represent and serve is THE NOBLEMAN. All true nobility is in Him. Where else can you look for it? God found it in Him. How absolute was His fidelity to God—ever obedient, ever dependent, He did always the things that pleased Him, so that God could say, "Behold My Servant, the One in whom My soul delighteth." And how noble He was in His ways with men. No selfish motive ever moved Him, no hatred or ingratitude ever changed Him. He would not put forth His power for His own relief, but for others that power knew no limit or rest. He was the servant of all from early morn to close of day. It is recorded that "all the people came early in the morning to Him." He was there waiting for them when they came; to teach them, to serve them, to heal them; and not until every man had gone to his own house did He retire, a homeless man,

to the Mount of Olives. And everything that He did in His life of service was nobly done, beautifully done. See Him as He stands beside the widowed mother, weeping for her dead. His heart is moved with compassion for her sorrow, and His word rebukes the cause of it and makes her son live again. Then He moves on without waiting for reward or recognition. See Him stoop to gather the children to His heart whom His disciples would have driven away—they were of no account to others, but how dear they were to Him! No need escaped His notice, no sigh reached His ear in vain. Self-sacrificing love placed Him at the service of all, and He served because love must serve in a world of sin and need. Wonderful Saviour! The true Nobleman! Our Lord and Master, who has saved us that we might serve Him! O Christian, we are to represent Him [where He is not known! But how can we do that unless we are near to Him, and learn of Him?

"But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him saying, We will not have this man to reign over us." The next thing that we must note is that we are to occupy for Him in a world that has refused His claims. He is the rightful King of all, but He is the rejected King. The world of men did not appreciate His nobility, so ignoble were they. His meekness, gentleness, and longsuffering moved them to nothing save hatred. The world has not changed to acknowledge His goodness, and Christ has not changed to meet its ignoble standards. He is not wanted in it now any more than He was, and we are to represent Him and trade for Him where He is not wanted. It should be plain to us that the world will not, cannot help us in this our Lord's business. We cannot call upon its resources and we ought

not to follow its ways. We are to serve in the midst of it as our Master did—doing good unto all men—but we must look outside of it for our supplies and directions.

"And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come." It is not in this parable as in that of the Talents in Matthew's Gospel, where the number of talents were distributed according to the ability of the servants, but to each servant is given a pound. The pound is that great treasure which the Lord brought into the world. *It is the knowledge of God in His grace.* This is specially unfolded for us in this Gospel of Luke. Jesus came into the world full of grace; He revealed the blessed fact that God is not against men but for them, and that He finds His great joy in blessing them, and in no part of the Word is this taught more conclusively than in Luke 15. The Lord brought the true knowledge of God from heaven into the world, but He did not take it away when He returned. He left it here. He has committed it to us. It is a great treasure; and thus it is described for us in 2 Cor. 4.: "For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined in our hearts, to give *the light of the knowledge of God* in the face of Jesus Christ. *But we have this treasure in earthen vessels*, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." This is the silver pound, and we are responsible to put it into circulation on our Lord's behalf, to trade for Him with it until He comes.

I ask you, happy Christian, what can compare in value with the knowledge of God? It has meant much to you. Without it you were without hope, without light, without peace; a wanderer, an orphan, an unforgiven sinner.

But the gospel of His grace has changed all that, and you can say, "God is for us." You can wake in the morning with the thought that you know God, that He loves you and He cares for you. Your needs are many, but His supplies are infinite, and His mercies are renewed every morning to you. Just as the manna was always waiting, morning by morning, for Israel in the wilderness, and God was never late with His supplies of it, so now a full provision awaits you when the day's needs commence. What peace of mind, what quietness this knowledge should give you !

The quietness of mind and contentment that the knowledge of God gives is necessary if we are to trade successfully, for if we are marked by worry and irritability and discontent, men of the world might well say to us, "What have you got that we have not ?" But if they see that we have something that sustains us in trial and keeps us quiet amid the stress and tear of life, they may be ready to listen to our words. So shall we have the joy of trading with our pound, of speaking to men and women of the God whom we know, and the words we speak will be words in season to them that are weary.

We may tell them that we know a God whose compassions are without limit, that never a cry to Him has been refused or will be as long as the day of grace lasts. We may tell them that God is moved because of their distress, and that His mercy is poured forth to meet them in their misery. We may tell them that He has searched them, that He knows them and their sins, and yet He will receive and save them ; that He commends His love to them in that while they were yet sinners Christ died for them. What good news is this for weary, sinful men ! Strange

it is that they care about it so little ! Strange that we who possess this treasure should show such faint zeal in trading with it.

If a man is to trade successfully he must consider carefully where and how to trade, and this is surely not less important in that which is the chief business of the servant of the Lord, and every Christian is a servant. Doctors, mechanics, teachers, nurses, typists, clerks, and many other callings we may follow, but all these are secondary. We desire to be efficient in these secular duties, and that is right, but our chief concern is our business for the Lord, and we ought to know where and how He would have us to serve. We ought to know where we can put the pound out at the best rate of interest. With most of us the Lord intends that we should continue in the calling wherewith we are called and hold forth the Word of life and shine as lights just where we are. It may be that He would have some of us to carry the pound in diligent labour into the streets and lanes of the city, or far out into heathen lands. In these things He, the Master, must direct ; it is ours to obey, to serve, to trade.

"And it came to pass that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded those servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much each man had gained by trading."

The absence of our Lord is not to be for ever. "*Occupy till I come*" links up the present with the future, and produces solemn thoughts as to what He will say to us when He returns. But there is encouragement for us in the parable, for sure we are that our Lord will not forget any bit of true service. Heaven's book-keeping is

accurate. All that we have gained for our Lord is entered there, and it will give the Lord great joy to acknowledge the faithfulness of His servants.

But there was one servant who knew not his Lord, though he stood with the rest who did and appeared to be what they were. To him the pound was an encumbrance, so he hid it in a napkin. It was something, perhaps, of which he was ashamed—for the gospel of God is despised even by some who professed to be servants of Christ, men who would stand well in the eyes of the world—so he laid it aside, and if he did business at all he did it with his own base coin, upon which the image and superscription of the King did not appear. There are many such. The gospel of the blessed God is out of date in their view; man's wit and wisdom pleases them better, and is more popular in the world, and while they still profess to be servant of Christ, by their words they deny Him.

This servant did not know the Lord at all; out of his own mouth will we judge him. "I knew," he said, "that thou wert an austere man." Did he know? Did he not declare his ignorance when he opened his mouth? Who among you who know the Lord

will go down on your knees before Him this night and say to Him, "I know that Thou art an austere man"? Nay, you have other things to say of Him. You have seen no frowns upon His brow; you have heard no hard words from His lips; the tenderest heart in the universe beats in His breast, and you have proved it so. Your service has been full of failure; blundered often you have, but those very blunders have become opportunities for the display of His grace to you. This man did not know the Lord, so we who do know Him must conclude. He was a wicked servant, who loved himself and despised His Lord and His pound.

"How much?" and "Of what sort?" (1 Cor. 3.); thus will all our work be tested. But let us have neither doubt nor question as to this matter, by *the pound* alone can we gain by trading. The knowledge of God as revealed by Christ Jesus, now told out in the gospel, and this alone can bring men to God and subdue them to Christ. All else will fail, no matter how plausible and popular; the gospel alone is God's power unto salvation to every one that believeth. Knowing this, may we earnestly desire to be kept diligently putting it into circulation "*till He comes.*"

The Beginning of Miracles.

The miracle at Cana was, we are told very expressly, the beginning of miracles. Here the Lord tolled for the first time the great bell of the universe that summoned men to listen to His sermon. In it God, as a bountiful benefactor, provided for His creatures' happiness. He had said at the beginning, It is not good for man to be alone, and His first miracle was a benediction upon that primal institution; and as marriage is a season of gladness, He provides a fit accompaniment—provides it of the best, and in such large measure as has amazed and alarmed the timid moralist. The quality and greatness of the gift were worthy of God; and we see the generosity all the more clearly when we remember that *this bountiful Creator had a little before refused to create bread to relieve Himself of hunger pangs.*—(Nichol.)

THE LORD'S RETURN—ATTITUDE OF HEART.

(JOHN WASTELL.)

"Where is the promise of His Coming?"—2 Pet. 3. 4.

"My Lord delayeth His Coming."—Matt. 24. 48.

"The Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come.'" "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."—Rev. 22. 17, 20.

[T is almost a century ago since the Spirit of God revived the hearts of the saints to the great and practical truth of the Lord's Return. The midnight cry rang throughout the professing church, "Behold the Bridegroom" (Matt. 25.). Attention was called to the Lord Jesus as the One whose coming was imminent, and about to step into the air to receive His loved and blood-bought saints to Himself, that He might "see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied."

The effect of this revival was immediate and far-reaching. Everything was tested by it,—personal walk, homes, associations, service. Nothing escaped careful scrutiny, and a great separation from all unsuited to "that Blessed Hope" took place. There was not only a beholding of the Bridegroom, but a *going forth* to meet Him.

Since then, the truth of the Second Advent has been embraced, and taught by Christians almost everywhere. But we must ask ourselves if it is not true to-day, that while many have got hold of this truth, this truth has not got hold of them. Now it is a remarkable fact that while every book of the New Testament with the exceptions of Ephesians, Galatians and Philemon, 2 and 3 John, abounds in references to the Lord's Return, yet it is not taught exactly in a formal way. It is assumed that the saints everywhere acknowledge the truth, and it is therefore taken up in a hortatory way. Thus, it is used for comfort in sorrow, as in 1 Thess. 4., and John 14., for warning against indifference, as in Matt. 25., as an incentive to faithfulness and service, as in Luke 12.,

and as the consummation in joy of the pathway, as in 1 Thess. 2. 19, 20; Phil. 3. Therefore, we are warranted in saying that, above all things, this truth is one pre-eminently for the heart, and however sound we may be on points of doctrine, and clear in apprehension of the various phases and events connected with Christ's coming, yet, if the affections are not powerfully affected, we have not grasped the simplest elements of this great and distinctive truth of Christianity.

In the three Scriptures at the head of this paper we have three different attitudes of heart in regard to our Lord's coming. They are those of

1. The *Scoffer*, who DENIES it altogether (2 Pet. 3. 1.)

2. The *Unfaithful Servant*, who DEFERS the fulfilment, Matt. 24.

3. The *Bride* who DESIRES the immediate realization of her hope (Rev. 22.).

It is a wholesome exercise to apply the test to ourselves, and see in which category we may be placed.

THE SCOFFERS—DENYING.

To take the first. We have a solemn warning as to the time in which we live, described as "the close of the days" (N. Tr.). It might be thought that such a warning has no application to believers, but Peter, who saw wickedness rapidly increasing, says he feels that he must "stir up" the saints, "in the way of putting you in remembrance." Our great danger is that of being affected, and infected, by the spirit of the age. That spirit we see

prevalent. It is the spirit of scepticism, which doubts and questions everything.

It works by doubting, only in order to deny. "Where?" it asks, and soon emboldened, it states that all the evidence is adverse to the truth. The attack resembles that of Satan at the beginning when seducing our first parent. The doubt is insinuated, "Yea, hath God said?" followed by boldly giving the lie to God, "Ye shall not surely die" (Gen. 3.).

We might ask why men deny the truth of our Lord's personal return. Is not the wish father to the thought? Is it not because it means the end of all *their* hopes? The will is at work, and there is wilful ignorance. "Walking according to their own lusts," they cannot tolerate the idea of Divine intervention, but ignorantly affirm "the eternity of matter." They are building a world of their own where God is excluded. But the lamp of truth sheds its beams on the *past* and *future*, as well as the *present*, and shows that, as in an ancient day when all was considered stable, "the world that *then was*" perished in the deluge, and so "the heavens and the earth, which are *now*," are reserved for judgment by fire, in order that God may inaugurate an Universe according to His own mind where righteousness will be at home—"new heavens and a new earth." This promise (verses 4, 9, 13) will be surely fulfilled, and the only reason why God waits, and holds back the Judgment, is that He is "long-suffering, not willing that any should perish," verse 9.

The realization of this would surely stir us up that we might make known the Ark of God's salvation, and persuade men to flee from "the wrath to come" (1 Thess. 1. 10). Judgment will inevitably overtake the scoffer.

If evil seems to triumph in the world now, it is because it is "man's day" (1 Cor. 4. 3). The saint of God is tried by it, but the triumph of evil is only apparent and transitory, for "the Day of the Lord" will close it up. "But *AS* the days of Noe were, *SO* shall also the Coming of the Son of Man be. For *AS* in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; *SO* shall also the coming of the Son of Man be" (Matt. 24. 37-39).

And even "the Day of the Lord" is only preparatory, in clearing away all that is offensive to the Divine mind, in order to usher in "the Day of God," when "God shall be all in all" (1 Cor. 15. 28), and He shall have us in His eternal rest (Heb. 4. 9), while His tabernacle is with men (Rev. 21. 3), and His purposes have their consummation, in that, once more the Creator and the creature are at one. Of that time we may say for ourselves—

"And we shall dwell with God's Beloved,
Through God's eternal day."

For this we look, knowing the vision shall not fail, and so in spirit we hasten it, as being the vindication of all God's way and purposes, and the eternal triumph of good over evil.

THE EVIL SERVANT— DEFERRING.

Alas! Alas! All do not hasten the coming, for there is a class who are *indifferent*, and who *expect not*, who are even worse in some respects than those of whom Peter writes, who with *hostility* in their hearts, *know not*. How strikingly the professing church is depicted in the character of the evil servant (Matt. 24.) who "*in his heart*" said, "My lord delayeth his

coming," and whose conduct was such as to call for the condemnation of his lord. Very early in the history of the church, she left her first love (Rev. 2.), and the hope of Christ's return grew dim, and she was found approximating to, and finally associating with, the world. In eating and drinking with the drunken, the church and the world are as one. "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead," is what is said of the great mass of profession. Decline has not only set in, but decay has actually arrived, and so completely joined to the world is that which bears Christ's name, that the Lord treats her as such, saying, "If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee" (Rev. 3. 3). The Lord as a thief? Yes, such is the figure used in order to express the suddenness and surprise which will characterize His return to those who have postponed the hour of His arrival (1 Thess. 5. 2-4). What a censure to those who profess to be His!

"Thou shalt not know what hour," is said of Sardis, and of the evil servant, "a day when he does not expect it, and in an hour he knows not of" (N. Tr.). But what of us who write and read? Are we professing with our lips "the calling on high" (Phil. 3., N.Tr.) and yet minding earthly things? Note, it is in the HEART the postponement takes place. Are we secretly deferring the coming? Thinking, "not just to-day," and betraying by our conduct indifference of heart to the interests of Christ? What of our treatment of our fellow servants and saints, and our general low walk? "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23. 7). Again, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Luke 12. 34). Can we honestly say

whether the Lord's immediate coming would surprise us, or are we on the look-out for Him and expecting Him, with our loins girded and lamps burning, ready to open to Him immediately (Luke 12.) and to welcome Him? If the latter is our attitude of heart, the Lord appreciates it, and Himself will reward us by ministering to our enjoyment of heavenly things. "Blessed are those servants." May we then be longing, looking, and labouring, for "now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand" (Rom. 13. 11, 12).

THE BRIDE—DESIRING.

We have looked at those who DENY, and at those who DEFER, now let us consider the attitude of those who have not defiled their garments, and who DESIRE the presence of their Lord. This, indeed, should be the governing motive of all our hearts. It is the expression of the Bride. Thrice in Rev. 22. the Lord speaks of His coming (verses 7, 12, 20), and when He announces Himself as "the bright and morning Star," there is an immediate response. "The Spirit and the Bride say 'Come.'" It is the expression of strong and undimmed *virgin affection*. The true Rebecca sees her Isaac coming to meet her (Gen. 24), and cannot restrain her joy, and all the pent-up emotion of her heart finds relief as, in unison with the Spirit, she calls to Him, and then to everyone who hears to also cry "Come" to her beloved One.

In the Canticles, the Bride sees her Beloved upon the mountains of Bether (marg., Division) "like a roe or a young hart" (2. 8, 17; 8. 14) coming with alacrity to meet her, and annihilating distance in the vigour of His love. Then "the day dawns, and the shadows

flee away." Again we ask, Is this desire strong in our hearts, not merely desiring relief from the trials of the pathway, but the deep, unspeakable longing

"For evermore to call Him mine,
For evermore behold Him shine,
With all His saints in glory " ?

And He too desires that moment, and in patience waits for it, as is said in 2 Thess. 3. 5, " But the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the *patience* of the Christ " (N. Tr.). It is an ancient custom in a certain noble family of Scotland for the head

of the house, when he marries, to take his bride in his arms, and to carry her over the threshold of the ancestral home. And soon that joy will be Christ's, for He has prepared a place for us, and when the hour strikes, He personally will come to receive us to Himself, and conduct us into the Father's house (John 14.), and be eternally " comforted " (Gen. 24. 67). In view of such a hope well might the apostle say, " For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy ; for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ " (2 Cor. 11. 2).

THE SONGS OF DEGREES. Psalms 120.-134.

120. Deliverance.

121. Preservation.

122. Prosperity.

126. Praise.

127. Rest.

128. Progeny.

123. Dependence.

124. Confidence.

125. Stability.

129. Affliction.

130. Hope.

131. Character.

132. SALVATION.

133. UNITY.

134. WORSHIP.

" Praise ye the Lord . . . HALLELUJAH ! " (Psalm 150.).

The Creator.

In John 1. the **WORD** was the Creator : " In the beginning was the Word, and all things were made by Him." In Hebrews 1. the **SON** was the Word, the Creator : " God has spoken to us in the Person of the Son, by whom also He made the worlds." In Colossians 1. it was **THE IMAGE OF THE INVISIBLE GOD**, who made all things. And to whom do these great names belong, and this great power by which the worlds were made ? To **JESUS**. Certainly these names were His before He became the Man Jesus Christ on earth ; but He has not given them up, that could not be, and now He is inseparably Man and God, and Head of all things. Moreover, He went down into death for the church, and rose again from the dead, and is the Head of His body, the church, also. If any one denies that He is the eternal Son of God or denies that He was eternally in relationship with the Godhead as the Word, then they deny the glory of the Person of Christ, and for themselves have destroyed it.—(G. J. Stewart.)

PRACTICAL PAPERS

No. 8. Hope.

HOPE in connection with natural matters is synonymous with uncertainty. For a man to say, "I have strong hopes of a certain thing happening," is tantamount to saying, "I have some doubts of a certain thing happening." This element of uncertainty often brings about a feverish state of mind, and that in proportion to the stake that is in question and the nearness of the matter being decided, or on the other hand the vagueness of it.

For instance, a man runs as a candidate for some place of honour. The votes are being counted, and soon he will hear whether he is elected or not. What a state of tension and feverish excitement is induced!

It is not so with Divine hope. There is no element of uncertainty as to it. An example of the contrast between natural and Divine hopes is given in Rom. 4. 18. Writing of Abraham, we read, "who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, so shall thy seed be."

Abraham was old and well stricken in years. As far as any hope of posterity was concerned his own body was dead, and so, too, was Sarah's womb. He had no natural hope. But God came in and promised that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed. Now he gets a Divinely given hope. And so against hope he believes in hope, against natural impossibility he became Divinely certain, and that on the sure ground of "that which was spoken"—the sure word of God.

Rom. 8. 24, 25 tells us, "We are saved by [in] hope; but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we

hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." Heb. 6. 18, 19 speaks of those who fled for refuge, laying hold on the proffered hope, "which hope," we are Divinely told, "we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that which is within the veil."

Here we have Divine hope, and the ability to wait with patience—a patience begotten of certainty—and not with the fever of impatience and uncertainty that ever surrounds natural hope.

Here we are told the hope is

"SURE and STEADFAST,"

and it is likened to an anchor. An anchor is an instrument to enable a ship to ride safely through the storm. There are two things that may render an anchor insecure and ineffective. Firstly, the anchor itself or its cable may be defective and under strain break. There may be a flaw in its manufacture and it may yield at some point. Secondly, the holding ground of the anchor may not be strong enough, and the anchor may drag and become ineffective.

What, then, is the anchor of hope? Surely, the word of God. In that very chapter from which we have just quoted, we are told of "two immutable"—unchangeable—"things in which it was impossible for God to lie" (Heb. 6. 18), showing the reliability of God's word. The Divine anchor then—the Word of God itself—has no flaw in it—it cannot snap or break or be defective in any way.

And what of the holding ground? The anchor is dropped "inside the veil; whither the Forerunner is for us

entered, even Jesus" (Heb. 6. 19, 20). The place where our Lord Jesus is affords the proof that He performed His atoning work entirely to God's satisfaction. The resurrection proved it. "God raised Him from the dead" (Acts 13. 30). The ascension proved it. "When He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Heb. 1. 3). What a holding ground—the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus, the vacant cross and the empty tomb and the filled throne proving it. Well may our anchor be cast inside the veil, where Jesus is.

Suppose you were a passenger sailing from Liverpool to New York, and were told that before your steamer had left the Mersey the anchor was dropped in New York Harbour—the place of your destination. You could never believe such an impossible statement. But what would be impossible in natural things is not only possible but is a blessed incontrovertible fact in spiritual things. The believer, in putting his trust in the Lord and His word, has not only an anchor that cannot fail him, but a holding ground in the very place where Jesus has gone. In Him we have an indissoluble link with heaven itself. Already our anchor is dropped in the heavenly port.

This brings us to the fountain head of our subject. We have been tracing the streams flowing from the fountain head, if we may change the metaphor, and streams of refreshing blessing they are to our thirsty souls. We read, "Now the God of hope fill you with all peace and joy in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 15. 13). Here we get "the God of hope" causing the believer to "abound in hope." He is the blessed Spring and Source of all our blessing.

Hebrews 6. 17 tells us of "two im-

mutable [unchanging] things in which it was impossible to lie"—

(1) *The immutability of His counsel;*

(2) *The confirmation of His oath.*

How wise God is! We may well ask, "For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been His counsellor?" (Rom. 11. 34). His counsel will stand, firm based, as it is, upon the righteous basis of the atoning death of the Lord Jesus Christ. Everything springs from the heart of God and all planned according to His wisdom and prudence.

And if God confirmed His counsel by an oath, "SURELY blessing I will bless thee" (Heb. 6. 14), He gives us a double oath when our Lord said, "VERILY, VERILY, I say unto you" (John 5. 24).

If a rich man made me a promise I could not be sure of it, for he might change his mind and refuse to carry it out, or become unexpectedly very poor and be unable to carry it out, or he might die, and with death the matter would be out of his hands. So natural hope is full of uncertainty.

But God will not change His mind, nor can He be bankrupt, nor can He die, so the believer's hopes are as sure as his possessions—the believer is as sure of being in heaven as he is of the forgiveness of his sins. So now the believer can "rejoice in hope [a sure and certain hope] of the glory of God" (Rom. 5. 2). "We through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith" (Gal. 5. 5). Our hope is founded on righteousness.

"Ye are called in one hope of your calling" (Eph. 4. 4), the Apostle Paul wrote to the Ephesian believers, that is to be with Christ and like Christ in glory, His bride in the hour of His holy triumph. And "the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles" is "Christ in you, the hope

of glory " (Col. 1. 27), so that the presence of the Holy Ghost in the believer, in the church, gives us the subjective side of this great hope.

So the believer should be "ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh . . . a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Peter 3. 15).

Great emphasis is laid on the three great graces—faith, hope and love. Prophecies shall fail. When all prophecies are fulfilled they will cease in the full perfection of all God's ways. Tongues shall cease in that day when nationalities shall cease, racial divisions no longer exist, the reason for the confusing of man's speech since the days of the Tower of Babel—when all

shall speak one tongue and one language—be no longer operative. Knowledge shall vanish in the fulness of knowledge that each shall enjoy, when we shall know even as we are known.

But in sharp contrast to all this we read, "And NOW ABIDETH faith, hope, charity [*literally* love], these three; but the greatest of these is charity [*literally* love]" (1 Cor. 13. 13).

Surely the greatest is love, for "God is love," and love, not faith and hope; will be the grand characteristic of the eternal state. Faith will be largely turned into sight, and hope into glad realization, yet even in heaven the believer will have full faith and happy hope in the everlasting continuance of the scene of ineffable love.

TO DIE IS GAIN.

(JAMES BOYD.)

GLORY to Christ for ever!

Glory to Father and Son!
Unto the Saviour eternal

Praise for the work He has done!

His be the throne and the kingdom
Who in unspeakable grace
Sought us and saved us and set us
Spotless in love's embrace,

Called us to heavenly glory,
Showed us a prospect fair,
Gave us a life to enjoy it,
Gave us a foothold there.

Right in the heavenly places,
Bade us His advent wait,
When His love everlasting
Fully our souls shall sate.

Now He is tenderly leading
Us thro' a desert lone,
Meeting our wants unnumbered
E'en in a land not sown;

Guarded by His good Spirit
Thro' a wide waste of sand,
Keeping our feet from falling
By His almighty hand.

Here in a body mortal

We from our Lord are far,
Therefore by faith we follow
Him thro' both peace and war.

But from this body absent,
Then in His presence bright;
Seeing is not believing,
Better than faith is sight.

Therefore it little matters
Whether He come to-day,
Or, in His wisdom searchless,
Whether He make delay;

Whether without the body
Or with the body changed;
Clothed or unclothed, whatever
Wisdom may have arranged.

Either with endless pleasure
Shall our estate enzone,
Blessings in infinite measure
For ever and ever our own.

Yet till He comes to take us
Fain would we here remain,
Tho' we would not for a moment
Doubt that TO DIE IS GAIN.

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR PARENTS.

(F. B. HOLE.)

TO be a parent is no light thing in any case. To be a *Christian* parent is an even more serious and responsible thing, as is doubtless realized by those of our readers who stand in such a relationship.

Here are, let us suppose, *Christian* parents with young children. As they gaze upon their loved little ones they realize that they are parents of their flesh—if we may slightly adopt the phrase used in Hebrews 12. 9—and that by heredity their children stand possessed of the same fallen nature as they know to be in themselves, and with probably a strong leaning towards just those passions and sins which they know to their sorrow and shame have been particularly emphasized in their own cases. For themselves they have happy experience of the grace of God and of the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit within, as a result they possess the new nature and by the Spirit given to them as believers they know themselves to be in Christ. As yet, however, they could assert no such things of their children, and they are acutely conscious that new birth and faith in Christ are not transmitted from parent to child. Such is the situation: a situation that may well cause deep and serious exercise of heart.

Surprise is not infrequently expressed by onlookers at the spectacle of young people becoming notorious in ungodliness, and yet springing from eminently godly homes; and it is sometimes suggested—in agreement with the arguments and insinuations of Job's three friends—that the explanation must be that there has been grave sin, or at least grave defect in training, on the part of the parents. If, however, what we have just stated be remembered,

as also that it is frequently just those who left unconverted would have been the greatest of sinners, that converted become the most devoted of saints, no surprise need be felt. The children have inherited from their parents the Adamic nature with, probably, an emphasis laid on some particular ugly feature or features which, but for the grace of God, would have been to the fore in the case of their parents; and so they will continue until grace intervenes also with them.

But have *Christian* parents any ground for really expecting such intervention? May they, in the midst of their exercises and even anguish of heart, repose in the confident anticipation of a work of God which in His own time shall effect a great and saving deliverance for their beloved children?

We may answer this important question by referring to the Gospel record and taking note of the seven occasions on which the Lord Jesus was approached by a parent on behalf of a child. They are as follows:

1. The daughter of Jairus: recorded in Matt. 9., Mark 5., and Luke 8. The daughter was a child of twelve, she was therefore just entering upon the age of responsibility; the father, a ruler of the synagogue; the catastrophe impending was the final one of death. In his affliction Jairus found his resource in an appeal to the Lord. He was heard, yet the impending catastrophe was not averted as doubtless he expected with more or less faith. Circumstances conspired to hinder, and the Lord did not alter the circumstances. Yet Jairus' appeal did not fall on unheeding ears. It was answered with a fulness of power that went beyond the father's faith, and the maid was restored to life.

2. The daughter of the woman of Canaan : recorded in Matt. 15. and Mark 7. The parent here was a Gentile, springing from an accursed race. The Lord Himself was in the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, a very stronghold of the devil, as Ezekiel 28. 11-19 testifies, and her daughter was grievously vexed with a demon. The poor woman, though an outcast, a mere dog, brought the case of her child to Jesus. She was not heard at once. The Lord used the occasion of the intensity of her affliction to work a wholesome state of honesty and humility and confession in her soul. But, when she took her own true place and incidentally expressed her faith in the largeness of His bounty that would overflow to a Gentile dog such as she was, she got to the full the desire of her heart in her daughter's deliverance. Her appeal was effectual. She was heard.

3. The lunatic, son of a certain man : recorded in Matt. 17., Mark 9. and Luke 9. This case has several features of special interest. In the absence of the Lord upon the mount of transfiguration, the man first brought the lad to the remaining nine disciples, and they failed to cast out the demon. The failure of the disciples cast reflections on the power of the Master, and hence, knowing all too well the peculiar malignity and stubbornness of the demon who held his boy in bondage, the father approached the Lord with weak and shaken faith, saying, "If Thou *canst* do *anything*, have compassion on us, and help us." This gave the Lord the opportunity of demonstrating two things. First, His own supreme power, utterly beyond the possibility of challenge by the adversary. The demon did his malign worst, as though he would wreck the poor tenement of clay, if, indeed, he had to vacate it ; yet the Lord raised

up the lad and delivered him to his father in perfect soundness. Second, that the only "if" that could by any possibility be introduced into the case, concerned the faith of the parent, who made the application, addressed to His grace and power : "If thou *canst* believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." That great statement full of encouragement was made in reference to a parent's application to Jesus for the deliverance and blessing of his child.

4. The little children brought that He should put His hands on them and pray : recorded in Matt. 19., Mark 10. and Luke 18. This case also is of *peculiar* interest. The children in question were very young. "Little children," "young children," "infants," are the descriptions given. We are not told with any exactness who brought them. In each Gospel the matter is left impersonal. Presumably the parents brought them ; if brought by others, it only makes the Lord's reception of them the more remarkable. The disciples, moreover, were actively hostile to the request, yet "He took them up in His arms, put His hands upon them and blessed them."

5. The mother of Zebedee's children with her sons : recorded in Matt. 20. In this case the "children" were no longer young, but full-grown men. Nor were they strangers to the Lord Jesus, but His acknowledged disciples, His chosen apostles, and near the end of their period of instruction by the Lord in person. The request preferred by their mother did not concern their deliverance or blessing either physical or spiritual, but had to do with their advancement and honour in the coming kingdom of displayed glory. A mother's natural pride and pleasure in her sons sought its gratification at His hands, *and was refused !*

6. The son of the widow of Nain : recorded in Luke 7. Special features are again prominent here. The dead son was a full-grown man and the only son of his mother, and she a widow. There is no record that the poor woman, widowed and weeping, uttered any appeal as the two crowds met—a dead man the centre of one ; the Christ, the Prince of Life, the centre of the other. Yet, though no cry for help passed her lips, though she was perhaps all-unconscious of the true identity of the Living One, He saw her ; He had compassion on her ; He said to her, "Weep not." He "touched the bier : and they that bare him stood still, and He said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And He delivered him to his mother."

Touched in His infinite compassion by the sight of a mother's lamentations, superadded to a widow's grief, unasked He acted ; and the power that was always the servant of His compassion wrought a deliverance which she never expected, and dried up her tears.

7. A certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum : recorded in John 4. Here again we meet with the pleadings of faith. The father went personally to Jesus and besought Him to come and heal his son. True faith had to be tested. The unbelieving mass were content with nothing but signs and wonders, and faith which merely rests on visible displays is no true faith at all. Under the test the nobleman redoubled his pleading and was then met by the word, "Go thy way ; thy son liveth." Here his faith triumphed, for without the slightest display which appealed to sight the man took the Lord at His word and went home, only to be met on the way by his servants with the joyful tidings of his son's recovery ; a recovery

that took place with miraculous suddenness at the very hour in which Jesus uttered the word of power concerning him. No wonder that then he believed and his whole house ! The thing of note was that he believed before, for faith is taking Him at His word—believing what He says, *because He says it.*

We have briefly reviewed these seven Gospel instances that we may obtain a safe and sound—because Scriptural—answer to our question. The question was, be it remembered : Have Christian parents any ground for expecting God to intervene in the blessing of their children ?

The joyful answer is : Yes, they have most abundant ground for expecting it. Is their child an infant ? The Lord Jesus took infants into His arms and blessed them. Is it the case of a daughter or son afflicted by the power of the devil, or near to death, or actually in death, or even a son grown to man's estate and claimed by death as its prey and insensible to all beside ? In each case He heard and wrought deliverance. True, in one case there was delay, circumstances were permitted to hinder. In another there had to be first wrought a work of honest self-judgment in the soul of the afflicted Gentile mother ; in another the gentle rebuke of feeble and shaken faith in the anguished father ; in yet another the testing of very genuine faith that it might the more distinctly be manifested ; and all these spiritual dealings with the parents necessitated some delay. Yet in every case their cry was heard and abundantly answered.

Still there was one exception, which was the more remarkable inasmuch as the applicants here were definite followers and servants of the Lord *before making their application.* They were, indeed, the only ones of the seven of

which we could confidently affirm this, and they were the only ones that met with a refusal! Ah, but they came not for blessing and healing and deliverance, but for honour and preferment! Herein lay the secret of their disappointment, and therefore the one exception is the exception which proves the rule.

We, who are Christian parents, may then with confidence get upon our knees to bring the cases of our children to the Lord. If we bring them with a desire for their prominence and glory, in order that our natural pride and pleasure in them may be enhanced by their being distinguished either in this world or the world to come, we have no ground for expecting the Lord to act. If we bring them that their desperate need may be met and their blessing accomplished, He will hear us. The varying circumstances on our side will be no hindrance. We ourselves may be Jews or Gentiles, people of little faith or defective faith, or strong faith,

or even so overpowered by grief that we make no audible appeal at all—it is all the same. The children may be young or old, afflicted in mind or body, or with no affliction at all—it is all the same. He will deliver. He will bless. He will do it in His own time, so as to spiritually exercise and bless the parent as well as the child, which may mean delay; but He will do it, and do it tenderly, even taking them up in the arms of His love to bless them.

No longer is He upon earth, so that the anguished parent heart may cry out before Him, "Master, I beseech Thee, look upon my son"—or "daughter" as the case may be. He is exalted in the heavens with all power at His disposal. Yet He is unchanged in His compassions as in all else, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." Therefore your cry shall be answered by the unchanged and unchanging Christ in the same unchanging way.

Is not this enough?

The Lord's Way.

How precious to know that Christ is ever the same. There can be no change in Him. His face always shines upon "His own" with undimmed lustre. His love is ever the same towards them, no matter what their treatment of Him may be, and our souls are most surely edified as we consider Him. Nothing can be more affecting than His ways with His disciples. We blame them for going to sleep on the Holy Mount, let us rather adore the grace of our Lord that awoke them to behold the departing rays of His glory when He was transfigured before them. We lament their weakness in sleeping when He was passing through those awful anticipatory sorrows in Gethsemane's garden, but let us not overlook His deep and tender concern for them when He said, "If ye seek Me let these go their way."

When Christ's glory, or Christ's sufferings, were displayed, His disciples slept, but when they were in peril on the lake they were wide awake; that was their selfishness. Nevertheless He used His power to still the storm out of sweet consideration for them.

We are not unlike those disciples. A suffering and glorious Saviour often finds us asleep to both His sufferings and glories, and yet in storm and stress we are ready enough to call upon Him. And how tender and gracious He is; He does not spurn or despise us, for His love is a perfect love.—(Nunnerley.)

LIGHT AND LIFE. No. 15.

(JAMES BOYD.)

Meditations on John's Gospel. (Chap. 15.)

THE words recorded in chapters 13. and 14. were spoken inside the upper room at the passover table, and what we have in the three following chapters were uttered on their way to Gethsemane. In chapter 15. the subjects are fruitbearing and testimony. I think the fruit brought forth by all who are in vital relations with Christ is the testimony. The fruit is for God ; the testimony for men. There were bells and pomegranates on the borders of the high priest's robe. The testimony may have a more direct reference to the ministry of the word by His servants, and in a special way to the word by the twelve apostles, for He says : " Ye also shall bear witness because ye have been with Me from the beginning." Nevertheless : " By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another." Also : " The sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world " (Phil. 2. 15). Indeed the whole church is here on earth as a witness to Christ during His absence. Though the bearing of fruit is for the glory of the Father, still it results in testimony to Christ. I should not like to think that one must necessarily be a preacher in order to be Christ's witness here.

The parable of the vine and its branches, though simple enough to the one taught of God, has been the cause of a good deal of contention among Christians. It is even brought forward to prove that a child of God may be lost for ever. This would be so at variance with the plainest teaching of Scripture that one wonders to find anyone clinging to such a notion. And to lay hold of a parable like this to support the error does nothing but

reveal the self-will that lies at the foundation of it. Though it is absolutely necessary to be in vital relations with Christ to bring forth fruit, yet the figure used takes in as branches all who profess faith in Christ. The branch that bears fruit is "*in Me*," and so also is the branch that bears "*not fruit*." Both are in the vine, the one as truly as the other, and yet one may bear fruit and the other not.

There are two ways in which Christians are viewed in Scripture : one in vital and eternal relationships to God the Father and to Christ. They are in those relationships solely by the sovereign operation of the Holy Spirit, and they are unalterable. Believers are begotten of God, His children, and members of the body of Christ. The terms used—" Begotten of God," and " Members of the body of Christ "—show how completely of God they are. The other way in which we are addressed in Scripture is as believers of the gospel, or those who call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, and this gives us a position of responsibility upon earth. Saints are addressed in the Epistles as in the blessings of the gospel, and they are so if their faith is of a vital character, and the whole profession is addressed as saints, along with warnings against turning away from Christ. So here in Christ may, or may not, be vital relationship. This is manifested by abiding in Him, which has a practical bearing, and means that such draw all their nourishment from Himself, and thus bring forth fruit to the glory of the Father. There is an analogy between this and " Holding the Head " in the Epistle to the Colossians ; that is, that we draw all our nourishment and strength from Him. The fountain

of supply is abundant, for in Him all the fulness of the Godhead dwells. The vine is the source of supply for the branches, as the Head is for the body. John speaks of *abiding in Him*, Paul of *holding the Head*.

All this is brought about and maintained by the anointing that we have received of Him, that is, the Holy Spirit. This unction, or anointing, abides in the children of God, and no other teaching is needed than that which He may furnish directly through the Word, or by teachers raised up by Himself to turn their attention to that Word, and to help them into the understanding of it. The anointing teaches them all things, is true and not a lie, and *as it has taught them they abide in Him*. Now he that says that he abides in Him ought to walk as He walked. And we know that we abide in Him and He in us by the Spirit which He has given us (1 John 2. 27, 6; 4. 13). Now in this chapter 15. we read: "He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit"; and in the Epistle 3. 24 "He that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Him, and He in him." And the preservative from every newfangled notion is found in 1 John 2. 24: "Let that therefore which ye have heard from the beginning abide in you. If that which ye shall have heard from the beginning abide in you, ye also shall abide in the Son and in the Father." Everything for life, preservation and service depends upon the nourishment we derive from our exalted Head. He says to Paul: "My grace is sufficient for thee, for My strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. 12.). What a comfort this is to those of us who feel what poor weak things we are!

In view of His impending departure to the Father, He would bind them together with the cords of Divine love.

He says to them: "As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you: continue in My love." Here it is in His love we are to abide. It is not only that we who have no resources in ourselves are to cling to Him in whom all fulness dwells, but we are to abide in the deep realization of the love that He has to us; and the way in which we are to do this is by walking in obedience. 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." If we walk in disobedience we have a condemning heart, and the Holy Spirit is grieved, and therefore are we occupied with our own failures and not the love of Christ. But if we walk in obedience, intimacy with Him is maintained, and our confidence in Him remains unbroken. An obedient child walks in happy intimacy with his father and in the enjoyment of the love that belongs to the relationship of a son with a father, while a child walking in disobedience, though not without the knowledge of his father's affection for him, is not in the enjoyment of that intimacy that is the privilege of every obedient child with a benevolent parent.

He was leaving them. They were now to be bereft of the solace that His presence in their midst gave them. He would send the Holy Spirit to take care of them. But they were to see to it that they were to show that real interest in the welfare of one another that belonged to the Divine nature, of which they were partakers. They were to love one another as He had loved them. How had He loved them? He had laid down His life for them. This was the way in which this love became manifested. It was a self-sacrificing love. It was not a mere human affection, though it was now

to be found in human beings. The love wherewith the Father loved the Son was the love wherewith the Son loved the disciples, and it was that same love that was to be active in them toward one another. He laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for one another (1 John 3. 16).

As we meditate upon this, what horror fills our souls in the contemplation of the deplorable condition in which saints are found to-day! We see the vast majority mixed up religiously with those who make no secret of their hatred of the Father and the Son. Then we have many who in a large degree of light have entered into the results of the labours of men of God long since passed into His presence, and what of them? Split up into little sections, not one of them being able to give a sufficient reason for his wilful separation from the others, and most of them, instead of being ashamed of their miserable sectarianism, as boastful of it as though they had letters-patent from heaven as warrant for their wretched position. How truly, even to this day, are being fulfilled the words of the great Gentile Apostle, spoken in the ears of the Ephesian elders as he was for the last time passing out of their midst: "OF YOUR OWN SELVES shall men arise speaking perverse (perverted) things, to draw away disciples after them" (Eph. 20. 30).

The allowance of the flesh ever tends to disintegration, and that because, in the first instance, in its very nature it is antagonistic to God. It will not acknowledge His authority, and it disregards His right to legislate for the guidance of His creature's well-being. In the second instance, though it may outwardly own that God has spoken,

and that His word is entitled to a certain measure of respect, yet it cannot be taken just as we find it, but as it is explained by those who have graduated in the sceptical universities of the world, or by some who are supposed to be possessed of a certain amount of spirituality not possessed by ordinary believers. If you hearken to the words of the Holy Spirit by the Apostle John, who tells you to "abide in that which ye have heard from the beginning," you are pitied as being behind the times, and as being so unspiritual as to be unable to appreciate advanced thought. Where the flesh is allowed a loose rein one may be prepared to witness a display of the most outrageous spiritual insanity, and that even among true believers. Think of the loose morals of the sectarian Corinthians glorying in bestiality that was unknown among the idolatrous Gentiles! (1 Cor. 5.). Think also of the downfall of the bewitched Galatians, and how near they came to apostasy from Christ, and let us all take warning! The flesh can make the most trivial questions a righteous ground of separation, if it is allowed its own way amongst a company of the most godly of God's beloved people.

Let Divine love assert itself as the bond and ruling principle among us, and all shall be well. But let it be true Divine love, not mere human sentiment like that which binds sects, clubs, clans and schools of opinion together, for in these things truth and righteousness have to give place to the creeds, and to the influence of the worldly-minded, and God and the word of His grace are disregarded. The love that is enjoined in this chapter (John 15.) is the love wherewith the Father ever loved the Son, and wherewith the Son loved His disciples: with this love they are to love one another.

FEAR YE NOT.

(H. J. VINE.)

AFTER their father's death Joseph's brethren lost their peace, and fear seized upon them. They judged Joseph according to the thoughts of their own hearts, thinking that, after all, he would requite them for the evil they had done unto him. Again Joseph wept when they came confessing their sin to him, and again he told them he would care for them and nourish them (Gen. 50. 21). This loss of their peace showed they had not increased in the knowledge of Joseph himself since he had made himself known unto them, for had they done so they would never have harboured such wrong thoughts concerning him. And it is just this which explains the unhappy condition of soul which sometimes overtakes older believers. They may have gathered up a great deal of knowledge concerning various things, but the knowledge of God's Son—of their Lord and Saviour—has been neglected.

Peter, in his second Epistle, speaks of idleness and unfruitfulness as regards the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of one having "forgotten the purging of his former sins" (2. 9), but he closes with an exhortation to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour. This will keep the heart and mind in perfect peace. Joseph had told his brethren it was God and not they who had sent him to Egypt (45. 8), and God had done so in view of *their* salvation. And now again he lets them know that he was fully aware that they "thought evil," but "God meant it unto good" (50. 20), to bring to pass the salvation of much people. Beautifully prefiguring our Saviour's love, Joseph's WAS AN UNCHANGED LOVE; and he said, "Now therefore FEAR YE NOT: I will nourish you and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them."

A MAN OF FAITH.

A MAN of faith knows that when he awakes in the morning, God is his Helper and Resource. It matters little to him how many are his difficulties, or how great, God is greater than them all, and he can start the day with the knowledge, God is for me. He and his brethren are like an army marching through a foreign land, having at its back a good basis of supplies. Many a commander has been beaten because he advanced too far

and forgot the necessity of a good commissariat; but the Christian knows that it is written, "My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus." His firm conviction is that, "they that wait on the Lord shall not want any good thing." And if the world spurns him because of his faithfulness to God, what of that? He can rejoice that God Himself is not only his shield, but his exceeding great reward.

"The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and He delighteth in his way" (Ps. 37. 23). Not his way only, but his very steps are ordered, and that by the One who knows all, sees the end from the beginning, discerns every snare and pitfall, and orders all with unerring wisdom. Who would not commit his way to the Lord and follow that which is good in view of this? What rest of heart it gives to know that I have not to be anxiously considering every step I take, as though all depended upon me, but that I can trust in the Lord at all times. Then will He delight in the way that I take, for it will be the way of His pleasure.

SALVATION AND RECONCILIATION—*Contd.*

(H. J. VINE.)

RECONCILIATION has the glory in view also, but there is this difference. While salvation delivers sinful man from his ruin and distress, to share in the coming glory, reconciliation sets him before God Himself in Divine favour, and with alienation and enmity removed, unblameable and holy in His sight, so that when the positions of dignity "on" the earth and "in" the heavens are reconciled also—"the visible and the invisible, whether thrones, or lordships, or principalities, or authorities," and Christ, the First-born of all creation and the Firstborn from among the dead, takes as the Head of the body, the assembly, the first place in all that vast domain of majesty, might and splendour—then all shall be for God's own good pleasure. The one frees man from everything to share the glory, the other brings all to pass for God's own satisfaction and pleasure.

Again, it is by the word of the gospel He brings both about to-day, for that is the "power of God unto salvation," as we have seen; and we read in 2 Cor. 5. 20 of "the word of reconciliation" being put in the servants of Christ, so that they entreat on His behalf, "Be reconciled to God." Although they are different things, God uses the proclamation of the word to bring them to pass at the present time in regard to men. And just as salvation is a personal matter in this dispensation, so also is reconciliation. The bearing of the latter is truly world-wide (Rom. 11. 15), and the offer of salvation by the gospel is likewise; but both are entered upon through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ individually, and both the one and the other set the believer apart from the present course of things obtaining in the world, even as Jesus said twice in His prayer

to the Father, "They are not of the world even as I am not of the world" (John 17. 14-16).

The *personal* character of present salvation should therefore be laid hold of by us. It is of the last importance to do so in these days of departure from the truth, and apostasy from the faith. To be saved, is to be saved! To be unsaved, is to be lost! The final issue is fast approaching! The coming of the Lord draweth nigh! The lights of the oilless lamp-holders are going out! Those who "have not received the love of the truth that might be saved" (2 Thess. 2. 10) will soon be carried away by the strong sweeping currents of error, "that they should believe what is false, that all might be judged who have not believed the truth, but have found pleasure in unrighteousness" (verse 12). God has no pleasure in this, but desires rather that "all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2. 4). The Son of God came not to judge the world, "but that the world through Him might be saved" (John 3. 17 and 12. 47). Upon the cross He bore the believer's sins, and the judgment that those sins deserved; moreover, He was raised again from among the dead for their justification. On the basis of that work the believer is saved, for it is on account of this God righteously forgives sins, and the gospel brings "the knowledge of salvation . . . by the remission of their sins" (Luke 1. 77). The first person outside of Judaism to be reached by the glad tidings was Cornelius. He heard words whereby he and all his house were saved (Acts 11. 14). Those words pointed him to Christ, through whose Name everyone that believes on Him receives remission of sins (10. 43). Christ Jesus came into the world to

save sinners, for grace alone could meet the need of such ; and while it is truly by the grace of God such are *justified freely*, through the great redemption which is in Christ Jesus, it is likewise true, we are "*saved by grace*" (Eph. 2. 5, 8) ; not on the principle of works, so that none might boast. Grace is in Christ Jesus, and so is salvation (2 Tim. 2. 1, 10). This latter is obtained there through faith, whether in regard to judgment, enemies, state, adverse influences, this present evil world or age. "Neither is there salvation in any other."

It should be pointed out, too, that not only have we been saved as sinners to be of the assembly, and "*saved in hope*" (Rom. 8. 24, N.T.) to share the glory, but there is salvation for us as "*worshippers*"—as those who "*approach to God*" (Heb. 7. 25) by Jesus, our living High Priest ; for by His priestly grace and power, He is able to save such to the uttermost, or completely. We should always bear in mind that this aspect of salvation is for those who draw near to God, assembling together for this purpose being in view. The custom is increasing with some to give this up, but the real are to seek it more and more as they see the day of Christ's return approaching. The word for "*assembling*" in Heb. 10. 25 is better rendered "*complete assembling*," so in 2 Thess. 2. 1 ; and our gathering together unto Him will indeed be complete then, for not one of His own will be left outside at His coming again ! Meanwhile, according to the Word, all should get together now, in assembly character, and each of us should seek this "*complete assembling*" of all ! Numbers of those who profess the faith are falling away ! Scripture is being rapidly fulfilled in those who are turning from the truth ! It behoves all those

who hold fast to it, therefore, to get together so "*much the more*" and reap the full benefit of the uttermost salvation of our great High Priest, for a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation awaits the apostates of Christendom.

To neglect in any way God's *great* salvation is a dangerous thing (Heb. 2. 3) ! The nature of the salvation of which Jesus has become the Author is *eternal*, "*to all them that obey Him*" (chap. 5. 9), for He Himself who secured it for us is eternal, though, notwithstanding the fact that He is the Son of God, He "*learned obedience from the things which He suffered*," having become Man. None need doubt that the salvation which is in Christ Jesus is for them. Jude speaks of it as our "*common salvation*" (verse 3). It is common to us all, and in its widest scope it is open to all, for "*every one whosoever who shall call on the Name of the Lord shall be saved*" (Rom. 10. 13, N.T.) !

It is a *great* salvation truly ! In Christ having come for all it has reached down to the chief of sinners ! In Him, too, the most wayward of saints have been restored to its wonderful joy ! In all its parts, and in all its bountiful benefits, it is open for us. The meek are beautified with it ! The holy and royal priests are clothed with it ! The most spiritual rejoice in the joyful sound of its proclamation ! It was of the Saviour of the world the prophet spake, "*I have set Thee for a light of the nations, that Thou shouldest be for salvation to the end of the earth !*" It was the Apostle Paul who thus heralded Him (Acts 13. 47) ! Soon the glory of it shall be ascribed to God by a numberless multitude *on earth*, saying, "*Salvation to our God who sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb !*" (Rev. 7. 10), and by a great

host *in heaven*, saying, "Hallelujah; the salvation and the glory and the power of our God" (Rev. 19. 1)! And we who are of the assembly shall worship Him, immediately surrounding the throne of glory, for we shall then have reaped the fulness of His *great* salvation, judicially, livingly, corporately; spirit, soul and body.

"We lift our hearts and voices
In blest anticipation,
And cry aloud, and give to God
The praise of our salvation."

Past telling are the rich results of reconciliation! Soon shall we dwell in

scenes of splendid majesty, with Christ our Head! When He is owned in His pre-eminence, where all the reconciled thrones, lordships, principalities and authorities yield fealty and honour and glory to the Son of the Father's love, in whom the fulness of the Godhead resides! When we, and they, and all the blest in Christ, shall be for the satisfaction and good pleasure of our God and Father, for ever and ever.

May we be adorned even now with the beauties of salvation, and carry in our hearts the gracious sense of God's own deep joy in reconciliation.

LOVE.

(L. R.)

"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." (1 Cor. 13. 1, 2, 3.)

WE wonder that it can be possible—to have eloquence, knowledge, faith, poverty for others' sake, to brave the fires of martyrdom and yet—love be lacking, and therefore all to be worthless!

How shall we learn the secret of love?

In the matchless Song of Songs, there is a wonderful little lesson on love. See chapter 8. 6-10. "If a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned"; and in the glowing Eastern imagery the story is told of one who had missed love. Poor little sister! What shall we do for her and for ourselves, who are, too often, in like case. Let us build a palace of silver, let us enclose with boards of cedar.

To translate into the homely words we all understand, let us tell her the sweet redemption story, for it is this that silver symbolizes in the word—

that the Lord Jesus went to Calvary for her, that He bore the judgment for her, that the cedar wood, hyssop and scarlet were all alike put into the fire (Num. 19. 6) that His death has become the door into life.

Let us, as endued with the Holy Spirit, repeat this marvellous story again and again, until with an answering note of love and joy, she can say—we can say, beloved—"I was in His eyes as one that found favour." Not only, I believe, because it is written, but my soul has *tasted* the sweetness of being loved; yea, loved with a love the Singer of old knew not, the love that was stronger than death, the love that was mightier than the grave—"the love of Christ that passeth knowledge."

So shall we say, in the words of the disciple whom Jesus loved, "we love because He first loved us" (1 John. 4. 19).

ONLY A TRACT.

(ARTHUR POLLOCK.)

[T was only a tract dropped into a standing motor-car as the distributor passed down the street, but the sequel proved it to be a link in the chain of the Lord's dealings with a soul. A letter to the distributor, who had stamped his address on the tract inviting enquirers to write to him, brought the interesting news that the owner of the car had read the tract with the deepest interest, and the writer asked what he should read for further help. Two booklets indicating the way of assurance were sent with a letter, urging the enquirer to carefully turn up the passages of Scripture quoted in the booklets and inviting him to a meeting, which the distributor had arranged to address. A few weeks passed by without further communication from the enquirer, and a book much used of God to the blessing of souls was sent to him by post, with a letter expressing the hope that the booklets first sent had been a blessing. The letter received in response was a very touching one, and you, my reader, will be able well to understand with what thankfulness and praise to God the distributor received it. It ran as follows :—

"The book came this morning, for which I am obliged. I shall make a good start to read it to-night.

"The little pamphlets you sent me have been most instructive and helpful.

"It was impossible for me to call on you at — because you did not give me your correct address ; in mistake you wrote my address at the top of your letter. I am a hard-worked doctor, and have very little time in the evening, otherwise I would have made an effort to see you when you gave your address in — Hall.

"I never had any particular faith in

Jesus Christ or God ; but at the back of my mind I knew there was something—nothing more. Last year, I had a very severe illness—rheumatism and a damaged heart. All the remedies known to science were tried without the slightest remedial effect, and so the days passed on until I got into such a state that I did not care whether I lived or died. But in the early hours of one morning, in a state of semi-consciousness, I repeated to myself the following words : ' There is nothing for it now but help from the Lord Jesus Christ.' I gradually got a little stronger and was able to do a little work in my motor car. I had not been out very long, when I discovered the little tract you left on the seat of my car. Then I was prompted to write to you and you have, like the good man you are, shown me the way of salvation. My life is changed and, although still weak, yet I feel and know that I am getting stronger every day. My faith is great, greater than words can express. With every good wish and may God prosper you in your good work."

How rejoiced I was as I read this letter, and how I praised God, especially when turning it over I read the following postscript :—

"I am 67 years of age. I have left my recognition of Jesus Christ a long time, have I not ? But it is not too late."

Many are those who have distributed the printed message of the gospel, but to few apparently it is given to learn of the results of their work of faith ; therefore, on receiving the above letter, I thought that I would do well to send it on to *Scripture Truth*, believing that it will prove an encouragement to some tract-distributor to continue, and an incentive to others to engage in such

work. There are those who complain that they have no gift and little opening for service, but here there is a wide field and plenty of scope for the earnest men and women, who will prayerfully and carefully select their stock, obtaining Scripture portions or good, sound and tactfully-written tracts and booklets (there are plenty of worthless ones published), and then prayerfully and tactfully make the distribution from door to door, to passers-by, or placing them where they will be found and, in many instances, read.

Supposing every true Christian in the kingdom were to distribute prayerfully only one good, sound tract every day, and supposing there are only 100,000 such, yet surely 100,000 tracts thus distributed daily could not fail to have a marked effect, for the distribution would cover a wide area. Further, the expense to each individual would not be more than a few pence per month, yet it would probably represent an annual expenditure on tracts alone of

over twenty thousand pounds, thus indicating the cumulative result of a little done by the many. I am sure that the work of God languishes to-day, not so much because of apathy on the part of those gifted, but rather because there are so many Christians who, because they have no special gift, fail to make their small daily contribution to the work of the Lord. Let us remember that no one else can do for us that which He who has saved us has left us in this world to do for Him. Little it is that any can do, but if we find out what that little is that the Lord would have us do for the furtherance of His interests, and do it heartily and in faith, we shall not have lived in vain. "Occupy till I come" (Luke 19. 13) are the Lord's own words to His servants. Let us not forget them, but with hope and courage do His work, remembering the words of Scripture, "Let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Gal. 6. 9).

Grace to meet Sin and Sorrow.

THIS is a world of sin and sorrow.

That scarcely needs to be said, for all who have had any experience of life know it well. But what many do not know, and what all need to know better, is that if sin and sorrow have entered the world, GRACE has come after them. Jesus Christ came full of grace. He took up the question of sin when He hung and died upon the cross of Calvary, and we can have perfect peace about that question now. What a relief it is when the conscience loses its burden before God and can rejoice that He can in perfect righteousness remember our sins and iniquities no more.

The Lord died to meet us in our sins, but He lives to maintain us in our sorrows. The cross of suffering answered for our sins, the throne of grace is our refuge in our sorrows. What a support it is in sorrow to have a living Saviour—a Friend indeed; to realize His nearness, His perfect sympathy, and that He is the great deliverer who can draw the heart away from the world where sin and sorrow are to His own company where perfect peace and rest abide. "My grace is sufficient," still abides in its unchanging truth. It is there for every one of us to prove.

"THE NEXT DAY AFTER."

(J. T. MAWSON.)

An Address on Worship, Work, and Witness.—John 1. 35-42.

EVERY Bible reader should know that John's Gospel shows the Lord Jesus in the fulness of His glory. It opens, as Augustine said, as with a peal of thunder. We are carried back to the beginning when the voice of God, the Almighty, broke the silence of Eternity in creatorial power, and that voice was the voice of Him whom we know as JESUS. "All things were made by Him and without Him was not anything made that was made." But more, He was the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father: not only did omnipotence dwell in Him, but He dwelt in infinite and eternal love—the Father's love to the Son. And all this was before the pendulum of Time began to swing, when nothing was but God. Then He was there, the eternal Son in the God-head, THE WORD. He created the world and it rebelled against Him. Then He came into it. He came not to condemn it but to save it. HE CREATED, HE CAME. The first means power, the second was grace. But mark the reception that was given Him when He came. "*He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came to His own and His own received Him not.*" In such terse statements as these was the world's indictment written. Ignorance and hatred scowled upon Him from His advent, surrounded Him, pursued Him, and at last crucified Him as a malefactor. But He was *the light* in the darkness of the world's ignorance, He was the full manifestation of the love of God when the world hated Him most, for His death was a sacrificial death. Men led Him to the place of it, but when their ignorance and hatred had reached their utmost limit God triumphed, for "*Herein is love, not that*

we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

Let us notice that the Spirit of God divides things into days in this chapter. *The next day* introduces the Lord Jesus as the Lamb of God. Then the day before the next was the day of His coming into the world, the day when "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." What a great day was that! The angels of God celebrated it with rapturous praise, and may well have wondered at the indifference of the world. But what shall we say of the next day? "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him and saith, Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world" (verse 29). It was for this day that He came, and as the Lamb of God He must fill the eye of faith as we look backward. He came into the world but He went out of it, He went out of it by suffering and death. These two days were wonderful days in God's work for the blessing of men—the coming of the Saviour and His death as a sacrifice for sin; but if they were to be effectual there was need of the *next day after*, and the great question was, Could the Lord Jesus reach unto this day? We see Him pass through the first and second days, filling them up as He passed through them with grace and truth and love; but shall there be a third day, a resurrection day—a next day after? If not, then His coming was useless, for "If Christ be not raised your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins" (1 Cor. 15. 17). We may be sure that the devil hoped that the next day would be the last day, that it would sink down into everlasting night unbroken by any further light from heaven, that the love

of God would be for ever quenched in the utter defeat of the Lamb of God, and that death and judgment would sweep with unrestrained victory over the human race, and that God would lose for ever the sons of men in whom He delighted. But thank God for "the next day after." "*Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; and looking upon Jesus as He walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus*" (verses 35-37). The next day after shows us a living person who can *detach* the hearts of men from the world and everything else that holds them captive and *attach* them to Himself, and lead them into His own dwelling-place. And He dwells in the bosom of the Father in the blessedness of the Father's love, and to that home of eternal rest He brings all who follow Him. It is this living Person that men need, that we all need. Yes, we needed a sacrifice of infinite value for *the salvation of our souls*, but we need a living Person for *the satisfaction of hearts*. Without the sacrifice we could never have had peace with God, our sins could never have been blotted out. Without the living Person of our Lord we shall be at the mercy of every passing attraction that the world and the devil may flash before us.

Christ is risen from the dead, He has attained unto the third day. His work is a finished **work**, and here we rest eternally secure, His blood has made a full atonement for our sins, and consequently our consciences are purged and we are free to think of Him who has done it all, and to follow Him who was dead, but who now lives for evermore. And that brings me to my object in this evening's address. I want to show you what the Lord can do with those who follow Him. It is shown us in pattern in the first three

men who ever did it. There can be no doubt that JOHN was one of the two disciples that followed Jesus. They followed on this occasion without being told to do so, they followed Him because He was so attractive to them as they looked upon Him that they could not help it. In John we see *the worshipper*. And it is well that we should begin here, for this will give its own tone to all that may follow. If we turn to John's Epistle we shall see how he worshipped, and the cause and basis of it. "*In this was manifested the love of God towards us,*" he says, "*because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.*" "**HEREIN IS LOVE**, *not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins*" (1 John 4. 9, 10). Do we not feel as we read these words the wonder that was in John's heart as he wrote them? The measure and the character of God's love seem to overwhelm him as he cries, "Herein is love." It is as we wonder that we worship. Let us never cease to wonder, for if we cease to wonder we cease to grow and we cease to worship. But we shall not cease to wonder if we continue to contemplate this great love; and the precious blood of the holy Victim gives us boldness in the very presence of God who gave Him. We can come into His presence, not as trembling sinners dreading the just judgment of our sins, or even now as hoping for mercy as once we did; but we can come as worshippers filled with wonder at the measure and the way of His love.

But John speaks further and says, "*Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God*" (1 John 3. 1). Again we feel that John was a wondering worshipper as this exclamation broke out from him. And we bow down

and worship with him as we read what he has written. This is not the manner of men, it is the manner of the Father's love. We, like the prodigal of the parable, would have been glad to have been sheltered in the kitchen where with hard toil we could have earned the bread that would have preserved us from starvation. That was our highest expectation, but not so was the Father's thought for us. He ran to meet us and covered us with kisses as we fell into His embrace. He clothed us in the best robe and brought us into His own home and called us His children. Oh, the wonder of it! We had no claim upon this. He has not treated us thus because of what we were; in this His own love has found its expression, and we wonder and worship before Him as we think of it. But this could never have been known by us if Christ had not come, and we can only enter into the experimental enjoyment of it as we follow Him as John did. It is the Son of God, risen from the dead, who declares the Father's Name to us, and as we listen to His voice He makes us worshippers—and such the Father seeks.

This contact with the Lord on ANDREW'S part had a wonderful effect upon him. He became a WORKER, for we read: "*One of the two which heard John speak, and followed [Jesus], was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon . . . and he brought him to Jesus.*" He was more successful than Philip was when he went forth, or at least his work was done with greater ease. And these two men stand out in contrast to each other in this Gospel of John. Andrew had found such an object for his trust and affection in Jesus that he cannot be idle, he must find someone else to share his joy and satisfaction, and who more likely than

his own brother? He had been so affected by that one day spent in the Lord's company that he effectually affected his brother. He had no difficulty in bringing him to Jesus. Philip had not been drawn in the same way after the Lord. He had to be commanded to follow, and when he set out to work as Andrew had done he met with questions and doubt. There was not the same clear, convincing ring in his witnessing, and not until he urged Nathanael to come and see for himself did he succeed.

In chapter 6, a multitude surrounded the Lord, and they needed bread, and to test Philip the Lord said unto him, "Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?" Philip did not know. Two hundred pennyworth of bread would only have given them a very little each. But Andrew, standing by, saith unto Him, "There is a lad here with five loaves and two small fishes." It is true that he added, "but what are these among so many?" But that may have been because the other disciples looked upon him with impatience and astonishment for calling attention to that which was only enough for a lad's hunger. We pass that by and rejoice in the faith and expectation that moved Andrew to bring the lad and his meal to Jesus. How he must have rejoiced when he saw the Lord bless that meal and distribute it to that great company, until they were all filled with such a feast as they had never tasted before.

In chapter 12, the Greeks come to Philip and say, "Sir, we would see Jesus." But what could Philip do? Were not these Greeks outside the pale? Would the Lord receive them if he brought them to Him? A perplexed, because an unintelligent servant was Philip that day; but he cometh and telleth Andrew, and in that he was

wise. He felt that Andrew would find a way out of the dilemma, and he did, for he brings him straight to the Lord with the difficulty: "*Andrew and Philip tell Jesus.*"

In the 14th chapter the Lord had to say to Philip: "Have I been so long time with you, and hast thou not known Me, Philip?" It was different with Andrew. He knew the Lord so well, that on every occasion on which we read of him in this Gospel he is bringing someone or something to Jesus, and this because he had found his heart's satisfaction as well as the centre of his life and activity in Him. He was a successful worker, and so shall we be if we come in the same way under the attractiveness and gracious working of our living Lord Jesus Christ.

PETER was brought to Jesus that he might become an outstanding WITNESS to the grace that was in Him. We have only to study the history of his soul with the Lord as it is given to us in the Word to learn this. And what an instructive history it is. Peter had to learn, as we all have, that in him no good dwelt. That all his aspirations and vows could only fail; fervent they might be, but unavailing. He had to learn, as we all have, that

it is what God is as revealed in Christ that alone avails. Grace it must be that greets us and saves when we come first to the Saviour, and grace it must be until we reach the glory for which we have been saved. This wonderful grace never failed Peter in all the ups and downs of his experience, and at last he became the great witness to others of it. It is the theme of the letter that he was inspired by the Holy Ghost to write to us. In the letter he declares that **THE LORD IS GRACIOUS** (1 Peter 2. 3), and he tells us of **THE TRUE GRACE OF GOD WHEREIN WE STAND** (ch. 5. 12). What a witness he was to the grace that is in the Lord when he preached on Pentecost, and for many a day afterwards. He proclaimed the remission of sins to others because he knew that his own sins had been remitted; he had himself been the subject of the grace that he proclaimed to others.

Thus the Lord is working in "*the next day after*" which is this present day, drawing men to Himself, making Himself the supreme object of their hearts and changing them into worshippers, workers, and witnesses; and that we each may be what these three men were is my prayer for His Name's sake.

NOTES ON SERVICE.

CONNECT your service with nothing but God, not with any particular set of persons. You may be comforted by the fellowship of your brethren, and your heart refreshed, but you must work by your own individual faith and energy, without leaning on anyone else, for if you do you cannot be a faithful servant. Service must ever be measured by faith and one's own communion with God. Saul was a prophet when he got among the prophets, but

David was always the same, in the cave or anywhere.

Whilst choicest blessings are given in fellowship in the truth, yet a man's service must flow from himself, else there will be weakness. In every age the blessing has been through individual agency; and the moment it has ceased to be this, it has declined in the world. The tendency of association is to make us lean upon one another, we have to learn that all comes directly from God.

EARS THAT HEAR.

(JAMES GREEN.)

AN immense principle of far-reaching importance is contained in the cry, "He that hath an ear, let him hear." Sixteen times do the words or their equivalent occur in the New Testament. Eight times in the Gospels, where the plural "ears" is used, seven times in Rev. 2. 3, the singular "ear," and each time the words are used by our Lord Himself or His Spirit, and lastly in Rev. 13. 9. The call in the first place is addressed to individual responsibility; secondly, it involves the exercise of spiritual understanding in contrast to the simple hearing of words; thirdly, it supposes consequent action. In a day of declension and departure from the truth, God's object is to find men who will listen to His word, and having heard will obey it; such are the men of God of 2 Tim. 3. 16, 17. The majority in Christendom are paying attention to other voices, they have ears for the utterances of their fellow-men, they will listen eagerly enough for the last new thing, the latest cult in the religious world, the last conclusion of science falsely so called, but the law and the testimony enter not into their calculations.

Amidst all this tumult of voices God's desire is for a man that will listen when He speaks, for "to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word." Alas, that He still has to say of many of His own, as He said eight times in Jeremiah's day, "They incline not their ears." Very significant is the call in Matt. 11. 15. The testimony of John the Baptist had been rejected by a people that nothing could move. The austerity of John and his urgent call to repentance, in view of coming wrath, left the nation unaffected, the grace and approachableness of the Son

of Man produced no turning to God, they had ears but they were deaf to wisdom's appeal. Only in the case of wisdom's children was any result apparent.

The parable of the sower, Matt. 13. 3, Mark 4. 3, Luke 8. 4, marked a new departure in the ways of God. The Lord began to speak by parables as He had not done before, and gave as His reason for this that the nation had stopped its ears lest His words should enter. Their condition was that of Zech. 7. 9-12. They were lacking in true judgment, mercy, and compassion; they cared not for the stranger nor the poor, the widow nor the fatherless; they indulged evil thoughts against their brethren; they were restless under reproof, and refused to listen, and they hardened their hearts because they did not want to hear. Has all this no voice to those who bear the Christian name to-day? The solemn consequence of such a state is seen in Jer. 5. 3, 21; 6. 10. Nothing more could be done, the Lord would no longer cultivate the old, but by sowing broadcast the seed of the Word, produce a crop which should bear fruit for God's pleasure.

On the proper reception of the word in the heart everything depended, "who hath ears to hear, let him hear." At the end of the explanation of the parable of the tares the same call is given (Matt. 13. 43). In this parable our Lord described the course that things would take during His absence, the sowing of the seed would be imitated by an enemy. From the side of human effort it would not be possible to remedy the mixed condition which would ensue, but on His return it would be dealt with. In other words, the outward dispensation produced by the word of His first coming would end in the

judgment of His word at His second, when He will purge "out of His kingdom all things that offend and them which do iniquity." His word alone can produce the righteous children of the kingdom, fruit of His own sowing. "Who hath ears to hear, let him hear."

More searching still become the words in Mark 7. 16, addressed not to the world but to those who professed to be hearers. Satan's constant effort is to corrupt the truth, and more often than not by additions to the word which expresses the present mind of God. No device has served so well for this object as the importation of the types and shadows of a past dispensation into the sphere of the full-orbed realities of the grace of God. Hence the Pharisee, the man of the exterior, becomes the most subtle enemy of the truth; and tradition, the words of men concerning the things of God, is relied on. Having the credentials of antiquity, plausible and easily assimilated by the natural mind, making great show of religious zeal, affording occasion of appearing well in the eyes of others, ministering to much pride of heart, in effect they make the word of God non-resultant, perhaps assented to in theory, but not obeyed in practice. The same snare was found in the Colossian day (Col. 2. 16-23), and none the less in our own. With one word (Mark 7. 15) the Lord strips off the mask and sets aside the whole ceremonial law, which consisted in meats and drinks and defilement from without, showing that everything depends upon that which proceeds from within the heart, that spring of all corruption, which faith alone purifies unto unfeigned love of the brethren. This is the moral cleansing which constitutes the holiness on which God sets value. Note the added emphasis in verse 14—"Hearken unto me, every one of you, and under-

stand"—to verse 16. "If any man have ears to hear, let him hear."

There is yet again the danger, if the ear is uncircumcised from the world principles of pride and selfishness, of misapplying the words of Scripture, like the Lord's disciples in the boat (Matt. 16.) who thought He was talking only of outward things such as loaves, when He was really bidding them beware of the inward working of the leaven of the Pharisee and Herodian, calling forth His rebuke, "Having ears, hear ye not" (Mark 8. 18). Hearing His word with singleness of purpose to do it, alone can produce disciples. Natural ties and love of self (Luke 14. 26) are the things which prevent following with the whole heart, and for such a path the cost and the consequences must needs be counted and the resources considered, otherwise there will be abandonment of the work begun or else a compromise with the enemy for the sake of peace. At the same time the Lord does not leave discipleship as an optional matter, for if anything less is accepted it means that, instead of being of use to Him, there will be a loss of savour, and a state neither fit for the church nor yet for the world. How great is the danger of indecision, and how much time is lost and needless exercise of soul experienced, through indefiniteness in respect of the Lord's claims.

In the seven epistles which describe prophetically the responsible history of the church (Rev. 2., 3.) the same call is repeated with growing insistence on the individual conscience, for this is a cardinal point in Christianity. It is what the Spirit saith that is to be heeded, not what the church says, for this latter is the very essence of Romanism. In the first three epistles one must hear in order to overcome, but in the last four the order is reversed,

and it is needful to overcome in order to have the opened ear. In these last states, which are all closed by the Lord's return, the opposition is so great, and spiritual energy so much needed, that only as any are superior to the corruptions of Thyatira, or the deadness of Sardis, the giving up of Philadelphian conditions, or the lukewarm nauseousness of Laodicea, that the Lord's word will have its true place in the heart and govern the practice. What then will produce a response to the call, "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches"? Is it not a vision of the glory of the Lord such as Rev. 1. reveals? If there were more impress of the greatness of Him who bids us listen to what He has to say as to the church condition in which we may be found, so much the more would we be found helpless and worthless at His feet. Then it is that the touch of His hand of might is felt, and the majesty of His voice heard, so that we must say, like him who saw that glory above the brightness of the

sun, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

A dark night is about to fall upon the world, and more especially upon those lands where the gospel has for so long been proclaimed. The signs of its approach are becoming increasingly evident, and once more the call falls upon our ears, bidding us walk apart from everything that savours of that day of reproach and blasphemy. The world will soon give its allegiance to the man of sin, "He that has an ear, let him hear" (Rev. 13. 9). In that day of darkness and gloom, it will be no longer possible to add "what the Spirit saith unto the churches," for the church the habitation of God in the Spirit will be no longer here during that hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world to try them that dwell on earth. The calling of the church is from and to heaven, and in view of its speedy translation thither it surely becomes all who love His appearing and approval, to give ear to His words and do them.

"ABIDE IN ME" : John 15.

"For without Me ye can do nothing."

HOW shall we illustrate this abiding in Christ? Let us take the earth in its relation to the sun for this purpose. What would the earth be without the sun? A cold, naked, barren place! Suppose, for the sake of our illustration, we endow it with thought and speech. It thinks of what it is in itself and says: "I am nothing, and of myself I can do nothing; of what use am I in the scheme of things? Let me pass out of existence; let me drop out of sight into oblivion." It would not make such a speech as long as it was conscious that the sun's rays fell upon it. Rather it would say, "The sun can do without me, but I

cannot do without the sun. O thou great light, let me see thee every morning; let me feel thee when I cannot see thee; warm me, cheer me, enlighten me, bless me and make me fruitful, that I may grow all that is needful for man and beast. Without thee I can do nothing; fill me with thy light, and enable me to fulfil my life with gladness and music and gratitude." May we thus speak to the Lord, who are as dependent upon Him as the earth is upon the sun? Surely we may, and as the earth abides in the light and warmth and under the control of the sun, so may we abide in Christ and be fruitful.

THE WRITINGS UPON THE CROSS.

(R. J. REID.)

[T is customary for those who deny the inerrancy of Scripture to cite the "superscription" in proof of their claims, asserting that its varied versions never could have appeared in writings that were verbally inspired. Of course they own that, in a sense, Scripture is inspired; but explain that this "inspiration" consists in the spiritual exercise of devout minds; hence, that Scripture teaching is but the record of the conceptions of holy men.

In referring to this conclusion, it is perhaps necessary to remind one another that Inspiration secures to us an authentic record without verbal error, whereas *Revelation is direct communication from God to man.*

Thus, when the Apostle Paul advises the Corinthians (on matters they had inquired about), he cautions them that his counsel is "no commandment of the Lord" (7. 6, 12, 25, 40); it is not Divinely authoritative. He shows that the conceptions of holy men are not the same things as communications from God. Of the latter he says: "The things that I write unto you *are the commandments of the Lord*" (14. 37). In this way the exceptional inclusion of his personal advice in an epistle comprised of Divine communications is used to show by contrast what Divine revelation is.

How keen was the penetration which took such a method of sifting the confused thought which even then lay at the door, and now unblushingly speaks under the name of Modernism! And how thoroughly did it destroy the equipment of this thing!

In nothing, however, is the warped vision of the fleshly mind more evident than in its discussion of the "superscription." For the very strongest kind of evidence of its inspiration in

every word lies in the variety of phrase objected to; in fact, it is this variety that unfolds to the inquirer the Divine meaning of the superscription.

Had "the will of man" any part in its composition, uniformity of statement would have been secured, for the writers could have been conscious of sacrificing no principle in securing it, seeing that nothing which the unaided intellect could perceive, would have been tampered with. But since "the prophecy came not in old [any] time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," the evangelists were guided to use words which convey the truth as no other words could have done. A little care will show that *every word* (in the original documents) is stamped with the impress of God; that the very variety of statement contains infallible proof of verbal inspiration.

However, "the inspiration" of these writings does not necessitate their "mechanical dictation," as can be seen in the fact that each writer retains his style and excels in his treatment of certain subjects; nevertheless, in some way which God does not explain, each evangelist is preserved from human infirmity, no slightest deviation from plan or inaccuracy of statement being discoverable in his work. He communicates spiritual things "by spiritual means" (1 Cor. 2. 13, N.Tr.), the means of communication being of the Holy Ghost no less than the things communicated.

Were "inspiration" a mere matter of piety and ability, would these writers have gone out of their way to record a public superscription in such fashion as to provoke questions for no advantage? Would the ex-publican MATTHEW, trained at "the receipt of

custom," an expert book-keeper, not record the writing exactly? Would MARK, the disciplined minister who had ultimately learned to "make good," prove slipshod? Would LUKE, the well-informed and lucid writer, who had undertaken "to set forth in order" the story of the Son of Man, exhibit the traits of a disorderly mind? And would JOHN, the last writer, and having all the evidence before him, only increase the confusion by his manner of reporting an inscription which had stared him in the face while "standing by" the cross? Now, if we revolt at such unlikely suppositions as these, we are of necessity shut up to the conclusion that, in their treatment of the superscription, the writings of these informed and capable writers "came not . . . by the will of man." But let us ask another question: What are we to think of the "chief priests"? For John says that the inscription reads, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews," yet reports the priests as saying to Pilate, "Write not, The King of the Jews; but that He said, I am King of the Jews." Why do they omit the words "Jesus of Nazareth"? Are they inaccurate in their statement to Pilate? By no means. The fact is (as Collett says), they quote "those particular words which apply to the argument they are using"—a very legitimate thing to do. But this is exactly what we shall discover in the four versions of the superscription: we shall find that God quotes "these particular words" *which apply to the argument He is using in each Gospel*. But to discern His purpose we must be alert and show some interest.

In our courts of justice, if a truthful man is asked to account for his movements on a given day, he may not furnish a statement which appears to the superficial so intact as the statement

made by a perjurer; but cross-examination elicits its truth in the minutest details, and the seeming discrepancies prove to be the strongest evidences of truthfulness. On the other hand, the smooth statement of the perjurer bears the earmarks of premeditation to the alert men of the law, and they will never halt until they discover the flaw which enables them to unravel the carefully framed lie.

Seeing, then, that these things are so, would it not be wise for the too-easily-satisfied critics (who think a smooth uniformity would strengthen the case for verbal inspiration) to do some cross-examining? And is it not possible that by so doing they might discover safer and more convincing proof of such inspiration in the very variety of expression they have been stumbling over? Let them try.

The Gospels present our Lord in four ways, each evangelist adhering to his plan of narrative no less than do those authors whose histories are the result of their own skill. As Joseph Tumulty shows the industry of Woodrow Wilson, the late ex-President of the United States, or as Colonel House reveals his appreciation of faithfulness—each historian presenting different views of the same president—so do the four evangelists present Christ in different aspects. But we shall also find what the biographies of the late president do not reveal the design of one Mind underlying the four narratives. This design and these plans dovetail into the structure of all Scripture. *For Christ is the subject of all Scripture*. We see this in the four ingredients of the incense; the four sets of curtains for the tabernacle; the colours of these four sets; the four colours of the veil hung upon the four pillars of shittim wood overlaid with gold; the four sacrifices slain; the four faces of the cherubim—

"the face of a man" (Luke), "the face of a lion" (Matthew), "the face of an ox" (Mark), "the face of an eagle" (John);—all these not only speaking of Christ, but doing so in accord with the theme of each Gospel. And although these distinctions are not rigid but, like the colours of the rainbow, blended in four Gospels which describe one Person, they are apparent to all but the blind.

Turning now to the "superscription," we may note that there are *three inscriptions*: one in Greek, another in Latin, and a third in Hebrew; while each evangelist prefaces his version by special information regarding it. The emphasis in each version we shall indicate by capital letters.

PARTICULAR PLAN IN EACH VERSION.

Matthew presents our Lord in special relation to Israel, portraying Him as King. Hence he gives His genealogy from Abraham, through David and Solomon to Joseph, the latter being recognized in Jewish law as the husband of Mary when Jesus is born. Consequently He is heir to the throne of Israel. In referring to His *virgin-birth*, Matthew simply announces the fact in fulfilment of prophecy (Isa. 7. 14). In describing the *transfiguration*, he alone remarks that "His face did shine as the sun,"—the Ruler of the day. He observes that the overshadowing cloud is "a bright cloud," being the Shekinah which attested the presence of Jehovah in Israel. Doubtless, then, this evangelist gives the inscription as it appeared in the Hebrew characters—"This is JESUS the King of the Jews." Israel's proper King is Jehovah, He who of old deplored to Samuel their defection, saying: "They have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them!" But as the name "Jesus" means Jehovah Saviour, Mat-

thew is showing that Jehovah is now present (see also John 12. 41). Hence the King whom Israel denies in the presence of Pilate is none other than Jehovah. He is "Emmanuel" God with us. He would save "his people" (Jehovah's people) from their sins. He had adopted them as a nation, but they had demonstrated their need of Him as a Saviour from their sins, and He is now present for that purpose. But Matthew, who shows this, prefaces the inscription with the information that it is "set up over his head." For he wants us to understand that Israel is compelled to read in the language of their fathers the proclamation of their infidelity to Jehovah.

Mark shows us the activities of the Son of God from the age of thirty onward. He begins the narrative by showing the Workman industriously carrying out the will of God, "immediately" doing this and "straightway" doing that. Therefore, neither birth nor genealogy is given, not being relevant to his theme. What is in question is the work of Him who takes the place of a servant. In describing the *transfiguration* Mark presents in pattern the Kingdom of God come "with power," for thus he shows the energy in which Christ does His work and wherewith He will ultimately displace organized evil by Divine rule. This evangelist, whom (with Timothy) Paul desired in Rome, and who is reputed to address himself especially to the Romans, probably gives the Latin inscription: "THE KING OF THE JEWS." He is not indicting Israel with its treason to a King who is Jehovah, but showing that the crucified One is acknowledged in Roman language as royal. Since Jesus was mute upon the question and submitted to the will of God, and since Israel repudiated Him, the Roman

governor acknowledges His royalty. And Mark does not say that soldiers set up this inscription, but that it is "written over"; it is put on record where it cannot be ignored.

Luke pictures Him in the grace of His humanity—the Man Christ Jesus. Therefore he traces His genealogy on the mother's side, Joseph's name appearing instead of Mary's because a woman's name does not appear on this particular register. Joseph is the son of Heli (the father of Mary) by virtue of Mary's espousal to him. This genealogy is traced not merely to Abraham but to Adam, emphasizing our Lord's humanity. To *Luke* is assigned the privilege of relating the manner of Christ's birth. He gives the angel's words to the blessed Virgin saying: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee, therefore, also, that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (1. 35). The eternal Son whom God "gave" is designated the Son of God as man, because of the manner of His birth. This is according to *Psa.* 2. 7, "Thou art My Son: this day have I begotten Thee." In his account of the *transfiguration* *Luke* informs us it was "as he prayed" He was transfigured, showing the pleasure God found in the dependent ways of this holy Man. He alone mentions the topic of Moses and Elias,—“His decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem”—reminding us why He became man,—made a little lower than the angels “for the suffering of death.” *Luke* then (probably a Greek himself) gives, we believe, the Greek inscription:—“THIS IS the King of the Jews.” As the evangelist of Christ's humanity, he shows the writing in that language which addressed itself most clearly to the human race. Even in naming the languages

used he puts Greek first in order; and by naming *three* implies there was fulness of testimony to no one nation in particular but to humanity as such. He also impresses upon us the fact of Christ's Kingship despite the lowliness of His guise, and shows that it could not be concealed by the most distressing circumstances, so that a repentant thief discerns it and solicits a favour at His hands, saying: Lord, remember me when Thou comest “in Thy Kingdom.” And never was request more royally acceded.

John describes the eternal One become flesh and tabernacling among us. Manifestly he could give no genealogy of such an One. Briefly does he mention the incarnation, saying: “The Word became flesh.” And although he was a witness of the *transfiguration*, he omits it from his narrative, for none was necessary to his description of One who was God and whose glory shone out in everything He did. So evident is this that the evangelist says, were an attempt made to narrate all He did “the world could not contain the books that should be written”;—for who could exhaustively write the story of God incarnate? Therefore this worshipful disciple is chosen to give the fourth (and last) view of Him whom God presents to universal attention—like the four-sided altar which faced mankind in every direction. These four views of our Lord might perhaps be divided into 3 and 1, the synoptical Gospels setting forth His rights, His industry, and His grace; while *John's* Gospel shows the greatness of the Person in whom these things are seen. Therefore, while in a general way he includes in his version what the other writers set forth in particular, he adds his own distinctive testimony. It has been said that *John* gives the full Latin inscription (of which *Mark* had quoted

that part which was "the accusation" only). But as to this we cannot speak with certainty. Nevertheless, it is very certain that, as the priests cited that part of the inscription which applied to the argument they used with Pilate, so God decides what parts of the story of Jesus each evangelist is best qualified to write, to give distinctive character to his narrative. Hence we now see another example of the amazing accuracy and moral force of verbal inspiration, in the part assigned to John. For he declares that the rights of Christ were denied Him *because men failed to discern who He was*. He says: "Jesus OF NAZARETH the King of the Jews." This blessed One had come to His own and "His own received Him not"; He was in the world and the world was made by Him and "the world knew Him not." So true was this that He was "called a Nazarene." And so great was the opprobrium attached to this in the Jewish mind, that Nathanael asks: "*Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?*"

Unlike Luke, John puts the Hebrew

writing first in order, saying the writings were in "Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin"; for he wants to show how it aroused the chief priests to protest to the governor. For the astounding fact dawns upon them that, even if ironical, the writing is official. If others did the actual writing and erecting of the inscriptions, they did so at the command of Pilate; therefore, "Pilate wrote" and Pilate "put" this title upon the cross. This official title stares that concourse in the face, speaking searchingly in three languages; but to the Jews, and especially to the chief priests, speaking in the Hebrew language. Moreover, the writing is irrevocable; it will never be recalled. Let the clever priests, in whose hands Pilate has been as wax all the morning, try to have it altered, and they will discover they have a very different man to deal with now. He declares in all the authority of his office that not so much as one word will be erased; he will not even discuss such a thing.

Thus did God make the wrath of man to praise Him.

"DO GOOD AND COMMUNICATE."

"THE meal unshared is food unblest;
Thou hoard'st in vain what love should spend;
Self ease is pain; the only rest
Is labour for a worthy end.

"Free-lipped the liberal streamlets run,
Free shines for all the healthful ray,
The still pool stagnates in the sun,
The livid earth-fire haunts decay!

"So do thy work; it shall succeed
In thine or in another's day;
And, if denied the victor's need,
Thou shalt not lack the toiler's pay."

PRACTICAL PAPERS. No. 9—Prayer.

(A. J. POLLOCK.)

THE Christian is exhorted to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5. 17), and that being so, prayer has a very important place in the Christian life.

There are twelve different words used for prayer in the Old Testament and eight in the New Testament, with various shades of meaning, but we do not propose to go into details, but take the subject up in its broad outline.

The first time that prayer is alluded to in the Scriptures, we believe, is to be found in Gen. 4. 26: "And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the Lord."

There seems a connection between the name Enos, or Enosh, given by Seth to his son, and calling on the name of the Lord.

Both the names Adam and Enosh are Hebrew words for man—the former derived, it is said, from *Adamah*, red earth, signifying that God formed man out of the dust of the earth; whereas the latter—Enos—means frail, sinful, mortal man, soon passing away; and Seth, in giving this significant name to his son, acknowledged the condition in which sin had brought man, hence his need of prayer. Prayer is the vehicle of communicating our needs and wants to God.

It has often been asked if prayer can turn aside the forces of nature or the onrush of disease. Increasingly this has been denied in this materialistic and infidel age. It is fashionable to scout the existence of miracles. We know who is at the bottom of all this, for if miracles are impossible, then the virgin birth and resurrection of our Lord were impossible. Christianity stands or falls by miracles.

Infidel scientists may grudgingly acknowledge an unknowable First Cause, who has brought everything round us into existence, but who, having given laws to nature, they treat as having entirely retired, and bound hand and foot by His own laws, so that they may not be set aside. Hence they deny that there is such a thing as a miracle.

But is this so? Scripture gives us striking instances to the contrary. Take, for instance, Elijah praying for a drought, lasting three and a half years, and then praying for the drought to terminate; Elisha's praying that the young man's eyes might be opened to see what ordinary mortal eyes might never see, viz., the mountain full of horses and chariots and fire—heavenly visitants for the defence of His servants against the host of Syria; the Syrians smitten with blindness and their power broken; Hannah praying for a son and becoming the mother of Samuel in distinct answer to prayer; King Hezekiah, "sick unto death," praying for his life and having fifteen years given to him, in distinct response—these and many more instances can be adduced that God can and does set aside natural laws for the moment in answer to prayer. How blessed to know that we can come to God as One who, knowing all our needs and circumstances, sympathizes and answers prayer.

Not every prayer is answered in the way we wish. God sometimes shows His love and wisdom just as much in withholding an answer as in giving it. Sometimes He may keep us long years before the answer is given.

Even as parents we often have to refuse the requests of our children. A little lad of four asks his mother for

his father's razor to play with. Will she answer his prayer? And often we ask God for razors whereby we might injure ourselves.

The writer, and I am sure many of his readers, can witness to wonderful answers to prayer, when only by a remarkable combination of circumstances as to time and place, etc., could the answer be possible—a combination quite beyond the range of chance or happy coincidence, but an answer clearly planned by Divine intelligence and carried out by Divine power—in short, an answer given by God Himself.

It is one of the distinguishing features of God that whilst caring and arranging for great things, such as the ordering of the solar system, or the sequence of the seasons, yet He can provide for the small things, such as marking the fall of the sparrow, or numbering the hairs of the heads of His saints. The great men of the earth are too small to look after small things—they are not big enough. How different is our God—great enough to sustain the universe, great enough to descend in fullest sympathy to the wants and woes of His meanest creature.

Surely the most deeply touching example of prayer is given in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ on this earth. Here we stand in the presence of an inscrutable mystery. He, who was God, omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, the Creator and Sustainer of all things, and never ceasing to be this, became a true Man, dependent and prayerful, doing the will of His Father in heaven.

How true was His manhood when we find Him, so truly marked by prayer! We read again and again of an all-night vigil in prayer on the mountain side. Is there anything more

touching in the whole range of prayer than seeing our Lord offering up "prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared"? (Heb. 5. 7).

In all the great events of our Lord's life we find Him praying—at His baptism (Luke 3. 21); when choosing His disciples (Luke 6. 12); on the Mount of Transfiguration (Luke 9. 28); on the cross (Luke 23. 34); and, above all, in what is pre-eminently the Lord's prayer (John 17.), when He departs from the usual word for prayer, using a stronger word, having the force of demanding.

What a wondrous example! If the blessed Son of God was marked by prayer—prayer of an extensive and intensive nature, too—surely it becomes us in all our weakness and infirmity to be men and women of prayer.

The gospel was first introduced into Europe in connection with a band of *praying* women at the river side of Philippi. Paul, the servant who received the vision calling him into Macedonia, was a great man of prayer. The intensity of his prayers for the saints who had not seen his face in the flesh he could only characterize as "conflict," or combat (Col. 2. 1). "Praying always for you" (Col. 1. 3) shows his steady perseverance in this matter.

Well does the writer remember in 1893 the venerable C. H. M., in his room in Dublin, putting his hand on his knee, and saying in never-to-be-forgotten, affectionate tones, "Here is a verse for you and me: 'We will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word'" (Acts 6. 4). "Continually to prayer"—what a word is this, what a challenge! The Lord stir up our hearts!

There are two great departments in prayer—one concerning our own interests, the other concerning the Lord's. The former is more prominent in private prayer, the latter more prominent in public prayer. In private prayer we may suitably pray for our personal and family needs, and be encouraged of the Lord to bring all our troubles, trials and perplexities to Him. But we should be self-centred indeed if we limited our prayers to our own needs. Whether in our own closets or in the public prayer meeting, there is the range of the Lord's interests in this world.

Take 1 Tim. 2. 1, 2, "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." We are exhorted to pray "for all men." God restrains men on behalf of His people. He does not allow Satan to go as far as he would like. Though on the one hand Satan is "the god of this world" (2 Cor. 4. 4), yet "the powers that be are ordained of God" (Rom. 13. 1).

And yet on the human side men can so easily rise and refuse to obey their rulers. The millions that compose the masses can in a moment alter the constitution. So prayer is to be made for them for two things, that they may submit to constitutional authority, so that "a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty" may be the portion of the believers. We must ever remember that the church of God is one, and that whilst believers in Great Britain may be blessed by quietness and tranquillity, it is far otherwise in other parts of the world, such as Russia and China. Secondly, we have to pray for the conversion of men to God.

Then for kings and those in authority we have to pray for two things. First, that they may govern wisely and justly; and, secondly, that they too may be converted.

The prayers of Christians alter things. The writer remembers a lady urging him to vote at a general election, saying that if he failed to do so he would be lacking in his duty. He replied that he probably did more than her husband. Did he vote? Yes! Did he pray about it? No! Well, the writer had prayed, and the prayer is all the more efficacious when we remember the words of the Lord Jesus in relation to the believers, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John 17. 16), which would keep the believer from voting and taking part in the politics of the world.

Note, too, the various terms used—*supplications*, speaking of intensity; *prayers*, that which is general; *intercessions*, that is, praying for others as a privileged person might intercede for another less privileged; *thanksgiving*, not forgetting grateful acknowledgment to God for His answers to our prayers. At the beginning of the Christian era we read, "They continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2. 42). Here we have collective prayer—assembly prayer. What scope there is for prayer for success in the gospel, for the deepening of the souls of the Lord's people in the things of God. We have already alluded to Paul's "conflict" in prayer that the believers' "hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God" (Col. 2. 2). Read also the apostle's prayer in Ephes. 3. 14-21, and

you will see what is pressing on the mind of the Spirit of God.

We need *more* prayer for the gospel and *more* for the church—more prayer all round. The pulse of any meeting of christians is measured by the prayer meeting—each one, brother and sister, young and old, is privileged to show his or her true interest in the Lord's things specially there.

We have only skimmed the very surface of this immense subject. We end with the text we began with—"Pray without ceasing." We believe that, whilst we are not able to be always on our knees, yet we may use

every opportunity, and be found in a continual spirit of prayer.

Whether we should pray to God the Father, or to the Lord Jesus, or both, has often been a great question. Prayer in Old Testament times was always to God, but an added thought comes out in the New Testament. Christians can pray to God *the Father*, and in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. That we can pray to the Lord as well as the Father is evidenced by Paul beseeching the Lord thrice that the thorn in the flesh might be removed. This leads us to believe that in matters of service especially the Lord might be addressed in prayer.

HEARING AND DOING.

"But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only."

James 1. 22.

OF course we all admire the Word, and that is right as far as it goes, but it has its dangers, and these are great if we stop there, for if we are satisfied with admiring it and do no more we deceive our own selves. So we learn from practical James.

A parable has been told of a child to whom was given a sheet of white paper and a pencil and a ruler. "Write as well as you can," he was told, but keep your lines straight: the ruler has been given you for this purpose; use it."

Now the ruler was a very beautiful one, and shone like gold in the sunlight. "I am glad it is mine," said the child; "how beautiful it is, and it must be of great value. I will put it there where I can always look at it."

So he commenced his task, stopping

every now and then to admire the shining ruler, until at last the sheet was filled. Alas! there was not a straightly written line upon it, not one. Crooked lines, sprawling letters, covered it; it was indeed a disgraceful page.

"I am ashamed of your work," said the teacher. "Where is the ruler I gave to you?" "It is there," said the child. "I put it there where the sun might shine upon it, and where I could see it and admire it." "But it was given to you to use," said the teacher.

"I prized it and valued it," said the child.

"Yes, but your lines are all crooked," said the teacher.

The wise-hearted will ponder the parable and understand what it is that James would teach us.

THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.

(F. B. HOLE.

Notes of an Address on Psalm 84.

WHILE recognizing the Jewish character of this Psalm, we may profitably consider it in the light of the New Testament, and thus make it the vehicle of a little New Testament instruction and encouragement. The theme of the Psalm is the exceeding blessedness of the knowledge of God and, as we might say, adopting an old phrase, the practice of the presence of God. True blessedness is to be found in the knowledge of God Himself. Of course for us to-day the knowledge of God, as revealed in Christ, has reached a completeness that was not possible in the days when this Psalm was written, yet to be put in touch with God Himself, and taste the reality of His presence, that is blessedness indeed, beyond which there is no blessedness to be known.

Now that is the theme of the Psalm. It says, "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts." I hope that in some small degree we can all take this language upon our lips, "My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth, for the courts of the Lord." Of course, for the godly Jew who was not of Aaronic or Levitical descent there was no access at all into the immediate presence of God. The high priest could only enter the holiest once a year, and then under the most stringent regulations. This meant, as Hebrews 9. tells us, that the way into the holiest, the immediate presence of God, was not yet made manifest. Thank God, for us it is made manifest. We have a new and living way, and a great High Priest over the house of God, who has taken up His seat in the very presence of God. Do we in any measure long for the presence of God?

Can we say, "My heart and my flesh

cry out for the living God"? Yes, I think even the youngest and simplest believer in this audience can say that, though admittedly in modified form. Have you never felt that you are going through a world which is just a wretched sham, that there is no real truth in the world? The world is dominated by the god of this age. He is a liar and the father of it. Truth has come out in Christ. We go through a world where things are not what they seem to be, and our souls long for that which is true and real. Give me the living God in a world of death like this, we cry. You may say, "I wish my heart always so cried out." So do I. Still, it does cry out. Your heart, though you have been but recently converted, surely enough does cry out for the living God. You never find absolutely unalloyed satisfaction and joy other than in the presence of God, now of course well known in Jesus' love.

We want the presence of God, and if anyone said to us, "Why do you want the presence of God? Why is it that you say in the language of the Psalmist that 'A day in Thy courts is better than a thousand,' and 'I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness'?" we could reply, "First because of what God is, and then because of what He gives."

He is a sun and He is a shield. How fully that has been verified in our Lord Jesus Christ! The sun is the Divinely appointed centre of our little solar system. The sun is the light-bearing and the attractive centre that holds the whole system together. That is what God is. All the light and attraction is found in Him. Happy for us if, like the planets, we have swung into

the attraction there is found in that great Sun, and find ourselves under His blessed direction!

Remember that there is no region of twilight between darkness and light. We may try to make a kind of third ground, a kind of neutral ground between the two, but you do not find that neutral position here. You find the courts of Jehovah and the tents of wickedness. You may say, "I live in a house where they are all unconverted." Yes, but where does your heart find its home? Where is your mental and spiritual abiding-place? To what spot does your heart resort in its leisure moments? That is a searching question for us all.

We can say He is a sun and shield. He is light and warmth and an attractive centre. What does He give? "The Lord will give grace and glory." In the light of the New Testament we would revise it, and say the Lord God *has given* the most abundant grace, and very shortly He is going to give the most abundant glory. As Titus tells us, the grace of God which brings with it salvation for all men has appeared, teaching us that we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world; looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory. Grace has appeared. The glory is about to appear. "The Lord will give grace and glory," said the Psalmist. We say, "He has given grace, and we stand on the threshold of glory." Verily the coming of the Lord is near. Glory is ahead of us and as to the time between, "No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." Do you say, "I am a poor man"? Well, it may be good for you. A little more money might have wrecked you spiritually. He will give you what is good. He will withhold nothing that is for your spiritual good, nothing that

will lead to advancement for you in the day that is coming. The Lord will give all that is really good to the one that walks uprightly, that is, in the fear of God.

We have been speaking about the excellence of the realized presence of God. Now in verse 4 you get the first of the three occurrences of the word "Blessed," and they are divided one from the other by the little word "Selah." The "Blessed" of the first section is in verse 4, of the second section in verse 5, and of the third section in verse 12. They evidently occur in what we may call a descending scale. "Blessed are they that *dwell* in Thy house." Happy, says the Psalmist, are those who have found in the presence of Jehovah a point of repose and dwelling. They are so blessed that they will be still praising Thee. They will have their lips continuously full of praise. They will praise and praise and go on praising. Find the Christian whose heart abides in the blessedness of the presence of God, and you will find one whose heart is filled with praise that springs from the knowledge of Himself.

I am here reminded of what we get in the second chapter of the first epistle of John, where the aged apostle divides the people of God into three classes—the fathers, the young men, and the children. There is an extraordinary likeness between the three classes of 1 John 2. and the three classes of our Psalm. Here you have what answers to the father. He has reached the source of eternal good and blessedness in God Himself. Blessed indeed is that one who knows God in such a soul-satisfying way that, whether the storms blow this way or that way, he abides in the presence of God, and his heart is continually filled with praise. Probably every one of us here

will say, "I wish I were like that, but I do not know much about it." That is how I should speak.

But then, there is an encouragement in the second section. "Blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee ; in whose heart are the ways." Another translation says, "In whose heart are the highways." Blessed is the man who, if he has not yet found his abiding place in the house of God, has the highways that lead to the house engraved like a map on his heart. The literal simple meaning of those words applied in a spiritual way is something like this: It may be quite true, I honestly confess, I do but very little abide in the presence of God. Instead of being above the storms I am often blown about in all directions and mightily perplexed. Instead of having my heart filled with praises, I am often filled with inward complainings. I get under the power of a thousand and one things that would not affect me in the same way if I were dwelling in the presence of God. Yet I do know the way. I have got the light and truth and direction of the Word of God in my heart.

It is a very good thing if we have. Happy is the man who has before him the highway of blessing. Happy is the one who knows the way of true sanctification, true devotedness, true abiding satisfaction in the "excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." Happy is the man who has the highway to the desired end mapped out in his mind's eye. Happy is the man who finds his strength in God while he is on the way. Unhappy is the man whose strength is in himself. "Happy is the man whose strength is in Thee." That is a lesson we have to learn. You say, "I hope I am learning it." Very good ; you are on the right road. That is like the young men in 1 John 2.

They are strong, and the Word of God abides in them. As regards the anti-Christian activities of the devil, they have overcome the wicked one. They are not yet "fathers," but the road opens out before them, for they know the Word of God, and it dwells in them.

They pass through the valley of Baca (which means "weeping") and they make it a well. They get into all kinds of troubles and exercises, and out of their very troubles and exercises they draw the waters of spiritual refreshment. It is through our own troubles and exercises that we learn most valuable lessons. It is when we are reduced to a point where we could very well weep that we learn something that will stand us in good stead. Oh, turn the valley of weeping into a well out of which you draw the waters of refreshment and blessing ! If you do, you go from strength to strength, and "every one of them in Zion appeareth before God." Thank God, they get there !

But a person may say, "I am afraid I know but very little about this second section, and those people whose strength is in the Lord, and in whose heart are the highways." So you come to the last four verses, and the Psalm closes on a simple note. See how the Psalmist emphasizes what God is, because what God is, He is to the feeblest and most failing believer as well as to the most faithful. It is recorded of Mr. Hudson Taylor that, talking in a meeting once, he quoted those lines of Miss Havergal's :

"They that trust Him wholly
Find Him wholly true"—

and said, "That is very nice, but I know something more wonderful than that—those who do *not* trust Him wholly find Him wholly true." Praise God, so it is. God is what He is, no matter how failing I or any one of His

saints may be. God is not what He is because I am very good, and He will not change because I am very naughty. Those who trust Him only ten per cent will find Him as wholly true as those who trust Him one hundred per cent.

How desirable that you and I should walk in communion with God! "O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in Thee!" That is like the babes of 1 John 2. We can come in there. We cannot, perhaps, say much about this great strength and these experiences. We hope we may turn the valley of weeping into a wellspring. We want to go on. We feel sure there is no lasting satisfaction in the world.

We believe it is only in God Himself there is to be found that which really satisfies. Oh, that we may know Him, that we may know Christ and explore His love! Then, happy is the man that simply trusts in Him.

Let us start with that—*we trust in Him*. We are on the road, and we know as we go through this vanity fair of a world, that there is no real, lasting happiness except in the knowledge of God Himself made known to us in Jesus. It is as we dwell in His presence, as we taste the bliss of His company, as we enter into communion with Himself, that we are really blessed, and that we find a satisfaction which abides.

REVELATION

REVELATION enriches us with the truths which Reason never could have discovered, but which, being given, Reason can accept without loss of dignity or remission of responsibility. To me the Bible is a Divine revelation—a revelation of God, Providence, Sin, Atonement, Faith, Immortality. The Bible is not a book containing a revelation; it is a revelation. We assume an immense responsibility in claiming that any book is a final and authoritative standard in faith and morals. We place the Book itself in an awful position. We separate it from all other books; we make sceptical criticism a profane offence, and devout obedience an essential element of spiritual character. The mind has simply to receive, the will has simply to obey, the heart has simply to trust. The Book is to us verily as God Himself. Are we, in nineteenth century light, to stand in such a position, or to abandon it? Is the Bible still to stand alone, and to demand the obeisance of all other books?

Only one Book in the world can prove the inspiration of the Bible, and that is the Bible itself. Let the Bible speak for itself. When inquirers come with their questions, objections, and difficulties, insist, as a condition of conference, that the Book itself be read through and through from end to end, until the inquirer is thoroughly acquainted with its contents. The reading will do its own work. That reading has made me an unquestioning and grateful believer in the plenary inspiration, the Divine authority, and the infinite sufficiency of Holy Scripture; and, therefore, I can the more earnestly and definitely encourage others to impose upon themselves the sacred task.

I now know that the Bible is inspired. It addresses itself to every aspect and every necessity of my nature; it is my own biography. I never know how great a Book it is until I try to do without it: then the heart aches; then the eyes are put out with the great tears of grief; then the house is no home of mine; then life sinks under an infinite load of weariness. I know well all the criticisms which this kind of confession never fails to evoke; if I knew less of them I would make more of them, but knowing them well, in all their scope and meaning, I will no longer allow them to rob the heart of its most sacred joys.—*The late DR. PARKER.*

LIGHT AND LIFE. No. 16.

(JAMES BOYD.)

Meditations on John's Gospel. Chapter 16.

THAT the disciples might not be looking for good times and general acceptance of the Word, the Lord sets before them plainly that which they might expect. He says: "They shall put you out of the synagogues; yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." An easy life was not that which He sketched for His followers. They would not therefore be disappointed when the storm of persecution burst upon them. It was not necessary that He should tell them about these things while He was with them; but now that He was going to the Father who had sent Him, He will no longer hide from them the roughness of the path which they had to tread in His service.

Sorrow was filling their hearts at the thought of His leaving them, and yet their interest in the place to which He was going was very feeble: "None of you," He says, "asketh Me, Whither goest Thou?" They were more interested in the place He was leaving than they were in the place to which He was going. But when the Spirit came to take up His abode in their midst, and in their bodies, they became linked up in life, relationship and position so completely with Himself, that heaven became the home and hope of their hearts, and a Christless world became to them a foreign country.

Nevertheless, however sorrowful to them His departure to the Father might be, it was profitable for them, for without His leaving them the Spirit would not come to them; but when He would take his place on high, He would send Him; and by His enlightenment and power they would see this world in its true character. He would

bring demonstration to the world of sin, righteousness and judgment: of sin, He says, because they believe not in Me. He had come into the world in grace, and that was the greatest and final test brought to bear upon man in the flesh. He says: "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin." But now every overture of mercy has been rejected, and sin sums up the whole condition of the world. It is manifested to be, in its present state, irreclaimable. It has by the rejection of Jesus shown itself to be an incorrigible God-hater. The presence of the Spirit here is the proof of the sin in which this world was sunken. He would not have been here had not God been cast out in the person of the Son.

His presence here is also the witness that righteousness has left the world and gone to the Father. The only righteous One that ever trod this earth has gone out of it, and by His rejection sin has been written on the face of the world that rejected Him. But righteousness has been honoured by the living God. God has been glorified in Jesus, and now Jesus is glorified in God. He says: "I have glorified Thee on the earth, I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." Now there is nothing but judgment for the world as such. The gospel is preached in the world, and salvation brought near to all in Christ, and no one need perish. But the gospel is not preached in the world in order that it may be converted to God, but rather to save souls out of the world. The devil has been manifested by the rejection of Christ as the leader of the world, and therefore the judgment long foretold, but delayed through the

long-suffering of God, is by the preaching announced everywhere as about to be executed. Therefore all men everywhere are commanded to repent. The whole world lies in the wicked one (1 John 5. 19), and its doom is certain.

It has been said that it is folly for believers to affirm that they are not of the world, seeing that they have to do business in it like all others, and that among them there are the rich and the poor, as there are in all other sections of the community. But when Adam was turned out of Eden he was condemned to get his bread by the sweat of his brow, and where was the world then? I do not know whether I have before referred to it in these meditations, but there is a great difference between the world viewed as the aggregate of human beings living at one time, and the world's system; that is, men banded together into kingdoms and associations, in which everything is ordered according to the will of the rulers, of the majority of the people, and out of which God is rigidly excluded. It is one thing for a man to earn his bread in whatever calling for which he is fitted, but quite another thing for him to become a Member of Parliament, a mayor of a city, or a town-councillor. It has been said that an angel might be sent of God to keep a crossing clean, but that would not connect him with this world; it would, if he became mayor of the city. It is sorrowfully true that many believers have mixed themselves up with the world, but they have all suffered for it in their own souls, and such never make advance in the knowledge of the will of God. To-day the world and the church are so mixed up that it is impossible to distinguish them. Nevertheless God has His witnesses, indeed He never leaves Himself without those who will maintain a

testimony for Himself, and the desire of every true heart is to be in the company of such as keep His Word, and do not deny His name.

"I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now." The Spirit was coming to enable them to take in the deep things of God. He says: "He shall glorify Me." And the way in which He will do this is, that "He shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you." All things are common with Divine Persons, but the Son having taken the place of a servant is viewed as having all things given to Him: "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand." But He says: "All Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine." So here: "All things that the Father hath are Mine: therefore said I, that He shall take of Mine and show it unto you." He will share with us everything that He can share with us—everything that in the Spirit's power we could be made capable of receiving; and what we are as creatures unable to enter into possession of, He will show to us. What knowledge-surpassing love dwells in the heart of Him who gave Himself to make us all His own!

But He was going away from this scene, and they were to be left in it. He says: "A little while, and ye shall not see Me: and again a little while, and ye shall see Me, because I go to the Father." In this little while in which He was to be hidden from them the world would rejoice. It was to be a time of jubilation for the world, but of sorrow for His own. But their sorrow should be turned into joy, for a Man should be born who would bring to pass every thought of the Divine mind. His death was the birth-pangs of a new order of things, and in resurrection we are privileged to behold the

Man who would accomplish everything for God. The little while in which they should not see Him was when He lay in death. But death and resurrection was the way to the Father, for it was to the Father He was now going. The world is crying out for a man, one with wisdom and power to straighten out things here on earth, and that man they will get in the person of the man of sin, the son of perdition. We see Jesus exalted to the right hand of God, and we are waiting for the day in which every knee in the universe shall have to bow at His name, and every tongue shall be compelled to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Well may we rejoice in the Lord, as the Spirit of God tells us to do. The joy we possess in the knowledge of Christ gone back to the Father is a joy that no man can take away from us. The world has for the present got rid of Him, and it rejoices. This is the time of our sorrow as we think of His rejection; though with the knowledge of what His death has accomplished for the glory of God, and also in the bright prospect of His speedy return, we rejoice with a joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Now the disciples had sorrow, for the cross seemed to them to rob them of all that their faith had looked for; but He would see them again, and their hearts should rejoice; and this joy no one would be able to rob them of. On that joy the shadow of death could never fall. In resurrection they

would have the Lord in a way they never before had looked for Him, or thought of Him.

"In that day ye shall ask Me nothing." While they had Himself with them their questions were all presented to Him for an answer; but in that day—the Spirit's day—they would be so in the sense of the Father's love, and so in the enjoyment of the relationship into which they would have been brought on the ground of redemption, that they would go directly to the Father. They would ask in His name, for only in that name can we draw near to God; but He says: "I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: for the Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me, and have believed that I came out from God." How infinitely precious are these Divine communications! And what an unspeakable joy it is to hear the Son speaking from the bosom of the Father and telling us: "The Father Himself loveth you"! O that we knew it better! What a marvellous privilege is ours, to go through this cold-hearted world in the continual sunshine, the warmth and comfort, of the Father's love! How well able this would ever make us to meet the hostility of this world, and to meet cursing with blessing! And it is: "Because ye have loved Me, and believed that I came out from God." It is with the Son we are linked up in the Father's love, therefore is there no separation from it.

Happiness and Labour.

WHEN upon the mount of Transfiguration, Peter displayed his ignorance, and spoke not knowing what he said, but this we may learn from his words—he was very happy in the presence of his Lord and that holy conversation, for he said, "*It is good for us to be here,*" and he was ready for

any labour, for he said, "*Let us make three tabernacles.*" Is it not a fact that the nearer we are to the Lord and to heaven where He is, the happier we are? And is it not also true that from thence comes not only the desire but also the energy with which to serve Him?

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

“The Gospel was preached to them that are dead.”

Will you explain for us this statement in 1 Peter 4. 6 ? We cannot understand it at all.—
SYDNEY.

THOSE to whom Peter wrote knew that the living would be judged at the coming of the Lord, for the Old Testament Scriptures with which they were well acquainted are full of this. But little or nothing had been revealed as to the judgment of the dead, and it is this with which this statement deals. The dead are to be judged as well as the living, but when that judgment takes place it will be as to what they were when they were men in the flesh ; i.e., when they were alive on the earth. It is in the life of flesh that men are responsible to God, and it is for the deeds done

in the body that they will be judged (Rev. 20. 12).

For this cause the gospel *was* preached to them *when they were alive in the flesh*. Notice it does not say that the gospel *is being preached to them*. It was preached to them, and by it God gave them the opportunity to repent of the evil deeds done in the flesh and to live unto Him in the Spirit and so escape the judgment.

There is no sanction in the passage for the false teaching that men have a second opportunity of salvation after death.

The Only-begotten Son.

In the July issue of “Scripture Truth” there is a short word on the only-begotten Son. I should like to understand it better.

1. What do the words mean ?
2. How are we to understand them in view of many sons being brought to glory ?
3. Has it anything to do with being begotten again from the dead ?—GLASGOW.

“THE Only-begotten Son” is a Divine title ; it could not be given to any other than the Lord. It is His title as being eternally in the bosom of the Father. John is the only writer that uses this title in speaking of the Lord, but one of his great purposes in writing his Gospel and Epistles was to establish the saints in the truth of the Person of Christ, when teachers were rising up in the church denying it.

The instances where it is used are John 1. 14 ; 18 ; 3. 16 ; 18 ; 1 John 4. 9. And a study of these texts must convince us that they refer to a Person, revealed in Time, but who is greater than Time, who is indeed co-equal with the Father who gave and sent Him. His was the glory of the Only-begotten with the Father, and such as no other in heaven or earth might possess.

This title reveals to us the relationship in which eternally our Lord was with the Father, that He was of the same substance and nature as the Father, dwelling with Him in the joy of the love that the relationship yielded, the

object of the Father’s infinite delight.

First-begotten from the dead is a title that belongs to the Lord as the Risen Man, who will have others to share with Him His victory over death, Christ the firstfruits, afterwards they that are Christ’s at His coming (1 Cor. 15.). But this is a title that He has *acquired*, it is an added title, gained as a Man by His victory over death ; it does not touch or change what He is as the Only-begotten Son.

All believers are born of God, and are the many sons that He is bringing to glory, but they have no part in Deity. They are one with Christ as Man ; for He became Man in order to die and rise again, and thus to redeem them and impart to them His own life which is eternal life. Now it is blessedly true that His Father is our Father and His God our God and that He is not ashamed to call us brethren, but all that has special relation to what He is in manhood. We could not share His place and glory as the Only-begotten, though we shall see it (John 17.).

A PRICELESS GEM IN A GOLDEN SETTING.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

A Sunday Evening Address.

"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief."

THERE could be no simpler statement of the gospel than that, and for that reason I have chosen it as my text to-night.

A PRICELESS GEM.

A priceless gem in a golden setting. I will speak of the gem first. It is this saying: "*Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.*" We are all familiar with it, yet I proclaim it afresh. I would speak of it as though it were the first time you were hearing it, as though never before had you heard the good news that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

There are many Christians here; your hearts ought to thrill to this word. It was written by a great servant of the Lord to his own son in the gospel, and these two found a wonderful communion in it, for "the exceeding abundant grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" and the love of God had been displayed in the fact that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. I am sure that as Paul wrote these words his heart was profoundly moved, for the coming of Christ into the world had meant so much to him. It had saved him, blest him, changed him, and filled him with a lifelong gratitude to his Lord.

It is not surprising that this saying should find a place in this letter of instruction to a young servant of Christ, for the fact that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners gives the impulse to all true service, and it must lie at the basis of all sound and effectual preaching. Paul did not want Timothy to forget it, he could not

forget it himself—no preacher should forget it. The man who does not rejoice in it and preach it has very little to say that is worth listening to, and I should advise you, my hearers, to give him scant attention.

This saying is a most fitting one for this company, for there are sinners here, the very sinners whom Christ Jesus came into the world to save. Indeed, the text would suit every sort of congregation that you could gather, whether poor or rich, illiterate or learned, high or low, for all have sinned. How universal is its appeal! It is God's message to all. We may carry it from pole to pole, through every clime and to men of every colour and creed, and everywhere it ought to command the deepest interest, for there is no man that sinneth not, and every sinner needs a Saviour.

I propose to divide the saying into three parts: (1) The One who came—CHRIST JESUS CAME. (2) The place into which He came—INTO THE WORLD. (3) The object of His coming—TO SAVE SINNERS.

THE ONE WHO CAME.

We must begin with the One who came, for apart from Him there is no gospel for men, no Saviour for sinners. It was Christ Jesus who came. But who is He? The Bible leaves us in no doubt as to this. When John was moved by the Holy Ghost to write of Him he scorned and discarded all introductions and preambles and made haste to get at once to his great subject, as he declared, "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. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made . . . and the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." He is God, the Creator, eternal in being, almighty in power, infinite in wisdom, and He came into the world to save sinners. Of old, when the corrupt and guilty cities of the plain were to be judged and destroyed, two angels were sent to do it; and when rebellious men were to be rebuked for their iniquities, the Word was sent by holy prophets. But now the time had come, not for judgment, nor for rebuke, but for salvation; and neither angels nor prophets were equal to this great work. For this the Word must become flesh, the only-begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father must become man. The day of salvation could not dawn until He appeared, but when Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners the light of that glorious day began to shine for all.

How wonderful it is! He was Jehovah who gave the Law at Sinai, and since that Law had been flouted and broken He might have come with flaming fire taking vengeance, but He did not.

"He did not come to judge the world,
He did not come to blame,
He did not only come to seek,
It was to save He came:
And when we call Him Saviour,
Then we call Him by His Name."

To save sinners He had to come down to them. Since they were men He had to become a man, though in Him there was no sin, as all Scripture shows. He was as holy as a man on earth as He was in His eternal God-head—just as sinless when He walked the filthy streets of those Eastern cities as He was when He sat upon His throne and created the angels. He is

God, infinitely holy; He is man, spotless and pure. A holy mystery is this! A mystery beyond the range of the human mind, but not beyond the reach of faith.

"'Tis darkness to the intellect,
But sunshine to the heart."

We may rejoice and exult in the angel's message to the shepherds of Bethlehem when he said, "To you is born a Saviour," and with them we may bow in wonder and worship beside the manger in which was cradled Christ the Lord.

THE PLACE INTO WHICH HE CAME.

Christ Jesus came into the world. It was the only way, but the world did not welcome Him when He came. There was no room for Him in the habitations of men: a stable was His shelter and a manger His bed at His birth. Nor did His great compassion for men and His gentle words and tender mercies change the world's thoughts about Him, the more it saw of Him the more it hated Him. It could not endure Him. It cried, "Away with Him," and spat in His face and crucified Him. Such was the world into which He came.

He knew well all that it would cost Him to come, He knew how men would treat Him when He did come. He was not taken by surprise when they despised and rejected Him, for He knew all men. The depth of their sinfulness, the hardness of their hearts, the blindness of their eyes was all known to Him. He knew that sin and Satan held them in an awful thrall, that they would prefer their corruption and sins to the choicest of heaven's blessing. He knew that coming into the world would mean for Him a life of sorrow and a death of shame, and knowing all He came. He came from the unsullied

glory into this world that reeked with moral putrefaction. He came to be the light in the world's darkness. He came to declare the heart of God to men who did not know Him. He came into the world to save sinners.

If there had been any goodness in the heart of the world it would surely have been discovered and developed by the life of Jesus here. Never were such words spoken as He spoke, never were such works done. He stretched out His hands to the weary and laden, and invited them to come to Him for rest. He offered satisfaction and eternal life, and proclaimed in the ears of men that "God is love." In Him God was beseeching men to be reconciled to Him. It was all in vain, their ears were heavy and they would not hear. His heart was moved with compassion for their miseries, and He fed them when they were hungry, He healed them when they were sick, He blessed their children, He went about doing good; but the world was only moved to deeper hatred.

The world that treated Christ like that has not changed one bit, and the only hope for us is to be saved out of it. If you are still unsaved, my hearer, you belong to the world, you are part of it, sharing its sins now and soon to share its doom. You may say, "Preacher, do you not belong to the world?" No, thank God, I do not. I did once, but the great Saviour of sinners has redeemed me by His own blood, and I belong to Him now, and He has said of all who believe on Him through the gospel, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." The man who believes the gospel belongs to Christ and to heaven; the one who rejects it, or neglects its entreaties, belongs to the world that spat in the face of Jesus and nailed Him to a cross. On one side or the

other each one of us stands to-night.

Such was the world into which He came, such were the men to whom He appealed. Nothing could be clearer than the solemn truth that in men dwells no good thing, that it is not a reformer or a teacher or a guide that they need, but a Saviour who is able and willing to save sinners, and this brings me to the third division of our saying.

THE OBJECT OF HIS COMING.

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. If they could have saved themselves He would not have come to do it. If men could have saved themselves God would have let them do it, and when they had accomplished the great work He would have put the crowns upon their brows and said, "Well done!" But no sinner can save himself, much less can he ransom his brother from sin's slavery.

A Saviour was needed and there is only one Saviour. "Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name given among men whereby we must be saved." It is strange that sinful men do not feel their need of Jesus; it is strange that some refuse to own it. I talked to one of these, a doctor in Melbourne. He told me that he had loved the Lord his God with all his heart, and his neighbour as himself. I expressed my astonishment, and told him that he was the only man I had ever met who dared to make such a claim. "You have no gospel, Doctor, and since you are not a sinner you do not need one," I said. "Oh yes," he said, "I have; my gospel is, Be true to the god within you, and all will come right in the end." I replied, "Sometimes I go into the slums and talk to those who are down and out, to the drunkards and the degraded. I have a gospel that I carry to them; it is, *Christ Jesus came*

into the world to save sinners. Would you advise me to throw over my gospel and carry yours to that sort of folk instead?" He coloured a little as he answered, "No, I think your gospel will suit such people better than mine." "Doctor," I said, "listen to this. God says, 'There is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.' The drunkard in the slums, and the doctor in his surgery, are alike sinful in the sight of God. They both need a Saviour, and Christ Jesus came into the world to save both." Is not this good news to every one of you? Surely no word that you can hear can give you greater joy than this, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners! You may say, "Why, Lord, that means me; I am a sinner, and if Thou didst come to save sinners, then Thou didst come to save me."

But think of what it cost Him! To show to the full His love to guilty men He had to die. His works and words and His holy life were wonderful, but they could not take the sting out of death for us, they could not deliver us from Satan's power, or save us from the just judgment that our sins deserved. To do this He had to die for us, for without the shedding of blood there is no remission. Hear what the Scriptures say, "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." And again, "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed." And again, "When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly."

There is a challenge to every one of you in this saying. It is as to what response you have made to the

Saviour's approach to you. I ask you to consider what He has done. Think of the great love that filled His heart for us when He died for such as we are. I would that all here were like a young Scotchman to whom I talked at the close of a meeting like this. He knew that he was a sinner and he wanted to be saved. I turned him to a verse of Scripture which I have already quoted, Isaiah 53. 5. I explained to him that it spoke of what Jesus suffered on the cross for sinners, and asked him to put himself into it, to change the plural pronouns into singular ones. He understood me and read, "He was wounded for MY transgressions, He was bruised for MY iniquities; the chastisement of MY peace was upon Him, and with His stripes I"—then he burst into a big sob and could not finish the verse. I put my arm round him and asked, "What is the matter?" He answered, "I can't understand why He should have loved me so much as to die for me." My reply was, "Neither can I understand it. And God knew that neither you nor I could understand it, and so He calls it in His Word, *'the love of Christ that passeth knowledge.'*"

I preach this great Saviour to you to-night. "He died for our sins, according to the Scriptures; and was buried, and rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." He is willing and able to save you, and all whom He saves He keeps. He gives to them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them from His hand. And yet this preaching Christ is alike my joy and my despair. *My joy*, for I speak with gladness of Him who has saved me and whom I know to be brighter and better than the brightest and the best that the world can give; and yet *my despair*, for I feel that my words are dull and cold words when they ought to throb

and burn, and move you, and bend you, and bring you in full surrender to the feet of Him of whom I speak.

THE GOLDEN SETTING.

This saying is the gem. Now for a few words about its setting. A man said to me after a gospel meeting, "If only what you have been telling us were true!" I answered, "It would be very good, wouldn't it?" He admitted that it would. "Let me assure you," I said, "that it is as true as it is good," and my text declares it to be so. **IT IS A FAITHFUL SAYING.** It will not deceive or disappoint you. It is true, it is faithful. You have heard and believed thousands of false sayings from the lips of men in your time; your credulity in that respect is amazing; but here is a saying from the lips of God, and it is not false but true, and it is good as it is true. Have you believed it with your hearts? You may safely do it, for it is a faithful saying. I wish you to consider earnestly that part of the setting.

Another may ask, "But is it for me? How may I be sure that it is for me?" The text answers the questions, for it tells us that the saying is **WORTHY OF ALL ACCEPTATION.** It is worthy that every man, woman and child should receive it. It reaches out to the greatest of men and they need it, and it comes down to the meanest of men—they, too, may believe it. All excludes none. This saying, Christ

Jesus came into the world to save sinners, is worthy of your acceptance, it is for you. That is another part of the setting that I want you to consider.

A young actor had come to hear the gospel, and at the close of the meeting he said to me, "If you knew what God knows about me you would not say that I could be saved." He felt his badness, and it may be that some here are like him, feeling that they are too bad to be saved. It is quite possible that you could not be worse than you are, but, even so, look again at our saying, examine further the setting in which it appears. The one who was inspired by the Holy Ghost to write it exclaimed as he did so, **OF WHOM I AM CHIEF.** It was as though he said, None need despair. Christ Jesus has saved the preacher, and if He has saved the preacher He can save you. The chief of sinners is with Christ in glory. He is there because Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. And for the same wonderful reason you may dwell for ever in the same glory.

It seems to me that my text meets every difficulty and answers every question that you can raise. It leaves you without an excuse. It encourages you to put the great Saviour to the test. If you do that now you will begin to learn His grace, His tenderness, His power. He is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.

Called to the Fellowship of God's Son. 1 Cor. 1. 9.

Christians, you have been raised to a wonderful fellowship. You have been raised into the fellowship of God's Son. If you have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, you belong to God's assembly. You may not have realized it yet, but that is your place. You have been

baptized into that one body by the Holy Ghost. Your privilege it is to carry it out practically and to see and own the Lord in the midst of His own when gathered together, and to acknowledge no other authority but His. That is our highest privilege.

THE GREAT REVIEW.

(H. A. IRONSIDE.)

An Address given in Baltimore, U.S.A.

THE twenty-third chapter of 2 Samuel has been a literary puzzle to the Modernist people, some of whom claim to be able to dissect the Word of God and divide the Book into separate fragments and ascribe the various parts to different authors. These tell us that we have here a literary crazy quilt. The chapter begins with the last words of David, and they say, Would any man with literary sense tack on to his last words a list of the mighty men he had forty years ago? But if we read this chapter with anointed eyes, we see that it is a remarkable one. First we get the last words of David, and then we have the great review!

You and I will soon be uttering our last words, and after the last words down here, then the manifestation up there. "Every one of us shall give an account of himself to God." We who are Christians must "all stand before the judgment seat of Christ," where the Lord will judge everything we have done down here, and the unsaved, too, will soon utter their last words; then for them the manifestation at the "great white throne," where "every transgression and disobedience" will receive "a just recompense of reward."

What was before David's eyes when he came to the end of his checkered career? Who filled his heart? Ah, David's last words were words about Christ! Jesus had not yet become incarnate, but David lay there on his couch and by the Spirit's inspiration he looked down through the centuries and saw a righteous Ruler: "He shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain." David was speaking of Christ.

He was looking on to the time of God's King.

What is it that gives such value to last words? "What were his last words?" is a question people generally ask about a man who has just died. The point is this: last words are honest words. People who have shuffled and shifted all their lives get down to basic truth at last. David was dying and he talked of the coming King. He thought of his failures and he said, "Although my house be not so with God: yet He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure, for this is all my salvation, and all my desire." He could leave all the failures with Him who has provided a salvation for sinners. He died confident that God would not go back on His covenant.

An old man died without being permitted to see all his children become Christians, and a friend remarked, "What a pity you cannot remain until the last one is saved!" and the dear man answered, "I don't have to live to keep tab on the faithfulness of God! He has promised 'thou and thy house.'" And he died in peace.

After the last words, then the great Review. So we have this striking array of mighty men. When I read it, I feel as though I am consulting a page out of eternity. I have no doubt that this page will be read at the judgment seat of Christ. I have no doubt that each of these men will be called to receive words of commendation from His lips. And just as God noted all that is written in this record, so to-day He looks upon His people and observes all that we do for God and Christ, and sees, too, what actions are the result of our own self-

will. He is going to bring everything out by-and-by.

"He is coming—oh! how solemn
When the Judge's voice is heard,
And in His own light He shows us
Ev'ry thought, and act, and word!
Deeds of merit as we thought them,
He will show us were but sin,
Little acts we had forgotten,
He will tell us were for Him."

He will appraise everything at its real value. There will be those who built with wood, hay and stubble, and those who built with gold, silver, and precious stones. "Every man's work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it." We shall get an idea of the distinctions at the judgment seat by consulting our chapter. First, let me remind you who these mighty men were. They hadn't always been mighty men. Read 1 Samuel 22. 1, 2.

"David therefore departed thence, and escaped to the cave Adullam: and when his brethren and all his father's house heard it, they went down thither to him. And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him, and he became a captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men." But after a few years' association with David, what changes! Those very men who seemed to amount to so little at first were mighty men at last! So it is, association with Christ affects people like that.

"These be the names of the mighty men whom David had: The Tachmonite that sat in the seat, chief among the captains; the same was Adino the Eznite: he lifted up his spear against eight hundred, whom he slew at one time." I can't understand that man. I never expect to get into his class. That is not the one who speaks to-night. The most I saw come down at one time was half a score, but God has had

his "eight hundred" men. Look at Peter, who brought three thousand into the church with one sermon. All through the ages there have been men of God who singly withstood the combined powers of idolaters and brought the heathen into subjection. There was Luther, who shook all Europe, and John Knox, who said, "O God, give me Scotland or I die!"

The next man I can better understand. He was Eleazar. It was said of him that he was "one of the three mighty men with David, when they defied the Philistines that were there gathered together to battle, and the men of Israel were gone away," and "He arose, and smote the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand clave unto the sword." It is a great thing to be found standing when other people run. The rest of the regiment had gone and he stood alone against the enemy. Then after the hard day of conflict, utterly worn out, he went to throw down his missile, and the muscles refused to relax, and "his hand clave unto the sword." It is a great thing to get such a grip of God's blessed Word that it is part and parcel of yourself and you cannot let go.

"His hand clave unto the sword; and the Lord wrought a great victory that day; and the people returned after him only to spoil." Plenty of people for that! Eleazar won the victory, and they who ran from the battle ran back for the prey. Now, Eleazar, they said, you have won the battle, and we will help you to divide the spoil. How God needs men like Eleazar, men who will stand for Him if they have to stand alone! Never were such men more needed than now.

The next man was of this type: "And after him was Shammah, the son of Agee the Hararite. And the Philistines were gathered together into a

troop, where there was a piece of ground full of lentiles : and the people fled from the Philistines. But he stood in the midst of the ground and defended it, and slew the Philistines ; and the Lord wrought a great victory." The time-servers would say, Now, look here, Shammah, "he who fights and runs away lives to fight another day." Don't take the trouble to risk your life for a patch of beans ! But Shammah answered, These lentiles are the food of the people of God and these uncircumcised Philistines would trample them under their feet, and "he stood in the midst of the ground, and defended it, and slew the Philistines."

I saw a letter written by a missionary in India to a member of the board in this country. He pleaded with the board in regard to the character of people sent out to the missionary field. "Why do you send us men who don't believe in God themselves ?" he wrote. "For God's sake, keep them at home ! God may not be necessary to you in America, but He is necessary to the poor people of India. If you don't need people who believe in God at home, we need them in India !" There were those unbelievers trampling down the food of God's people. They didn't want it themselves and they wanted no one else to have it. God raise up more Shammahs to defend the food of His people, the Word of the living God !

Next we come to "three of the thirty chief" men. There are some men who can stand alone and win a great victory, but cannot work with others. Just let them alone and they get along all right, but not in fellowship. The next instance cited is of three men who could work together and gain a victory. These three "went down, and came to David in the harvest time unto the cave of Adullam :

and the troop of the Philistines pitched in the valley of Rephaim." All day long they had been in conflict and now they flung themselves wearily down to rest. David came in, and he too dropped down hot and exhausted in the cool of the cave, and speaking to no one in particular, much less expecting anybody to get it for him, he said, "Oh, that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate !" The three men resting in the gloom looked straight into each other's eyes. They had a common thought, If there is anything we can do to add to David's happiness, we want to do it ! Silently they leaped to their feet and down the hill. They reached the Philistine outposts and finally, at the risk of their lives, made their way to the well, stooped for the coveted drink, and then wormed their way back past the outposts, up the hill and into the cave where David was. And David stared in amazement

What ! WHAT ! Did you really go down there and risk your lives just to get me a drink of water ! Oh, I cannot drink it. Lord, none but Thyself deserves devotion like this. Let me pour it out before Thee, my God ! And he poured it out as an offering to Jehovah. God never forgot that ; He put it down in His Book. They did it to God's anointed, and in serving God's anointed they served the One who anointed him !

The Lord says, "If ye love Me, keep My commandments," but He also says, "If a man love Me, he will keep My words." What is the difference ? Here is a girl called Mary. The girls ask her friend if she will come out and play after school, and she asks her mother if she may. Mother says, "I tell you, Mary, I want you to dust out the parlour—there is a little company coming this evening—and set the table for supper,

and then you may go and play." Like the dutiful little girl she is, Mary does as she is told and then runs out to play. But the next day mother has promised her that she may go to a basket-ball game after school, and she hurries home. As she enters the house she hears her mother saying to a neighbour, "I've had a sick headache all afternoon and I haven't been able to do a thing. I haven't supper started yet and it is almost time for the folks to come home!" Mary slips into the house and says, "Mother, you go lie down for an hour while I get the vegetables ready. I'll peel the potatoes and set the table. I'll get the supper to-night, mother." "No, Mary," mother says, "you go off to the game. Mother doesn't want to spoil your pleasure," and Mary answers, "I'm not going, mother; I wouldn't enjoy myself to-day." Mother didn't ask her to do that. She found out that mother needed somebody to do it and she longed to contribute to her mother's happiness. The greatest things ever done for Christ were not done in response to command. They were done because devout souls felt they would bring joy to His heart and glory to His Name.

Then we come to Benaiah: he went down "and slew a lion in the midst of a pit in time of snow." This account gives us an idea of the way God keeps His records. The Lord takes notice of the kind of weather in which you do things for Him. It is much easier to do things for Him when the weather is fine. Here is a man who performed his service in a snow-storm, and God says to the recording angel, Just put the weather down. "He went down, and slew a lion in the midst of a pit in time of snow." Here it is on the records of the Book of God, and there it will stand for eternity. O God,

have mercy on these fair-weather folks! Give us men like Benaiah who are willing to fight the enemy "in time of snow."

If you were making a list of David's mighty men, whom would you put down first? *Joab!* Let us see. We turn to this list, and lo and behold! though we read of his brothers Abishua and Asahel, Joab himself isn't in the list! Joab is conspicuous by his absence. There never was a greater warrior than Joab, and yet his name isn't there. What Joab did, he did for Joab's glory, and when God made up the honour roll, He said, He has had his reward already. If he had done it for Me, I would have rewarded him. Oh, there is coming a day when those who have honoured honour will be conspicuous by their absence! By their great deeds they sought only honour and glory for themselves. They have their reward already who "receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only"!

But all the years that Joab went in and out before Israel there was a quiet man who went always with him. No man said, That is Joab's armour-bearer; but turn to the list, and behold! the armour-bearer to Joab is there. Think of it, his armour-bearer gets honourable mention in God's honour roll, but the great captain's name is left out! How blessed to be faithful in little things!

There is a last name. There was a man whom David wronged as much as one man can wrong another; he robbed him of his wife and, indirectly, of his life. You tell me David repented. I know he repented. I have listened to his sobs in the Psalms, and God forgave him and he was able to say, "Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." But that didn't bring Uriah

back to life and restore happiness to his home. I have often preached on this remarkable chapter, and I used to stop short of this verse until one day I understood. "Oh," I said, "it is going to be all right up there. His own king didn't appreciate Uriah as he should have done, *but God is faithful!* He saw that the name of Uriah was put on the honour roll, where it will shine out in everlasting remembrance! Some day He will say at the great review, I saw when you refused to go down to your own house that night, Uriah; I saw you lie on the ground because you said, "The ark, and Israel, and Judah

abide in tents, and my lord Joab, and the servants of my lord, are encamped in the open fields; shall I then go into mine house, to eat and to drink, and to lie with my wife? As thou livest, and as thy soul liveth, I will not do this thing." I saw and heard, Uriah. I saw how you were wronged and yet how true you were through it all. I am going to reward you. No man ever lost anything for being faithful to Me!

"These be the names of the mighty men whom David had." How blessed to be enlisted in the host of "King David's greater Son"!

THE GRACE OF GOD FOR ALL.

[T is exceedingly interesting and instructive to see that in the first three cases of conversion in the Acts of the Apostles, the accounts of which are given to us in detail, there are represented the three branches of the human family. The Ethiopian eunuch was a son of Ham (Acts 8.). Saul of Tarsus was a son of Shem (Acts 9.). The centurion was a son of Japheth (Acts 10.). And these three men whom the grace of God reached were men who had much to hold them to earth and to keep them from Christ. They were men who were high up in civil, religious and military life. But they found something brighter and better in Christ. It was the death of Christ that moved

and melted the first of the three. It was the glory of Christ that broke up the second. It was the wonderful, world-wide offer of forgiveness through the Name of Christ that was enough for the third.

But how blessed it is to see that, when official Judaism murdered Stephen, sending him after the Lord saying, "We will not have this man to reign over us" (Luke 19. 14), the Gospel pours out its blessing for all mankind, and begins with a son of Ham. There is great encouragement in this to carry out the Word to the uttermost part of the earth when the ears of those who are familiar with it are refusing to listen to it.

TRUE LOVE.

"By love serve one another."—Gal. 5. 13.

TOIL never outwearies love—love toils

And finds its rest in toil;

Love cannot rest, when those it loves

Are misery's sport and spoil.

Love rests in work, Love joys in pain

If only it may bless

The objects of its care, and save

From suffering and distress.

HE WAS IN THE WORLD.

"THAT was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (John 1. 9).

The Light SEARCHES out the sins and sinfulness of the sinner.

"Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1. 29).

The Sacrifice SAVES the sinner whom the Light searches, for it meets all the claims of Divine justice against him.

"The same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost" (John 1. 33).

He SEALS by the Holy Ghost as His own cherished possession all those whom He searches and saves.

"Master, where dwellest Thou? He saith unto them, Come and see" (John 1. 38, 39).

The company of the Saviour SATIS-

FIES the hearts of those whom He searches and saves and seals.

"One of the two which heard John speak and followed Him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon . . . and he brought him to Jesus" (John 1. 40, 41).

The one who is searched, saved, sealed and satisfied delights to SERVE the one who has blessed him, and he does it successfully and spontaneously.

Thus does He who commanded the light to shine out of darkness when He manifested His creatorial power in the beginning, draw us out of our darkness and sins into the light of His love, and we rest from our burdens and wanderings in His own dwelling-place, His Father's love, and from that wonderful rest He sends us forth to serve Him, to speak of Him to other weary hearts, and to bring them back to Him.

CRYING OUT AND RECEIVING.

IT is delightful to see the faith that was in the blind son of Timæus (Luke 18.). He had heard and perhaps pondered deeply some of the Old Testament promises. Psalm 72. 12 states, for instance, that the King—the Son of David—*"Shall deliver the needy when he crieth, the poor also, and him that hath no helper."* Isaiah also told out that the day was coming when the eyes of the blind should be opened. This blind beggar had heard these promises, and he saw, though his eyes were sightless, the One only who could make them good. So that he cried with a loud voice and would not be silenced. He was one of the poor and needy, surely, whom the Son of David would deliver. He cried and was not disappointed, for the Lord disappoints none who take their stand upon His promises, and there are enough in His

Word to suit all of us. Not less than 30,000 of them, we are told, by those who have made a study of them, and not one of them given in vain, and not one of them that the Lord will not fulfil to those who come in their need and put in their claim.

But see what the beggar says in answer to the Lord's gracious question as to his need: "Lord that I may receive my sight." There were no doubts or misgivings in his mind. Here was the Son of David; there was the word and the word surely was for such as he was—poor and blind. What then, the Son of David was here to make good the word and to give. Bartimæus bent expectantly at His feet, he was there to receive. Ah, that is the great principle of all blessing. We lift sightless eyes and stretch out empty hands to Him and He gives.

FROM BIRTH TO BAPTISM.

(JAMES MCBROOM)

Notes on Matthew's Gospel. No. 1.

IN the Gospel of Matthew there are recorded some of our Lord's longest discourses. The first of these (chapters 5.-7.) fills a peculiar place. We would endeavour to lay before the reader the teaching of that discourse in its moral order and note at the same time the dispensational setting of it, and to whom the Speaker addresses Himself. But we must first learn something of the Teacher; whence He came, what are His credentials, and wherein lies His right to a kingdom.

"*Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham.*" Two of the greatest names in the nation's history are here brought together and linked with His, who is the first and the last. He is the true Solomon who will bring in righteousness and peace: but as all must be brought to pass on the ground of death, He is the true Isaac who in resurrection will bring in everlasting delight.

Forty-two generations are given from Abraham to the Messiah which are divided into three groups of fourteen. The first of these bridges the history from Gen. 12. to the Books of Samuel. There we get a full account of the origin and development of that people in whose history the being and character of God are remarkably displayed. We are taken through the Patriarchal age to the day of David the king. He is the great figure in the day of the nation's prosperity and the outstanding type of Him in whom all the nation's hopes centre.

The second part covers the decline and fall of Israel. It began in her brightest day and extends to the waning of her glory and ends with the break up of the kingdom in the time of Zedekiah. The splendour of Solomon's

reign was the brightest point in the nation's history. His father had made the name of Israel to be feared and respected everywhere. Then the decline set in, and kingdom glory gave way to prophetic testimony, when men like Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, etc., etc.—the grandest figures in history—did their service. The sons of Aaron fulfilled their courses also in putting incense before Jehovah and whole burnt-offerings upon His altar. But, alas! Israel's conduct went from bad to worse, until all had to go. The period which had begun with such rich promise in the building of the Temple, finished with its destruction, and along with it the break up of the kingdom, and Lo-ammi, "not My people," written upon the nation.

Of the third part of the history indicated in these genealogies, little is recorded on the pages of inspiration. God graciously opened the way for the return of a remnant of the people through Cyrus, the Gentile monarch, and a bright picture of revival is seen in their return to the city, temple, and worship of Jehovah. But in process of time all tended to failure, and we learn from the prophets of that period that, however faithful the remnant might be that was maintained, the nation itself was made to pass through the hands of both Persia and Greece, until when the New Testament opens it is found under the iron yoke of Rome.

In verses 18-25, mystery, dignity, simplicity, and beauty are combined. At a time when the House of David had sunk into obscurity and poverty, Heaven began to move in relation to the promises. If on the inner and most sacred side all manner of profane

scrutiny is forbidden, the surroundings on the other are spread out in such a way that the heart is held under their influence in worship and adoration. The stable and the manger are lighted with a glory far surpassing thought, and exalted for all time beyond the most princely palace. The Eternal One had become Man and is here presented as the fulfilment of the promises made to Abraham. He did not come in the splendour of Solomon, nor with myriads of Seraphic beings in His train. He made Himself of no reputation and took upon Him the form of a servant; He came to serve.

It is interesting to see that where Christ is presented definitely in relation to Israel, Gentiles are the first to seek Him. There is a contrast to this in Luke's Gospel. He is presented there as Son of Man in relation to the human race, but the first two chapters present a beautiful picture of the faithful remnant of the Jews. Ruth and Rahab, two of the four women named in the genealogy in this Gospel, were Gentiles, and in chapter 2. certain Gentiles from the East come seeking Him who is born King of the Jews.

Heaven and earth were brought together in the birth of Christ in view of the accomplishment of Divine purpose and the fulfilment of the Scriptures, but the lower regions were active at that moment as well. Ps. 40. 6-8; Heb. 10. 5-9, with John 1. 14, record the movements in the eternal world, while Luke and Matthew present the earthward side. The harmony of the higher intelligences is voiced in Luke 2. 11, but here the dragon of Rev. 12. is active, working through Herod the usurper, for the destruction of the young Child's life. So Joseph is instructed to take Him and His mother into Egypt, that that might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through

the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt have I called My Son." God's intention was that the nation's history should be taken up in the Lord's own Person from its commencement in Egypt and carried through until its consummation in glory: evil is thus compelled to serve God in the working out of His will.

The interest of the chapter seems to centre in two indoor scenes: one where there was alarm and dread combined with craft and violence; the other where there was peace and joy. The first was an exposure for the leaders of the Jews. Had their moral sensibilities not been entirely dead they would have been ashamed that the Magi had come from a distant land to enquire for the King while they had to be awakened to an interest in His advent by Herod the usurper. They use the Scriptures and correctly say where Messiah was to be born, but though they were the people that this great event most directly concerned they were the least interested of all.

At the other meeting we have Christ among the Gentiles, "the hope of glory." It is sweet to see that He is the Object of the affections of these men in an atmosphere of peace and joy. It speaks of a time when the kings of Sheba and Seba shall render tribute. . . . And He shall live and to Him shall be given of the gold of Sheba (Ps. 72.). Before that time comes, the church is called in as the heavenly company to witness to the thoughts, purposes and ways of God, and every instructed Christian knows something of the excellencies, beauties and glories of Christ, and they delight to pour out their spiritual treasures at His feet. The gifts of these wise men were symbolical, and we see in them something of the hidden glories both of His Person and work. Gold witnesses to

the Divine and eternal glory that was there; the frankincense of all those precious human graces so blessedly combined with the Divine of which the Father could take account; while myrrh—a plant which is said to yield its fragrance when crushed—tells of that which came out by suffering and death at the Cross.

The Spirit takes occasion of the awful massacre of the children by Herod to allude to the heartrending distress which was Israel's when many were bound in chains at Ramah and carried into Babylon (Jeremiah 40.). In that portion which belonged to Benjamin there had once more been deep distress. It is interesting to see in the same prophet that the future unprecedented trouble the nation is yet to pass through is called the time of *Jacob's* trouble, the father's name and not the mother's being used in this case as taking in the whole twelve tribes. The similarity of the words of verses 19-21 to Exod. 4. 19, though not a quotation, is remarkable. Moses was raised up for the deliverance of Jehovah's people from bondage: Jesus came to save His people from their sins, to begin a new order, to destroy Satan's power and the world's system; He was the full revelation of God. Joseph acted in simple obedience but without much intelligence. Mary, who had before manifested the most lively faith combined with obedience, is the subject of angelic care, but the Child, who is mentioned nine times in the chapter, is the centre around which everything must revolve.

Chapter 3. and chapter 4. 1-11 go together. Here two of the outstanding events in the history of Immanuel come before us, both of which connect with the transition from His private to His public life. His birth and the movement in the heavens connected

therewith we have already seen; here it is His baptism and temptation. The interval between birth and the baptism was of very great importance, though little of what occurred is recorded. What happened during those silent years prevented defeat of God's purposes and provided glory to God with regard to the whole race. Man's history from Eden had been failure in man, triumph for Satan, and apparent defeat for the Creator, but now things are reversed. By this Man's obedience Satan is defeated and Heaven is delighted. If there was to be the recovery and blessing of fallen men, the Cross must be met with all its woe; about that there could be no question, but that in no wise touches the truth that Jesus fully glorified God in the path of a man in the world. Two things came out during the years of His ministry, namely, God was revealed to men in Him and in Him God found His full delight in a man. The One who was revealing God to men was at the same time perfectly setting forth man to God. The latter *only* could be true during those thirty years.

In the light of redemption we can see God's name and throne covered with glory in the blessing of sinful men, but during those thirty years God was glorified in Man in flesh and blood upon the earth. We may catch glimpses of the life of Jesus during that time as we read the prophetic description of it in Ps. 16., or Isa. 53. 2, but the silence of the New Testament is that which leads the devout heart to adore. What a heaven must the humble home at Nazareth have been during that time!

John came preaching repentance, the kingdom of heaven, and Christ. Again Heaven puts things in movement, but this time it is to assert itself in the souls of men and women. Repentance, confession, and baptism, owning the

claims of God in deep self-abasement was proof of a real work of God accompanying the labours of this distinguished servant. He was a preacher of the type of Elijah and came from the desert, his ministry was of a searching nature, the necessity for it being the state of the people.

The Branch of Jehovah having come the axe is at the root of the trees. All man's greatness must be brought down because of this glorious Person. Three kinds of baptism are mentioned : water, the Spirit, and fire. John was doing the first, the other two would be the work of the King Himself. The baptism of the Spirit refers to the future, to be fulfilled when the believing remnant of the Jews shall constitute the nucleus of the nation and enter into blessing ; then shall the fire of His judgment purify His threshing floor. Meantime we have a present aspect of the baptism of the Spirit in the church (Acts 2.), which may be viewed provisionally as the garner.

His coming to John for baptism calls for attention, for around it circles some important principles. While mercy is in evidence among the people, grace and righteousness are brought into evidence in Christ. The more we think of Him and who He is, the more amazing does His condescension appear to us, while the grace displayed in His seeking baptism at the hands of His servant was in the circumstances morally beautiful. Having taken a place in the creation, for the working out of all moral questions, and the establishment of the Divine glory, He identified Himself with the work of grace in others. This principle of identification we have already seen in a dispensational way (chapter 2. 14-15),

here it is association with God's work in others.

But deeper things come out here, indeed some of the grandest things in Holy Writ come before us. We behold Him the true Meat Offering of Lev. 2., anointed with the Holy Ghost, and hear with reverence the Father from the opened heavens saying, "This is My beloved Son in whom I have found My delight." He is the Son in Manhood for the express purpose that through His death others might be brought into this holy relationship and share with Him the Father's love. A Man was here on earth sealed by the Father, setting before us what the Christian's place is to-day. "In four ways He sets forth in Himself the pattern of the place He would set us in by redemption : Heaven opened, the Holy Ghost given to abide, sonship, and man's place in perfect Divine favour (the object of God's delight)" (J. A. T.).

Sonship to David and Abraham (chapter 1. 1) speaks of what is official, relating to the glory of the throne and the security of the promises. The Virgin's Son of 1. 21, like the woman's Seed of Gen. 3., describes Him in relation to the human race, but the Father's voice proclaims Him as His beloved Son, the object of His own peculiar delight.

Bethlehem for Him involved Calvary, but between these two came out what shall ever remain the richest treasures of eternity. He is seen as the most accessible of men, but ever sustaining Divine dignity ; speaking in simplest words but unfolding Divine mysteries ; living in the company of the simplest of men, yet far beyond earth's greatest. This was, as it should be, when God was manifest in flesh.

EXCEEDING SORROWFUL—EXCEEDING GLAD.

(W. BRAMWELL DICK.)

HOW deeply touching are the words of our Lord Jesus Christ: "My soul is exceeding sorrowful" (Matt. 26. 38). We do well to meditate upon them, because, whilst our hearts overflow with praise as we recall what He has done, our spirits are subdued; and whilst we exult in all the blessing that He has secured for us, we are humbled as we remember what it cost Him. We approach this hallowed spot with unshod feet and with reverent hearts. Leaving the upper room the blessed Lord, accompanied by the eleven, went to Gethsemane. Arrived there He said, "Sit ye *here*, while I go and pray *yonder*" (verse 36). That was a spot beyond their reach, beyond their ken. Then He took three who, throughout His life, seemed to be a little nearer than the others, but to them He said presently, "Tarry ye *here*" . . . "and He went a *little farther*" (verses 38, 39). They had reached the utmost limit, just as we do when we meditate upon His sorrow, and we seem to hear a voice saying, "Hitherto shalt thou come, *but no farther*." We are reminded, are we not, of the beautiful picture in Genesis 22., where Abraham went to offer up Isaac? On the third day he "saw the place afar off," and "said unto his young men, Abide ye *here* . . . while I and the lad will go *yonder*. . . . And they went both of them together" (verses 4-7). Then came Isaac's question and the father's answer, and once more we read: "So they went both of them together" (verses 7, 8). In the garden the Father and the Son "went both of Them together." The Son was "exceeding sorrowful," and if the disciples so little entered into it that they slept, the Father knew it. But oh, His love! If in the perfection of His holiness He shrank from the cup, in the perfection of His obedience He

took it, and, wending His way to the cross, in the perfection of His love He "drained the last dark drop."

"That bitter cup—love drank it up;
Left but the love for me."

Precious Saviour! Adorable Lord Glorious Christ of God! We worship Thee! Sorrowing saint, art thou crushed and overwhelmed with grief? He was "*exceeding sorrowful*." Is the cup that has been pressed to thy lips bitter indeed? Never could a cup be so bitter as that which the Father placed in His hand. To-day thou hast at thy service the sympathy, the succour, the just-everything-that-thou-needest of Him who for thy sake was "*exceeding sorrowful*." Now let us turn to Psalm 21. 6, and there see the answer: "Thou hast made Him *exceeding glad* with thy countenance." We follow Him, with wondering and worshipping hearts, from the garden of Gethsemane, through "death's dark vale," on to resurrection triumph, "length of days for ever and ever" (verse 4). We look up to the throne of God and see Him there with "a crown of pure gold on His head" (verse 3), and with "honour and majesty laid upon Him" (verse 5). We see Him set there to be "blessings for ever" (verse 6, margin); blessings for His own now, blessings for Israel in a day to come, blessings for the whole universe culminating in a scene where God will be all in all (1 Cor. 15. 24-28). All this is the result of His having been "*exceeding sorrowful*," and as He surveys it He is "*exceeding glad*." "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning" (Psalm 30. 5). His night of weeping has ended, and He has entered upon the morning of everlasting joy. We could have no part in His sorrow:

alone He had to bear that, and, blessed be His name, He did bear it. It is our happy privilege, however, to be sharers of His joy. How He delights to share that joy with us! Yet His joy is always the greatest. If we find joy in being gathered together around Himself, and we feel like the disciples of whom it is recorded, "Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord" (John 20. 20), His joy in having us near Him is greater. If when He comes for us and takes us to be with Himself in the Father's House, our joy will be unspeakable, His joy will be infinitely

greater, for He shall present us "faultless before the presence of His glory with *exceeding* joy" (Jude 24.). The Father has so ordered things that "in all things He might have the pre-eminence" (Col. 1. 18). He was pre-eminent in sorrow in the garden and on the cross, even as in His pathway He was "a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief" (Isa. 53. 3). He is pre-eminent in the gladness that fills His heart to-day. He will be pre-eminent in the joy that shall be His in the coming day of glory!

LIGHT AND LIFE. No. 17.

(JAMES BOVD.)

Meditations on John's Gospel.

"*Ye are my friends.*"—Chap. 15.

JESUS called His disciples *friends* and He had well acted the part of a friend to them, for He had laid down His life for them. And not only that, but He had made known to them all that He had heard from His Father. In this way He had brought them into intimacy with Himself and His Father. Now on their side they had the opportunity of showing that they were His friends by doing whatsoever He commanded them. In this way we can prove that we are friends of Jesus. We believe on Him for our own salvation. This we do out of love to ourselves. But it is out of love to Him that we do what He tells us to do.

We had not chosen Him, but He had chosen us. We might have thought very differently, but it was He that was the prime mover in our salvation. He chose us, and with an object in view, and that was that we might bear fruit to the Father's glory, and that our every prayer might be answered, if in His name. We are to be His friends: He has none other on earth. We are

to love one another in a world that hates us, but which hated Him before. It hated us, therefore we need not be astonished. It loves its own, but we are not of it, no more than Christ is of it. He never was of it, His origin was heavenly. There was not one thought in the heart of the natural man in harmony with His. He loved righteousness, and they loved sin. He loved the Father, and they hated Him. There was nothing in common between Him and the world. And He had chosen His disciples out of the world, and He has chosen us. By being begotten of God, and by His quickening power, we are partakers of the Divine life and nature. Therefore He can say: "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."

From the world His followers must receive the same kind of treatment that it meted out to Him. He says: "If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you: if they have kept My saying, they will keep yours also." Here we cannot expect differ-

ent treatment from that which He received. "The servant is not greater than his lord." The world persecuted Him, and refused His Word, and remained in ignorance of the Father that sent Him. The light was hated, the darkness preferred, and so was the rule of the devil to the rule of the Son of God. Thus were they left naked in their sin; and by their unbelief in the face of the signs that He had wrought among them, they were convicted of being enemies of both the Father and the Son, and that without the slightest reason; rather had they every reason for believing on Him and loving Him.

But the Comforter was coming to bear witness of Him. His disciples were also to bear witness. They could speak of Him, and of all that He said and did, from the close of the ministry of John until He was received up into heaven. But beyond that they could not go in their personal testimony, whatever they might know by Divine revelation. But the Holy Spirit could give witness as that which took place after He, by means of the cloud, was received out of their sight. Thus was His life, His death, His resurrection and His glory, perfectly authenticated. And the Spirit was here making His presence manifest by signs and wonders and various acts of power, thus leaving the unbeliever inexcusable.

Chapter 16. 28-33.

The disciples had believed that He came forth from God. He says: "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again I leave the world, and go to the Father." Until they had received the Spirit they were incapable of entering into the blessedness of the truth He was setting before them. These heavenly relationship are only known in the power of the Spirit. The creeds may contain these

things in the letter, and orthodox unbelievers may talk about the Father, Son and Spirit, but it is nothing but parrotry. It has no power with them in their relations with God or with men. The words of Jesus were spirit and life, not things that belonged to the old fleshly order, everything of which lay in moral death.

But the hour had now come that would manifest, not only the length to which the wickedness of man would go, but would also show the weakness even of those who really loved Jesus. His followers would be scattered, each man to his own, and would leave Him alone; none to stand by Him but the Father, for flesh and blood can have no part in conflict with the powers of darkness. The world had been overcome by Him; and though they would have tribulation in it, in Him they would have peace. Blessed Master! thinking only of the Father's glory, and of the happiness of His poor weak followers, apparently unmindful of the sorrows that were now gathering thickly about His lonely path! How true was that word which was said of Him: "Having loved His own that were in the world, He loved them to the end." The black night full of unutterable woes was about to drop down about His devoted head, but of Himself He was not thinking; His thoughts were in that moment engaged with His own.

The sixteenth chapter ends all He has to say to them until they see Him again in resurrection. At the beginning of His public ministry He had called them, and with one exception they had faithfully continued with Him in His temptations; and now in answer to the expressed desire of their hearts to know where He dwelt, He has brought them to the only dwelling place that could be for men. He has brought them to the love of the Father.

HOLD FAST.

(H. J. VINE.)

I quickly come !

Hold fast ! hold fast ! that no man take thy crown !
 Let no delusion thy discernment drown,
 Nor heed the false one's smile, still less his frown.

Behold, I quickly come !

I quickly come !

Hold fast ! thy martial days shall not be long,
 And though sharp conflicts on the red fields throng,
 The last shall yield to loyal victor's song.

Behold, I quickly come !

I quickly come !

Hold fast ! lose not amidst the battle's strain
 Thy rich reward—the costly prize retain !
 Close by thy Captain's flag of truth remain !

Behold, I quickly come !

I quickly come !

Hold fast ! prepare to raise the triumph shout !
 Be not unnerved by slavish fear or doubt,
 And thou shalt see the foeman's final rout !

Behold, I quickly come !

I quickly come !

Hold fast ! strong in the Lord whose power and might
 O'erwhelm the boastful scions of the night !
 They flee before the panoply of light !

Behold, I quickly come !

I quickly come !

Hold fast ! nor let My love forgotten be ;
 I entered death's domain to rescue thee :
 Thou soon shalt share new scenes of life with Me.

Behold, I quickly come !

I quickly come !

E'en so, Lord, come ! my fadeless Crown art Thou !
 My Strength and Joy ! the Hope which lights my brow !
 Thy Name, Thy Word, my shield and sword endow !

Lord Jesus, quickly come !

For Thee alone

I wait, and hold as Thine what grace has given ;
 Bound by love's cords which never can be riven,
 I look to see Thy Face more bright than heaven,
 Of every joy the Crown !

PRACTICAL PAPERS.

No. 10.—Sanctification.

(A. J. POLLOCK.)

THERE is a very important principle we gather from the Holy Scriptures, viz. :—

God never asks us to work up to any position, but puts us into the position, and then, giving us the necessary power, asks us to be true to it.

The Scriptures are full of positive statements, describing the Christian's blessings, and then of exhortations following, bidding us to be true to these blessings.

For instance, we read, "Ye are all the children (literally sons) of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3. 26). Then follow many exhortations. Take one out of many, "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit" (chapter 5. 16). We are not called upon to "walk in the Spirit" in order to become sons, but being sons we are called upon thus to walk. Again we read that God "hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. 1. 3), and then the Apostle beseeches the saints to "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called" (chapter 4. 1).

It is a great matter to realize that we are given a place of blessing first—given to us in absolute perpetuity, given, never to be recalled—and then there is the exhortation, coupled with the desire, and the power to carry that desire into effect.

Thus sanctification is in one aspect *absolute*. This can be easily proved from Scripture.

First of all let us be clear about the meaning of the word "sanctification." In itself it means *separated* for a given purpose. It does not necessarily mean holiness or being made holy. For instance, "God blessed the seventh

day, and sanctified it" (Gen. 2. 2). The seventh day did not need to be made holy. Sin had not come into the world, nor could a day—a measure of time—be charged with sin. It simply means that God set the day apart for a given purpose—*rest*.

Again, the Lord Himself in His prayer to His Father, speaking of His disciples, said, "For their sakes I sanctify Myself" (John 17. 19). Surely the Lord did not need to make Himself holy—that were blasphemy for such a thought to cross the mind. No, He set Himself apart for a given purpose, viz., to sanctify His own through the truth.

Again, in Isaiah 66. 17, we read of sinners who sanctified themselves to do abominable things. They set themselves apart for a given purpose, viz., to do evil.

We see, then, the thought of sanctification is setting apart for a given purpose, whether it be for good or evil.

The sanctification of believers, which we are now enquiring into falls, then, under two heads :

1. *The position given, and*
2. *The practice suitable to that position ; or, to put it into other words :*
 1. *Positional sanctification ;*
 2. *Practical sanctification.*

In the former it is absolute, brought about outside of ourselves altogether, absolute, irrevocable ; though accompanied by a work of God within us. In the latter it is progressive, progress secured by our exercises in answering to the Word of God as we grow in grace, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Let us look at the former.

In this aspect it may surprise the

reader that sanctification takes place through the agency of the Holy Spirit *before* justification.

Positional sanctification comes *before* justification.

Practical sanctification comes *after* justification.

Let us give Scripture proof of our statement.

Writing to the Thessalonian believers, the Apostle Paul says, "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" (2 Thess. 2. 13). Here we have sanctification put in order first and denoting its origin, it is said to be "of the Spirit," followed by "belief of the truth."

Again, the Apostle Peter writes, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1. 2). Here again sanctification is placed first and it is "of the Spirit" and "unto" a given purpose, that is, to obey as Christ obeyed, the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ emphasizing the claim of the death of Christ to whole-hearted response.

1 Cor. 6. 11 says, "But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God." Here sanctification is clearly put before justification. The washing mentioned first refers to, I judge, the cleansing by new birth, "born of water and of the Spirit" (John 3. 5).

It is very evident that sanctification must be first an absolute idea in the mind of the Holy Spirit. What idea can the sinner have of what is suitable for God, as being set apart for Himself? It is only as God teaches us by His Word and works it in our souls by His Holy Spirit, and helps it on by

His holy discipline, that we can answer in practice in any little measure to our position.

Sanctification, then, is absolute, a sovereign act of the Spirit of God, definite, irrevocable, final. Seeing it is a sovereign act of the Spirit of God, it follows that nothing can set it aside.

But once that sanctification has been accorded us in the mind of the Holy Spirit, it is His desire that we should answer to it in practice. It is the character of the One we are separated to that determines the character of our sanctification.

So we read, "As He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation (literally, *manner of life*)" (1 Peter 1. 15). The next verse goes on to say, "Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy." The quotation is from Lev. 11. 44, "I am the Lord your God; ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy."

Thus we see plainly what God expects of us, giving us those desires, which long to respond to Him.

The Israelites were *nationally and outwardly* separated to God, and God called upon them to abstain from idolatry and the evil practices of the heathen—God thus providing us, far back in His dealings with His earthly people, an illustration of what should be true of us, who are believers on the Lord Jesus Christ, only in our case *individually and inwardly* and in a far higher way than was ever expected of Israel.

So believers are exhorted to "present your bodies a living sacrifice, *holy*, acceptable to God" (Rom. 12. 1). If it is a question of God's dwelling among His people, we read, "The temple of God is *holy*, which temple ye are" (1 Cor. 3. 17). We are told

that God "hath saved us and called us with a *holy* calling" (2 Tim. 1. 9).

In short, the claim on the believer is to be as holy as God is holy, a sufficiently high standard, for none could be higher. We are told to be "followers (*imitators*, N.T.) of God, as dear children" (Eph. 5. 1). And further, we are exhorted to "follow . . . holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12. 14).

We may say that God will never rest till He has His own practically what He has made them positionally by His Spirit, in other words, till we answer fully to what He has made us by His grace.

We have, therefore, the very person and character of God as the model for our holiness; we have the blessed Lord saying to His Father, "For their sakes (*viz.*, His own) I sanctify Myself, that

they also might be sanctified through the truth" (John 17. 19), thus giving His position on high as being for this end. Surely His high priestly grace and unfailing advocacy are all for this end. Finally, He prays, 'Sanctify them through Thy truth, Thy Word is truth' (John 17. 17), putting before us the Word of God as the purifying agent, as we read the question and answer of old, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse His way? by taking heed thereto according to Thy Word" (Ps. 119. 9).

Two verses seem to stand out in great vividness in this connection:

"Be ye holy; for I am holy."

"Holiness, without which no man can see the Lord."

May they be worked out in our lives, for His Name's sake.

HOW GOD ACTS.

[T is not easy to illustrate fully the grace of God and its effects. Indeed to do it at all adequately we must suppose something that probably never happened. For instance, suppose a tenant farmer, lazy and ignorant, who when the rent day comes round is a defaulter. He had no means at the start for the proper cultivation of the land, nor has he the energy to save himself from bankruptcy. The landlord shows patience and longsuffering, but gets only hatred in return. At length in his compassion for his wretched tenant he says, "I will wipe out the past, and will make no more demands upon you in the future, but further I will love you and will make you my son, and take you into partnership with myself." Now everything is changed, the farm should be now a model farm, for there is plenty of

capital at the farmer's disposal, and agricultural wisdom also, and we can understand that the farmer would get an entirely new view of the landlord and would delight to make the farm what he would have it. The landowner's kindness would make a new man of him. Thus has God acted toward us: we were bankrupt, our lives were profitless, we paid no rent to God to whom really we belonged and for whom we ought to have lived. But He has forgiven us. Wonderful grace! His forgiveness is complete and eternal, He has made us His own children, and given to us His Spirit, that now we may be no more barren and unfruitful, but profitable to Him.

Grace exceeds our highest expectations. It is the revelation of what God is and can do, not only for us, but in us and through us.

NOTES ON JOHN 6.

(J. ALFRED TRENCH.)

AS to John 6. observe as to the Lord. First, that as come down out of heaven only to do the will of Him who sent Him, He was the sealed object of the Father's delight, the food of God's own joy ; and secondly, that for us to have any part in Him as such, we must be brought to identification with Him in death, as the necessary end of all we are after the flesh. And that it is by constant feeding on His death that we enjoy a life of fellowship with the Father (verse 54) which is eternal life, and (verse 56) of abiding in Christ to this end.

It may be a little more difficult to enter into verse 57, first because of the defect in the English, "I live *by* the Father" and "he shall live *by* Me," and then because of the wonderful bringing of us by "He then eateth ME" into participating in God's portion of ineffable satisfaction in Him personally as expressed by verse 33. For now that the teaching supposes that we have reached Him by having eaten His flesh and drunk His blood (the verb being of *past* or completed tense in verse 53), the thought of eating His flesh and blood (though ever needed, verses 54, 56) being *present* is supplemented by eating *Him* who is the Bread of God, typified by the golden pot of manna laid up in the ark for God : compare Rev. 2. 17. But I have yet to note the force of "*by*" in the two parts of verse 57.

It is not *dia* with the genetive in the Greek, which would mean "by means of," and would convey perhaps sustaining power, but *dia* with the accusative which has the force of "on account of." Observe carefully it does not say the Father lived on account of the Son. It is the Son who *lived on account of* the Father. Namely, the Father was

the sole reason of the existence (*raison d'être*) of the Son of God as come down here. As we say, "that mother *lives* for her child"—so wrapped up in it ; or Paul as divinely inspired "To me to *live* is *Christ*." That is, that Christ had become the absorbing object of his life.

The perfection of this is found for us in the Lord Jesus, as developed in His works and very words. But it was not only that in word and work alike He carried out nothing but His Father's will, the Father and His glory was the absorbing object of His life. Now follows the wonderful application to us of the principle, "So he that eateth Me even he shall live on account of Me." As we enter into more and more by the Spirit's teaching of all that made Him the perfect object of the Father's delight, the food of His own joy, He will be found worthy and able so to absorb our hearts that He will become the sole reason of word and action, yea, even of our life.

It is humbling to write and speak of such truths, and know how deeply one has failed. But His grace can make it more and more the purpose of our hearts, and give it effect in our lives.

John 6. gives us more the *Person* of Christ than the grace flowing forth to us from Him ; Him whom, in the infinite stoop He took to carry out God's will, "the Father sealed" as the perfect object of His delight, the Bread of God is the humbled place He took—the food of God's own joy, as He came down from heaven to give life to the world, governed only by His Father's will, and this brought to the last crucial test in the cross.

There are two things the chapter occupies us with ; first, all that made Him the Bread of God, and then from

verse 51, how we come to have any part in Him as such. The moral incompetency of the flesh to appreciate Him, having been fully proved (verses 41, 42), it needed that He should give His flesh for the life of the world, and that we should identify ourselves with Him in His death as the end of all we are under God's judgment (verse 53, etc.) in order to enter into eternal life and be brought (verse 57) into the communion of God's delight in Him, to feed upon *Him*, "he that eateth *Me*"—as God does (verse 33). All His perfection came out, indeed, in that supreme test of the devotedness of His love to the Father and to us, but He was the Bread of God as come down out of heaven not to do His own will,

but the will of Him that sent Him. It was the state in which we were that made necessary that further stoop to the cross, though all God's glory was made good in it. One more position of the blessed Lord is glanced at in verse 62, from whence the light of that glory in which He is, is shed back upon all He was, and upon His death for us to enter into the glory of it. You could not speak of His being "humiliated" save by man, He humbled *Himself*; but that is a different thought, and this because it was to the death of *the Cross*. We had had no part in all the perfection of that life of lowliness, obedience and devotedness but for, and by, that death. — (*From a letter.*)

"THE GLORY WHICH THOU GAVEST ME I HAVE GIVEN THEM." (John 17, 22).

WHAT has the death of Christ done for us? It has saved us from eternal judgment, but is that all? No, it has done more; it has entitled us to eternal glory. Who can measure the grace of that? Christ suffered for us to remove our sins from God's sight for ever, but not that alone, but that He might bring us to God. He has made a complete discharge of all

that lay upon us, but more, He shares with us all the glory, the distinction that He acquired when He paid our debt to God's glory. We are not only out of debt now, who were once hopeless bankrupts, but He has endowed us with inexhaustible wealth. He has made us heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ Jesus.

THE BOOK OF LIFE.

"THE force of the expression, *the book of life* (Rev. 3. 5), is evidently that of a general registry of profession, taken from the custom of corporations of cities, where a name may be enrolled, the title to which may prove false, giving at the first blush a *prima facie* title to something, though on investigation it will have to

be erased. Those who were written in this Book had a profession, 'a name to live.' This was very different from 'being written in the book of life of the Lamb, before the foundation of the world' (Rev. 13. 8, 21, 27), because God in that case had written them there; it was thus the book of the counsels and purposes of God."

THE HOLY GHOST.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

[T is important to see that the coming of the Lord Jesus into this world introduced an entirely new era in the ways of God with men, and that this new era is marked by the presence of the Holy Ghost in a way that was never known before. In Old Testament days the Spirit of God visited the earth and energized men for certain great exploits, or moved them to write the Holy Scriptures, but He never dwelt here as He does now. John 7. 39 will be sufficient to prove this.

"But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Spirit was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified."

Mark what is here stated. Believers on Jesus were to *receive* the Spirit; but for this they had to wait until Jesus was glorified, and He could not be glorified until His death and resurrection were accomplished. The order of events was as follows:

1. *The Incarnation of the Eternal Word, the only begotten Son of God* (John 1. 14, 18), for the declaration of what God is.

2. *The death of Jesus*, by which the love of God has been fully revealed and sinners redeemed (1 John 4. 9-10).

3. *The resurrection of Jesus*, the signal proof of the completeness of the work of redemption and God's seal upon that work.

4. *His ascension to the right hand of God*; the undeniable evidence of God's perfect delight in Him and in the work that He had finished.

5. *The descent of the Holy Ghost*; to gather men out of this world and unite them to Christ, so that He may have His church for Himself and reap the full harvest of His travail and death.

The two great facts of this present period are that the MAN CHRIST JESUS sits on the throne of God in heaven, and that God the Holy Ghost dwells in men on the earth.

THE COMING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

The Lord Jesus often talked with His disciples about His death and resurrection, but they always failed to understand Him; they expected to see Him sit upon the throne of David and make Israel glorious in the earth. So that when He allowed men to put Him upon the cross, and died without resisting their violence, these poor disciples were dismayed and heart-broken. They thought that the Lord had been utterly defeated, and that His mission was a complete failure and that all their hopes were for ever blasted. But just as the rising of the sun at morn flings back the gloom of night, so the resurrection dispelled the darkness into which the death of Jesus had plunged them; their doubts and misgivings vanished when they saw the Lord and they knew that what they had thought was defeat was glorious victory. As He instructed them in things concerning Himself from the Old Testament writings (Luke 24.) they must have realized the blessed fact that He had gained more glory upon the cross than He could have done had He taken the throne, and that only by that death of suffering and shame could God's intentions be brought about in the midst of the children of men.

It is scarcely needful to call evidence as to the Lord's resurrection, but as the coming of the Holy Ghost was entirely dependent upon it, it will be well to note that He was seen, and

handled, and heard by many of His disciples on many occasions after He rose from the dead. They had looked into His grave and found it empty, they had handled Him and found that he had a body of flesh and bone, they saw the wounds in that body which were made at the cross, and never afterwards questioned the fact of His glorious bodily resurrection.

To deny this is to attempt to overthrow Christianity, for it is written :—
“ And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain ; ye are yet in your sins ” (1 Cor. 15. 17).

If Christ is not raised, it is proved that He was unequal to the task which He undertook, that our sins were too many, and death too strong for Him, that God Himself has been defeated and that the devil has gained a supreme and final victory. If Christ is not raised the work of redemption is not accomplished, and consequently the presence of the Holy Ghost in men is an absolute impossibility, for He can only dwell in those who are redeemed.

But now is Christ risen from the dead, and in that resurrection we see the mighty triumph of God, and the irrefutable pledge of blessing for men.

It was on one of these occasions when the Lord revealed Himself to His disciples after His resurrection that He spoke very definitely to them as to the coming of the Holy Ghost.

In Luke 24. 49, it is recorded that He said—

“ And, behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you : but tarry ye in Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high.”

And Luke, who also wrote the Acts, tells us in the 1st chapter, 8th and 9th verses, that He also said—

“ But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you :

and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the utmost part of the earth.

“ And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up ; and a cloud received Him out of their sight.”

Now these disciples, believing the word of the Lord implicitly, abode together in Jerusalem, and continued in one accord in prayer and supplication, awaiting the fulfilment of the Lord's promise.

They had grasped the fact that they were to represent the Lord during His absence, and to spread the fame of His mighty victory ; they were evidently also conscious of their own inability for this great work, and so they waited in earnest supplication upon the Lord for the coming of Him by whom they were to receive power, that in His strength they might go forth and bring men as captives to the feet of Jesus.

Turning to Acts 2., we find there the account of the coming of the Spirit.

“ And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

“ And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

Peter explains all this to the multitude that gathered together, in verse 32.

“ This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.

“ Therefore being by the right hand of

God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear."

This is the account of the actual coming of the Holy Ghost to take up His dwelling place upon earth, and He remains with us to-day. His presence has never been withdrawn.

THE PERSONALITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Before dealing with the mission and activities of the Holy Ghost on earth, let us see what the Bible says as to His Person. We often hear Him spoken of as an influence or a power, but this is certainly not the teaching of Scripture. It is true that He exercises an influence, and is the power by which God operates in the souls of men; but He is a Person, and not only a Person but the third Person in the Godhead—the Holy Ghost.

In Matthew 28. 19 we read—

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

So that the Holy Ghost is co-equal with the Father and the Son.

THE FATHER is the source of love and life, the spring of all good and blessing for men.

THE SON is the perfect expression of the Father, the Revealer of all this good and blessing to men.

THE HOLY GHOST is the One who, by His power and wisdom, interprets that which has been revealed, and makes the revelation a reality in men.

So that we have the Ever-blessed Triune God working for the salvation of men, and if we keep in mind the three prepositions "for," "to," and "in" in this connection, they will help us to understand the relative position of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost in

the carrying out of this gracious purpose.

THE ACTIVITIES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

We will now turn to John 3. 3.

"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto Him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."

Two things stand out clearly in this statement. (1) The badness of men by nature. (2) The goodness of God in undertaking to make a new start in them for their blessing. "Ye must be born again." This is an absolute necessity, and this statement gives the lie direct to the vaunting boast that good dwells in every man and merely requires development.

Let us note the fact that these words were not spoken to an outwardly gross and vicious man. Nicodemus was a model for his fellows, upright and correct in his conduct; but with startling clearness the truth is set before even him; flesh is flesh, there must be a new start. "Ye must be born again."

We are told that what humanity needs is to be cultured, educated, religionized; that men ought to be placed in better environment, their standard of life raised. It is argued that a change from the slums to garden cities, that suitable recreations and the like, will bring them up to the platform that will make them satisfactory to themselves and their fellows, and pleasing to God. Well, I for one would like to see all slums disappear,

and the lot of man made easier, the miseries and hardships of multitudes can give no pleasure to the Christian ; but these things are the foul brood that sin has begotten in the world. Man has a fallen sinful nature and no change of environment can change that. Do not lose sight of the fact that the fall took place amid the most beautiful surroundings that human eyes have seen on earth, and that the foulest crime that ever stained the sad annals of humanity was perpetrated in a garden. It was in a garden that the traitor kiss was put upon the cheek of Jesus, and the man who did that dastard deed had been in company with Him for three years. He had been taught, and fed, and protected by Him, but in spite of these circumstances and conditions, the best that men could have, his heart remained unchanged. And the truth must be told, though it may hurt us to hear it, the heart of Judas was but a sample of yours and mine.

If you demand my authority for such an assertion, I will turn you back to Jeremiah 17. 9.

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked : who can know it?"

Or further back still, to Genesis 6.

"And God saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil and that continually."

It is useless to plead that great progress has been made since those far-off days, for Jesus said—

"That which is born of flesh is flesh."
"Ye must be born again."

All are corrupt alike by nature, from the mansions of Mayfair to the hovels of Shoreditch ; from the highest grade of society to its lowest dregs ; flesh is flesh, and nothing but this absolutely

new start which God's Spirit alone can produce, can make men acceptable to God. "Ye must be born again."

The truth as to the fall and the utter badness of the heart is not pleasant to the unregenerate man ; it suits the pride of his heart better to believe that he has descended from the ape, and that the ape arrived through various stages of evolution from the lowliest form of life, for then he can reason that if he has made such wonderful progress in the past, the future is big with possibilities. But, alas ! it is the Edenic lie, "Ye shall be as gods," which he has believed. This is the will-o'-the-wisp that is leading him through the night of his ignorance, to the black doom of eternal despair. Happy is the man who accepts God's truth as to himself and owns that he is a fallen sinner, for then he is ready for the unfolding of God's great plan for his blessing.

On the side of God's goodness in this matter we have "the water and the Spirit." The water certainly is not baptism, it is that which cleanses—not the guilt of a man, the blood does that—but which gives him a new and clean nature ; it is the truth of God applied to his heart, which produces repentance in him, and makes him turn from his evil way to God. It makes him hate the sins which once he loved, and long after those things in which he once found no pleasure. In short it is the introduction of an entirely new nature, not produced by the will of man, but by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever. Psalm 119. 9 will be sufficient to prove this interpretation of the use of water.

"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way ? by taking heed thereto according to Thy word."

And Ephesians 5. 26 is even clearer still.

"That He might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water by the word."

And speaking to His disciples in John 15. 3, the Lord said—

"Now are ye clean through the word which I have spoken unto you."
Evidently the water is the word.

The truth of God is applied in convicting power by the Spirit of God, for just as He brooded over the face of the waters in the days of creation, so He moves now upon the souls of men to bring form out of chaos, to make the light shine where the darkness has reigned, and to bring life out of death. He is the untiring Servant of God in this gracious work, and happy is the man who yields to His influence and power.

Having quickened the soul out of death, the Spirit of God turns the eye to Christ as the only hope and Saviour; and faith in Him settles the question of guilt for ever, for God "is just, and the Justifier of Him that believeth in Jesus." It is verily a glorious day for a man when he casts himself unreservedly upon the Lord Jesus Christ, for then a complete change of ownership takes place, he is no longer the slave of Satan, but he belongs to the Lord, and as a result receives the Spirit of God.

Two passages from the epistles will make this clear. Eph. 1. 13, 14.

"Christ, in whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise."

Also 1 Cor. 6. 19.

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body."

In these two passages three important questions are answered.

1. Who are indwelt by the Spirit?
2. When are they indwelt?
3. Why are they indwelt?

WHO?

"The immanence of God in humanity," is a favourite phrase in the mouths of some, and by it is meant that God dwells in, and manifests Himself through *all* men. But Scripture teaches the very opposite. Notice the Lord's own words in John 14. 17.

"The Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him; but ye know Him, for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

How clearly the distinction is here made between the world of men and the believing "YOU." Those who are addressed in the verses quoted had "heard" and "believed the gospel of our salvation"; they are addressed as "saints," and "faithful in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 1.). They are "sanctified in Christ Jesus" (1 Cor. 1. 2) and are included in the "us who are saved," verse 18.

But nothing could be plainer than chapter 6., verses 9, 10, 11.

"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,

"Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, inherit the kingdom of God."

Now mark well the next verse.

"And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

These are they who were indwelt

by the Holy Ghost, their bodies had become the temples of God, but they had first to be washed, sanctified, and justified; in this way they were prepared for this wondrous indwelling.

"Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" (Rom. 8. 9).

WHEN ?

The "When" of the indwelling is equally plain; it was *"after that ye believed, or 'having believed' (N.T.) ye were sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise."*

This is plainly illustrated by the case of Cornelius and his household in Acts 10. 43, 44. For while Peter bore testimony to Christ in those blessed words: "To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His Name, whosoever believeth in Him shall receive the remission of sins," the Holy Ghost fell upon all who heard the word. Faith came by hearing, they believed the glad tidings, and were at once sealed by the Holy Ghost, as belonging to the Lord.

When a man thus believes the gospel, and surrenders himself to the Lord Jesus to-day, he becomes His property in deed and in truth, and receives the Spirit at once. When a farmer buys sheep in the market he puts his own mark upon them, he does not go about marking other men's sheep, but he stamps those that his own money has purchased. In like manner the good and great Shepherd marks off His own sheep by the indwelling of the Spirit.

WHY ?

Of equal importance is the "Why?" of the indwelling, and for this we must look at 1 Cor. 6. 19. It is here that the Lord's rights are emphasized. Are you a believer on the Lord Jesus Christ? Then you are God's property. "Ye are bought with a price," and the great-

ness of that price no mind can grasp, no tongue can tell. The love of Christ was so great, His desire to possess us so strong, that He endured the speechless pangs of Calvary and shed His precious blood. More than this He could not have done, and no less a price would have availed.

Now every believer on the Lord Jesus Christ is the rightful property of God. A man has money to invest, and with it he purchases a row of houses; as soon as they pass into his possession, he advertises that the houses are to let. He has purchased that property to let it out to others. But here is another man, who also purchases a house, but instead of advertising for tenants, he resides in it himself. Now, judging by the conduct of some Christians, we should be led to the conclusion that God had acted according to the former, for they have given much room within their hearts and lives to the world, the flesh, and countless other things. But the truth is that Christians have been chosen, purchased, and redeemed by God, that He might dwell in them Himself, and by the Holy Ghost He has taken possession of that which He has purchased. It is His will and His right to occupy us altogether. He would have us, spirit, soul, and body, yielded up to His control. This is the "Why?" of the indwelling. He claims our bodies as His temples.

THE COMFORTER.

We will turn again to the Gospel of John, for the Spirit is mentioned more often in that Book than any other, except the Acts of the Apostles.

The reason for this is that a very full unfolding of Christianity is set before us in it. It will pay you well to search out all the times that the Lord uses the personal pronoun "My"

in John. You will find it to be the characteristic word of the Gospel. He says, "My Father," "My Father's house," "My Father's name," "My joy," "My peace," "My glory," "My love," "My name," and so forth. From these blessed possessions He derived infinite gladness, and true Christianity simply means that those who are His own—those whom He can call "My sheep," "My friends," "My brethren,"—share these things with Him, for He gives not as the world, but shares all He possesses with His loved co-heirs. But these things cannot be understood and enjoyed apart from the Holy Ghost, hence the place He occupies in the Gospel.

In chapter 14. 26, Jesus says—

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

Chapter 15. 26.

"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me."

Chapter 16. 7-15.

"It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you. . . . Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; . . . He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shew it unto you."

Every word that fell from the lips of Jesus is of the utmost importance, and I would ask you to note particularly how He speaks of the Holy Ghost. He does not speak of Him as the Comforter merely, but "*Another Comforter.*" That means, on the face of it, that He was to take the place of One who had

already acted the part of Comforter. That One was Jesus Himself.

He had been their Teacher, Guide, Protector, and Friend. He had guarded them in danger, comforted them in sorrow, and made Himself altogether indispensable to them. Now it was expedient for them that He should go away, and the Holy Ghost was to come, and fill the Lord's place in all this wondrous activity of love.

And this brings before us in a vivid way the character of the Spirit of God. We are apt to dwell upon the fact of His holiness, and it is most necessary that we should, for He is the Holy Spirit of God; but do not let us forget His love and tenderness. We see in Jesus the embodiment of tenderness and love, for every beautiful grace dwelt in Him; but in all this He was the perfect expression of the character of God. Now the Holy Ghost is God, so that dwelling within us is One who, though intensely holy, is exactly in character what Jesus was when here on earth. He is with us as the Comforter. How shall we illustrate this blessed office?

Upon the curbstone yonder there stands a timid little girl; she must cross that crowded thoroughfare, but she is filled with fear at the sight of the whirling traffic. She dare not venture alone, and she looks about for guidance and help. Presently there comes along one whose face gives her confidence, and he, seeing her standing there, divines her need, and taking her small hand in his strong palm, he leads her safely through all the dangers and sends her on her way, light of heart and happy. He is a comforter. That is the place that the Holy Ghost takes with regard to us, and it will be with exceeding joy that He presents all the blood-washed ones at last to the One who bought them in the eternal glory

of God. By Him they are kept through faith unto salvation.

But the Holy Spirit is not only here to guide and lead God's people through all the difficult ways in life: He is with them to minister constant comfort and joy to their hearts by unfolding the glories of Christ. If a beam of sunlight is allowed to shine through a transparent prism, it is decomposed into its constituent rays, and we are able to admire its glories in the red, green, blue, gold, and purple. Now the Bible is the prism through which the Holy Spirit makes the glory of Christ to shine, and as we are taught of Him, we are able to discern the golden ray of the divine glory of Jesus—the blue ray of His heavenly character and grace—and the red ray of His suffering and death; and as we are engaged with the all-varied glories of Him who is so precious to us, we are comforted, helped, and greatly rejoiced.

The natural man cannot see or know these glories, it is the work of the Holy Spirit to reveal them to us, as is plainly stated in 1 Cor. 2. It is in this way that He turns the affections of God's people from the trifles of earth, and fixes them upon the glorious and ever blessed Man who sits at God's right hand.

OTHER RESULTS OF HIS COMING.

The Holy Ghost is also the Spirit of sonship. Those whom He indwelleth are the sons of God. This is plainly put in Paul's letter to the Galatians.

"For ye are all the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Chapter 3. 26).

"And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son in your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Chapter 4. 6).

Suppose the King pardoned a poor criminal, lying under a death sentence, that he set him at liberty, and finally

took him to the royal residence at Windsor. We can understand how grateful the man would be for His Majesty's clemency, but we can also see that he would be very uncomfortable in the palace, he would be more at home in the prison than there, for he has had no training for Court life.

But if the King could give him the spirit of the Prince of Wales, everything would be changed, he would then be able to enter into the King's ways and thoughts, and he would be perfectly at home in the presence of his benefactor. Now what the King could never do, God has done. He has given the Spirit of His Son to all who have truly believed in Him. Apart from this they could not have been at home in the Father's presence, but since they have received the Spirit of His Son, they in measure are able to enter the thoughts of the Father, they can appreciate and reciprocate His great love, and understand that they are placed in His sight in all the favour and love that belongs to His dear Son, and this will be their joy in heaven for ever.

Now mark well the character of God's love. It is so great that He will have us, who are saved, with Himself in heaven for ever. *But He loves us so much that He will not keep us waiting until we get to heaven to enjoy it; He has given to us His Spirit, that the ineffable bliss of heaven might fill our hearts now.*

Now it is evident that as Jesus alone could accomplish the work of redemption, so none but the Holy Ghost can give effect to that work in the souls of men. The work of God is beyond the power of men; the power of the Holy Ghost is alone competent for it.

The things of God are beyond the range of the wisdom of men; the wisdom of the Holy Ghost alone can search them out and reveal them to us,

and no man can understand them apart from the teaching of God the Holy Ghost.

If this were understood, Christians would be delivered from reliance upon the strength and wisdom of nature, and become useful vessels in the hands of the Spirit. They would be satisfied with that which was from the beginning, and be able to detect and reject as spurious every doctrine that is not of God.

Thus far we have confined our thoughts to the individual aspect of the Holy Spirit's indwelling, but it is also most important for us to see that His presence on earth has bound all God's people into one compacted whole. This must be so if one Spirit dwells in all. Hence we read in 1 Cor. 12. 12—

"For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body."

Every one who has truly believed the Gospel, which proclaims the forgiveness of sins to men, is indwelt by the Spirit, and by this same Spirit is united to Christ the glorified Head of the body, and every member thus united to Christ is necessary to all the rest. Each has his place in this

wondrous unity, even as the members of a human body have each their place and function in the body in which they are placed. But space fails for further reference to this great aspect of the truth, but if you will prayerfully consider 1 Cor. 12., where it is unfolded for us, you will be convinced of its importance.

Oh, that this truth may lay hold upon heart and conscience in these days of cliques, and sects, and divisions, and that all of us who love the Lord might have grace to depart from iniquity, and endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling.

Finally—

"Grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice :

"And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph. 4. 30, 31, 32).

The Adversary.

WE must not forget that the Devil is a subtle and persistent foe of both God and men. 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). He **BEGUILES** the saints by corrupting them, "from the simplicity that is in Christ" (2 Cor. 11. 3), and that by bringing in all sorts of specious doctrines that rob them of the true Christ, the Son of God. He **BUFFETS** those

whom he can neither blind nor beguile, as in Paul's case (2 Cor. 12. 7). But the Lord's grace is sufficient even for him, and if the Christian draws on this grace and bears buffeting patiently it is acceptable to God (1 Peter 2. 20), and the spirit of glory and of God rests upon such (chap. 4. 14).

But we need not fear him if we are dependent upon and obedient to God, for then we may resist him and he will flee from us **BAFFLED** and **BEATEN** (James 4. 7).

PAUL'S PERSUASION.

"For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come ; nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."—Rom. 8. 38, 39.

YOU will notice that Paul had no fear as he looked backward, forward, upward, downward ; nothing that beset him, or might yet beset him, moved him at all. Time and eternity were alike to him in this, for the God who loved Him was over all and greater than all, and the love of God held him in its everlasting embrace, as it does all His children. He begins with death, death that separates a man from all that he loves in this world—it had no terrors for Paul for it could not separate him from the love of God ; and then he runs through the whole category of things that fill the minds of men with misgiving and dread, they were nothing to Paul. God is greater than all, and God loved him, that was enough for him and he knew that no power of evil could dislodge him from his place in that love.

But mark how he describes that love. Men have a loose way of talking about the love of God ; it is to them a vague sort of thing, a philosophical term. You find it in Theosophy, Christian Science and other anti-Christian cults. It means nothing beyond mere human amiability. Not so did Paul speak of

it. The love of God to him was "IN CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD." This brings in Calvary and its suffering, for the love of God is commended to us in that Christ died for us. It brings in the blood, and redemption through the blood ; it brings in resurrection, for Christ Jesus is the risen Man ; it brings in the exaltation of Christ, for God hath made this same Jesus both Lord and Christ ; it brings in also submission to Him, for if He is Lord we must bow to Him, then only can we say OUR LORD. The love of God is in Christ Jesus our Lord, and nowhere else for men. To spurn Christ Jesus our Lord is to refuse the love of God and to abide in darkness. The light of that love shines in Christ Jesus our Lord and dispels the gloom of death and fear of the future ; it has come nigh to us in Him who sought and saved us ; it has brought us to God. The love of God in Christ Jesus has done the greatest thing for us as the Gospel declares, and knowing it we can rest in it when everything else fails us. This abides, this is eternal ; from this nothing can separate those who believe—the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

THE TEST OF A PERSUASION.

(T. OLIVER.)

(The Substance of an Address at a Graveside.)

"I am persuaded, that neither death nor life . . . shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."—Rom. 8. 38, 39.

"I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day."—2 Tim. 1. 12. Read.

WE do not seek to eulogize or to advertise the many virtues of our departed friend, but we do advertise his persuasion, yet not in any

narrow sense ; but in the term we embrace the persuasion of the whole household of faith, the church of the living God.

That a man should have a persuasion, either political or religious, is common, but, to use a chemical phrase, the acid test is "How does that persuasion react towards death?" Unless a persuasion is proof against this dire calamity it is valueless. However, our friend did not esteem death as a dread calamity. Two weeks before he died, one of his family said that they could not afford to lose him. He replied that someone else had higher claims over him than they. It is good for a Christian to own the sovereignty of God. He is God's property, therefore God has a right to do with His property what He wills.

Death has not separated him from the love of God, but mark the nicety of Scriptural expression. Non-separation from the love of God is only continued beyond the grave in the envelope "in Christ Jesus our Lord." We must have bowed to the Lordship of Christ, come under His sway, owned Him as Saviour. Otherwise death will prove an inexorable separator, not only from the love of God but from the mercy of God, plunging the man without Christ in hopeless gloom. Therefore it is of prime importance that we should review our persuasion as to the contingency of death.

We pass for a brief moment to the second passage read. Like the apostle, our friend knew whom he had believed. For nearly half a century that was true, but it applied with much greater emphasis at the close of the long period than at the beginning. In his last illness, he said to one of his sons, "A

death-bed tests the reality of what we profess."

In the face of winter, bad trade and closing mills, a worker who has laid by a little in the Savings Bank feels more secure against the lean period ahead; but we draw attention to an infinitely leaner time when death ushers a man into eternity without Christ, hence we beg that consideration should be given to what investments we may have beyond the grave. It is all-important to have the persuasion that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.

We are not performing any ritual of sprinkling earth on the coffin, because "the grave is not the goal." "Returning to dust" has a proximate and not an ultimate bearing. We have reverently lowered the body of our friend into the grave in view of a certain resurrection, the complement of the resurrection of Christ. The Lord Himself is coming and will explode all the scientific theories which seek to prove the impossibility of His claiming that body. Faith's transpiercing vision sees clearly that what is impossible to man is not only possible but certain with God. We have put away the casket which contained the jewel we prized and loved, but that jewel (call it "soul" or "spirit" as you will, I do not trouble about the psychology of the matter) is not there. What the philosopher has to tell us on the matter is but vain vapouring. We turn with certainty to this old Book which tells us that he is with Christ, which is beyond comparison better; therefore we do not sorrow as those without hope.

The cure for care is faith and prayer.

FAITH appropriates to oneself what is offered to all, and LOVE makes me anxious that all should enjoy what I have appropriated for myself. Faith and love are born in the soul together. One cannot exist without the other.

THE TEMPTATION OF OUR LORD.

(JAMES MCBROOM.)

Notes on Matthew's Gospel. No. 2.

IN chapter 4. we reach the scene of our Lord's temptation. The One born King must first be subject; His right to rule is to be demonstrated by His delight to obey; He whose prerogative it is to command takes first the place of a servant. If God is to have the redeemed creation in abiding stability, every part of which will be beyond taint of sin or shadow of imperfection, the One who shall hold it together must be tested. The beginning and guarantee of that new creation is Christ, but for Him there must be testing, and that in a way no other could ever know.

Fallen man lives in a world which is the sphere of Satan's rule, but He who lives with the Father has to be led into the wilderness to meet the tempter. The three recorded tests doubtless correspond to all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life (1 John 2. 16) in the way of pleasure, pride and glory. They touch the Lord in a threefold way as Man, Messiah and Son of Man.

If, as we have seen, the going to Egypt had identification with Israel in view, this first temptation goes back to Eden in view of the history of man. There was no prohibition here as in Adam's case, a point which brings out the perfect obedience of the Lord. The first man had failed in the best circumstances in which he could be placed, the abundance of God's creation was within his reach; but with the second Man there was perfect devotedness in the worst extremity. He was in the wilderness, had fasted forty days, and was an hungered. "Satisfy Your hunger, use Your power for Your own comfort," said the tempter. The Lord replied from Deuteronomy. "Man shall

not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

The holy city and the temple referred to in the second attack brought into view His royal rights in Israel. For Him, according to God's will, they were to be reached through a path of suffering and taken up by redemption. This attack was more impudent, with an endeavour to support it with a text of Scripture. The Lord again replied from Deuteronomy, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." The distinction between miracles and magic should be noted. Our Lord and His disciples wrought the former and exposed the latter. In Acts 8. a man is seen using magic arts and spoken of as the power of God, and one of a like class is called a son of the Devil in chap. 13. of the same book. It was the same with Jannes and Jambres who withstood Moses. As Herod looked for some display of that kind, some sensational feat (Luke 23. 8), so here the Devil suggests that character of things.

The last test was an offer of worldly power, and was a challenge to the Lord's place of universal sway in the creation. He could have it by submission to the Devil. It was, however, far beneath what God had in store for Him, as we see in another mountain scene in this Gospel (chap. 17.). The transfiguration displays His glory in the creation when for the glory of God He shall contro! it all. Nothing would He take from the Tempter. He who received the cup of suffering from the Father, doing His will in drinking it, will also take the answer to that sorrow in glory from the same hands. At that moment the Lord stood the appointed Heir of all things, and the

whole hierarchy of the heavens, whether thrones, lordships, principalities or authorities, were for Him. Satan sought proofs of His Sonship by outward works of display; the Lord gave full proof of the same by obedience to the WORD.

But we lose much if we miss the important lesson here, namely, that the enemy's recorded suggestions cover the range of his resources and pervade the whole complicated course of man's life upon the earth. It shows the interweaving of good and evil, and brings out the need of the Incarnation. It was necessary that One should enter the conflict who was able to disentangle the one from the other and put each in its place for eternity. In this way these temptations speak of whatever surrounded the Lord, and are still to be resisted by His saints in the power of God's Holy Word.

He stood in need of what He had power to supply. The thrust appeared innocent. Make use of personal ability for personal ends. One feels how poorly we can catch the drift of such a suggestion. This has been practised to such an extent that not to do so would put one, in the eyes of his fellow-men, in the place of a madman. It is the predominating sin which has made the world what it is, and is the proof that when man lost God he became self-centred. The Lord Jesus Christ showed that life does not consist merely in what it can get or in doing for oneself, but in what it can give and what it can do for others. "Man shall not live by bread alone, . . ." See chap. 6. 19-20; Luke 12. 29-31.

The enemy had not met this before, hence the new device. If that is your idea it is no good in this world; no one will be able to understand or appreciate such a life. You may, however, arrest attention by some

wonderful achievement that no one has heard of before: you may direct attention to yourself in such a way that all will marvel. "Cast thyself down." To do this might seem complete abandoning of Himself to God, in reality it was distrust—tempting God; for it meant that an outward act was needed to demonstrate His care. No true confidence in God calls for that. Instead there is an inward peaceful trust. See John 6. 30; 7. 3-5, and the Lord's answer quoted from Deut. 6.

But there is still need of submitting, as men say, to reason. He had come to recover the world for God. There could not be success on the lines adopted. Such a life could neither be understood nor appreciated. It is no use attempting it. If you will be advised by me I can put you in the way of success; in fact, if you commit yourself to me I will guarantee the whole. "All these things"—"the kingdoms of the world and their glory"—all are yours "if, falling down, Thou wilt do me homage." Again from Deut. 6. come the words "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and Him only shalt thou serve." He had not come to be a patriot or link Himself with creature schemes for putting things right. How often His followers lose their true glory by accepting some favour from the world. The key to the whole position is in the hands of every simple saint who understands the distinction between the faith system, or the world of God's purpose, and this poor world and its efforts, which is dominated by the Devil.

The conflict over, Satan disappears, and angels come and minister unto Him. The public ministry of the Lord according to Matthew now begins, though a good deal had been going on before. (See John 1.-4.) John is im-

prisoned for reasons stated later (chap. 14.), and Jesus leaves Nazareth for Capernaum. Having bound the strong man He goes forth to spoil his goods in His royal rights as David's Son and His irresistible power as Immanuel.

Note : His personal appearance was the crowning test to man in his responsibility. His acceptance or rejection stood for a time an undecided point. To understand the development of truth in Matthew this must be kept in mind. He stood before them as the Minister of the circumcision to confirm the promises made to the fathers, and all His words and works had the setting up of the kingdom in view. We who live in the full light can go back from the moment of His rejection and see that all He was doing had also the full purpose of God in view. This could not be otherwise.

He had come from heaven to die, and though necessarily veiled, that death may be seen bearing upon His spirit before Israel's decision had come fully out. See chap. 9. 15-17, where His words anticipate the cross and involve Paul's gospel and the new creation.

Connected with this is the use of the term kingdom of heaven. John began with it, the Lord used it Himself, and so also the twelve apostles. It was a term suited to cover both periods, but in its full meaning stands proper to the day of His session at the right hand of God. It was used to designate the blessing then offered in fulfilment of prophecy. From chapter 13. the kingdom is set forth in mystery with the King in heaven, the result of Israel's rejection of Him, and His consequent death, resurrection and ascension.

The Love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

"I love to tell the story,
It has done so much for me,
And that is just the reason
I tell it to thee."

WHAT a difference the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord makes in a life! yes, and in the presence of death, too. We must speak about it, for it is so real, so true and so peace-giving.

There is a story told of John Bruce—the Scottish martyr—That old man of God, after his troubled, persecuted life, lay dying. His daughter was sitting by his bed telling him of the Master he had served, and suddenly he said: "Hold, my daughter; my Master is calling me. Fetch the Bible," he said, "and turn up the 8th of Romans, and put my finger on these words: 'I am persuaded that NEITHER

DEATH, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depths, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.'"

And the old man died with his finger there, and his heart there too. Lay your heart down there, fearful soul, on the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Rest on it, and face the untried future with your heart resting there. There is nothing that need trouble you in life or death or the great eternity, nothing that you need to fret about or to be afraid of either now or for ever. All, all is well.

PRACTICAL PAPERS.

No. 11—The Two Natures.

(A. J. POLLOCK.)

MAN, as fallen, acquired a sinful nature, incapable of producing fruit for God.

This is a simple sentence to write, but it is the failure to wholeheartedly believe it on the part of Christendom at large that accounts for a great deal of error in its teachings and failure and disappointment in practice.

Men naturally cling to the belief that there is some good in man, a vital spark in every breast that may be fanned into a flame. Such beliefs naturally lead to cultivating, with the best of intentions, the wrong nature, with deplorable results.

Gen. 6. 5, describing the antediluvian world, says, "God saw . . . that every imagination of man's heart was only evil continually." What could be more sweeping than that? Man is unchanged, and God sees the same in the unregenerate to-day. "Every imagination" without exception, "only evil" without any co-mingling of good, "continually" without cessation. What a picture!

The Apostle Paul, in summing up the whole human race, reviewing first the heathen, then the civilized pagan, and lastly the religious Jew with all his God-given advantages, is equally sweeping. "There is none righteous, no, not one." "There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God." "They are all gone out of the way." "They are together become unprofitable." "There is none that doeth good, no, not one." So the summing up of Romans 3. runs, and in the main made up of skilfully chosen quotations from the Old Testament Scriptures, outwardly received and revered by the Jewish race. Paul testified to nothing new. How could

the Jew stand up and deny his own Scriptures?

The Apostle John goes to the very root of things—*nature*—when he says, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh" (John 3. 6)—*flesh* describing here the fallen sinful nature of man. "*Flesh*" in Scripture sometimes means the physical body, such as "flesh and bones." In this use of it, it includes reference to the Lord Himself, but mostly the word refers to our fallen sinful nature, in which the blessed Lord had no part surely, or else He were as one of ourselves and no Saviour.

So in the sense of sinful nature the nature can only produce what is its nature. Thus Matt. 7. 16-20 tells us that we cannot expect grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles, nor good fruit from a corrupt tree.

So if man seeks to cultivate the flesh, even in its fairest forms, he is doomed to disappointment. If I cultivate a thorn-bush under the illusion that it is a vine, I shall only increase the size and number of the thorns and not succeed in getting one grape. No one would be so foolish as to mistake a thorn-bush for a vine, but alas! in the realm of the moral and spiritual, even leaders in Christendom are making a worse mistake with graver consequences.

To set a man working on his own salvation, with the idea that there is naturally good in him, that only needs diligent encouragement and education and a suitable environment, you put that man on the clean side of the broad road to destruction, as John Bunyan quaintly described it, and make it harder for him to come in his true colours to God as a hell-deserving

sinner needing redemption through the atoning work of Christ.

So the sentence we penned at the beginning is really a big sentence, needing much thought to grasp its real significance. It may seem very elementary, but as a matter of fact no one can build well save on a good foundation. A good foundation is of supreme importance.

I remember seeing a large ecclesiastical building, evidently an ancient structure, and yet the massive tower was left half-finished. On enquiry I was informed that the foundation would not stand the strain of the superstructure that the architect designed. Hence the disfigurement of a half-built tower.

So with divine things. There must be the foundation, well and deeply laid in our souls, before we are ready to advance to other and higher truths.

Thank God, believers have a new nature, and it is this divine nature that God alone recognizes. Death, mortification of our fleshly members, is the alone divine treatment meted out to the old nature. This can only be effected in the life of the new nature, as empowered by the Holy Spirit of God.

Not only does propitiation come through the death of Christ as the manifestation of God's love, but also *life*—and put in the order of

LIFE AND PROPITIATION

(see 1 John 4. 9, 10), what would it avail if a sinner were cleansed from his sins and he were left untouched as to his nature? What would it avail if a crab-apple tree were stripped of its crop of fruit, and its nature were left untouched? Nature can only express itself and a crab-apple tree can only bear crabs.

So propitiation of our sins alone would not meet our case. Indeed, propitiation without life or life without propitiation would be equally impossible.

Thank God, the believer in the Lord Jesus has a new nature—a nature that is at home in the presence of God—a nature that loves holiness and shrinks from evil. Equally emphatic is Scripture as to the consistent character of the new nature. We read, "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3. 6). Again, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit [practise] sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (1 John 3. 9). "He cannot sin" is a strong statement, but the inspired writer is looking at the believer abstractly as identified altogether and only with the divine nature. Just as you might say that a vine cannot bear thorns, or a fig tree thistles, and only and altogether and absolutely the fruit expressive of its nature, so it is with the divine nature—it must express itself; it cannot sin.

Again we read, "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that the wicked one toucheth him not" (1 John 5. 18). How sweet and comforting it is to read these absolute statements, which are definitely and wholly true. But the reader may say, "But that does not tally with my experience," and ask, "What is the solution of all my strivings after holiness and victory, and my constant disappointments?"

We propose to answer these questions in next month's issue of *Scripture Truth*, with the Editor's kind permission.

But we have gained something if we have received a clear idea from Scrip-

ture as to the two natures—one wholly and irremediably bad, that can never by mistake bear fruit for God; the other wholly and absolutely good, incapable of sin. To be delivered from the mistaken idea of good in man as

such before God, and the attempt to cultivate that which God has condemned by the cross, is a great gain, leaving us free to be occupied with the new, and that which is of God. May this be our happy occupation.

SAFELY GUIDED.

"I'll bless the hand that guided,
I'll bless the heart that planned,
When throned amid the glory
Of Immanuel's Land."

A LITTLE yacht was cruising among the Western Isles of Scotland, and one sullen evening a gale set in from the broad Atlantic. It came moaning over the long, rolling swell, and caught the frail craft off a perilous lee-shore. There was no shelter at hand, but the old skipper had known that treacherous coast from boyhood, and he said that there was a harbour some distance away, and he thought he could make it. And so, through the darkness, lit only by the gleam of phosphorescence in her wake, the little ship went plunging on her course amid the wild welter of wind and wave. At length she swung into smooth water, and they let go the anchor and, turning into their berths, went peacefully to sleep. In the morning the master came on deck and surveyed the scene—a little loch, girt about by dark, purple mountains. It was a quiet haven; but, looking toward the entrance, he beheld a narrow channel, with sharp rocks jutting here and there, and all awash with boiling surf. To think of passing that way! The least swerving of the tiller, and those jagged teeth would have caught the frail timbers and ground them to splinters, and every life would have perished. He gazed a while, then he shuddered, and, turn-

ing to the old skipper, he exclaimed: "Did we—did we pass there in the darkness?"

And this is a parable of life. We know something of the goodness and mercy which have followed us all our days, but there is more, immeasurably more, that we have never noticed; and we shall never realize what a debt we owe to the unseen love which has attended us, until we get home to the Father's house and from the rest and peace of it survey the long road which we have travelled over the wide wilderness. We shall then perceive, in the clear light of Eternity, what perils we have escaped—the hidden snares, the lurking foes, the rushing torrents, the dizzy precipices which we have passed securely in the darkness, because an unseen Hand was holding us and guiding our blind steps. Then we shall realize what we owe to the Love of God—

"When this passing world is done,
When has sunk yon glaring sun,
When we stand with CHRIST in glory,
Looking o'er life's finished story,
Then, LORD, shall we fully know,
Not till then, how much we owe."

It will be an amazing discovery. "Did we—did we pass there in the darkness?"

HIS ROYAL BOUNTY.

(A. S. LOIZEAUX.)

Notes of an Address at Towson, Maryland.

WHEN the Lord condemned the generation that rejected Him He made mention of "the queen of the south," and said that she, too, "shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here. While David is a type of Christ as a rejected king—a king truly, but a rejected one, though later glorified—Solomon is a type of Him on His throne, His power sweeping from one end of the earth to the other, astonishing the world. The Queen of Sheba typifies the nations bringing their riches to the Lord. They will say, "It was a true report that we heard in our own lands of thy acts and thy wisdom, and we came and our eyes have seen it, and behold, the half was not told us."

Solomon told the queen all the answers to her hard questions. There was nothing he did not tell her. No doubt she brought difficult problems to Solomon, but he solved them all; and all the hard questions that puzzle the human heart can be answered by the King of kings. So we are privileged to ask, and so He will graciously answer. When Solomon has met all her need, she says, "Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom." How true that will be when Christ is on the throne. Happy, then, will be His servants! Happy those who stand around Him, too!

Jesus said to His disciples, "Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations, and I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me; that ye may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." There is reserved for

you a place at My table, He said. How much does our faith lay hold of these things, how much do we consider the fact that these days—these humdrum business days—are marking out just how much of a place we will have in His kingdom? In accordance with the measure of faithfulness or unfaithfulness we display here we shall be given a place with Him in His kingdom.

The Queen of Sheba brought Solomon an abundance of spices, gold, and precious stones. These things, signifying loyalty and unswerving worship, the nations, too, will bring to the Lord. They will hear of Him in far countries and will come to Jerusalem with their greatness just as the wise men did when they went to Bethlehem with their gifts. So in a spiritual way we can yield ourselves to Him. The queen gave Solomon all those precious gifts and then he asked her, What is your desire? And he gave her what she desired. Then he said, I give you what you desire, and I have more, too; and he loaded up the camels with his royal bounty, as much as they could carry. Those things which he gave her of his royal bounty were far more precious than those for which she asked.

What we are told about heaven is meagre. We are told chiefly that God the Father has His will there. "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Heaven is ours, it is God's royal bounty. We never deserved heaven. We never asked for it. All we asked, when we knew our wretched condition as sinners in God's sight, was forgiveness. Here is the royal bounty!

"Trembling we had hoped for mercy—
Some lone place within His door;
But the crown, the throne, the mansion,
All were ready long before!"

Like the publican we asked for

mercy. That is what the prodigal came for, just for mercy, just for bread, and he knew he didn't deserve that. He said, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants," but the father gave of his royal bounty. "Bring forth the best robe," he said, "and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet, and bring hither the fatted calf and kill it: and let us eat, and be merry." Think of what we were; and yet, notwithstanding all that we were, God has set His table, made a feast, piled it high. That's His royal bounty. God never meets a person halfway. His whole heart and home go out to anyone who pleads his need. The prodigal's reception illustrates God's way of giving. Everything God gives is given that way. When God gives anything there is always excess, and that is His royal bounty!

In Genesis we are told how God made the earth and the sun, and into the account He puts that charming little sentence, "He made the stars also!" We could have done without them. Ships would have been hard to steer, perhaps, but we did not have to have them. "He made the stars also," and it is only of late years that astronomers have discovered that their number and size are inconceivable and their bounds unknown. They are God's royal bounty, silently witnessing to the unspeakable greatness of the Giver.

He made the earth and threw the flowers in extra. He made them sweet, He poured the perfume on the blossoms. They were more than man needed, but He gave them out of His royal bounty! And He made the birds with beautiful wings and lovely songs—all—*all* of His royal bounty! When I hear the thrush outside my window in the

morning, I think, "God's royal bounty to mankind!" These little creatures are so full of joy that they cannot contain it, and they just sing it right up into His face. Man didn't ask for these gifts. God just gave of His royal bounty.

Now for spiritual things we have come to Him. We asked forgiveness and He has given it, but that isn't half the story. We did not ask for His boundless love, but He has given it. In John the Lord says, "The thief cometh not but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy." The thief cannot kill *us*, but he will try to destroy our peace. But then He adds, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." Not just enough to keep us alive, but enough to sweep us on through all eternity—life which He gives more abundantly.

Safety is all we think of, but safety is just the beginning of God's thoughts for us. "Peace with God"—that is safety, just the beginning. The most a sinner could expect would be to have his sins forgiven, his debts cancelled, his lost place restored; but God does not only that; He always adds from His royal bounty. If we are not fit for earth, He comes in with His salvation and gives us heaven instead! Aye, and makes us meet for it—"meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col. 1. 12). Though we have sinned against Him, He holds us to His heart, and gives us earth and heaven also!

In Ephesians we read how God has given; and the Apostle Paul, anxious that we understand what He has done for us, prays that we "may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye

might be filled with all the fulness of God." I have no doubt that thousands and even millions of God's generation have thought they discovered more about God's love and mercy than any others. The sweetness of God's love in dealing with us is unspeakable. The apostle says it "passeth knowledge," so it cannot be measured. It is too vast to know at all.

"Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding above all that we ask or think." The Queen of Sheba asked Solomon what she desired. We ask what we think and then God gives us more than we can even think. When we are in His presence we shall be astonished at what He has done. We are told that these bodies which are now characterized by weakness will be characterized by power. These bodies mortal will be immortal. These bodies of humiliation will be glorified—we know not why or how—but it is His royal bounty.

The things which are Christ's shine sweeter and brighter unto the perfect day. I have seen old people just drinking in these blessed things they are soon to see. "Happy are these thy people."

Because His royal bounty is greater than we can conceive, because He "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think," young people, give Him the best years of your lives, and the time will come when the Lord will remember the love and consecration and service, and will say, "Well done, good and faithful servants!" Oh, let us be true! There will be hardships and trials, but if we put our hand in the hand of Jesus Christ, He will guide us through them and will say to us some day, "Henceforth there is laid up for you a crown of righteousness."

"And how shall recompense His smile
The sufferings of this little while."

"IF ANY MAN."

SALVATION.

"I am the door: by Me *if any man* enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture."—John 10. 9.

SATISFACTION.

"Jesus stood and cried, saying, *If any man* thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."—John 7. 37, 38.

SERVICE.

"*If any man* serve Me, let him follow Me; and where I am there shall also My servant be; *if any man* serve Me, him will My Father honour."—John 4. 26.

SUFFERING.

"The Jews had agreed already, that *if any man* did confess that He was the Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue."—John 9. 22.

LIGHT AND LIFE. No. 18.

(JAMES BOYD.)

Meditations on John's Gospel.

The Prayer of the 17th Chapter.

ALL through His years of patient ministry the Lord had spoken to them about the Father: now He was to speak to the Father about them. The hour was come. The work is viewed as already accomplished, and He says so: "I have glorified Thee on the earth, I have finished the work that Thou gavest Me to do." He had done all that He had come to do on earth. This is the position that He takes. When He spoke these words He had still to accomplish the mighty work of redemption. The bitter cup was still full to the brim, and He had to drink it. But it was as certain to be done as though it had been done.

But in this wonderful prayer of His, which is deeply engraven on the heart of every one who truly loves Him, there is no mention made of the cup that was yet to be drunk. He speaks as no more in the world. The hearts of His adversaries were filled with hatred. They had plotted His destruction, and the betrayer was at hand. One thing remained to complete their utter refusal of Him, and that was the cross: He must be lifted up from the earth. He must be numbered with the transgressors, and dealt with as one unfit to live. It was night, and the murderers led by the traitor were on the track of their Victim. It was man's hour. The restraining hand of God was withdrawn, and the devil has his own way. The God of Israel is about to be encircled by the leaders of His favoured nation. They have had centuries of His gracious and forgiving ways, but now they will break His bands and cast off His cords. And the Romans must have a hand in His mock trial and His refusal from

the earth. In this awful tragedy the whole world must be represented. If the traitor has been pointed out by a sop, that speaks of the purest friendship; so must the Saviour be distinguished by the kiss of the traitor. But I anticipate.

Jesus is going back to the Father. But the way home was by the cross, and that was as rejected by the world. But what transpired on the cross after that was between Himself and God, and therefore could have no place in this prayer. Properly speaking the work of the cross was not done upon earth, but as lifted up from the earth. I do not say that the cross is not included in "*I have glorified Thee on the earth.*" I cannot pronounce any definite opinion on the subject. But when He speaks in this prayer to the Father He does not mention it. He speaks of all that He had made known to His disciples, how He had kept them, how He had manifested the Father's name to them, what they were to the Father and to Himself, and what His desires for them were; but of His sufferings and death He says nothing.

He had glorified the Father on the earth, and on this ground, and on the ground that He had finished the work given Him to do, in which the work of the cross may come in, He claims the glory with the Father that He had with Him before the world was. But this was only that He might continue to glorify the Father in a way in which it was impossible to glorify Him on earth. And one way in which this glory was to be brought to the Father was by giving eternal life to as many as the Father had given to Him. "And this," He says, "is life eternal, that

they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." It is as possessing this life that we can enjoy the Father and the Son. It came into manifestation in Jesus, and is the life by which we live in the revelation that has come to us in Him. It is the life of divine Persons, but ours also in the power of the Holy Spirit.

"Now they have known that all things whatsoever Thou hast given Me are of Thee." They were able to trace things to their source, however little they might have been able to put their knowledge into words. They had received the words that the Father had given to the Son, and had known surely that He had come forth from the Father, and that the Father had sent Him. This the Lord could say of them, though they might not have been able to say it of themselves. They knew He had not come of Himself, but that He had been sent of the Father. The Father's words through His lips had produced that impression in their hearts.

For them He makes demand. He does not demand for the world just yet. The day is coming in which that demand shall be made, and God will give Him the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession (Ps. 2.). He can confidently make demand for those He speaks of, for, He says: "They are Thine." But then: "All Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine." All that the Father had was His, and all that He had was the Father's; and in the men given to Him out of the world He was glorified. And in the Father's charge He leaves them, asking Him to keep them through His name. He, while upon earth and in their midst, had kept them in that name, but now He was leaving them in the Father's

care to be kept in the same name, in order that they might be one, as the Father and the Son were one; that is, one in thought and mind. And we know that the apostles were thus kept, in spite of the various gifts that they possessed, and the special line of ministry that was given to each one of them. The truth never could have been established in the hearts and minds of believers had the apostles been disputing among themselves.

How very wonderful it is that He who is holy and true should interest Himself in such poor, unworthy, failing, and naturally selfish things as we are, and that even though we may be the subjects of a work of grace, for the flesh is unmendably evil! (Luke 9. 46). How true it is that His love "*surpasses knowledge*"! They were the Father's, and He had loved them and had kept them because they were the Father's. They were the Son's by right of eternal counsel (Ephes. 1. 4), and they were the Father's as chosen out of this world, and by Him given to the Son (John 17. 6). And now Jesus was glorified in them, and this fact He presents to the Father as a powerful motive for the Father's unfailing interest in them.

Into what a holy fellowship are we here introduced! To what familiar intercourse are we privileged to listen! Here is one of the persons of the God-head speaking to another of things with which His heart was burdened. The sun, the moon, the stars, the marvellous constellations that adorn the firmament of heaven, the myriads of angelic beings that wait the command of their august Creator, or that flame across celestial regions in lightning haste to accomplish the only will that ever gave impetus to their spiritual being: these were all as well remembered as though nothing else claimed a single thought of the

Maker, Upholder, and Governor of all ; and yet at this present moment the heart of Father and Son is supremely engaged with eleven—or at the most with a hundred and twenty—of the poor and despised of this world, whose hearts were filled with anxious forebodings regarding the dark and lonely future that seemed to be opening before their sorrowing souls.

But such were the Father's choice. "Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me." They were the objects of eternal love ; and though in their natural state as in the flesh they were no better than others, just "children of wrath," yet the Father would not forgo His purpose regarding them, but in sovereign grace would draw them to Jesus, who gave Himself a propitiation for their sins, that they might live to God as partakers of His own life, and that in the power of the indwelling Spirit.

"Thou gav'st us in eternal love
To Him to bring us home to Thee,
Suited to Thine own thought above,
As some like Him with Him to be."

But His prayer was not for those only who surrounded Him at the moment, but "for them also which shall believe on Me through their word." His desires include all who would believe on Him throughout the whole of the present dispensation. One we are in life and nature, but practically as far from it as we possibly could be. Still one we are, though without the grace to own it. *Brethren*—children of God—are one : one by being born of God, one by the lifegiving power of Christ, one whether they dwell together in unity or whether they do not. The "good and pleasant" thing (Ps. 130.)

we neither exhibit nor enjoy, for the will of the flesh is to a large extent dominant, the Holy Spirit grieved, and Divine love swallowed up by the pride of our own hearts. How thoroughly ashamed of ourselves we should be !

The world has not believed, and the blame of its unbelief lies at our door. We have fought and devoured one another when we should have walked in the unity of the Divine life and nature. Had the Father's word, which was spoken by the Son down here, held a larger place in our hearts, we would have been more effective witnesses to the grace of a Saviour God, and we might have given to men the impression of His infinite love ; so that whatever else was true we might at least have had this confidence that "We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son as Saviour of the world" (1 John 4. 14).

But if we have failed, if we have wrought no deliverance on the earth, if the world must go on in blind unbelief, and if the spurious profession must be eventually spued out of the mouth of Christ, He can and will deal with the men of this world in both judgment and mercy. His dealings with sinners shall not be altogether in judgment, as though He had forgotten to be gracious, nor will they be altogether in mercy, as though rebellion against God were of no importance, but in the execution of wrath mercy will be remembered, and multitudes will be brought to repentance and saving faith (Rev. 7.). We have to confess failure terrible and grievous, but with Him failure has no existence. This is our confidence.

GOD'S children are—

Endowed with heavenly treasure.—Luke 12. 34.

Invested with heavenly power.—Luke 11. 13 ; 24. 49.

Divested of earthly care.—Luke 12. 20-30 ; Phil. 4. 6, 7.

GOD'S GREAT LOVE.

GOD'S love has been manifested in a twofold way. IN THIS WAS MANIFESTED THE LOVE OF GOD TOWARDS US, *because that God sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him* (1 John 4. 9). We were dead, and it was God's desire and purpose and God's love that we should live. He had to deal with our dead condition, so that He could say with holy joy, "He was dead and is alive again." Only the coming of the only-begotten Son, the great life-giver, could effect this.

But we were not only dead as to our condition but we were sinners as to our practice, and this question had to be met also. So we read: HERE- IN IS LOVE, *not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins* (verse 10). The whole bent of our nature was away from God, all our activities were opposed to His will. We did not love Him, we did not seek Him; but He loved us and sought us, and sent His Son that every claim of

Divine justice against us might be answered perfectly and for ever. Now justified from all things and alive in Christ we can live in the love of God.

Thus God has manifested His love toward us in His Son. We have to look to His beloved Son and we see it all in Him; but He has also done a work in us, and this is by His Holy Spirit and the same great, love lies behind all that He does in us. So "God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ" (Eph. 2. 4, 5). And "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Rom. 5. 5).

There will be a practical result in all those who have been wrought on and in by this great love of God. They will manifest that they are born of God by loving one another; by practising righteousness; and confessing that Jesus Christ is come in flesh. All this is pressed upon us in John's first Epistle.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

"Pure in Heart."

What is the meaning of Matthew 5. 8: "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God"? In view of the teaching of the "Holiness people" how would you answer this?—PARTICK.

THE expression "pure in heart" gives no sanction to the false teaching of "sinless perfection." The thought occurs in other parts of the Word; notably in Acts 15. 9 where the hearts of the Gentiles are said to be purified by faith, and in 1 Peter 1. 22: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently," and in 2 Tim. 2. 22, "Them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart."

When true faith enters the heart, God becomes its object instead of self and evil things, and in this sense the heart

is purified. The more the heart knows of God the greater will be its delight in Him, and the more fervent will be its unfeigned, unselfish love to all His children. It does not mean that the flesh and sin are no longer in us (1 John 1. 8; Gal. 5. 16, 17), but they no longer control the life, and its whole bent is after God and not evil. There may be failure and sin through carelessness, but the pure heart is distressed at it and confesses it, whereas before it revelled in it. The Gospel gives all that believe it a pure heart, but we need exercise of heart and self-judgment that it may manifest itself in practical life.

IF ANYONE MINISTER.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

"If anyone minister—as of strength which God supplies; that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom is the glory and the might for the ages of the ages. Amen."—1 Peter 4. 11, N.T.

TO minister is not to preach or to teach, but to serve—to serve the children of God, and nobody will do that who does not love them, and the more love the more service. This is not talk, it is deed, and when it is done God is glorified through Jesus Christ. A man may talk and there be nothing in it but words and wind, and he may love himself, glorify himself all the time; but if one loves the children of God and serves them, he secures glory for God, as we shall see. This ministering is open to all; the youngest as well as the oldest may have a part in it, and sisters as well as brothers; indeed, a woman can often do it more effectually and blessedly than a man.

Do you know a man or a woman to whom Christians will go in their sorrows and perplexities, one in whom they can confide, and who will enter sympathetically into their trials and comfort and help them? Then you know one of God's ministers. If you know one who can find out these burdened souls, and place his knowledge of God at their disposal, who can help them by his own experience of God's mercy and grace, and can comfort them with the comfort wherewith He has been comforted, and can draw them near to JESUS, our great High Priest, who is able to succour those that are tempted, then you know one who is invaluable in the church of God, a true and God-gifted minister. As this service is open to all, let us all strive after it. But it can only be done as self-sacrificing love is active, it is the "more excellent way" of love.

How is it done? An incident related to me recently shall illustrate it. It was during the war. A tired horse fell in a London Street, the usual crowd gathered round, and various efforts were made to get the poor beast on to its feet again, but all in vain. The driver dragged at the reins and shouted at the horse; it made a few spasmodic efforts to rise and then lay still. Some one tried the whip, which was just as useless. The driver, losing his patience, applied his boot to its hide, and only produced shudders of pain in the poor brute. At this point an Australian soldier arrived on the scene. "Get out of my way," he said, "and leave the horse to me." To the amusement of some in the crowd, he lay down by its side, and whispered soothingly in its ear, stroking its neck the while. He did that for just about half a minute, when to the surprise of the spectators, soldier and horse rose up together. The whole thing was as simply and quietly done as could be. That man from "down under" understood, and the horse, brute though he was, felt that he understood, that was the secret. If anyone minister, he must understand, and understand with his heart. He must not be a bully, a critic, a heartless, censorious or superior person, but one who can get down alongside the one whom he would help, and so will he bring into the place of need the grace and comfort that he has himself received.

But how can anyone understand? We are so dense and so ignorant; we have so little heart for any one but ourselves, how can we be changed into

those who can love and understand and so be able to minister to others? We must learn, and the only Teacher is our Lord. "Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me," He said. Is it not wonderful that those words should be addressed to us just after He had addressed Himself to a world of need? "Come unto Me," He had cried, "all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Ah, yes, He came "not to be ministered unto but to minister," and of Him we must learn, and like Him we must become if we are to understand and help others in their burdens and woes. Have we considered His words, given to us in the Scriptures of the prophets. "*The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: He wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned*" (Isa. 50. 4).

The results of the service correspond in their blessedness to the service itself. The grace and the power for the service comes from God and the glory goes back to Him. Suppose, for instance, a burdened Christian, tempted of the devil to sink down under his trials, like the tired horse, and to murmur against his lot as so many do. Well, if he yields and does stumble and murmur God is dishonoured and the devil is delighted. But suppose one of these ministers of God, who has sat at Jesus' feet and learned of Him, comes along in that moment of trial and is able to comfort the tried heart, and to lift up the hands that hang down, and to

strengthen the feeble knees, so that instead of murmuring, the Christian sings; then is threatened defeat turned into victory and God is glorified, for "who-soever offereth praise glorifieth God."

All are not called to speak as the oracles of God, but to serve one another in love is within the reach of all. This is the need of the day. It is a quiet and often hidden service, it must be so in the very nature of it, and no great renown will be won either in the world or the church by it. But will God ever forget such service rendered to His children? Will the Lord Jesus forget those who in love to Him have sacrificed their own ease and spent themselves for the sakes of those whom He loves, because He loves them? Never, such deeds are recorded in heaven, and the book of records there will be opened and read when service on earth is done, and this quiet, hidden service, so little thought of here, shall be commended there, and names unknown here shall shine out there. And when all the honours that men can give have become of less account than the dust of the street, imperishable crowns of glory shall be placed upon heads that wore no crowns here. This is the time for lowly service, service that the love of Christ constrains, and the crowning day is coming by and by. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." "To whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

Prayer.

"Men ought always to pray, and not to faint," (Luke 18. 1.)

This text teaches us three things: first, the imperative duty of prayer: "Men ought . . . to pray"; second, the constant necessity of prayer: "Men ought always to pray"; third, the secret of prevailing prayer: "and not to faint." Prayer is not merely a matter of privilege. It is a solemn obligation.

"HE KNOWETH"

(SAMUEL LEVERMORE.)

Job. 23. 10; 1 Cor. 13. 12.

"*BUT* He knoweth the way that I take." I know not. "I cannot perceive" (8). "I cannot see" (9). "But He knoweth." Supreme consolation. He *knoweth*. There springs out of the mists of a dim past in golden characters a Johannine verb, so to speak—He *knoweth*. When one is involved and shrouded in the cold mists of doubt, mistrust and evil suggestion, how precious is this divine assurance. One may run through all the whole six persons of the conjugation and, like Jacob's ladder, each one is a step to bring me nearer Heaven. But mark, it is not what I know, or thou knowest, but what He knows that matters. "He knows the way that I take." My doubt is lost in His knowledge. My darkness is illumined by His light, as a dazzling star in a dark sky. This truth is sweeter in my ears than the liquid notes of a thrush in shadowy eve, or of a nightingale in the darkness of night on a yew tree in a churchyard. He *knoweth*. My way is far too intricate, the maze of my life far too involved for human thought, but "He *knoweth*." "He *knoweth* our frame" Psalm 103. 14. Ah me, how few, even of my nearest and dearest really know my weakness or have the power to enter into my particular weakness—but *He knoweth*. And there are some who have known, yet seem all too readily to forget, but *He* "remembereth" that I am as dust. Oh what a family inwardness there is in this expression. Only the "children" can appreciate it. Here then is "a drop from the honeycomb" a "leaf from the Tree of Life."

When the heart, in its intolerable anguish and unutterable desolation

cries, "Nobody knows"—"nobody understands me," then comes the sweet voice of the Spirit saying, *He knoweth*. The One who knew all thy sins and bore them on the tree; He *knoweth* all thy pains, all about thy path—the difficulties—misunderstandings—false judgments, and every drop of gall and wormwood that go to fill thy cup of sorrow. "He *knoweth* the way of the righteous" (Psalm 1. 6). And what is more, "He *knoweth* how to deliver" (2 Peter 2. 9.) "He *knoweth* your heart" (Luke 16. 15), and if your heart condemns you, as perhaps it often does, He is greater than your heart and *knoweth* all things (1 John 3. 20). Perfect sympathy requires perfect knowledge, and misjudgments and harsh conclusions come from a partial knowledge. Oh if we only knew a little more about the one we so freely, rashly and presumptuously misjudge, surely we would repent in dust and ashes. He *knoweth* all things—all about *me*. He *knoweth* my *frame*. "He *knoweth* the way that I take."

"He *knoweth* them that are His" (2 Timothy 2. 19). Others may repudiate—excommunicate, even turn away from me, as all they in Asia turned away from the apostle (2 Timothy 1. 15). "Nevertheless the foundation of the Lord standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord *knoweth* them that are His."

So faith, rising as on eagle wings from the *third* to the *first* person cries, I *know* *whom*, not *what*, but *whom* I have believed (2 Timothy 1. 12.). Even as Job, that great saint—that illustrious man of God said, in an ecstasy of revelation, "I know that my

Redeemer liveth " 19. 25. And " He knoweth " 23. 10. Oh supreme consolation ! Say it, my heart, " My Redeemer liveth " and " He knoweth the way that I take." And a time is surely coming when thou shalt know the Whys and Wherefores, but—

" Not till the loom is silent, and the shuttles cease to fly,
Will God unroll the canvas, and explain the reason why.
The dark threads are as needful, in the Weaver's skilful hand,
As the threads of gold and silver in the pattern He has planned."

Blessed are the people of whatever age, clime or nation, who can use this expression of absolute confidence and celestial intimacy, " I know that my Redeemer liveth " and " He knoweth the way that I take." " He " and " I " What intimacy ! What community of interests !

" Precious thought, my Father knoweth ! in His love I rest,
For whate'er my Father doeth must be always best :
Well I know the heart that planneth naught but good for me ;
Joy and sorrow interwoven, love in all I see.

Precious thought, my Father knoweth ! Careth for His child,
Bids me nestle closer to Him, when the storms beat wild ;
Though my earthly hopes are shattered and the tear-drops fall,
Yet He is Himself my solace, Yea my all in all.

Oh to trust Him then more fully ! Just to simply move
In the conscious calm enjoyment of the Father's love ;
Knowing that life's chequered pathway leadeth to His rest ;
Satisfied the way He taketh must be always best."

Out of a physical cataclysm and a mighty upheaval—thunders and lightnings, crashing rocks, melting hills, and a burning earth in Nahum 1, comes the still small voice of love in a whisper of infinite assurance, " He knoweth them that trust in Him."

And when the larder is empty, and the purse no longer needed for lack of money to put in it, how often those sweet words of the Everlasting Lover of our souls have brought victory—" Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things " (Luke 12. 30.).

He knoweth the way that I take, and He goes on before
He knows my frame so weary, weak, and sore—
He knows my heart, unknown by dearest friend—
He knows my need, and timely help will send.

He knoweth I am His, though others turn away—
My very doubts are lost in faith, my darkness in noonday.
He knoweth to deliver the godly out of trial,
And how to fill with His sweet peace this very " little while."
He knows, and that is all that matters, my Saviour and my Friend.

Trust.

" *Put your trust in the Lord.*" (Psalm 4. 5.)

In the measure in which we truly recognize Him as our Lord and ourselves as His possession will it be easy to " put our trust " in Him. Do not we all take the charge of those things that we purchase ? If the shepherd purchase a flock of sheep, does he not intend to provide for and take care of them ? And the more they cost the more carefully will he tend them. Our Good Shepherd has paid for us an infinite price, and we are not merely the sheep of His pasture and the subjects of His kingdom, but we are members of that body which is the bride whom He loves. Well may we " put our trust " in Him who loves us with love unique and unparalleled !

THE ONE WHOM GOD DELIGHTS TO HONOUR.

(H. J. VINE.)

OF all the circles which God has counselled and planned for glory, order and blessing, that into which the church, the assembly, is brought is the chiefest, for the assembly is the body of Christ who is the Head of all things. The members of His body are *out-called* from the world by God's grace, but they are also *called into* the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, and it is the mission of the Spirit who indwells them to show to them the glories of Jesus (John 16.) and the breadth and length and depth and height of the vast range of blessedness which He will soon manifest in glorious order and joy. They are saved by grace, they are introduced into present favour, and they rejoice in hope of the day of glory (Romans 5.).

But along with all this rich present and eternal blessing, it must be remembered that there are "the sufferings of this present time" also, and these sufferings are very real, for, said the apostle, "Even we who have the first-fruits of the Spirit groan within ourselves" (Romans 8.); and again, "To you it is given on behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake" (Phil. 1.). Now suffering of this sort is not without profit to ourselves personally, nor is it without benefit to others, and it results in the furtherance of divine designs as 1 Peter 1. 6-8 indicates: "Though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be *found unto praise and honour and glory* at the appearing of Jesus Christ: whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with

joy unspeakable and full of glory," that is, the glory soon to be displayed with Christ the Centre of it all! It fills our hearts beforehand while we await His coming!

We remember the story of the two disciples, who on the Resurrection day were going to their home disappointed and sad, and how Jesus found them and talked to them until their hearts burned within them as a holy joy glowed there. He talked to them of the sufferings first and the glory to follow, saying, "Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" He endured *the atoning* sufferings for us alone, but others now share in "the fellowship of His sufferings"—His *sufferings from man* in the path of devotedness to God on the way to the glory; and they also taste the bitter trials which are common to us all in a world like the present.

But what are these sufferings in the estimation of a man whose heart is set on the glory? Paul could say, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the coming glory to be revealed to us"; and again in 2 Cor 4. 16, "Wherefore we faint not, but if indeed our outward man is consumed, yet the inward is renewed day by day. For our momentary and light affliction works for us in surpassing measure an eternal weight of glory" (N.T.). In all that he suffered he found consolation and comfort, in all he saw profit resulting in glory, yea, "IN ALL THESE THINGS"—not as being *out of them* or evading them—"We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us" (Rom. 8. 37). Christ was near to him in the trials! The love of Christ filled his heart in his afflictions! He was more than a conqueror through

Him! He knew present joy and satisfaction in the love of Christ, who gave Himself for us. It was a love that He knew well and which we may know well, and yet it passeth knowledge, for it made Him ready to suffer for us beyond all others, and what none other could suffer, and so enter into His glory. Now the One who suffered is He whom God delights to honour, He is the One of whom it is decreed that all should "honour the Son even as they honour the Father."

Joseph was honoured after his rejection and affliction. He was exalted and made very high after his humiliation and after the iron had entered into his soul, and this resulted in salvation and blessing for his brethren and the whole earth. Mordecai, the man whom the king delighted to honour (Esther 6. 6, 7, 11), was first of all the man for whom a gallows was made of fifty cubits high (5. 14). But the Agagite (a type of sin in the flesh) was hanged thereon, and the king's wrath pacified (7. 10). Mordecai's exaltation resulted in rest and blessing and gladness to God's people (9. 18) as well as eventual peace and prosperity for all. Then what shall be said of the greater than Joseph and of the greater than Mordecai? He passed through the time of His sorrows, He left the prison-tomb of death for ever behind, He rose from among the dead and ascended to God's right hand. There He is crowned with glory and honour upon the throne. To Christ is given the first place in every created position of dignity in the heavens and on the earth, and by Him all shall be reconciled and set in beauteous order for God's own satisfaction. But in that supreme place of honour, He is the Head of His assembly, holding the pre-eminence as such. Therefore we said that the subjects of God's saving grace to-day are called

into the very highest circle of favour. "He is the Head of the body, the assembly, who is the Beginning, First-born from among the dead, that He might have *the first place in all things*" (Col. 1. 18, N.T.). If Mordecai's people were blessed and honoured in his exaltation, how much more is the body of Christ, the assembly, blessed and honoured in the supreme glory of her exalted Head!

Joseph was dearly loved of Jacob his father. Jesus is the Son of the Father's love. The many-coloured coat which Joseph wore was his father's gift, but it was dipped in blood when he was rejected by his brethren. The many-coloured glories which encircle our Lord Jesus Christ are the outcome of the Father's counsels, but through the blood of redemption the rejected One shall shine forth amidst them all as supreme for the Father's delight. Asenath, the bride given to Joseph when he was exalted, shared in Joseph's glory, the bride of the Lamb shall share in His. How wonderful to us are His own words, speaking to His Father, He said, "The glory Thou hast given Me I have given them." If Joseph's administration resulted in all being brought under Pharaoh, the glorious administration of Christ will result in God being "*all in all*." What an eternal day of rejoicing and love will that be! What deep and eternal delight will it yield to our God and Father!

In the presence of such heights and depths of infinite blessedness and majesty, we do well to turn our thoughts simply to the One who will bring it to pass, to the One whom the prophet calls "WONDERFUL." We sometimes sing to Him,

"Royal robes shall soon invest Thee,
Royal splendours crown Thy brow!"

In public display shall that be seen!

but don't let us forget that Pilate, the Representative of Imperial Rome, brought Him out to the people wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, and said, "BEHOLD THE MAN." What a sight! There stood the Man of the eternal purpose and counsels of God, the Man who is to be first in universal majesty and dominion, the Man whom God delights to honour! Derision and contempt were being hurled at Him by men then, though even the judge declared Him to be faultless, yet the glories typified in the blue, the scarlet, the purple and the gold of the tabernacle of testimony shall find their beautiful and displayed fulfilment in Him. The priestly crown and robes of Exodus 28, the royal crown of Judah's King only point on to His excelling distinctions. In the Gospel of the King we are told that Pilate's soldiers mocked Him with a short "*scarlet cloak*" of royal military design, putting a reed in His right hand and a crown of thorns upon His holy brow (Matt. 27. 27-29). They added the "*purple*" in the Gospel of Jehovah's devoted *Servant* (Mark 15. 17); Herod's troops put a shining or "*splendid robe*" in mockery upon the Son of Man in the Gospel of the perfect *Man* (Luke 23. 11) and send Him back to Pilate. The "*purple robe*" (John 19. 5), indicating imperial glory, is prominent in the Gospel of the Son—the Word who was GOD become flesh. But God will see to it that the royal, imperial, and universal honours

derisively put on the rejected Messiah by His sinful creatures, shall be His in reality; and it shall publicly be seen that

"Heaven's royal diadem adorns
The mighty Victor's brow."

In all that He passed through His divine perfections shone out! The pressure and the suffering but caused the sweet perfume of His holiness, love, meekness, majesty, gentleness, strength, grace and truth to flow forth! He has glorified God here and God has glorified Him in Himself there. On the cross He upheld the throne and upon the throne He upholds the victory of the cross! From heaven He came and suffered vicariously on earth, and from heaven He'll come again and victoriously fill the earth with the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea! All the thrones, authorities, principalities, dominions and powers on earth and in heaven shall find their Centre in Him who is pre-eminent! He is already set over all as Head, and the assembly, His body, is livingly united to Him even now where He is, and she awaits the day of His glorious outshining; then when Christ who is our life shall be manifested, we shall also be manifested with Him in glory. Suffering now, reigning with Him then, our deep joy in Himself and the high favour of faith's present portion will give place to the exceeding joy of being actually with and like the One whom God delights to honour.

Suffering.

"Hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow His steps." (1 Peter 2. 21, R.V.)

"Till he come" our Master expects each of His followers to "do well," to "suffer for it," and to "take it patiently." He is still an example for us; and we should follow in His steps who did well; who suffered not for Himself, but for us; "who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, threatened not; but committed [alike] Himself [and His cause] to Him that judgeth righteously."

THE MASTER'S WORDS.

(JAMES MCBROOM.)

Notes on Matthew's Gospel. No. 3.

THE greatness of the Person of the Lord as He is presented in chap. 1-4. prepares us for the teaching of chaps. 5-7. Chap. 4. 23-25 shows the immediate connection of the Sermon on the Mount with what went before. His fame had gone throughout all Syria and the whole country had been stirred, and as the King He took occasion to unfold to His subjects in the hearing of the people the word of God for the moment.

Here He is teaching, and all that He teaches is new. The history of the human race had been that of a downward course, but now we have a new beginning, and an immeasurable gap lay between Christ and the whole race. "The first man was out of earth, made of dust; the second man is out of heaven," hence the teaching must be altogether new. And this the people felt when they said, "Never man spake like this man." If the men of God of previous ages can only stand out in contrast to Him, how painful is the attempt in these modern times to compare certain philosophers and leaders of heathen nations who were mixed up with all manner of uncleanness with Him. Nor is it true as some teach that He merely attained a height towards which others had striven, that as Moses or David were each head and shoulders above their generation, so He went beyond them and gained the height. The fallacy of all this is seen when we remember that "He that came from above is above all," and what He testified He had seen and heard. The language of this Person would have been blasphemy on the lips of any other man.

The discourse supposes regeneration in those addressed and the new rela-

tionship which redemption brings. "Having sat down *His disciples came* to Him and having opened His mouth He taught *them*. Because it is not understood that the Lord was addressing those in relationship with Himself as subjects of grace, it is assumed that these moral traits can be produced by man in the flesh, apart from the new nature which is implanted at new birth, and the whole truth of the gospel set aside. It is this that accounts for the fact that many admire the Sermon on the Mount who reject the truth of the gospel as set forth in the New Testament, and it demonstrates the truth that man wants to be or do something to merit God's favour but will not tolerate the idea of being nothing and God everything.

The Lord's teaching had its own divine origin and character and could neither compare with nor link on with any other. It was not a new law nor indeed a moral code in the true sense of that word. It was a Person, the living Word, set before men in the spoken word, and a new life, His own life, to be reproduced in His disciples through grace and the power of the Holy Ghost. The grand contrast lies in the fact that this discourse begins with that which all others set out to reach, namely, suitability for God. He had before this time insisted that man must be born again, and that that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit (John 3. 6), and in this very discourse He shows the working of each nature as true to law. "Do men gather a bunch of grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles? So every good tree produces good fruit, but the worthless tree produces bad fruit" (7. 16-20. See also 15. 13).

The opening verses describe a class of moral virtues different from every other system of teaching that men followed. The seven virtues in verses 3-9 are not what men call the heroic virtues, but in the sight of God they are blessed. There is little room in the schools of philosophy for the poor in spirit and for those that mourn. These blessed things are the reproduction of the life and character of Christ in His people in a world where all is out of gear as the result of man's departure from God.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens." Trust in the hand of Omnipotence and dependence upon God is a law in the sphere of creature obligation. "To this man will I look: to the afflicted and contrite in spirit, and who trembleth at my word." This draws down the complacency of God in a world of man's self-confident boasting. The bearing of this upon us to-day may be seen by comparing Jer. 45. In the crisis preceding the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonian, the word of God through Jeremiah to his servant was, "Seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not: for behold I will bring evil upon all flesh, saith the Lord." We are to-day nearing a greater judgment; "Behold, the Lord cometh . . . to execute judgment" (Jude 14). We may well take heed to such words. The promise attached to the state of soul in this first beatitude would cover all the virtues mentioned, "Theirs is the kingdom of the heavens."

"Blessed they that mourn for they shall be comforted." This is apt to be misunderstood, particularly at a time like the present when the hunt for pleasure and fashion is engaging the mass of men. There were those who sighed and cried in Ezekiel's time for

the abominations done at Jerusalem, and we live in the midst of a godless and suicidal infatuation which calls for the judgment of God. Such a state of things calls for mourning on the part of those that know God. Every divinely taught heart knows that the time of the Bridegroom's absence is the mourning time (Matt. 9.), but like Mary of old has divine comfort even now (John 20.). To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion; to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning.

"Blessed the meek for they shall inherit the earth." Meekness contrasts with the bold boasting of man, but is far from being a sign of weakness. It was no sign of weakness in Abram when he yielded up his right to Lot, as may be seen from his exploits in the following chapter. Moses was the meekest man in all the earth, but there was none so valiant as he. "The meek shall inherit the earth." The land for the people is the cry to-day, and large estates are changing hands constantly. The time is near when in bold apostasy "the wilful king" shall divide the land among his favourites for gain (Daniel 11. 39). But at that time the Lamb will take possession and overthrow every opposer. While we wait of that day it is well to be able to say, Jehovah is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup (Ps. 16.).

"Blessed they which hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled." This is the central trait of the seven, and it seems to bind them all together like the central light on the candlestick. Do we know what this means? David cried, "As the hart panteth after the water-brook so panteth my soul after God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God." No person ever sought the Lord and was disappointed, and no amount of

this world's goods can ever satisfy the heart that has fed upon the bread of God. A Jewish Rabbi when urged to accept a lucrative situation and to fix his settlement in a place where there was no synagogue, is said to have resisted the temptation by the recollection of the words "The law of thy mouth is better to me than gold or silver" (Ps. 119. 72).

"*Blessed the merciful for they shall obtain mercy.*" How God-like is man when seen in this character. What bright examples are seen in Joseph among his brethren and David when he had Saul in his power but would not smite him. Elisha also when he led the blinded Syrian soldiers to Samaria, and when the King of Israel said, "Shall I smite them?" "Thou shalt not smite them, set bread and water before them," was the answer of the man of God. Mercy is a quality which so affects man that his beast gets the benefit of it. It springs from an inward sympathy with God. In mercy He is sovereign, great, plenteous and tender.

"*Blessed the pure in heart for they shall see God.*" The same lips describe the human heart in its sinfulness, but by His power He can change it from being hard and stony and write His laws upon it, that in boundless grace it might be like His own. It is said of the elders of Israel that they saw God and did eat and drink. Surely it is blessed to behold the beauty of the Lord and inquire in His Temple. Have we ever beheld the King in His beauty? Can we say, "We see Jesus crowned with glory and honour"? If so we can look forward to the time

when His servants shall serve Him and shall see His face (Rev. 21.). Meantime there is a wholesome word for us, "Pursue peace with all, and holiness without which no man shall see the Lord."

"*Blessed the peace-makers for they shall be called the sons of God.*" This is not peace at any price. The wisdom that cometh from above is "first pure and then peaceable." This feature supposes all the others, for only those who are righteous, meek and merciful are able to discriminate in moral and spiritual matters in such a way as to lead to peace. This demands much spiritual energy, combining and putting into practice all the other traits mentioned. They that do such thing are called the sons of God. They exhibit the moral features of a generation that has sprung from God. They show themselves the sons of their Father (verse 45).

Verses 10-16 show the submission of heart which accompanies the foregoing. Suffering whether for the kingdom or the King was to be esteemed a favour, and it would have its bearing both on the present and the future. Future reward it ensured to them, but it also gave the present distinction of being in the ranks of heaven's most distinguished witnesses on earth, and set them in the line of divine testimony. They were the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Notwithstanding the persecution and hatred of men they were to be a force for good, able to meet and counteract in divine power the corruption that is in the world through lust, and shed a beneficent influence on all around them.

Some men forget God all day, and ask Him to remember them at night.

Preacher, do not substitute the word in fashion for the word in season.

An immature state of knowledge serves to render men susceptible to doubts but incapable of their solution.

LIGHT AND LIFE. No. 19.

(JAMES BOYD.)

Meditations on John's Gospel.

The Prayer of the 17th Chapter (continued).

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." If we have failed to convince the world that the Father sent the Son, the glory in which He will present us to it along with Himself will accomplish this. When He appears we shall appear with Him in glory, and then the veil shall be lifted off all faces, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

But the love of Christ to His own has not in the least degree been weakened by our miserable shortcomings. He will share with us everything that is possible for us in the power of the Holy Spirit to enter into or receive; and the glory that is peculiar to Himself, which He could not share with any other, He will allow us to witness, and that will be our greatest privilege: "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given me; for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world." "We shall see Him as He is," apart from all official dignities and glories, and here we shall reach the glorious summit of our unspeakable felicity and joy.

As in Psalm 17. so here His appeal is to the righteous Father to give sentence between Himself and the unbelieving world; and along with Himself He numbers His disciples. The Father had in Him been set in His true character before the world, the

disciples had believed that He had been sent of the Father. The unbelieving world is placed in contrast with Himself and His disciples, and the Father is appealed to to "hear the right." The question cannot remain open between Himself, His disciples in association with Himself, and the world that preferred nature's darkness to the light of the knowledge of God revealed in grace and love. To His disciples He had declared the Father's name, and He would still declare it, not only in relation to Himself the Son down here but in relation to Himself as Man in the exalted position that in the counsels of God was given to Man before the world was, and along with this the fact that they were in the same blessed relationship as Himself, His Father their Father, His God their God. And this name is declared, that the love wherewith the Father loved the Son might be in them, and He in them. For the fulfilment of this we have to come to the first Epistle, and there we find the love of the Father in the saints and Christ in them.

Into what an unspeakable sphere of blessing are we introduced! The Father's love that in the midst of a hostile world was the enjoyed portion of the heart of Jesus is now to be the enjoyed portion of our hearts, as we thread our way to heaven and to the home of that love. When we reach that home we shall enjoy the love in a way we cannot do here, for we are hindered by the evil of the scene through which we are called to pass, as also by the fact that we have the flesh in us, and we are liable to forget to keep it in the place of death. Then

again, we are not yet home, and that must make a difference. Away from our own natural home we may carry with us a sense of the love of that home in which, wherever we are, we have always a share; but this, while it is ever a joy and support of our hearts, only makes us long all the more to be where that love has its abiding rest. And was it not so for Him, "who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God"? (Heb. 12. 2; Ps. 16. 11). In that day of unutterable joy the love will not be greater, but we shall enjoy it more.

Having, in view of His departure out of the world, commended His disciples and all who should believe on Him through their word to the Father, He crossed over the brook Cedron and entered into a garden with His disciples. It was a place well known to the betrayer, and we might have thought that seeing the errand Judas was on this garden was the one place to avoid. But the Lamb was to be led to the slaughter, and the Victim will take no precautions against the scheming wickedness of him who had lifted up his heel to destroy Him. Once He had hidden Himself, at other times He passed through their midst and went His way; but to-night He will surrender, for this was man's hour and the power of darkness. The restraint that a God of infinite goodness exercises over His fallen and self-willed creature was now removed, and in the silence and shadows of night the clang of steel, the tramp of armed men, and the glare of lanterns and torches heralded the approach of the veteran hosts of the infernal regions in active warfare against the Father and the Son, led on by the invisible fiend of hell, and by one who was a devil in

human form, the prime mover in it all being the chief priest, the man who held the most exalted God-given place on earth, and the only man who could approach God in His sanctuary, God's High Priest. What a world it was! A race of fallen creatures seething with rebellion against God!

They are led into His presence by Judas. But the devilish courage that had brought them out to seek and to apprehend Him deserts them now that they have found Him. They confess that they seek Jesus the Nazarene. He says to them: "I am He." What then? They go backward and fall to the ground. They cannot take Him. They are powerless in His presence. Such is man! Arrogant, boastful, ready to attempt anything! He is quite prepared—if we can believe him—to take the living God in hand in the day of judgment, confute the wisdom of the Almighty, and leave the presence of the throne triumphant. Prostrate on the earth lie those poor slaves of the devil who had dared to attempt the apprehension of the Son of God, and more terribly and eternally confounded shall all be who presumptuously determine to enter into judgment with God.

More than twelve legions of angels, armed with the might of the Omnipotent, stand ready at His word to rain destruction upon all who would raise hand or voice against Him; but that word shall not pass the lips of the patient Jesus. "If ye seek Me, let these go their way," is at once His surrender to His enemies and safeguard of His followers; for as to the men given to Him of the Father He would not lose one of them. He was their defence while with them, and now that He was being parted from them He would still be their defence until they would be placed beyond the reach of every enemy.

Peter, rash, reckless and thoughtless, unable to take in the true character of the scene of which he was eye-witness, and therefore utterly unaware of the needlessness of any intervention on his part, draws the sword on behalf of his beloved Master, gets gently rebuked for his foolish intervention, and learns that, at all cost to Himself his Teacher will do the will of His Father, and that, however bitter the cup given to Him of the Father may be, He will drink it. How little Peter was aware when he drew his sword against armed men that in the same night he would thrice deny that he had anything to do with Him! It would be easier to face single-handed an armed host than to confess Christ. I suppose Peter was naturally a courageous man, but we all have to learn that only in the might of the Holy Spirit can we stand fearlessly for the testimony of the Lord; and even should our affection for Christ lead us into a conflict not in harmony with the will of God, we have to do without the help of the Spirit, and our weakness becomes evident to all. In the path of the will of God we shall get all divine support, so that there may be no failure with any one of us engaged in the wars of the Lord.

The apostate nation chooses Barabbas, and rejects the Son of God, declares also that they have no king but Cæsar. Not long afterwards they

were made to experience the pitiless power of the oppressor, under whose authority they had chosen to be; and the robber and murderer have pursued them until this day, and worse still is in store for them. As far as the nation is concerned, they have murdered their Messiah, and they shall never see Him again until they shall confess their sin, and say: "Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord." That day is not yet, but it is fast approaching, and near at hand.

After His resurrection the Lord shows Himself frequently to His disciples, comforting their hearts, and speaking to them of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God. His ascension is not recorded in this Gospel, as the great subject is the revelation of the Father in the Son down here, and eternal life in the power of the Spirit in men on earth. He often speaks of His going to the Father, but the record of His ascension is not found in John's writings.

I will now bring these meditations to a conclusion. How blessed are all who can truthfully say, "We KNOW that the Son of God has come, and has given us an understanding that we should know Him that is true; and we are in Him that is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life."

Roots and Fruit.

ARE we satisfied, any of us, with knowing that the Lord has saved us, and that we are going to heaven presently? There are such Christians, the root of the matter is in them, but they are all root, and something else is wanted besides root. Our Lord Jesus said to His disciples, "I have chosen you and ordained you, that ye should GO AND BRING FORTH FRUIT." Now there can be no fruit

without the root; but who would care to have a garden full of roots that brought forth neither flowers nor fruit! Let us beware, earnestly and continually that we do not mar "God's husbandry" by being roots of that kind. "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." So spake our Lord and Master. May His words affect our souls.

THE FULFILMENT OF PROPHECY.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

LET us conjure up in our minds an incident recorded in the Scriptures, which to the casual observer would be most trivial. Paul had arrived in Rome, a prisoner, and on the third day of his stay in that city he called together the chief Jews to talk with them. They appointed a day and met him in his own lodgings to hear what he had to say. It was a long talk, for Paul in his fervency for the truth and for them, knowing what was at stake, expounded, testified and persuaded from early morning to the close of the day. It was a momentous day, for the fate of a people hung upon the issue, and those obstinate Jews sealed that fate, for Paul closed his labours with them with this solemn pronouncement, "Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers,

"Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive:

"For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

"Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it."

There was no further hope for that unhappy generation. The quotation is from Isaiah 6., and goes on to tell of the cities of Israel being wasted without inhabitant and the houses without a man, and of the land being utterly desolate. And so it turned out. The leaders of the people refused to listen to Isaiah when he spoke to them. It was nothing to them that he had seen

the glory of Jehovah and that his lips had been touched with a live coal from the altar; they had no heart for his message from God, and the solemn words quoted by Paul were first pronounced against them. Yet that did not seal their fate. They had another opportunity when Jehovah, dwelling among them full of grace and truth, spoke to them Himself, but they spurned their opportunity, and again the solemn words were uttered, revealing alike their condition and doom (John 12.). Yet such was the wonderful longsuffering of God, that their fate was not sealed by their rejection of the Lord Himself. God spared them for another testimony, for the Lord prayed for them, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." The third and final testimony was that of the Holy Spirit through Paul, and their rejection of that was final. For eight hundred years God had waited, but now at last Isaiah's solemn prediction was fulfilled. Jerusalem was destroyed and the site of it ploughed up, the land became a wilderness and the men of it were scattered to the ends of the earth, as they are to this day.

Yet God is full of mercy, and Isaiah spoke not only of the judgment of a stubborn people but of a remnant—a holy seed, that should spring up again, just as an oak tree springs up after being cut down (verse 13). So in John 12. when the majority refused to believe the word of Jesus, "Nevertheless among the chief rulers many believed on Him." And in Acts 28, "Some believed the things that were spoken." God got His remnant—His tenth, as Isaiah speaks of them—out of the nation. And so it shall yet be, as God has fulfilled His word in judgment and in scattering the nation, so will He gather and restore them. "Yet it shall

be a tenth and *it shall return*, and shall be eaten: as a teil tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them, when they cast their leaves: so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof." (verse 13). "They shall return"—It is very interesting and instructive to see that the name given to one of Isaiah's sons, Shear-jashub, means, "the remnant shall return," and he was a pledge that while the enemies of Judah should oppress them, they should not finally prevail against them (chapter 7.). Shear-jashub appears again in chapter 8. with Maher-shalal-hash-bez, his brother, whose name means "haste ye to the spoil." In this chapter the prophet says, "Behold, I and the children which the Lord hath

given me," and these words are taken up and applied to the Lord in Hebrews 2. He is to stand in the midst of the holy remnant of Israel, they shall be His spoil, the fruit of His suffering and grace, and they shall grace His triumph in His kingdom. The enemy will hope to make them his spoil and utterly destroy them, as Isaiah 8. clearly shows, and they shall pass through Jacob's trouble, the great tribulation, when there will be "trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish," but the Lord will bring them through it, and when they own their sins and own their Lord, "all Israel shall be saved." And so shall the prophetic word be fulfilled to the letter.

BEHOLD HE COMETH. Psalm 72.

(E. M. MARRIOTT.)

O sing with expectation, tell forth with jubilation,
That He cometh, that Christ cometh soon, to judge the earth.
Declare His wondrous glory, and tell to all the story
That He is coming, who to Bethlehem came in lowly birth.

Idols shall fall before Him, the heathen shall adore Him!
Who cometh from His holy place, in majesty and might.
Forth from those distant regions, with myriad angel-legions,
He cometh,—and the eyes that weep shall kindle at the sight!

The groans of all creation shall end in exultation
Within that Kingdom's rule of peace and righteousness and love:
From thence shall sin be banished; from thence all grief have vanished,
And earth shall taste with glad surprise the bliss of Heav'n above.

O let the whole creation acclaim its renovation,
For He cometh, for He cometh soon, on earth to reign!
Fields, flowers, and trees extolling, with seas, and rivers rolling,
And mountains,—all His mighty works—shall greet their King again!

"I Will Come Again." (John 14, 3.)

A word from the One to all our hearts the dearest,
A parting word to make Him aye the nearest;
Of all His precious words, the sweetest, brightest, clearest,
Is the hope of the coming of the Lord.

THE REVEALER, THE REVELATION, THE RESPONSE.

(W. BRAMWELL DICK.)

IN the first chapter of the Gospel according to John, we learn how great a person is the Revealer of the heart of God.

The chapter begins in eternity, for "the beginning" really never had a beginning (cf. Proverbs 8. 22), and it ends in eternity, for whilst it closes with a forecast of the millennial state, we know that that will be merged into the eternal state (cf. Rev. 21. 3). Then the Holy Spirit passes before our vision a sevenfold view of the glories of Christ. (1) As the "One that inhabiteth eternity" (verse 1, cf. Isaiah 57. 15), who was self-existent, who was "with God," who "was GOD." (2) His glory as Man. He "became flesh" (verse 14). It was His own voluntary act. The first man left his first state in a vain attempt to attain to the position of God. The second Man, in a sense, stepped out of His first estate in order to come down to man and bring to him the revelation of God. Thus what was apostasy in the first man was perfection in the second Man. Note here how the glory of His person is divinely guarded. When He became Man He did not cease to be God, and every attribute of the Godhead was found in Him. Thus after having His incarnation brought before us (verse 14) we read in verse 18, "The only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." (3) His glory as "the Lamb of God" (verse 29). The very title suggests sacrifice, and in this brief verse we have His work in its most comprehensive character, setting forth its present and future aspect, and its marvellous result (cf. Colossians 1. 19-22, New Trans.), showing the basis on which the revelation could be made,

and the response produced. (4) His glory as Son of God (verse 34), a title given to Him in incarnation and resurrection (Psalm 2. 7; Luke 1. 35; Romans 1. 4, etc.). (5) His glory as the centre of gathering for "His Own" now (verses 36-39). As the result of the perhaps involuntary expression of delight in Him by John the Baptist, two disciples were attracted, others were added. The Lord Jesus became their centre, their object, their all, and henceforth to be with Him was their one desire. (6) His glory as King of Israel (verse 49) refused by the nation at large (verse 11). Nathanael represents the remnant who acknowledge Him and points on to the day when as Messiah He will be owned by those who rejected Him. (7) His glory as Son of Man (verse 51). As such He shall exercise universal dominion, for "He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth" (Psalm 72. 8). Thus when we see how great a person is the Revealer, we are prepared for a great revelation, nor in this are we disappointed. Let us turn now to chapter 3. We observe, first, that the blessed Lord chose not a great multitude such as He frequently addressed, but a solitary individual who came to Him by night, as the one to whom He should make the wonderful communication. Before He could do this, however, this man had to hear those arresting words, "Ye must be born again" (verse 7). The natural man cannot receive the revelation of God. Alas! how many, ignoring this fact, give lectures, preach sermons, write volumes, etc., which only serve to show their colossal ignorance of the things of God. It is written: "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). Having prepared the ground, the Lord Jesus proceeded to disclose to Nicodemus the great secret of eternity, that " God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life " (verse 16). A great revelation indeed this was ; only a divine Person could make it, and only a renewed mind could receive it. It told of love that found its origin in the heart of God, that reached down to the perishing sinner, delivered him from perishing, and carried him right back to the heart of God to revel in that incomparable love. For is not eternal life the present and the everlasting enjoyment of divine affections in the relationship into which that love has introduced us and which we shall enjoy without let or hindrance in the Father's house ? All this has in view a response from us. Never could there be a response worthy of so great a Revealer, and befitting such a revelation ; yet there should be a response well pleasing to God. In chapter 4. we find that which speaks figuratively of the gift of the Holy Spirit to those who have received the divine revelation (verses 10 and 14), and we see that the response is in the first instance upward and Godward. The blessed Lord dealt with the woman of Samaria in His own gracious and inimitable way. He aroused her interest ; He awakened her conscience ; He touched her heart ; He revealed Himself. Not only so : He divulged a secret not less startling than that which fell upon Nicodemus' wondering ears. He spoke of worshipping "*the Father*" (verse 21), of how that should be done, and added, "*the*

Father seeketh such to worship Him " (verse 23). Such words had never been uttered before, nor could such an idea have entered the mind of man. HE sought that woman because the Father was seeking worshippers. As a preacher quaintly remarked, " When Christ revealed Himself to her, she left her waterpot and went away with the well." We have no doubt that Samaria's erring daughter was that day transformed into a worshipper. Do we realize that the Father looks for this response from us ? That He seeks not merely gratitude for blessings received, but the overflow of the heart that delights in the Blessor. Then there will be the response outward, or manward. John 7. 37-39 is the portion to which we turn to find this. The revelation comes *downward* in chap. 3. ; the response rises *upward* in chap. 4. ; and flows *outward* in chap. 7. If the love of chap. 3. 16 is filling and flooding our hearts, and the relationship spoken of in chap. 1. 12, and hinted at in chap. 4. 21, 23 is enjoyed, there *will be* worship to the Father, and rivers of refreshing and blessing will flow to all around. One thing only remains to be said : it is the Holy Spirit that produces the response. If we worship the Father it is " of Thine own have we given Thee " (1 Chron. 29. 14). All is of God. God has sent His Son, the Son has revealed Him, the Holy Spirit has opened our hearts to receive the revelation, and He produces the response both upward and outward. " O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out ! . . . For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things : to whom be glory for ever. Amen " (Rom. 11. 33-36).

PRACTICAL PAPERS.

No. 12—Deliverance.

(A. J. POLLOCK.)

WE come now to a matter of intense and practical interest to the earnest Christian. How often in the first flush of the joy of conversion has the young convert believed that never again would he sin, never again would he lose his temper, or be swept by gusts of passion.

What a disappointment is the awakening from this illusion, and to find that the flesh is the flesh still, and that the Christian life often seems more marked by defeat than victory.

An earnest Christian, however, will not be content with clear theological explanations alone. He wants to live the victorious life, and won't be content till he has learned wherein lies its secret.

It may be that the following incident may bring a little comfort to the mind of such. An infidel American judge was being driven by his coloured Christian coachman to a place where he could indulge in the sport of duck-shooting.

As they rode along the judge said, "Sambo, I can't understand your Christianity. Here am I an infidel, who does not believe in heaven or hell or the Bible or Christ, and yet I am happy and content. You profess to be a Christian and yet you are constantly complaining of the devil tempting you, and of your difficulties and trials. It appears to me that I am happier than you are, and yet you profess to be a Christian."

Sambo was puzzled, and did not know how to reply, and said so.

At length they got to the shooting. The judge's gun shot more than one duck. Sambo went off to get the spoils. As he did so, the judge cried

out, "Sambo, don't trouble about the dead ducks. They'll wait for you. Go after the wounded ducks, and secure them."

Sambo carried out his master's instructions, and on bringing the ducks to the carriage, said, "Massa, I can answer your question now. The difference between you and me is this. You are the dead duck, and the devil doesn't trouble you. He can get you when he likes. I am the wounded duck and he comes after me, and that's why I am troubled."

There is a good deal of sound philosophy in this. When a man is unconverted, where there is only the flesh, there is no conflict.

But the fact that there is conflict, that there is distress, has this element of comfort in it, that the one so troubled has clearly the new nature as well as the old nature. These two cannot mix any more than oil and water—the flesh cannot be educated or improved by environment, and cannot be brought into accord in any shape or form with the new nature.

The road to deliverance lies, first in the recognition that there are two natures, and second in the irreconcilable and unimprovable nature of the flesh. This will lead to all attempts to cultivate and improve it being given up. Death—death only is the way to deal with it. "Mortify [= put to death] your members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence and covetousness, which is idolatry" (Col. 3. 5). How outspoken Scripture is! How it puts its finger on the spot! How often in Scripture does it put together the two glaring sins that generally mark the flesh—viz., the

unbridled passions of the body and the love of gain.

Then follows another list equally straight and to the point and wonderfully comprehensive. "But now ye also put off these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is created in knowledge after the image of Him that created him" (Col. 3. 8-10).

But now we come to the question: How can this be accomplished? The answer is found in Romans 7. and 8.

It is one of the signs of the last days, of the superficial character of Christians generally, that one rarely ever hears anything about Romans 7.

In that chapter we get a description of a man who finds two natures at work, two natures exactly opposite to each other, two that cannot blend. Neither nature can be improved—one so bad that it cannot be improved; the other so good that it cannot be improved.

We suppose it is an inspired record of the Apostle Paul's own exercises before he got into the liberty of the gospel, for the Holy Ghost, the Seal upon those who have received the gospel of their salvation (Ephes. 1. 13), is not once mentioned in the chapter, whereas in chapter 8. the Holy Spirit is mentioned very often and in great fulness.

Rom. 7. describes a man, whose new nature leads him to desire to do certain things, but the evil nature within refuses him the carrying out of his desires; whilst on the contrary the things the new nature shrinks from, the evil nature leads him to do, so that he describes in simple yet pathetic and profound language, "For that which I do I allow not: for what I would,

that do I not; but what I hate, that do I" (verse 15).

Lamentable condition to be in—to do that which his renewed nature tells him is wrong; that knowing the right to do he does it not, and knowing what is wrong yet he does it. Could anything be more terrible?

And so he learns to distinguish between the three I's—the responsible I—that is the man who lives the life, and who is surely responsible; the new I, that is the new nature, which ought to alone characterize and control his life; and the old I, that is the flesh, the sinful nature, the source of all the trouble and defeat.

So he says, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing" (verse 18). Here the writer identifies himself for the moment with the old I—the flesh—and by bitter experience learns its irremedial and unimprovable nature. Here is a great advance—he will cease to cultivate the flesh or expect any good from it.

All down the chapter the writer is marked by self-occupation, necessarily so, if on the road to deliverance; but the sooner he learns his lesson the better, and the sooner would he be delivered from self-occupation.

Self-occupation, I, I, I, I, I, *ad nauseam*, at last leads him to despair as to himself, and he cries out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (verse 24).

Now we come to the point where deliverance may be known. It is not that deliverance can be accepted from the Deliverer once and for ever, or that the delivered one will never again sin or fail, but we get the secret of deliverance.

Note, the writer calls not for deliverance but a Deliverer. This must be so,

for he cannot bring about his own deliverance in the smallest way. He needs *outside* help.

So this chapter does not put deliverance before the soul, so much as a Deliverer. If it put deliverance before us, we should immediately ask the question, am I delivered? Note "I" is the middle word of the sentence—proof of self-occupation, not of deliverance. If we answered in the affirmative it would prove we had not learned our lesson, for deliverance is not something we get once and for ever, but something to be worked out daily as we keep in touch with the Deliverer and walk in the power of the Holy Spirit. If we answered in the negative we might well be depressed. But we do not ask, are we delivered? But we can joyfully say, "We have got a Deliverer."

It is said the expression, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" refers to a punishment in vogue in the Roman army. When a soldier had transgressed very seriously, he was tied to a corpse, and allowed to die in that condition. The living man would grow weaker and weaker as he was left without food and water, the corpse would become more repulsive each day. Could any condition be more terrible?

And using this as a graphic illustration of his condition, the man cries out for a Deliverer, and finds him in the Lord Jesus Christ Himself—One he can turn to at any moment and get the help he needs at any time.

Deliverance is only to be known as one keeps in touch with the Deliverer. So that whilst the writer can fervently thank God for His Deliverer—"I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord"—he has to immediately add, "So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin" (verse 25). The circumstances

are unchanged as long as we are down here, but we have a Deliverer, who can and does deliver us as long as we are looking to Him.

Did not Peter begin to sink in the water when he looked at the wind and waves; but crying, "Lord, save me" he was delivered from his danger? When we get to Rom. 8. we find if Christ is the Deliverer that the Holy Spirit is the *Power* of the Christian's walk.

To sum up. To know deliverance from sin and self there must be

1. Recognition of the two natures.
2. Recognition that the old nature is unimprovable and irremedial.
3. Recognition that the only help is in a Deliverer.
4. Recognition that we do not get deliverance apart from the Deliverer, nor do we get it once and for all, but stand in daily and hourly need of it.
5. Recognition that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Deliverer—the objective power of deliverance.
6. Recognition that the Holy Spirit is the subjective power of deliverance.

We are thus delivered from ourselves, from self-occupation, and become occupied with the Lord and walk in the power of the Spirit of God.

If each reader would try to live twenty-four hours without talking of good self, or bad self, or self in any shape or form, he would be astonished to find out how much self-occupied and how self-centred he is.

May the Lord help us out of self-complacency, self-occupation, self-seeking, self in every shape and form by occupation of heart with the Lord Jesus Christ, who has left us an example that we should follow in His steps (1 Peter 2. 21).

SOME EXPERIENCES IN CALAIS.

(SAMUEL LEVERMORE.)

This paper, as instructive as it is interesting, is published in order to lead our readers to prayer for the work of God in France.

THESE experiences go to show the great truth of the Acts, that gospel service is not *something that we do*, but rather *something that the Holy Ghost does by us*. This is made abundantly clear in chapter 14. 26, where the apostles rehearsed "all that God had done with them." God did all: they were but instruments in His hand.

"Sent forth by the Holy Ghost" (13. 4).

"Forbidden of the Holy Ghost" (16. 6).

"The Spirit suffered them not" (7).

He commissions—He empowers—He leads and directs—He gives the Word and He gives effect to the Word (John 6. 53; 1 Thess. 1. 5).

THE HOLY GHOST IS AT BOTH ENDS.

He was acting at one and the same time in Philip, His chosen instrument and in the Ethiopian to whom Philip was sent. He was working mightily at the same time in Saul and in Ananias, chapter 9. Also in Peter and Cornelius in chapter 10. The Holy Ghost was the link between the praying Assembly at Antioch and the itinerary of Paul and Barnabas.

We must never presume to manipulate the Spirit (or seek to do so) but rather to be manipulated by Him. Simon Magus answers to the former, and Paul and Barnabas to the latter. The one is from *beneath*, the other is from *above*. The first is *damning*, the other is *saving*.

THE STONY GROUND HEARER.

Statistics are only for the Holy Ghost. He is Omniscient. He makes no mistakes. We, of course, do, and

mostly. Our Lord's teaching in Matt. 13. is a preparation for the "Acts," and the actings of the Spirit in that Book a practical exposition of it. The Lord speaks of the stony-ground hearer as one who "anon with joy receives the Word."

"No root in himself."

"By and by he is offended."

He is the most hopeless class of hearer. The word goes *in* and *up* but not *down*. Stone cannot be ploughed. Simon deceived Philip. We have many possible stony ground hearers in our work here. Our very first case was of a man who accepted with delighted surprise all we said, both as to man's guilt and God's mighty salvation. I fear that many would have urged an immediate confession. We carefully abstained from doing so. Had we said, "Do you *now* believe?" "Do you *now* come to the Lord Jesus?" he would have said, "Oh yes, I do." Some would even go so far as to tell such an one "Then you are saved." And indeed he might have been. It might truly have been a work of the Spirit: but, alas! it might also have been a desire to be amiable, or a mere intellectual assent. If it is indeed God's work it will be "for ever." If He has begun a good work He will perform it until the day of Christ. In a case like this, and they are very frequent here, we are generally led to insist upon repentance as *required* by the Lord, and preached by Paul (Acts 26. 19, 20.) Repentance is a bulwark of the Kingdom.

A typical case of this kind was a young man who, without any urging, professed to receive the gospel, and was apparently most happy. We met him

again and again and had the most delightful times over the Word. But alas! the time came when he began to avoid us, and ended by fleeing from us altogether. The test had come and all was over. The Curé, the Parents, or what not, withered and blighted the rootless plant. It is ours to speak God's Word faithfully, and leave statistics with God.

SOMETHING TO EAT.

An aged man of very respectable and intelligent appearance sitting on a seat. I presented him with one of Mr. Kensit's "Pain Quotidien" (Daily bread)—with the Word of Life for each day—simply saying, "Some bread" (du pain) and passed on. Repassing later I found him busily occupied with the little book so I again approached him, saying, "Vous mangez donc?" (You are eating, then?). He smiled and made room for me to sit beside him. How thankful I was to be enabled to place "God's Bread" (Num. 28. and John 6.) before him. How amazed he was to hear God's plan of salvation. I could not tell him enough. His hunger increased with eating. The Lord Jesus and His great work enthralled him; Rom. 8. 1. came to him as a wondrous revelation. Another aged man joined us, and he, like Talkative in Bunyan's great work, was all self: what *he* had done, where *he* had been: how good *he* was, and how he loved humanity. Whereupon I said, "Here, gentlemen, is a great contrast, like Heaven and Hell—Light and Darkness. Our friend here is all occupied with himself, but Monsieur there wants to hear more about the Lord Jesus and what He has done. He has Christ before him and is therefore on the road heavenward: whilst you (turning to the Egotist) have only your own guilty, wretched self before you, and are, therefore, on the great

self route—La Route Egoiste—which leads to endless woe." The little meeting broke up, but I had a precious inward conviction that the Christ-occupied man and I would meet again in the place where "They shall see His face, and His Name shall be in their foreheads."

THERE IS NONE THAT SEEKETH AFTER GOD (Rom. 3. 11).

What fearful disappointments await the man who expects to find among men "in the flesh" any interest in the things of the Spirit. Dead souls never seek God. When God in His sovereign grace seeks a soul, that soul at once begins to seek after God. To such the word of Isaiah 55. 6–13 comes with Almighty power. Without that, there is nothing doing.

THIS BIBLE: IS IT CATHOLIC OR PROTESTANT?

This is the eternal question among Romans. Alas, it is never "Is it the Word of God?" I wish it were. To make them clearly understand that it is what we understand it to be, is beyond human wisdom. The Bible is its own interpreter. But only He who wrote it can use it to profit. And only those whom He teaches can teach others. Here is a very strong and illuminating paragraph from C. H. M.'s Deut. 18.

"My Father has communicated His mind, and He can make me understand the communication." "All scripture is given *by inspiration of God*." "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were *written for our learning*." As for the evangelist himself, 1 Cor. 2. is his sure guide. "Is it Catholic or Protestant?" That is all that the Church-taught Roman Catholic cares for. For them, what the Church says is all that matters. If you simply reply, "It is the Word of God" it leaves them cold. With us it is *everything*, to them it is *nothing*.

Yet doth the Spirit, in His mercy, enable us time and again to throw light upon this question. One of our special departments of service here is among.

**POSTMEN ; TRAMWAY MEN ;
RAILWAY OFFICIALS AND
THE POLICE.**

They even come to us. Three of them sent for me, and after thanking me very warmly for a copy of the New Testament, which they had received on some previous occasion, put the oft-repeated question to me in a serious way.

**"THESE NEW TESTAMENTS ;
ARE THEY CATHOLIC OR
PROTESTANT ?"**

I was led to reply something like this. Supposing you left your wife and went to England or anywhere else, and from thence wrote her a letter ; can you imagine her saying, "Is this Catholic or Protestant ?" "No, No, that would be ridiculous," they cried in unison. "And is it not equally ridiculous to ask that question in regard to the letters, etc., which our God has written and which He has given us in this book for 'all the world' and for 'every creature' in a *general* sense, and for His own in a *special* sense ?" Light broke in upon them so that they laughed freely at their own folly. But, let us remember that the poor afflicted person in a mad house who thinks he is the King of England, has no idea of its absurdity, or he would not be there. Even so the deluded Roman Catholic has no idea of his folly or he would not remain one.

How grateful we are that the Lord has enabled us so to speak that a large number of these deluded souls have received the True Light (at least professedly). To God be all the praise !

THE RESTRAINT OF THE SPIRIT.

"Forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia" (Acts 16. 6).

"They assayed to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit suffered them not." This clearly teaches the importance of being led by the Spirit—i.e., *constrained* and *restrained* in every act. I was led the other morning to stand upon a certain bridge, just asking for the Spirit's guidance. If it had been a question of how many Gospels I could give away it would have been hundreds ; but as it was, the Spirit in His gracious answer to my humble cry led me to very few : but I felt so happy in each case, because, first of all, it is His business, and He knows exactly to whom He would give the precious gift. To do only that which is under the constraint and full guidance of God the Holy Ghost, and to honour His restraints is the only and *sure* way of blessing. In my humble judgment there is nothing so harmful as to distribute *eagerly* and *indiscriminately*. The people think you are paid so much a hundred, or that you have some personal interest in quickly getting rid of as many as possible. It is quite a different thing when they see a man quietly and thoughtfully present one here and there. Then they will come and civilly ask for, and gratefully receive the gift, and often ask a vital question. The flesh-led distributor often witnesses a sad sight. Some tear up the Word of God and, perhaps, throw the pieces in his face—others make open ridicule, etc., etc. But since I have been taught by grace the blessedness of the Spirit's guidance, I gladly bear my testimony, that all such experiences as those of the indiscriminate distributor have been spared me. The sight of a street in Brittany being literally covered with torn fragments of Gospels is ever before me, and is a powerful condemnation of the *statistical period* (if I may so describe it) of my service in France. I therefore give, I trust, very humbly my

own experience upon this much neglected question—founded upon the very Word of God—and leave it, simply adding that he who humbly casts himself upon the Spirit's guidance will not only consciously receive it, but will also find his service filled with obvious purpose and delightful surprise and learn more every day of the glorious fulness of our Lord's own words in John 14. 12.

THE FRANCO-TURK.

Of French parents—born in Constantinople—a very handsome and intelligent-looking young man sitting in a thoughtful attitude on a seat overlooking the sea. We sat beside him, longing for the Holy Spirit to use us in His great work of glorifying Christ, and He surely did.

Mrs. Levermore said, "Can you read English?" "Only a little, but I can read Fench," he replied. "Then here is something well worth reading" (handing him a New Testament). After he had thoughtfully examined it, I broke in with, "I suppose you have read many of the great Writers?" "Oh yes,—Molière, Racine, Hugo, Dickens, Shakespeare." "Well then," said I, "that little book there is incomparably better and greater than them all. They are human and imperfect—this is divine, and therefore perfect. Those books, like the men who wrote them, pass away—this endures for ever. Their authors are dead, but the Author of this book liveth for ever"—and other words on the same lines. Perceiving that the Spirit was dealing with him, I asked if he would mind reading aloud for our benefit. "With pleasure, but where?" We turned to the Gospel of John and spoke to him of the Deity of our Lord Jesus. The Word—logos—in chapter 1. And then, to the young man, "Will you kindly read

in chapter 3. down to the 16th verse?" He did so. "Now is not that infinitely better than anything you ever read?" I demanded. "They are not to be compared," he cried. "Listen carefully, then," I continued. "Here are God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. God the Father *loves and gives*. God the Son *loves and dies*. God the Spirit *loves and reveals* both the Father and the Son to the one whom He quickens into a new life—the very life of God. Is it not most wonderful that Father, Son, and Spirit, are all engaged to bless the wicked, guilty, and helpless sinner? But in chapter 1. we read what the Son is. He is 'the Word,' the 'Lamb' and 'He that baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.' Oh what a wonderful Saviour! Here in chapter 1. is the great Workman, but His work—dying that believers might live—is in chapter 3. Nicodemus needed chapters 1. and 3. and so do you likewise. His *work* takes its value from His Person. If I were to give my blood, my life, it would not save a single soul, but His on the contrary has saved, and is saving and will yet save uncountable hosts—numberless multitudes—and so on. . . ."

Then came the dénouement and the parting. He, we trust, with the light of eternal hope dawning in his soul, and we to thank the One who, in Eden, at the Fall, and on the Cross at the great expiation, and by the Spirit in the great quickening and ingathering—Father, Son, and Spirit—is, even now, even to-day, seeking and saving that which is lost. Oh the ineffable delight! Oh the inexpressible joy and peace of being a subject of this three-fold perfection of Life for evermore.

Indulgent reader, can you say, "Such, through grace, am I."

P.S.—*The prayers of the reader are earnestly requested.*