

# SCRIPTURE TRUTH.

VOLUME XIX. 1927

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“Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching  
daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my  
doors.” *Proverbs 8. 34.*

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THE CENTRAL BIBLE TRUTH DEPÔT  
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# Scripture Truth.

Vol. XIX

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

No. 1.

## THE LORD'S LAST WORDS.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

WE invite you to consider the last words of our Lord to His disciples before He went forth to His agony in the garden and His death upon the cross. We take those that Luke was inspired by the Holy Ghost to give us, and we suggest that at least one hour should be given at the opening of this year to the consideration of them. They set before us our position in the world as the Lord's witnesses in it during His absence from it, and His tender solicitude for us; upon this we would lay the emphasis. They show us His intimate knowledge of our fickleness and frailty, and of the dangers and vicissitudes that beset us, but also of His unwearied and unwearying love for us, and His ability to make us more than conquerors until He comes again.

We will read the chapter (Luke 22.). For nothing could be more moving, surely, than it; nothing more calculated to fill us with wonder than what is there recorded; and it will give us the setting, the surroundings, without which, as always in the case of the words of Jesus, the infinite and divine beauty of the words and acts will be partly lost.

The chief priest and the scribes sought to kill Him, so verse 2 tells us. That was because they hated Him with a bitter and incorrigible hatred, and that in spite of the fact that it was the Feast of unleavened bread, which spoke symbolically of all malice and hatred and evil being put out of the heart; but what cared they for that? To rid the world of Him whose very presence in it was a continual rebuke to their sin

and hypocrisy and pride was their purpose, but how to do it was their problem. They were cowards, every one of them, base cowards, and they feared the people whom they despised. They had no need to have feared them, for those people could be swayed either this way or that like saplings in a gale; they were as foolish as they were sinful, and had no love for the Lord. All they cared about were the loaves and fishes with which He had fed them. They would defend Him if he fed them well, if not—“Let Him be crucified.” But the perplexity of these rulers disappeared when there slunk into their council one of the Lord's own disciples. Here was the solution of their difficulty, here was the devil-possessed implement of their plot.

Judas had slipped away from the Lord's company under some pretence or other that must have deceived his fellow disciples but not the Lord. Do you not see him hastening furtively through the streets, hastening as only a guilty man bent upon a foul crime could hasten, to the place where he knew those enemies of the Lord were? There was no time to waste in haggling or bargaining, the deed must be done and done speedily; thirty pieces of silver was “the goodly price” that they offered him, and for that price he sold his Lord and agreed to bring about His capture while the people slept. Then this devil's dupe—oh, the horror of it!—returned to resume his place among the disciples, as though none were more devoted to the Lord than he, and the Chief Priests proceeded to plan the execution of their murderous

design, and then went to their prayers and to their preparations to eat the passover. Such is the world, such was the world on the night of the Lord's betrayal, and He knew it, He knew it thoroughly and completely.

It was not the rabble, untaught and knowing not the law, that planned this greatest crime that night or day has ever seen. It was the chief priests and the respected leaders of the people, religious men, men of education, who boasted in their culture and elevation above the common herd. They brought it about, but they could not have done it alone; one of the Lord's own disciples, His own familiar friend, was necessary, and he was ready when the devil entered into him. You could not find men in better circumstances than these were in. The chief priests had the law and Judas had the gospel, and all the grace of it in the Master whom he had followed for more than three years, but neither law nor gospel changed them, though both increased their responsibility and added to their guilt. But such is the heart of man, and such is the world, and seeing it we do not marvel as Nicodemus did when the Lord said to him, "Ye must be born again."

Now the Lord knew all this. If Elisha the prophet was enlightened by the Lord as to the journey that Gehazi took in order to gratify his covetous heart, the Lord of Elisha—for Jesus was that—knew all that had passed between the traitor and His foes. He knew, too, all that would follow this plotting; He knew that man's hour and the power of darkness had come, and knowing all, what does He do? Let us see.

Exercising His authority as Messiah for the last time, He sent Peter and John to demand a guest chamber, in which He could eat the Passover Feast

with His disciples, and pour out His heart in a last farewell before He suffered; and at that supper He clearly showed them what their position in the world during His absence would be, and what the resources they would have. The storm was gathering outside, preparations for His arrest and condemnation and crucifixion were being rapidly completed, and Judas, who knew all about it, sat there at the table with Him with the price of his treachery in his bag. And Jesus knew all this. Never before had the powers of darkness been so stirred; this was the supreme hour, men were but the puppets on the stage, guilty puppets, playing their part with willing hearts; but behind them were the forces of evil determined to crush that one lowly Man, and to finish for ever at one blow their long fight with God, and Jesus knew this. But His disciples, and we, were His one thought. Behold Him look round upon them and say, "*With desire have I desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer.*"

They loved Him, but He loved them more; and it was His desire, not theirs, that had brought them together for that sacred occasion. The Passover Feast commemorated the deliverance of Israel from Egypt; the lamb roast with fire upon which they fed year by year turned the eye of faith forward to His coming. And now He had come, and there He sat to share with them that meal which spoke so eloquently of what He would do ere once more the sun sank down over the western sea.

It was at the Passover Feast that He instituted the supper, which we know and love as **THE LORD'S SUPPER** (1 Cor. 11.); and this He did entirely in view of His absence from them. It is this that we must specially consider because it is definitely for us, which the passover was not. One of the chief

features of this period in which we are called to witness for Him is, that He is absent from this world ; His disciples were to serve, and we are to serve, an absent Lord.

### AN ABSENT LORD AND A SUPPER OF REMEMBRANCE.

He was to be no more with them, and they would miss His blessed company ; and the measure in which they would miss Him would show the measure of their love to Him. And so it is now ; the Lord is not here, He has no place in the world ; its politics, social circles, pleasures, and schemes of reconstruction have no room for Him. Are we conscious of His absence, and of this ? If we love Him we shall miss Him and shall long for the time when He shall come to take us to His Father's house, that where He is we may be also. Nor shall we long with less desire for the day when He shall be glorified in this world that despised and rejected Him.

Christ is not here. What other than this is the meaning of those words we prize so highly, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them" ? If He were here, why gather in His Name ? But why is He not here ? There are two reasons : *The world hated Him and slew Him ; and He loved us and died for us.* These are the two sides of the Lord's exit from this world by death, as they are given to us in this Gospel by Luke.

The world is so seductive and can put on so fair an exterior that we soon forget that the cross of Christ is the witness of its awful hatred of Him, and that whoso will be a friend of the world is an enemy of God. It is well that we should learn that when all things are normal and right with us the cross of Christ is our only glory, and that by it the world is crucified to us, and we to it.

The Lord's Supper brings before us the fact that He is not here—we show

the death of our Lord until He returns—and one reason why He is not here is, the world cast Him out. This that was written had to be accomplished in Him : "And He was reckoned among the transgressors." His name was blotted out from David's royal line and inscribed on the criminal roll of Jerusalem. Yes, if the criminal roll of that proud city for that eventful year could be discovered the name of Jesus of Nazareth would be found along with the names of thieves and murderers. And we show the Lord's death until He comes again. As we eat His Supper, we announce the fact that we are identified with Him whom the world slew, we are identified with Him because we love Him.

*But He died for us.* He made us His own for ever by a love that gave Himself for us. How easily we forget this. If He stood in our midst and showed us His wounded hands and side, as He did to His disciples on the resurrection day, His love would without doubt be a great reality to us ; but "out of sight" is so liable to be "out of mind," so fickle are we ; and knowing this He instituted His Supper, which should be a constant and perpetual reminder to us of a love that is stronger than death.

And so, as we sit at His Supper, we follow Him in thought through the gates of David's city, that city that He loved so well and for which He wept, to Calvary. We see Him there for us, no light shining on Him from above, no friend ministering comfort below. We hear His broken cries, but men only mock them and heaven is dumb, and at last He dies. The Prince of Life hangs dead upon a cross *for us* ; His body was there given *for us* and His blood shed *for us*. It is this that the broken bread and the poured-out wine speak of—Christ dead for us. And we need this Supper to keep Him in this great

love ever fresh before our soul. If He were here we should not need it, because He is absent we do.

How necessary it is that we should have this eucharistic feast, this supper of love, which expresses so blessedly to us what our Lord is, and our fellowship together—the fellowship of the Lord's death—the one only true fellowship of the many members of one body! What a joy to recall Him whose love many waters could not quench! With the storm gathering thickly about Him His thoughts spanned the whole of the time of His absence, and He then and there gave us a supper of remembrance until He comes again. "And He took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is My body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of Me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new Testament in My blood, which is shed for you."

#### A LIFE OF WITNESS AND A PERFECT PATTERN.

Those disciples were to witness for Him, and we are to witness for Him during His absence; we are to be His letter of commendation before the world; to shine as lights. But how unlike Him we are by nature, just like those disciples indeed, who, even at that supper table, with these farewell words of the Lord sounding in their ears, were quarrelling as to who should be the greatest among them. They needed, and we need, to have set before us a perfect pattern if we are to understand what our witnessing must be.

He set Himself before them; they were not to be like the Gentiles but like Him; they were not to exercise lordship over one another, but to follow His example and serve one another in love. It is in the world that men endeavour to be great, and jostle one another in their scramble for the chiefest

places; but those disciples, and we like them, are not of the world, then the spirit of the world had not to show itself in them, nor must it in us. They belonged to Christ and so do we, and consequently it is His spirit that we have to bear and show.

Let us incline our ears to hear His words. He said to them, "*I am among you as he that serveth.*" Are there any more affecting words in Scripture than these? Consider what they mean! When they awoke in the morning He had been awake before them and prepared their breakfast; they never needed a servant if He was near; His love made Him watch for opportunities to labour on their behalf, and if there was one task more menial than another that was the task He undertook. He, the Lord of glory, was the servant of those rude, unlettered fishermen; His love bound Him with unbreakable fetters to a life of service. He is our pattern, and our witnessing for Him must be after that pattern. He who loves most serves most, and He who would be most like his Lord must take the lowest place amongst his brethren that he might serve them all.

#### THERE IS A TIRELESS FOE, BUT AN ALL-PREVAILING INTER-CESSOR.

Now if we are to witness for Christ, there will be opposed to us a sleepless and subtle foe; and the greater our determination to witness faithfully for Him, the more we shall be challenged and attacked. "Simon, Simon," said the Lord, "behold, Satan hath desired to have YOU that he may sift you [all the disciples] as wheat."

What could Simon do in the presence of Satan—poor, impetuous, self-confident Simon! And what can we do who are as foolish and weak as he? Satan's effort was and is to separate the souls of those whom Jesus loves from Him

and to destroy them ; and if he cannot destroy them, he will endeavour to destroy their testimony. What easy prey he would have if it were not for the blessed fact that we have an Intercessor, whose ceaseless and blessed activities on our behalf are all-prevailing. He has died to make us His own ; He ever liveth to maintain our faith in witness for Himself during His absence.

How cheering are the words, "*I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.*" He had anticipated that fierce trial through which Simon was to pass ; Satan is always too late for the Lord's vigilance, the prayer arose before the temptation came and so it always does. He was ahead of Satan ; Satan might catch Simon sleeping, and take you and me unawares, but he could not forestall the Lord. He had gauged the power of the foe and the weakness of His well-meaning disciple ; and He had spoken to God, His Father, about it all, and secured for Simon all the grace that was needed. Simon failed ; he was allowed to do so, for he had lessons to learn ; but his faith did not fail, and he came out of the distress and the dishonour to strengthen his brethren, and to storm the devil's stronghold at Jerusalem, and take captive for Christ thousands who hitherto had been Satan's lawful captives.

The intercession of our Lord is not less effectual for us ; He is even at the right hand of God for this purpose. There, amid the glory of the throne, He pleads for us so that we may be more than conquerors through Him that loves us (Rom. 8. 34, 39).

#### A LIFE OF LABOUR WITH A BLESSED RECOMPENSE.

But these disciples of the Lord had to learn also of what sort their lives would be as witnesses of Christ in the

midst of a world that hated Him. Hitherto it had been an easy matter to serve Him, for He had exercised His authority as Messiah on their behalf, and they had gone forth without purse or scrip, or shoes, or staves, and they had lacked nothing. Their feet did not weary, and wherever they went their needs were most abundantly met ; but now all was to be changed ; He was to be rejected ; to be cast out as a malefactor, and they were henceforward to be identified with that Name which was dishonoured by man though honoured of God in heaven. Theirs was to be a life of toil and conflict.

They had to sell their garments and buy swords. The garment spoke of ease and comfort, and the sword of hardship and conflict. They had to exchange the one for the other.

It has been thought that the Lord spoke here of an actual sword ; indeed so thought these disciples, for they said, " Lord, behold, here are two swords." And He said unto them, " It is enough." But if He had meant an actual sword, He would not have said, " It is enough." He would have said, " It is not enough, you will want one each." The fact is, they did not understand then the spiritual significance of His words. But Paul understood them afterwards when he described the Christian life, not in the language of the drawing-room, or couch of ease, but in the language of the battlefield. Mark well how he speaks of " the good fight," of " enduring hardness as a good soldier," of " wrestling not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." We are told by him " to watch and be sober," to " put on the whole armour of God " ; to withstand and to stand.

How we shrink from this hardship and the sacrifice that witnessing for Christ involves ! We labour to save our own lives often, for we so little appreciate the love of Christ that made Him die for us ; and it is only as that love of His constrains us, that we shall do any other ; but when that love takes full possession we sell the garment and buy the sword, and go forth to witness for our Lord regardless of the consequences to ourselves. In this there is compensation ; the compensation of the Lord's approval in this present time, and in the future there is glory with Him, for if we suffer with Him we shall also reign with Him (2 Tim. 2.). " I appoint unto you a kingdom," said the Lord to these men, who afterwards sealed their testimony for Him with

their blood, these true martyrs of our Lord. May we be like them through His grace.

Let us in our meditation put ourselves in thought among that company of men in that upper room, and listen to these wonderful sayings of our Lord, spoken with such quietness, such tenderness, until their full meaning fills our souls. Then let us follow Him as the Holy Spirit here shows Him to us, going forth to the Garden, then to the Cross, and down into the grave, then rising in the triumph of His victory over death, and ascending at last to His Father's throne ; then like those disciples who saw Him go up, we shall worship Him, and be filled with great joy, and be continually praising and blessing God. Amen.

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## "ASK WHATSOEVER YE WILL."

*" If ye abide in Me and My words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done for you."*—John 15. 7.

THE most obvious difficulty in prayer is that we live so much where God is not, that we allow Him to sink beneath our horizon, and become ourselves unconscious of His presence ; when we wish to pray, it is as though we did not know where we were, nor where God was. We abide in the market-place, in the circle of our own imagination or activities, our social or domestic circles, or in our books. These become our "world," the place in which we abide, sometimes without GOD. The soul often strikes roots and seeks its nourishment in

strange, unwholesome soils, and one of the quickest indications of what is amiss is an incapacity to pray. We do not know how or what to ask ; instead of the boundless liberty of which Jesus speaks there is a weight on our tongues, and we cannot speak to God at all. There is no cure for this but to return to the true centre, to learn again to abide in Christ, and to let His word abide richly in us. This is the element in which God is real, near and known, and in which it is possible to pray in the name of Jesus and in the full assurance of faith.

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There is no truer humility than to accept the limits which God has prescribed for us, and subject to His will and by His grace, make our works, within those limits, great works.

Do common things in a perfect manner. A constant fidelity in small things is a real and heroic virtue.

# THE MASTER'S WORDS.

(JAMES MCBROOM.)

## Notes on Matthew's Gospel, Chapter 5.—No. 4.

CONTINUING this great discourse, the Lord said, "*Think not that I am come to make void the law or the prophets ; I am not come to make void but to fulfil.*" The discourse goes on to show who were the transgressors here, and becomes a tremendous exposure of the leaders of the Jews, both in their teaching and practice. The traditions of the Rabbis are brought under the searchlight of Immanuel the King. For such was He who at that moment stood before them as the embodiment of all that God's ways and words had pointed on to and shadowed forth. Every claim of God put forth in the law met its answer in Him. Nothing that belonged to the relationship He had entered into but was perfectly carried out. This incidentally shows the difference between Him and the Adamic race. The perfect law of God which was His delight became a ministry of condemnation and death to everyone else.

The point, however, was not what He did but what He was. He presents Himself here as filling up in His Person all that the typical system and the law presumed, and in that way He is seen as the embodiment of all that the law and the prophets contained, He is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believes. God's end in it was Christ : He is the essential and underlying spirit of it all. He is indeed the filling out of all Scripture. Speaking of this He said, "They are they which testify of Me." And again, "Beginning at Moses and the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." A system had been sketched out in previous days which is now permeated with life ; the kingdom, covenant, house, temple, all are made good in Him.

Has the reader ever pondered this ? Christ stands before us in the Gospels as the ultimate end towards which all time, all nature, all history hastened. The whole march of events down through the ages, with every movement of divine testimony in the progress of revelation, had Him as their goal. He was bound in the very nature of things to be the Pivot around which everything in the ways and purpose of God revolved, and every movement in the Godhead, whether creation, providence or government, had Him in view.

Note, too, His authority. If it is the glory of other teachers to hide behind their theme, not so with Him. He brings His Person to the front, and that without apology, in the most simple and unaffected way. He spake with authority without stopping to say why, and commanded without declaring His right. He teaches in a way altogether different from others, penetrating to the heart of things in a way that carried conviction and exposed the accredited teachers of the day. While ever honouring and fulfilling Holy Scripture, He cites no previous authority for what He says : He taught them as One having authority and not as the scribes.

We may now pass on more rapidly till we reach the end of the chapter. In verses 21 to 37 the human heart is laid bare, and evil is traced back from the overt act to the motive which gave it birth, and with this the adjusting of existing relationships in regard to earth and heaven, time and eternity. Violence (verse 21) and corruption (verse 27) are mentioned only to be traced to the heart of man, however cultivated, and then (verses 29, 30) not only is the spring of evil in man traced to its source, but the cause or opportunity of it must be

cut off. (See Colos. 3. 5, 8, 9.) The sacred character of human life; the sanctity of marriage; the authority of God in regard to the taking of oaths and its bearing on their conversation, all of which connect with the virtues mentioned at the beginning of the sermon, would indeed manifest the fact that His followers are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. It is from the old corrupt tree of fallen human nature that these evil things spring; introduce the new life, and instead of the works of the flesh there are love, joy, peace, long-suffering: against which there is no law.

The end of the chapter fits in with the beginning in moral beauty. If at the opening it is character, at the close it is conduct. The standard of all practice is to be according to the Father, who makes His sun rise on evil and good, and sends rain on just and unjust. The blessed God is above all the strife and evil of man, and our adorable Lord is seen here the expression of it all, and He desires that His followers should be the same. If such practice is called for from the earthly people, what shall we say about those who are blest with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ? What a triumph for God that there should be in this world a class so formed in their inner being after Christ as to be expressive of Himself! A class that love their enemies and bless those who curse and do good to those who hate them, and pray for those who insult and persecute them, that they are known as the sons of their Father in heaven. Under the teaching of the Holy Ghost this becomes one of the grandest chapters in the whole Bible.

A few words are necessary here in connection with the dispensational character of this discourse and the class of people the Lord has in view.

It was His early ministry given before His definite rejection by His people, the Jews, and it gives those to whom it is addressed association with Himself in that rejection that was becoming more and more apparent every day, and describes a state of things which ran on to the fall of Jerusalem late in the Apostolic age. Before the gospel as we have it could come out in its fulness, His ministry, involving death, resurrection and ascension, had to be completed. Christianity proper, which gives a much higher range of blessing, and opens out the truth of part with Christ in the glory, could not be given yet. This commenced with the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and goes on right through the Spirit's day till the removal of the church to heaven as given in 1 Thess. 4. 13-18. The church formed at Pentecost came into her place at the time of the suspension of divine testimony among the Jews. She is the vessel of God's counsels and witness of a new heavenly testimony during the time of that suspension; and her translation to heaven will be the signal for the renewal of divine dealings with the Jews in view of the advent of the King. In this way all is seen to work out in perfect harmony, and the order and beauty of God's ways fill the believing heart with delight. When the church has been translated to heaven, a company will be converted and entrusted with the testimony of heaven, on the earth, and will pass through many sorrows into the reign of glory with the King. They are seen in many Scriptures both in the Psalms and Prophets. They fall into two distinct classes, one going into heavenly blessing through martyrdom in the unprecedented sufferings of the great tribulation, and the other preserved to inherit the earth. See the reward mentioned in verses 5 and 12.

# THAT WONDERFUL PSALM.

(W. BRAMWELL DICK.)

WE could almost imagine that before commencing to peruse this paper each reader has said to himself, or herself, "The Twenty-third," and, needless to say, that is right.

What more comforting, soul-inspiring portion could we have with which to step out upon the New Year? What awaits us in the church, in the world, in our home circle, in our professional or business life, we know not, but we can claim every word of this precious psalm for ourselves individually, and thus go forward with joy in our hearts, and with a song upon our lips. In verse 1 we seem, do we not, to have

## THE BELIEVER'S PORTION?

And what a portion! "The Lord is my Shepherd." "The Good Shepherd," as viewed in "the dust of death" in Psalm 22. "The Great Shepherd," as seen later in that Psalm, in resurrection. "The Chief Shepherd," as presented in Psalm 24., in glory. How lovely the title! If He is the Shepherd we are His sheep. It is because we are His sheep that He sought us, and went into the very domain of death to find us. That is why, having found us, He says: "Rejoice with Me; for I have found MY sheep which was lost" (Luke 15. 6). Small wonder that He cares for us, tends us, preserves us, as He does. We think we could understand David singing this Psalm as he watched his father's sheep at Ephratah. He knew them, he cared for them, he fed them, they had no cares, no worry, no anxiety. David was their shepherd, and, learning his lesson, the shepherd lad, soon to be the shepherd king, could say, "The Lord is *my* Shepherd." Observe the intimacy, the individuality, of it. Have you thought of it, dear friend? You can claim the Shepherd all for yourself, and all His resources are at your disposal. "The

Lord is *my* Shepherd; I shall not want." You may not want exercise, nor trial of faith, nor test of endurance, and you certainly shall not want all that the Shepherd knows you need. Does the cupboard get bare? Do the clothes begin to look shabby? Is the supply of cash slender? Sing, do it just now. "The Lord is *my* Shepherd; I shall not want." How stirring it must have been to hear the Scottish Covenanters, driven from house and home, gathered on the hillside, and never knowing when their persecutors might fall upon them, singing:—

"The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want:  
He makes me down to lie  
In pastures green, He leadeth me  
The quiet waters by."

Our lives are cast in peaceable times—thank God—but we have our vicissitudes, and we need to apprehend the portion that we have in our Shepherd.

Notice next:—

## THE BELIEVER'S PASTURE.

May we give the marginal reading of verse 2? "He maketh me to lie down in pastures of tender grass, He leadeth me beside the waters of quietness, or rest." Remark! It is He and me. We are not lost in the crowd, nor do we simply get a share with the rest in what is to be had. You, dear fellow-believer, are but a speck in His great universe, only a unit in His innumerable flock, but He seeks to make *you* to rest and to lead *you*. How choice is the language! "He *maketh* me to lie down." Here is the constraint, yea the compulsion, of divine love. "He leadeth me," not He driveth me, but "He leadeth me." We recall that memorable scene, in the days of His flesh, when there came to Him the sorrowing disciples of John who had just lost their Master, and, almost simultaneously, there came His own disciples flushed with the

success of the mission on which He had sent them. "And He said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place and rest awhile" (Mark 6. 31). He made them to lie down, He led them beside the waters of quietness. His love provided the very best for His own. Oh, the rest, the tranquillity, the joy of His presence and His company! Oh, the richness of the pasture where He makes His sheep to lie down! To borrow an expression from another, it is "the region of satisfied desire."

In verse 3 we have

#### THE BELIEVER'S PATH.

The soul restored, after wandering it may be, and refreshed as He alone can refresh it. He leads in the paths of righteousness. This, to be sure, means practical righteousness. The one who can say, "The Lord is my Shepherd," who can sing of his confidence in the Shepherd, and who knows a little—it may be only a little—of the luxury of being made to lie down, and of being led where He alone does lead, will be found "in the paths of righteousness," for He who leads besides "the waters of quietness," leads also "in the paths of righteousness." He leads us there, and we desire to be maintained there because it is "for His name's sake," and His name is dearer to our heart than any other name. How God-honouring, how Christ-glorifying, how soul-satisfying, is the path in which He doth lead!

In verse 4 we see first

#### THE BELIEVER'S POWER,

by which we mean the power that is exercised on his behalf. The rod speaks of rule, authority, power. Was not Moses' rod the symbol of these?

We may encounter the wolf, we may be confronted by those who will be relentless in "not sparing the flock," but we are in the hands of the Shepherd,

we are under His beneficent care, and all His power is for us. In this verse there is also

#### THE BELIEVER'S PROTECTION.

"Thy staff." Here surely is something upon which to lean. The road may be rough, the path may be difficult, the pitfalls may be many, but with His staff we will be comforted, supported, encouraged, kept. Praise His name!

Then be it noted these are for us while passing through "the valley of the shadow of death."

Many dear saints have found comfort in this when just about to leave this world and go to be for ever with the Lord, and happy in the support that they have received, that which once seemed so terrible, as death indeed is, and which, it may be, they dreaded, proved to be but the shadow of death and the valley was illumined with the light of His presence. It is also suggestive, however, of what this world is to the believer. The shadow of death is over it, and we have got to pass through it, but we can say, "THOU art with ME; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me." Hallelujah!

Verse 5 seems to set before us, in choice words,

THE BELIEVER'S PROVISION, a table prepared, prepared by the Shepherd, prepared for me, prepared in the presence of mine enemies, i.e., the world, so far as we are concerned, a table groaning beneath the load of good things that infinite love has provided. A feast of love! An atmosphere of joy, for "Thou anointest my head with oil"; a heart that knows not how to express its delight. "My cup runneth over." Shall we ask ourselves just here—does our cup run over? During the past year did our cup overflow? or was our heart overwhelmed? Did we praise? or did we murmur? Did

we rejoice? or did we complain? Did we trust? or did we doubt? Let us begin 1927 with overflowing cups, with happy hearts, with shining faces, with songs of praise to our precious Shepherd.

Last of all we have in verse 6

### THE BELIEVER'S PROSPECT.

We look back over life's journey, be it short or be it long, and we can say, "Surely goodness and mercy have followed us all the days of our life." Sometimes we wounded His tender heart by not trusting Him, but we did not want. We have oftentimes failed Him but He has never failed us, yea, "there hath not failed one word of all His good promise" (1 Kings 8. 56). Now standing on the threshold of the New Year we look forward. We look not at the cupboard, or the wardrobe, or the contents of the purse. We look to Him, we say, "The Lord is *my* Shepherd; I shall not want. Surely goodness and mercy *shall* follow *me* all the days of my life." They have not ceased to follow us, they will not cease to follow

us, therefore all is well. Such a Psalm could not stop there, however. "I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." For us it will be the Father's house. The Father's house and the Father's heart may be said to be almost synonymous terms. For that we wait. The Shepherd is carrying us there. "Goodness and mercy" are escorting us there. If He is with us here, we shall be with Him there. It may be that 1927 will not be many hours old before He will call us hence, and then, and there, it shall be ours to know Him better, to learn His love in a deeper and a fuller way, to appreciate His grace as we cannot do at present, and we shall praise Him as we would and as we ought.

Meanwhile we say to our fellow-believers: "Be of good cheer, look up to yonder throne, and in the happy consciousness that He who sits there is *your* Shepherd let confidence and delight in Him possess your heart, and let His praise ever be upon your tongue."

## "ASSEMBLING TOGETHER."

(H. J. VINE.)

*"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."*—Hebrews 10. 25.

A SEASONABLE exhortation! and while it becomes "the custom" of some to ignore it, it is increasingly to mark true believers as the day of the coming of Christ draws near. The injunction is to "*complete assembling*" of ourselves together. The word (episunagōgē) is once used elsewhere in regard to our complete assembling together to Christ in the air at His coming again (2 Thess. 2. 1). Not one of the saints will fail to be at that glorious assembling together, but we

are to be on that line NOW. The children of God should gather together, we should seek to get all together wherever we may be locally found. Not only the scattering work of the wolf (John 10. 12), but the pursuits of these "last days" militate against our being all found often together. Nevertheless the Word points us in that direction, "*encouraging one another*," and so much "*the more*" as we see the day approaching.

## SHORN LOCKS.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

[T is possible that this year opens for some of our readers not with songs but sighs, because the happiness that once they had in the Lord is not theirs now. Is there one who is saying, "I am a backslider and my heart is very cold; people would not recognize me now as a Christian"? Here is a very pretty story: A little boy named Frank had golden curls that clustered round his head, and were his mother's pride. One day he got hold of the scissors and went off alone, and when he returned the curls were gone. In order to punish him the family decided not to recognize him, and when he sat at the meal and spoke to his father, his father said, "What strange little boy is that?"; and his brother asked, "Have I ever seen you before?"; and even his mother, with a lump in her throat, turned her head from him and said, "I wonder where my Frank is?" Little Frank at first thought it a very funny game, but as the meal went on and he was still unrecognized, his face became very serious and he burst into tears and said: "Well, anyway, God

knows me even if you don't, and I wish some of you did."

You may have become so changed in your life and ways that your brethren no longer know you. Your locks are gone, like little Frank's or like Samson's, and you may be grinding in the devil's mills, the sport of those who do not know your Lord, but He has not forgotten you. "He knoweth them that are His"; and you may gather it, as comfort to your unhappy heart, that it is easier for a mother to forget her only child than for the Lord to forget you.

Your back is turned to Him, but He shines upon your back, and He wants you to turn quickly, to turn at once, to Him, and to know that all is forgiven. And He will make your backslidings to be such a lesson to you that in the future you will keep nearer to Him than ever you did before. He will empty you of self-confidence and fill you with confidence in Himself, and once again others also will take knowledge of you that you are the Lord's.

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## THE SAVIOUR AND THE SINNER.

### THE SAVIOUR.

#### *The Faithful Man.*

"His delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth He meditate day and night."  
Psalm 1. 2.

"I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." John 17. 4.

#### *The Forsaken Man.*

"My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Psalm 22. 1.

"He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin." 2 Cor. 5. 21.

The FAITHFUL MAN was FORSAKEN, that the FILTHY man might be FORGIVEN.

### THE SINNER.

#### *Filthy man.*

"They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy. There is none that doeth good, no, not one." Psalm 14. 3.

"All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Romans 3. 23.

#### *The Forgiven man.*

"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered"  
Psalm 32. 1.

"Your sins are forgiven you for His Name's sake." 1 John 2. 12.

# THE LORD POSSESSED ME.

(JAMES BOYD.)

*"The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. . . . Then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him, and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him."*—Proverbs 8. 22-31.

THAT we find ourselves on earth within a sphere of incomprehensible limits, and surrounded by worlds innumerable and immeasurable, each with a glory all its own, diverse from all the others, and baffling adequate description, is in itself a continual reminder, not only of the eternal power, wisdom and divinity of the Creator, but of the exceeding littleness of our own individual selves, and of all that in which we naturally have our proud boast. David, the king of Israel, says, "When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained; what is man that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that Thou visitest him?" And then, guided by the Holy Spirit of prophecy, before his vision comes the man of God's counsels, and he sees Him made a little lower than the angels, on account of the suffering of death, and then crowned with glory and honour, everything put under His feet (Ps. 8.). What he, the sweet psalmist of Israel, took in of the import and power of such a vision we are not told. We know that he said in a later song: "Jehovah said unto my Lord, Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool" (Ps. 110.). It is there He is crowned with glory and honour, and awaiting the day in which His foes shall be made a footstool for His feet. This Son of Man is Creator.

For the profitable contemplation of the marvellous works of God, we require neither scholarship nor telescope. All that is requisite is a deep sense in the soul of the grace and love of a Saviour-God, and a heart-acquaintance with the revelation brought to us by the

eternal Son, and this—for it could not be otherwise—in the power of the Holy Spirit. If we occupy ourselves only with the vastness of the starry host, while we contemplate with admiration their varied glories, or with the movements of the planets and their circling satellites: if our thoughts do not rise above these interesting spectacles our studies will be profitless, and our time misspent. But if with holy reverence we contemplate them as David did, and view them as creatures called into existence and upheld by the Word of the living God; and if for a moment we turn our gaze from their entrancing wonders, and let it fall upon that scene enacted almost two thousand years ago on cloud-swathed Golgotha, where the One who made those worlds, rejected by His creature man, mocked, nailed to a gibbet, and numbered with the transgressors, dies that you and I might live in the fathomless love of God: if the study of the work of God lead to this, our profit shall be great indeed. But, alas, not often it does this!

Were the words of the Almighty meaningless in the ear of Job, when He said: "Canst thou fasten the bands of the Pleiades, or loosen the cords of Orion? Dost thou bring forth the constellations each in his season? or dost thou guide the bear with her sons?" (New Trans.). These questions were not asked in order to interest the patriarch in astronomy, but rather that Job might have his attention turned to his own insignificance, as compared with the greatness of the One with whom he was in conflict, and that he might be led to acknowledge the folly he was so hopelessly pursuing. We

may be sure that the questions put to him by the Lord were to him in no way mysterious, but referred to things of which he had previously some conception.

In contemplating these stupendous works of God, let us seek His wisdom and gracious guidance, that we may get some true knowledge of His object in creating such a universe. It is not, as some foolish and godless people imagine, eternal. It has had a beginning: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." It would seem that the whole vast creation was brought into existence at the same time. At once, and at the word of God, everything came into being in the most perfect order and beauty: "He hath made everything beautiful in its time" (Eccles. 3. 11). If we find the earth at some subsequent time of its history in a state of ruin, every man that knows God knows He never made it thus, but perfect. We can truthfully say of its waste condition, "An enemy hath done this."

Let us then seek to interest our souls in the great thought of God in the creation of such a wondrous universe, that almost blinds us with its glory during the day, and with its countless tongues of fire calls to us through the mantle of the silent night, producing in our inmost hearts a holy awe and reverence for the One who made both ourselves and it. If He has given us any light as regards His intention in calling into existence such a galaxy of brilliants, this must be found in the revelation He has given to us in the Holy Scriptures.

I do not think we require to be told that a God of such wisdom and power as creation declares Him to be would call the heavens and the earth into existence, and fill them with intelligent beings possessed of inquiring minds,

and also set them in relationship with Himself, without some purpose worthy of the mind of such a Being. Fallen man for his own amusement will invent things utterly profitless; for having abandoned God, he foolishly seeks to occupy his mind with his own fruitless devices which he finds useful to divert his thought, and the thought of his fellows also, from his practical state before God, and to silence the voice of a condemning conscience. Even the wondrous works of God may be, and for the most part are, studied without one thought of the Creator rising up in the soul.

It is evident from what we know of the early history of the human race, that man from the outset was greatly interested in the heavenly bodies, but on account of his innate enmity against God, the works themselves, and not the God who created them, engrossed the mind. There is also an evil connected with this, that the pride of discovery gives to the person who discovers things others may have been blind to a distinction above others in his own eyes and in the eyes of observers, so that himself and his supposed cleverness shut out from view the Creator of all.

The study of astronomy never yet led, neither shall it ever lead a soul to Christ. The Gospel is the alone power of God for the salvation of the believer. When by means of the things that are made the world had a conviction of the eternal power and divinity of God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were they thankful, but became vain in their imagination, and their foolish heart was darkened; professing themselves to be wise they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image like to corruptible man, and to birds and quadrupeds and creeping things (Rom. 1. 19-23). This

testimony shines to-day in the darkest places of the earth, along with God's providence, but what have men profited by it? In spite of all, they are sunk in idolatry and degradation. Such is man as the slave of sin and Satan.

But not only has this testimony been rejected, but also grace in the person of the Son, on the acceptance of whom depended the continuance of man in the flesh in life and blessing upon earth. To this He gave abundance of proof both as to His ability, and willingness, to reinstate the human race in happiness and divine favour. He bound the strong man (Satan), who ruled over all as a cruel autocrat, and He spoiled his goods, healing all who were oppressed by his power. He displayed His almighty power in resurrection, making manifest His ability to bring back from hades their departed dead. All that men were asked to do was to submit themselves to His authority, and to place themselves under His gracious protection, and all would be well with them. The long-promised Saviour was in their midst in power.

What an opportunity for a fallen, devil-degraded, death-doomed race! What a wide door of earthly blessing was thus thrown open to a world of rebels in the compassion of God! Alas! the labour was all in vain. He who thus in unspeakable grace had condescended to become the slave of His contentious creature, spent His strength for naught and in vain. "Though He had done so many miracles (signs) before them, yet they believed not on Him" (John 12. 37). He was the despised and rejected of men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and as thus rejected, delivered into the hands of the lawless Romans, crucified and slain. God, by His creature, is turned out of the world. Man has lost his opportunity. The

world is judged. In the cross of Christ the flesh is refused and condemned by God, just as truly as by that same cross God has been refused by the flesh. An end was there reached. Man in the flesh comes no more for ever into relationship with God. On man, after that order, the door is for ever closed.

What is now to be done? Are the resources of God exhausted? Are the angels of God to be called together for the destruction of the rebellious race of mankind? Is there no way by which a door of grace for guilty man can be righteously opened? The door must be opened righteously if it is to be opened at all. Man is righteously under condemnation. Can the wisdom of the Creator find no way of blessing for man made in His image and in His likeness? These are questions that for centuries have had a perfect answer, and yet how few there are who can give the answer of God to them!

I have said that an end has been reached regarding the dealings of God with man in the flesh, viewed as in relationship with Him. As to this order of man there is no hope whatever of his ever being recovered for God. He is not only lost, but already under judgment. But for men viewed as the creatures of God is there a door of mercy by which any may have entrance into relationship and favour with God? The answer to this opens another chapter, and a completely different one, in the history of the activities of God for His own glory in His vast creation.

I will turn for a moment to Proverbs 8. 22, and there I read: "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old." Here is One who filled the thoughts of the Creator "*in the beginning of His way.*" The way He was to take in the fulfilment of the thoughts of His gracious

mind had reference altogether to this Person who was possessed by the Lord. This shows us that His way is only discoverable by those who have learned something of Him, without whom no step of that glorious way was taken. His way is said to be in the sanctuary (Ps. 77. 13). Christ is the true sanctuary of God. His way is only traceable in Christ. This is the one who is speaking in Prov. 8. In the beginning of His way, before His works of old, the Lord possessed Him. Before the mountains, before the hills, before the earth, He was brought forth. When He established the clouds above, when He strengthened the fountains of the deep, when He gave to the sea His decree, when He appointed the foundations of the earth, "*then I was by Him.*" Nothing was done without Him. Everything was done with reference to Him. All wisdom centres in Him. It is not only that this earth bears the impress of the wisdom that resides in Him, but the whole universe, all the worlds, however numerous they be, have been formed by His understanding. Indeed, He is the Creator of everything that has existence.

No creature is eternal. It would not be a creature if it were. Only the true God is eternal: He is from everlasting to everlasting. Man fills his day like the hireling, departs hence and is no more, but God lives for ever. We are creatures of time. There was a

moment in which we came into existence, and we can number the days since then. We know that the moment is fast approaching when we must go to our long home, and leave the mourners to go about the streets. We may have reigned as kings, or worn the chains of slavery; we may have been honoured by the world, or despised by the grand and great; but whoever and whatever we may have been or possessed, our tenure of all is but for a moment as far as life on earth is concerned. Everything is subject to the vicissitudes of a changing creation, and of a universe in which it seems everything is subject to decay.

What then has been the object of the Creator in bringing into being such a universe of nebulae, stars, planets, moons and comets? The answer cannot be other than exceedingly simple: "For Thy pleasure they are and were created" (Rev. 4. 11). In bringing such a heaven and earth into existence we may be sure He had an object worthy of His wise and gracious mind. Rational beings do not work without some object in view. None but the insane do meaningless actions. Reason itself would tell us that when God began His works of old He had counsels and purposes to fulfil which would be for the eternal delight of His heart, and for the glory of His greatness, might and wisdom.

*(To be continued.)*

## HOW TO LIVE.

(E. E. TRUSTED.)

*"Live as if Christ died yesterday, rose again this morning, and was coming back to-morrow."*

OH, let me live as if Christ died but yestertide—  
 And I had seen and touched His piercèd side.  
 I would rejoice as one who knows how soon He rose.  
 To tread beneath His feet our unseen foes.  
 And I would work as if heaven bright were now in sight.  
 What if to-morrow bring that great delight!

## NEW CREATION.

(A. J. POLLOCK.)

EVER since man fell he has been working to gain a golden age. The circumstances surrounding a fallen race are sad indeed. Men would like to banish disease and death, they would like to get rid of pain and sorrow.

Legislation on the one hand and religion on the other attempt to improve things, and enthusiasts and visionaries will tell you that their efforts will in the end bring in a golden age of peace and prosperity. If improved sanitation lengthens the age of man it is at once hailed with a chorus of approval. Men will be inoculated with the thyroid gland of the monkey in the hope of having restored to them their lost juvenility, and do a thousand things to bring about what they aim at.

These efforts are pathetic in the extreme. One cannot but feel a sympathy for them, yet we regret the inability of the men of this world to understand where their fundamental error lies, and to realize how hopeless are their efforts, save in very partial measure.

What we mean is, for instance, improved sanitation, medical and surgical skill, have undoubtedly prolonged the life of the community, but how very partial and temporary this advantage is. Lengthen a man's life by ten years, and what is that? Death comes. Eternity comes. The great fundamental question has not been touched at all.

Again, philanthropists will say, Look at the way the poor are herded together in the East End of London. Decency is thrown to the winds. Married couples, young men and women, boys and girls, and infants—all herded into one sleeping-room. Give them proper housing conditions, give them bathrooms, give them garden cities, and see what an improvement will take place.

Doubtless, and every right-minded person would rejoice at the efforts made for the better housing of the poor, the amelioration of their lot, the benefit which would accrue from such efforts; but again the benefit is but temporary and partial. It lasts for each individual for a few years, and then—death comes.

Moreover if better houses, bathrooms and gardens would suffice to make things right, one would expect the West End of London to be free from vice. But is it? No, the very luxuries that men have only make it easier for them to sin.

The fact is, environment will not put things right. The kind of cage in which you put a tiger will not affect its blood-thirsty tendencies. The cage's size and sanitation may make it more healthy and prolong the life of the animal, but they will not alter its propensities.

Every now and again a disillusionized politician or theologian lets out the truth when he says the problem is not one of environment or better circumstances, but of the man himself. I read a trite saying the other day, "The heart of every problem is the problem of the human heart." How true that is! There you touch the crucial spot.

There is nothing wrong with our head, and hands and feet, for we are exhorted to yield our "members as instruments of righteousness unto God" (Rom. 6. 13)—what is wrong is the utterly depraved fallen nature of man—"the flesh" as Scripture so often calls it. Was there ever a more sweeping condemnation than Gen. 6. 5, "Every imagination of the thoughts of his [man's] heart was only evil continually"? A more deadly description, allowing no loophole of escape, so

precise is the language, could not be framed.

Nor is the summing up of Rom. 3. less sweeping. Sentence after sentence, a veritable mosaic of Old Testament quotations, strikes at the root of things. None understanding, none good, none righteous, all become unprofitable—"all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3. 23).

No wonder that new creation is the only solution of the problem. Man must have a different constitution. With one stroke the Lord cut the ground from under the feet of Nicodemus. Nicodemus, as men speak, was a good man, a teacher of the law in the synagogue, a man with a reputable character, yet the Lord said to him, "Ye must be born again" (John 3. 7). And again, "Except a man be born of water [meaning by the word of God] and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (verse 5). Thus the Apostle John presents this radical truth.

The Apostle Peter puts it in his way : "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Peter 1. 23).

The Apostle Paul puts it in his way : "But 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).

When we say the Apostles John, Peter and Paul put things in their way, we wish to guard against the thought that their writings put forth their *own* ideas. On the contrary they were equally and fully inspired, and their writings have all the authority of God behind them. The Spirit of God uses each to put forth from different points of view the great radical truth that there must be a new creation if we are to be pleasing to God, and that the old creation must pass away in all its features, whether physical or moral, whether the material earth or man upon it.

It is the failure to grasp this fundamental fact that leads men to live in a fool's paradise, to pursue the will o' the wisp, the painted bubble of improving the old creation in view of the arrival of the golden age.

Men have set their hearts upon this, but it can only come in God's way, and unless it comes in God's way it can have no sure foundation.

By the courtesy of the Editor of *Scripture Truth* we hope to elaborate the great truth of New Creation in a series of articles.

Meanwhile we have gained much if we clearly see that nothing but new creation will do for God. This will save us from cultivating the wrong man and set us on right lines, which will help us in our judgment of this great world system around us, and set us free to use all our spiritual activities in the right direction.

## HOW PRAYEST THOU ?

(HELEN MCDOWELL.)

ONCE I prayed  
 (I knew not what I said),  
 Show me myself, O Lord.  
 Alas I did not dread,  
 The hideous sight  
 (Which now I shudder to behold)  
 Because I knew not self aright.

Now I pray  
 (I know the prayer is right),  
 Show me Thyself, O Lord.  
 Be to my soul the bright  
 And Morning Star,  
 To shine upon the grave of self,  
 And lead my heart from earth afar.

# DANGERS THAT THREATEN

(F. B. HOLE.)

## 1. Deception.

THE church of God has an unsleeping foe. In the very earliest moments of its history his attacks began, first by persecution from without, then, and more successfully, by seduction and corruption from within. At the beginning his attacks were in measure repulsed. Apostolic vigilance discovered his movements, apostolic energy under the Spirit's direction largely countered his devices. We may be very thankful that God permitted Satan's power to be so early manifested in this direction, for as a consequence we have unfolded in the epistles of the New Testament the divinely-given antidote to his devices, and the divine method of dealing with them.

It is a remarkable fact that both the Apostles Paul and John were taken up by the Spirit of God as vehicles of His testimony to seven assemblies. John writes to the seven assemblies of Asia in Rev. 2. and 3.; Paul addresses letters to the Romans, Corinthians, the assemblies of Galatia, the Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians and Thessalonians. It is an even more remarkable fact that in each case five out of the seven assemblies had to be dealt with in correction. The epistles to Smyrna and Philadelphia alone, in Rev. 2. and 3., are not marked by reproof and correction. The epistles of Paul to the Romans and Ephesians alone are occupied with exposition of the truth followed by exhortations based upon it. The other epistles addressed to five churches clearly had correction in view though much truth is unfolded in them.

Of these Pauline epistles, the two to the Thessalonians are the last in the order of Scripture. If we allude to them first it is because they were written within a short time of the

conversion of the Thessalonians, meeting a danger which threatened them when still but babes in Christ. In reading them, therefore, we are warned against snares that may beset us at the beginning of our Christian careers.

The devil particularly attacks the spiritual babe by false and even anti-christian teaching. This is made plain to us in 1 John 2. 18-27, and what John lays down in this passage is illustrated by the case of the Thessalonian saints. They were in danger of being deceived.

When Paul wrote his first letter they were suffering from self-deception through ignorance. When he wrote the second time they were being deceived by mischief-makers from elsewhere. In both cases *deception* was the trouble.

If a comprehensive view of the 4th and 5th chapters of the first epistle be taken it will be seen that a state of distress and restlessness prevailed amongst them. They needed to be quiet and to do their own business, for some were inclined to be unruly or disorderly (see 4. 11; 5. 14). Disquietude is the product of distress, and for that comfort is needed (see 4. 18; 5. 11, 14). They were in trouble about some of their number who had died, evidently imagining that this would in some way penalize them in regard to Christ's coming and kingdom. Their sorrow, however, was based upon an illusion. They were ignorant of truth which once known would remove all their difficulties and set the whole position and prospects of "them which are asleep" in their true light. The apostle proceeds to reveal to them what will come to pass at the coming of Christ for His saints, particularly as regards the sleeping saints. For certain

details concerning the living we have to turn to 1 Cor. 15.

The tender love of the apostle for these young children of his in the faith, the solicitude for their welfare, the care for their souls, which breathe in every part of this epistle, are very beautiful. There was, of course, much excuse for their ignorant condition. But recently converted they could not be expected to know everything. The ignorance that so often marks the children of God to-day is less excusable, for the written revelation of God is complete. If we, who are not new converts but older Christians, with the New Testament, containing the full unfolding of the counsels of God, in our hands, are compelled by honesty to sing such lines as :—

“ I am not skilled to understand  
What God hath willed, what God hath  
planned ”—

then we ought to be ashamed of ourselves.

What is wrong with us? Is it indifference—that we have no real interest in the things of God? Or, is it indolence—that though we have an interest, we allow the things of God to be crowded out instead of diligently pursuing them? Or what? If in difficulty by reason of cherishing delusions and deceptions, we certainly have the remedy to our hand in the written Word of God. Let it be studied in dependence upon the Spirit of God and a cure will be found.

When Paul wrote his second epistle further difficulties had been created. They were “shaken in mind” and troubled (2. 2) by some who insisted that the “persecutions and tribulations” they were enduring meant that the day of Christ was “at hand” or “present.” It was apparently claimed that their tribulations were a part of the great tribulation of prophecy. This

deception evidently came from the devil, for the apostle writes of their being troubled “by spirit.”

He writes, in fact, of the methods of deceit.

1. “By spirit.” The Thessalonians received what purported to be a revelation given by the Spirit of God but which really came from a spirit of darkness, and they had not been able to “try the spirits,” according to 1 Cor. 12. 1-3; 1 John 4. 1-6.

2. “By word.” The same erroneous idea had also reached them by word of mouth through one or more men who were deceivers.

3. “By letter as from us.” Those who were deceiving them even went to the length of writing what professed to be an epistle from Paul confirming their error. By this spurious document they hoped the more effectually to gain the ear of the Thessalonians.

If any be tempted to wonder what particular harm would be done to the Thessalonians by entertaining such ideas, they may find some enlightenment in the 3rd chapter of the epistle, verses 5 and 6.

To interpret the persecution and tribulation which they were enduring for Christ’s sake as the throes of the great tribulation which has the character of wrath from the hand of God, would divert their hearts *out of* instead of *into* the love of God. It would then be a case of God counting them worthy of governmental wrath instead of His counting them “worthy of the kingdom” for which they were suffering (1. 5). It would leave them also the prey to impatient longing instead of their hearts being directed into “the patience of Christ.” Lastly it produced disorder which expressed itself in not working at all but acting as busybodies.

In the light of what has happened in our own day we need not be surprised at the infant assembly being troubled and deceived in this fashion. How many of the deceits of the twentieth century centre around the fact of the second advent and prophecy generally? Men are naturally curious as to what may be expected in the future, and credulous too. Hence, from the days of the Thessalonians until our own, matters concerning the coming of the Lord have provided a kind of hunting ground for those of speculative mind; and of these Satan is not slow to take advantage.

The Thessalonians were not free of blame in the matter themselves. Neither are we, if we too get deceived. The apostle had already instructed them that the day of Christ must be preceded by evil coming to a head in the form of a *movement*—a “falling away” or an “apostasy,” which should be headed up in a *man*—the “man of sin,” the “son of perdition”; and as neither of these had materialized the day of Christ could not be present. He could appeal to them and say, “Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?” Careful attention to instructions already given to them would have preserved them from being deceived.

But there was more than this. Since he had been with them he had written to them his first epistle, in which he had revealed to them the truth concerning the coming of the Lord for His saints and the way in which they would be “caught up together” to meet Him. To this he alludes in verse 1 of chapter 2, speaking of it as “our gathering together unto Him.” How could their tribulations be those connected with the day of Christ when it had been plainly revealed that the saints should be raptured to heaven? That rapture

being in fulfilment of the word, “God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thess. 5. 9). By this fact so firmly established in his first epistle he beseeches them not to be betrayed into theories at variance with it. A young assembly has more truth to learn, but to be truth it must be consistent with the truth with which they started.

In verse 15 of this second chapter Paul alludes to these two ways in which the truth had reached them. They were to hold fast the “traditions” or doctrinal “instruction” which they had *been taught*, “whether by word” when he had been present with them, “or our *epistle*” when absent from them. They did not as yet know all the truth, but it was foolish of them to let what they did know be disturbed by what they did not know. Their safety lay in the Word of God received either orally through apostolic lips, or in writing through apostolic pens.

We have no apostolic lips to speak to us to-day, but the apostolic writings—the New Testament—we have, thank God! Here is our resource and our safeguard. The deceits of the present hour are legion, but there is no need that we fall under their power. If we do, it simply means that we are either ignorant of the Word of God, or that knowing it our eye is not single, our spiritual state is not according to God. If on the other hand “the word of God abideth” in us (1 John 2. 9)—which means that we not only *know* it but that by the Spirit of God it is *operative* and *formative* within us—we shall be preserved from the snares set by anti-christian teachings and indeed from all the deceptions which spring directly or indirectly from our great adversary, the devil.

# NOTES OF PROPHETIC SUBJECTS.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

*The Shout of the Lord, the Voice of the Archangel and the Trump of God.*

**T**HERE is no prophetic word in the Bible more wonderful than that given to us in 1 Thess. 4. 16, 17. And let us remember that it is given to us **BY THE WORD OF THE LORD.** It possesses not only the authority of the Holy Ghost by whom all Scripture is inspired, but it has this added authority, if we may so speak, of being a special revelation from the Lord to Paul, it was a special communication from the Lord Himself to him. The passage is well known, but we quote it again.

*“But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.*

*“For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.*

*“For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.*

*“For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:*

*“Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*

*“Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”*

It is not our purpose to unfold the Scripture, this has been done many times in our pages, but we desire to call special attention to the remarkable fact that we have in connection with this great event “the shout of the Lord, the voice of the archangel and the trump of God.” Why should this be?

We can understand the shout of the Lord, the fact that it is for His beloved and blood-bought church that He is coming explains that, but why these attendant voices? We suggest that this event will have far-reaching consequences, that it will in fact affect the whole of mankind; for it is the initial movement of that power by which the Lord will subdue all things unto Himself (Phil. 3. 21).

Mankind is divided into three circles in the New Testament, namely, the Church, Israel, and the Gentile nations, or the rest of mankind. In connection with each the Lord is to have a special glory, and we would suggest that all these circles are involved in this passage of Scripture.

*The shout of the Lord* has to do specially with His church, and those who died in Old Testament times, who will share in some measure her heavenly part. All these will answer instantly to that assembling shout of the Lord, and in the twinkling of an eye will appear, radiant and glorious in the presence of the Lord.

*The voice of the archangel* is Michael's voice, and he is the angel who has the special care of Israel (see Daniel 10. 13, 21; 12. 1; Jude 9., and also Revelation 12. 7). When the shout of the Lord breaks forth, it shall find an instant response in the church. Michael's voice will also be heard gathering Israel together for blessing. He will arise for this great work. This work will be slower in its accomplishment. The devil and his angels will have to be cast out of the heavens before the woman clothed with the sun can enter into her glory and inheritance (Rev. 12.). And the people themselves will have to go through the great tribula-

tion, but Michael shall stand up for them and they shall be delivered (Dan. 12. 1). The wheels will move more slowly for the deliverance of Israel than in the case of the church, but they will assuredly be set in motion in connection with this great shout of the Lord.

*The trump of God* has a wider application. It is with God that *all men* have to do. It would appear to the uninstructed observer that men may live as they please without any reference to God at all now, but the trump of God will break His long silence and end His long-suffering; the present state of things will cease, and every creature under the sun will soon discover that

they have to do with God in judgment. The nations of men will not instantly appear before Him, for the wheels in their case will work more slowly than those that bring about Israel's deliverance. Yet all nations shall be brought to the throne of the Son of Man for judgment (Matt. 25.) and God will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained (Acts. 17.).

The whole of God's intentions in regard to the earth are held in abeyance until the church is taken out of it, but when that event takes place things will move swiftly to their fulfilment, and God will vindicate Himself and His word in regard to the whole race of men.

## “My Father's House” (John 14.).

Oh, whither doth life's tangled pathway tend?  
What peace awaits us at our journey's end,  
Dear Saviour, who for us Thy blood didst spend?

Thy Father's House! No strange and foreign land;  
No wonderful new world, too coldly grand;  
But home—a Father's outstretched welcoming hand;  
OUR FATHER'S HOUSE.

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

### “We live if ye stand fast.”

“Will you kindly explain the teaching of 1 Thess. 3. 8? In what sense does the apostle mean WE LIVE if ye stand fast in the Lord? What aspect of his life was conditional upon the Thessalonian believers' steadfastness?”—SURREY.

THE expression reveals the intensity of Paul's love and care for the saints at Thessalonica. He was passing through great distress and affliction, but Timothy's report of their faith had brought him comfort, and he rejoices. Persecution, even dying daily—for what he suffered for Christ's sake, and to make the truth known was enough to kill him every day—but it was nothing to him if the saints for whose sake he lived were

steadfast in Christ. The knowledge of this came to him as a powerful tonic to a fainting man, or as a draught of cold water to one parched with thirst; it was life to him. We ought to learn from it how important it is that the saints of God should continue to stand fast in the Lord, for here the affections and desires of Christ Himself for them were expressed in the Apostle.

## “All the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge.”

“What is the correct reading of Col. 2. 3? I had always thought that the treasures of wisdom and knowledge were in the church, but I am told that this is not so but in Christ; if so how can they be hid? Your help will be appreciated.”—E.17.

IN J. N. Darby's New Translation the passage is rendered: “The mystery of God, in which are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” The mystery of God is not the church, nor is it Christ apart from the church, but Christ and the church, which is His body. In this Epistle it is specially stated to be “Christ in you (Gentiles) the hope of glory” (chapter 1. 27). It is the members of the body of Christ united to Him their Head, and in the Colossians' aspect of it, the life and character of the Head in them and being manifested through them. It is spoken of as the mystery because, though it is the crown of all God's ways, it had not been revealed to either men or angels before; it was given to Paul

to complete the Word of God by making it known (chapter 1. 25). It could not become a fact, of course, until the Son of God became a man and died and rose again and was glorified in heaven. Now by the power of the Holy Ghost come down from heaven it is a fact, and it is for us to have the full sense of it by faith in our hearts, so that we turn nowhere else for the wisdom and knowledge of God, neither to systems of philosophy, nor the dead forms and ritual of a legal religion. Being united to Christ, His body is complete in Him. God has brought about a way by which His own wisdom can show itself in us, and this simply by the reproduction in us of the life of Christ to whom we are united.

## The Things above.

“In Col. 3. we read, ‘Set your affections on things above.’ What are the things above?”

THE things above are those things of which Christ is the centre in heaven, the things of Christ which the Holy Spirit opens to us (John 16. 14, 15). If we are risen with Christ, it can only mean that we have His risen life as our life now, for our bodies are not yet raised. This life has its own sphere and its own things; and these things have to be our object. Our things, if we are risen with Christ, are His own things, and they are

not on the earth where He was slain but in heaven where He has been enthroned. We are not to mind earthly things (Phil. 3.). That does not mean that we are not to occupy ourselves with His interests on the earth—His saints and the salvation of sinners—but that our minds have not to be engrossed with the things that men pursue, but with heavenly things of which they know nothing.

## Baptism.

“Can you explain why Matt. 28. 19 is so frequently used in the baptizing of believers? The formula of the Acts is absolutely set aside by those who use the former. Acts 2. 38; 8. 16; 10. 48; 19. 5. Please answer through ‘Scripture Truth.’”—A READER.

THE only formula to be used at baptisms is given to us in Matt. 28. 19. We do not get any formula in the Acts of the Apostles. You will notice that in the four Scriptures instanced, different words are used on three occasions, plainly showing what we say, that no formula is given to us there.

We must not conclude that because it is not definitely stated in the Acts, that the words given to His disciples by the Lord in Matthew were not used by the Apostles, but what is emphasized is that

it was to Jesus Christ the Lord that they were baptized. They were committed by baptism to Him, really identified with Him in that which speaks of death, and in the acknowledgment of His Lordship. A little consideration will be enough to convince us how needful that was, especially with the Jews. The full revelation of God comes out in Matt. 28. 19. and we judge that it is right to baptize those who are baptized “unto the Lord, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

## “YOU” AND “ME.”

(J. T. MAWSON.)

*“This is My body which is given for you : this do in remembrance of Me.”—Luke 22. 19.*

[T is the *personal* element in the Lord's Supper that makes it so attractive to all who love Him. This is the one arresting thing in the words that He used when He instituted it on the night of His betrayal: *“This is My body which is given for YOU : this do in remembrance of ME.”* We must all feel that the emphasis rests upon the personal pronouns in these wonderful words. His heart was set with an unquenchable love upon those whom He addresses as “YOU,” for them He gave His holy body in sacrifice even unto death; for them He shed His blood. It was not for a vague, intangible theory that He suffered; it was not for some great and important principle that He died, as some who profess to admire Him but don't know Him assert; it was for persons, “FOR YOU.” His outlook on that night when treachery and hatred conspired to destroy Him was the “YOU” of whom He spoke.

Every Christian can, of course, make this an individual matter, indeed all must begin there, and from a full heart exclaim as Paul did: “The Son of God loved ME, and gave Himself for ME.” But the “you” that filled the Lord's thoughts in those hours of darkness was the Christian “you.” Every individual of that company had a place in His thoughts, was an object of His love; but it was an indivisible company upon which He looked, and the love that filled His heart for them made Him die for them. “Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for it.” Not for crowns and kingdoms did He do battle on that great day, though these He shall have, for they are His inalienable right, and a defeated foe must yield to Him all that he had

seized in presumptuous usurpation; but He fought and suffered for persons, for those whom He loved: to deliver them, to redeem them by His blood, that they might be free and for Him, moved by His love to responsive devotion and love: His own for ever.

It is wonderful to recall the sufferings of the cross, and to remember that they were for us, and that no consideration for Himself made our great Saviour hesitate for a moment in what His heart had purposed. “This be far from Thee,” said Peter, who did not understand. “Save Thyself”; “Come down from the cross,” cried His foes with bitter taunts. But He would not save Himself. He thought of us—persons who could never have been saved if His blood had not been poured out for our salvation, but whom He knew would appreciate His love when, by the Spirit of God, we perceived its greatness and felt its power, and respond to it with joy, and thus be a recompense to Him for all He suffered.

When we come to the Supper it is not to a mere ordinance we come; we do not sit down to perform an empty rite, but to remember a Person. “This do,” He said, “in remembrance of ME.” If at the cross the “YOU” filled His thoughts, at the Supper the “ME” must fill ours. We may rejoice in what He has done for us, and be grateful for deliverance from sin and Satan's power and judgment to come; cold would our hearts be, and hard, if we forgot all this, or were not thrilled at the remembrance of it. Our deliverance is real, we gather together in the joy of this, we are spiritually free, and we must sing our song

of praise to Him who has done it for us; but it is not that that gives its own precious character to the Supper, the personal element eclipses all else. It is Himself that must fill our thoughts. He said, "Remember ME."

As He looked onward amid those *never-to-be-forgotten* sorrows to the "YOU," so we look backward at the Supper to the "ME." It is Himself, but it is Himself pouring out unspeakable love in immeasurable sacrifice. Only in that way could He fully reveal Himself to us, and it is by that we know Him.

"Wouldst thou know My glory, beloved?  
Know Me, the great I AM?

First must thine eyes behold Me,  
The slain and stricken Lamb.

"My visage so marred more than any,  
My form than the sons of men;  
Yet to the heart I have won Me,  
I am the fairest then.

"Thou knowest the sun by his glory—  
Thou knowest the rose by her breath,  
Thou knowest the fire by its glowing—  
Thou knowest My love by death."

Praise and thanksgiving there must be for what He has done and for what we have received, but in this act of remembrance it is Himself, and as He rises up before our souls and we realize His great love by the Spirit, we forget ourselves, and these lesser notes give place to worship that may deepen into silent adoration, silent because too deep for words.

"Silent at His feet we lie  
Lost in love's immensity."

"YOU" and "ME" and only love  
between! Love that holds us in an

embrace which is eternal, and from which no power can take us! What joy it must yield to the heart of the Lord when we realize this! He finding His joy in us, and we absorbed with Him! The natural man cannot understand this, for it is not a mere natural emotion, it is the outflow from the new spiritual nature within us that delights in the Lord, whom having not seen we love; in whom, though now we see Him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

It is here that we find our truest and holiest fellowship, for where every heart bows down before the Lord there must be one mind. About many things at other times we may differ, and that will be no credit to us, but not here, surely. The love that has bound us all together in that blessed "YOU" forbids discord and division, it rebukes all selfishness and pride, and sets us in happy unity before Him, and "we being many are one bread and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread" (1 Cor. 10. 17). How wonderful it is to know that we are part of the "YOU" for whom He gave Himself, and to know in truth what His words mean, "Remember ME"! It is this that soothes the restless spirit and blends all into heavenly harmony, and draws from us the adoration of wondering and satisfied hearts, which is to our Lord as fragrant as was the spikenard, very costly, that Mary poured upon His sacred feet in other days.

"By Thine empty grave we worship,  
By Thy cross our hearts we bow;  
All the memories that pursue us  
Waken our affections now.

"Lord, we follow—Thou constrainest,  
Step by step, and hour by hour;  
Object of our hearts in glory,  
On the way, our stay and power."

## BE CAREFUL FOR NOTHING.

### Philippians 4.

THIS is a command, and we may be sure that such a command would never have been given to us if God were not able to enable us to obey it. It does not say, be careless, in the ordinary sense of that word, as though nothing mattered, for everything matters, and out of the trials of this life God intends that we should find blessing and He get glory. Then what can it mean? Well, simply that you have not to carry the burden—if you do your heart will be racked by it and you will be unable to cast it off; you may try, but it will come back to you again and again and be a continual worry.

What, then, must you do? Go to God. "*In everything* by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." God does not ask us to wait until we are sure that what we would like to ask Him for is His will for us. No. He wants us to unburden our hearts before Him, to tell Him what we want and then trust Him. Have you any burden on your heart? Go at once to God with your request. He does

not say that He will give to you what you ask. Paul asked three times for one thing. He did not get it, but he got something better. "My grace is sufficient for thee," said the Lord. If you make your request as here indicated the peace of God will keep your heart and mind. It does not say that you will keep that peace, but that it will keep you. And it is the peace of God. Is He ever troubled by the things that trouble us? Can those things that shake us shake His throne? Can anything disturb His peace?

How wonderful that we can draw near to that unshakable throne, that we can come into the presence of God whose peace nothing can disturb, and be enfolded in the peace that is there! How blessed to realize that God is greater than that which troubles me, and that He cares for me and is interested in me, that my affairs are safe in His hands! Then can I thank Him, and say, "All must be well, for He careth for me." How infinitely better is that than brooding over and being burdened by our trials!

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## REJOICE IN THE LORD.

WHAT a lack of joy in the Lord there is in the lives of God's children! How can we get joy in the Lord? By making use of Him and then by being absorbed with Him. We cannot know the value of Christ unless we use Him. He wants us to use Him. "Cast thy burden on the Lord and He will sustain thee," and, "Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you." Have we got so far in our experience of Him?

"I find," said a servant of the Lord, "when I sit down with people and talk

quietly with them, they begin at once to talk of the difficulties of the way, and after that, if I say, Let us change the subject and talk of the things of God, they can talk of nothing but the *mercies* of God, His temporal mercies to themselves. Few seem to get higher than that." But the Lord would have us on higher ground; we ought to be able to say, The Lord has shown me wonderful things lately about Himself, His love and His glory. Then have we true joy, then it is that we rejoice in the Lord.

# THE ETERNAL WORD.

(JAMES GREEN.)

*An address given to Young Men at 15, Aldersgate Street, London, 15th Oct., 1926.—(John I. 1-18.)*

[F I ventured to address you concerning such things as mathematics, finance, or geography, you would naturally expect me to be master of the subject, but if any profit is to follow from the matter before us to-night, the subject must master the speaker, for its greatness and grandeur are overwhelming. In reference to natural things, Sir Isaac Newton said that he felt like a little child picking up pebbles on the sea-shore, while the infinite ocean of truth lay stretched before him. Far more does the simile apply when we attempt to speak of the Person of the Son of God.

There are three great chapters which deal with this sublime subject, John I., Col. I., Heb. I., and added to these 1 Tim. 6. 15-16 and Luke 10. 22 should beget in us the holy reverence that becomes those who are permitted to think at all of the eternal existence and glory of the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ. Along with this there must be a readiness to listen with faith to the words of the Holy Spirit, humbly seeking to understand those words, and careful that we neither take away from them nor add to them. The result of this attitude will be that we shall be transformed by the renewing of our minds. I am not speaking of being changed from the position of those who are dead in trespasses and sins to the peace of those who have received life and forgiveness through our Lord Jesus Christ, but I am speaking to Christian young men who know this, and I say advisedly, we need to have our lives transformed. We are all commonplace sort of people, much as the writer of the fourth Gospel was, for after all John was but a fisherman by the lake of Galilee. There was

nothing intellectually, or morally, to distinguish him from the other fishermen, and yet he wrote in the simplest language the most holy and profound book that has ever been written. What brought about this surprising result? Nothing less than that he was transformed by the shining of the glory of the Person of the Son of God upon his soul; the sublime truth concerning the Person of Christ held him, not as a truth merely, but in living contact with Him whom he knew and of whom he wrote. A transformed life is brought about by a living acquaintance with the glorious Person of the Son of God. May God accomplish it in all of us to His praise.

John begins his Gospel without preface; at once he makes the profound statement, "In the beginning was the Logos." That is a personal name of our Lord Jesus Christ, He is the Word, and that not only as the means of communication, but as the very thing communicated. In Greek there are three words used to express speech, "lalia," the words that are said; "rhema," the thing that is uttered; "logos" includes the thought that gives rise to the communication, and therefore involves personality. Our Lord said to those around Him (John 8. 43), "Why do ye not understand my speech" (lalia) what I am saying, "because ye cannot hear my word" (logos). You have not grasped the fact of who I am, consequently my words have no meaning to you.

There is a great deal of talk to-day about following the teaching in the Sermon on the Mount, while all the time the glorious Person who uttered it is denied by those who so speak.

They cannot, however, understand His words, nor do they, until they have confessed Him as the Divine Word, the very Son of the living God. There is something behind the words that I speak to you, namely the thought in my mind, and that thought would not be there unless I were a living person, and it is that which is implied in the word "Logos," thought expressing itself in words. It tells us that the Lord Jesus Christ is none other than God, for only God could express His own thoughts. Luke also uses the name "Logos" chapter 1. 2, where we should read, "Those who were eye-witnesses and attendants upon **THE WORD**," a beautiful touch at the commencement of the Gospel which sets forth the exquisite graces of the Word become flesh. There are two names used in John 1. which must never be separated; one is "The Word," the other is "The only begotten Son;" they describe the same Person. If we think of "the Word" He is "the Son," or again, the Son is He by whom God has spoken.

Verse 1 tells us that in the beginning He was, taking us back beyond all time, not when time began to be, but before time was, beyond the farthest limit the human mind can reach, "the Word" is found not beginning to be, but existing eternally. At the same time He was a distinct Person, "The Word was with God." The preposition used does not simply mean alongside of, but towards, conveying the idea of intimate communion with God. Then lest our minds should conceive that although anterior to creation, He was an independent being, exterior to and something less than divine, it is added, "The Word was God." Thus we ascend from His eternal existence, to His distinct personality, crowned by the fact of His absolute Godhead. Yet so liable is the human mind to err in

respect of so stupendous a statement, that we might imagine that He was evolved from the Godhead, or as some say, "Begotten of the Father before all worlds." No, the second verse guards such a thought, "The same was in the beginning with God."

Everything that was created owes its being to Him, "And without Him was not anything made that was made." Is that a needless repetition? No, for people talk about the eternity of matter; but there is no such thing, God only is eternal. "In Him was life." That short sentence solves all the problems of life that the scientists worry their minds about. A learned professor addressed the British Association a few years back, and having discussed the origin of life at great length, left off where he began, yet here it is settled in four words of one syllable, "In Him was life." Of every form of life He is the Author, and above all the Source of spiritual life by which moral beings can stand in relation to God, for "The life was the light of men." Light and life came into this world when "The Word became flesh." Mystery of mysteries, blessed object of faith, which no creature mind can comprehend. He became man, never ceasing for a moment to be all that we have read in the first verses of John 1. Though He took a place of humiliation He was never less than God. The outward glory was laid aside, but not the intrinsic excellence that belonged to Him. He was still the eternal Son, He was still a distinct Person dwelling in the Father's bosom, He was still God over all blessed for ever. There is no other light or revelation of God but in Him. The message He brought was this, that God was unveiling Himself in His own beloved Son. That is the true light which like the sun in the heavens shines for every man. What was the condition into which He came? The

world was not only in darkness, but darkness itself, and it comprehended not the fact that light had come. But Israel was a people to whom God had spoken in partial revelations of Himself. There had been a gradual preparation through Old Testament times for the coming of the light, but when He came to His own, they received *Him not*.

But there were some who saw the light, some who received Him. But how did this come about? Only because there was a divine work in them, they were born of God, and no one has ever seen the light or received Jesus as the Christ in any other way. It does not come about by blood, that is by natural birth. People do not believe on His name because they belong to a certain race or family. Neither is it by the will of the flesh, that is by moral improvement, it is not by the development of the moral faculties. Nor again, is it by the will of man, for it is not by cultivation of the intellect that a state is produced capable of receiving Him. It is solely and simply of God. Take John the fisherman, how did he come to see the glory of the Lord? Not because he was of the chosen race of Israel, not because he was morally better than anybody else, and certainly not because of his attendance on the schools of learning. None of those things brought him to see it. He was born of God, and the same is true of all into whose hearts the light of the glory has shone. What was the glory that they saw? It was the revelation of love. They saw in the One who daily walked with them the only begotten Son of the Father.

This title of "only-begotten" does not refer to His birth in time, but to the place of intense love and intimacy that had been eternally His in the bosom of the Father. The same word is translated "my darling" in Ps. 22. 20. In reference to His birth of the Virgin in time, we read in Ps. 2. 7. "Thou art my Son: this day have I begotten Thee." I would like you to notice the order of the words. It does not say "This day have I begotten Thee; Thou art my Son," for He was already "the Son" when He came into the world, and in manhood He is still "the Son of God" (Luke 1. 35). He brought with Him all the deep affection and tender love of the Father, and manifested this in His Person and by His words and works. Rejected, misunderstood, walking in the midst of darkness that was not dispelled by the light, yet just as much the Son in the bosom of the Father as He was before all worlds. Further explanation of His Person is impossible. No finite mind can understand the Person of the Son; let us not attempt it, but rather worship and adore. What one would greatly desire is, that this glorious Person might become more intensely real and commanding to us. If we know Him, His words will be supreme over us, and shut out every other voice. If His greatness and the glory of His love hold us, as it held the writer of this Gospel, we shall want to understand His words and do exactly what He says, for that alone will be of account in the day when we shall indeed see Him face to face. Let us remember, too, that it is by this test of obedience that He measures the reality of our love to Himself (John 14. 21).

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We must have confidence in God if we are to walk with Him. If we cultivate intimacy with God, our consciences will be kept tender and our hearts happy.

# “NEW CREATION” SERIES.

(A. J. POLLOCK.)

## No. 2. All Things Headed up in Christ.

GOD is the supreme Originator of the universe, and two things must be true of Him.

*First*—He is the supreme Ruler. No one can dethrone Him. No one can successfully challenge Him. As Job said, “He is not a man, as I am, that I should answer Him, and we should come together in judgment” (Job 9. 32).

*Second*—He is the only Being to whom worship can be rightly given.

God being what He is, we can only exclaim with the Apostle Paul, “For of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen” (Rom. 11. 36).

Surely the will of God is that which is vitally important for the creature to know. We are entirely in His power. There can be no appeal from Him. He can do what He likes. He is accountable to none.

When we are in the power of an absolute autocrat it is a matter of the highest importance to know what his character is. For instance, the character of Nero—tyrannical, capricious, murderous, lustful, vindictive—made it a fearful thing to be in his power, as witness the Christians, swathed in waxed cerements, lighted as torches to illuminate the pagan festivities, or thrown to the lions in the Colosseum,

“ . . . *butchered*

*To make a Roman holiday.*”

But the supreme value of revelation is that God in His nature and being has been expressed to us. The ancient philosophers, like Socrates, in vain searched for God. Well might Job ask the question, “Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is

as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea” (Job 11. 7-9).

Revelation, and *revelation alone*, can reveal what God is. In all the heathen writings there is not one sentence that can compare with the sublime words of inspiration: “GOD IS LOVE.”

If there were no other sentence in the Bible than that, it would prove its inspiration, for not all the deep thinking of the massive intellects of the ante-Christian philosophers ever reached to such a sublime height. Revelation, and revelation alone, has brought to us this great truth.

What, then, is God’s will? Is that revealed to us in Scripture? Eph. 1. 9, 10, gives us the answer: “Having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself: that in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are in earth; even in Him,” or as another translation words it, “to head up all things in the Christ, the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth” (J. N. D.’s N.T.).

God has revealed His will to us. We know to what goal He is directing His energies. And this is a great matter for us. It will save us, if rightly understood, from putting our energies in the wrong direction, for God graciously uses His people to help to bring about the end He has in view. For instance, many earnest and sincere Christians think that Christ came here to lift up and become the Head of improved humanity. They seek to

attach Christ to a fallen race, to recover it, to become its topstone. They try to fit Christ into an earthly scheme of things.

But "in Christ," as we hope to show in another article, connotes new creation. The old is set aside. It is condemned, root and branch, at the cross of Christ. God begins anew and He begins "in Christ."

It must have been an amazing revelation to Nicodemus when our Lord said to him, "Ye must be born again" (John 3. 7). "What!" he might have exclaimed, "is there nothing in me that can be acceptable to God? Am I condemned root and branch, centre and circumference, inside and out? I, with all my religiousness, my position in the synagogue, my zealous observance of the law, is that all to go for nothing?" And yet that was just the meaning of the reply of the Lord Jesus, "Ye must be born again."

The first head, Adam, fell, involving in inextricable ruin the first creation. The second Head, Christ, founds His Headship in His death. His atoning death has propitiated God about the whole question of sin, setting God righteously free, so that it can be said of us, "quickened us together with Christ" (Col. 2. 5). And not only so, but "hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (verse 6).

We have a glorious perfect Head, who has communicated to us a life to which sin never could attach and has introduced us to a new creation order of things, sinless, stainless, glorious, in which there will be no breakdown.

Doubtless "the fulness of times" brings us to the millennium. Man's efforts only result in a monster of wickedness—the Antichrist, the antithesis of all that Christ is. That will be the result of man's best. Melan-

choly thought! Not till the millennium comes will peace and righteousness reign. The true Melchisedec (King of righteousness) will truly be King of Salem (King of peace). What a day that will be! Instead of the Kingdom of God being in mystery it will be in glorious manifestation.

But even then there will be failure, such is the ineradicable sin of man's heart. At the beginning there will be the heavenly saints and the earthly saints; on the heavenly side the church, the Old Testament saints, the friends of the Bridegroom; on the earthly side the saved remnant of Israel and the sheep, the nations who have bowed to the gospel of the Kingdom (Matt. 25. 31-46). But there will be those who yield only feigned obedience (see Psa. 18. 44, *marginal note*) and multitudes born during the millennium in whom no change of heart will take place. These will be tested, and when the presence of the Lord is withdrawn and Satan loosed from the bottomless pit, their true character will assert itself. They will fall an easy prey to Satan's machinations, and rise in their last mad revolt against God, and fire shall come down from God out of heaven and devour them (see Rev. 20. 9).

Then the heavens and the earth will flee from the face of Him who sits on the great white throne; the second resurrection, that of the wicked dead, will take place; the books will be opened and the final phase of judgment will be carried through; the new heaven and the new earth will appear in all their new creation beauty at His word—the old order of things will have passed away for ever. He who will sit upon the earth will say, "Behold, I make all things new" (Rev. 21. 5). Then all things in heaven and on earth will be literally and absolutely headed

up in Christ—a blissful eternal state, a scene of new creation, in which there will be—

*"No thorns to wound, no toil to mar our rest."*

Then "when all things shall be subdued unto Him; then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him

that put all things under Him, that

"GOD MAY BE ALL IN ALL"

(Rom. 15. 28).

Hallelujah! God will triumph! Good will triumph!

Here we can rest content and praise and worship.

## JESUS HIMSELF DREW NEAR.

(E. E. TRUSTED.)

FAINT with the heat and the length of the road,  
I was oppressed with a wearisome load;  
One came so tenderly, saying to me,  
"Give Me thy load, 'tis too heavy for thee"—  
JESUS HIMSELF.

I was so poor, not a penny had I  
Clothing or food for the journey to buy;  
One came and whispered: "Leave that to My care,  
Wealth of a kingdom with thee will I share"—  
JESUS HIMSELF.

I was so lonely for lack of a friend;  
One came and offered me love without end,  
Love that is mighty to strengthen and save,  
Love that can triumph o'er death and the grave—  
JESUS . HIMSELF.

What though the valleys be many and deep;  
What if the pathway be stony or steep;  
Mountain or moorland, or valley of death:  
"I will be with thee," my Comforter saith—  
JESUS HIMSELF.

## WE NEED CHRIST ONLY.

WE ought to begin the day with the confidence that we have enough in Christ to meet every difficulty that may befall us, just as we know that we shall have light enough to do our work by. We never think of wanting another sun; the day may be more or less bright or cloudy, but all we want is clearer light, not a new light. So it is: Christ is our guide, our light,

our wisdom, our resource. Our doubts cloud our apprehension of what He is; our own efforts to push our own way through our difficulties rob us of the experience of His grace and power; but there He is, indispensable and all-sufficient. It is not a new Christ we need or want, but a fuller knowledge of Him, a deeper appreciation of all He is and of all that He can do for us.

# GOD'S EAGLES.

(SAMUEL LEVERMORE.)

In their Plight, Might, Flight and Sight.

(Read Deut. 33. 9-12.)

"THE Lord's portion is His People."

All His love—all His sublime designs—all His gracious purposes are centred in them. If I want my heart to be warmed, my love revived, my faith strengthened, my hope inspired, I dwell upon the dealings of God with His people; if I feel the need of humbling, warning, and correcting, I have only to consider their utter failure—considered corporately—in giving an adequate response. Everything *good* is *His*, everything *bad* is *ours*.

See in verse 10 His people are

"FOUND"—"LED ABOUT"—  
"INSTRUCTED"—"KEPT."

"Found by Him before I sought." I have Him as my

*PATHFINDER—TEACHER—  
PRESERVER.*

And then the Lord introduces the Eagle, to illustrate His own dealings with us, in verse 11. "As an eagle"—"so the Lord." As the eagle stirs the young out of the nest for flying practice, so the Lord stirs up His people. He has various ways and means. He used the tyranny of a cruel Pharaoh and the taskmaster's whip in Egypt. Then Moses and Aaron. Stirred up, yea, and brought out of Egypt, upon the eagle wings of Jehovah, as He says in Exod. 19. 4, "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagle's wings, and brought you unto Myself." "Unto Myself." That is *perfect redemption*. The Apostle Peter so describes it in his first epistle (3. 18). "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust—to bring us to God." "Unto Myself"—"Brought to God." "He brought us out, that He might bring us in"

(Deut. 6. 23). Redemption places us in the love of God—where Christ is. Perfect satisfaction and rest. Does this stirring up go on in the New Testament? Surely. Witness the beginning of that stirring up the nest by the Holy Spirit in Rom. 7. There must be no peace with Amalek—the "flesh," the "old man." God's eaglets do not like it: indeed, they are utterly "wretched," and cry out in their misery (verse 24), "O wretched man that I am." And so in chapter 6. they are turned clean out of the nest, to be dead to it henceforth; to find a new sphere on the eagle wings of God. And these we find in chapter 8. 2—"the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." Here we have not only eagle wings, but eagle heights. "All spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." How blessed to be stirred out of the comfortable nest of the self-life only to fall upon the extended wings of Christ's risen life!

Now let us take the eagle as the type of a Christian

*IN HER PLIGHT* (Isa. 40. 29, 30).

Like the "youths" she does "faint," and like the "young men" she does "utterly fall." Elijah under the juniper—Jonah fleeing to Tarshish—David fainting under the unremitting persecution of Saul—are examples, and what shall we say more of Abram in Egypt—of Isaac and Abimelech—of Jacob and Esau—of the terrible weariness and faintness of the sorely tried patriarch Job—of the great Moses himself, crying, "I am not able to bear this people" (Num. 11. 14).

Who among us never has his "bad day"? The great Peter had

his ; an example of those who "utterly fall." But waiting upon the Lord brings renewal. The eagle in her period of faintness is the most helpless thing imaginable. The absolute contrast with her power in flight reminds us of Samson after his slaughter of a thousand men. "He was sore athirst, and called upon the Lord, and said, Thou hast given this great deliverance into the hand of Thy servant ; and now shall I die for thirst, and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised ?" (Judges 15. 18). But I take it that this utter faintness of Samson was not so much physical reaction after an epoch-making effort (as in the case of Leonidas of Sparta at the Pass of Thermopylæ) as a spiritual depression (for it was the Holy Ghost who wrought this miracle by Samson). Ah me ! who of us all have escaped it ? Gaze upon that long line of God-made leaders in the van of spiritual aggression and defence. What miracles of long-sustained effort ! What tragedies of nervous exhaustion ! Men of the world have their hours of terrible reaction, but only God's eagles know anything of this spiritual *DE PROFUNDIS*. It is then—that moment of fearful danger for the eagle—that the Lord puts His eagle wings *over* His own, and in the utter abandonment of their unutterable depression they have, at least, the sense of perfect security "under the shadow of His wings" (Psa. 36. 7). It is then that divine help comes, and they are enabled to rejoice "under the shadow of His wings" (Psa. 63. 7). Thus we see that the eagle is not only a type of the Lord's children in her plight ; but also,

Secondly—

#### IN HER RENEWED MIGHT.

The eagle has a great capacity for *perfect stillness*. No bird can lie so still and rest so perfectly. Her strength

is renewed by *waiting*—by *stillness*. "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength." Here is a blessed lesson for the spiritually depressed. "Be still and know that I am God" (Psa. 46). He is thy refuge. Leave *everything* in His hand. He is God. He was carrying on *before* you, and can carry on *without* you. Put your home—mission—business—everything in His hand, and leave it there, and let Him do as He will with it—and you shall find, O sorely tried one, that "In returning and rest shall ye be saved ; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength" (Isa. 30. 15). "Quietness and assurance shall be yours" (32. 17) and you shall dwell in "a peaceful habitation—a sure dwelling—and a quiet resting place" (18).

#### THE WAITING ROOM IS THE POWER ROOM.

Our Lord's "tarry" (Luke 24. 49) preceded the "power from on high," and although we do not have to await the coming of the Holy Spirit from on high, for He *has* come, He *is* here, yet these times of waiting and stillness are imperative if we would have a real heart experience—a "filling of the Holy Ghost" (Ephes. 5. 18).

It is those who "wait" that renew their strength. It does not say *here* those who *pray*, but those who "wait." You can pray at your own pleasure, but you must "wait" on His.

#### WHAT A LESSON IN SPIRITUAL PATHOLOGY

we have in Psalm 62. "Truly my soul waiteth" (is silent, margin). Praying is not once mentioned. The stricken saint seeking a renewal of power does the *waiting*. The Lord Himself alone does the *speaking* (11). Thus the Lord becomes real to him and he is able to cry out in the joy and vigour of returning power, no less than three

times—He is—and He “only” is “my” salvation. Read also Psalm 33. 20, and 130. 5, 6. “The Lord is good to them that wait for Him, to the soul that seeketh Him. It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord” (Lam. 3. 25, 26). “Are there any among the vanities of the Gentiles that can cause rain? or can the heavens give showers? Therefore we will wait on Thee” (Jer. 14. 22).

Like the eagle, strength comes through waiting, and as strength comes faith expands her wings, and as her wings grow stronger and stronger, she mounts higher and higher. And so

Thirdly—THE EAGLE IS A TYPE OF GOD’S PEOPLE

*IN HER FLIGHT.*

Her flight is *safe*. She is built for high altitudes. She is capable of respiration in the most attenuated elevated atmosphere. Her form is the most perfect known for rapidity. She has the maximum of speed with the minimum of resistance. She is capable of incredibly long, sustained effort. She is built to master opposing forces. She can fly before and outstrip the wind. Earth is her greatest danger. Contrast the eagle flight of Paul in Phil. 3. 4-14, with those “who mind earthly things” (verses 17-19).

Fourthly—

*IN HER SIGHT* (Job. 39. 27-29).

“She dwelleth and abideth on the rock . . . From thence she seeketh her prey, and her eyes behold afar off.”

When the eagle flies the highest, she does so gazing at the noonday sun. Her eye is able to bear the intense splendour of the meridian sun, and her flight is always highest when her bright eye is fixed most vividly upon it.

Likewise the Christian’s progress will always be highest and speediest when he runs the race, or pursues the flight set before him, “Looking unto Jesus,” the Sun of Righteousness, the “Author and Finisher of our faith.” Oh, for this eagle vision! We have it in 2 Cor. 3. 18: “But we all with open—unveiled—face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit.” Then in chapter 4. 17, 18, we find that “Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” How? and when? “While we look not at the things that are seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”

There are many other points of comparison, but these must suffice at this time; but the very mounting of the eagle suggests blessing upon blessing—glory upon glory, as we have it in Psalm 103. Forgiven—Healed—Redeemed—Crowned—and then Satisfied, “So that thy youth is renewed like the eagle’s.”

“Though thy way be long and dreary,  
Eagle strength He’ll still renew,  
Garments fresh and foot unwearied  
Tell how God hath brought thee through.”

“My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”  
—Philippians 4. 19.

It is a great thing to trust God daily and hourly; not thinking we can provide for ourselves, or secure ourselves against the power of evil, but to trust God thoroughly. And what is the measure of supply? Nothing short of “His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” He will exercise our faith, but He will always meet it, and not according to our standard but according to His own.

# THE LORD POSSESSED ME.

(JAMES BOYD.)

## *Continued.*

"The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. . . . Then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him, and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him."—Proverbs 8. 22-30.

FOR the fulfilment of these counsels of God of which I have already spoken, it was necessary to possess such a creation, and to fill that creation with creatures, the nature of which we have little or no conception. It would be foolish on our part to suppose that the worlds that we see shining about our heads in the darkness of the night were waste and empty, and worse than foolish for us to suppose them to be inhabited by creatures like ourselves. Indeed, from what we learn of the ways of God from the revelation He has been pleased to give to us, we cannot do otherwise than infer that they were from their origin filled with beings set in intelligent relationship with Himself. That he has myriads of beings of angelic order is just what His word tells us. There are "principalities and powers," both good and evil, in the heavenly places, and they all have their various abodes. We cannot say that our own earth was not peopled by responsible creatures many millions of years before its *making* as recorded in Genesis 1. 2-31. I except verse 1, which speaks of the *creation* of the heavens and the earth, attributing their existence to the putting forth of the power of God. As far as this is concerned, it was all that was needful for us to know. He spoke, and it was done. What more do we want to know? But when He began to fashion the earth for the abode of man, we get more details of His operations. Scripture does not ask us to believe that it continued in the order and beauty in which it left His hand. It rather draws our attention to the fact that it had fallen into a state of ruin; for it is

said to be waste and empty, swathed in darkness, and enveloped by water, the Spirit hovering over the face of the deep. All that we require to know is plainly brought before us, and no words are wasted in the narration. We have to do with a God of infinite goodness and wisdom, and who wastes no words in His gracious communications, nor does He omit one syllable from the lesson He would have us learn.

The Son is the One by whom the invisible God manifests Himself. He is the One who declares God. Creation sets forth His power and divinity, and this leaves the idolater without excuse. He is the Word of God, and by the Word the worlds were framed. But He has brought God to light, and by that light shall the whole creation be illuminated. He will fill all things, and the heavens and the earth, the heights and depths shall praise Him (Ps. 148.).

For the fulfilment of the counsels of the Father a universe such as exists was necessary; and THE WORD—He who was to bring the invisible God to light, and to lay a foundation upon which those counsels could be righteously fulfilled—created, brought into existence, a universe to be filled with the fulness of eternal LOVE.

I do not think that I can rightly be accused of rashness in saying that the things that have been enacted in this little world of ours cannot be for ever hid from any intelligent creature. It is impossible to entertain the notion that the fact of the fall of man, who was made in the image and likeness of his Maker, and who wilfully rejected

every overture made to him in grace, breaking His holy commandments given to him by the disposition of angels, and in the end reviling, falsely accusing, condemning and crucifying His beloved Son, should for all eternity be veiled from any one of those who have been placed in responsibility with their Creator.

The angels already know these things. The infernal powers are well aware of them. These have witnessed the advent of the Son in grace to this earth. At the laying of its foundations, "The morning stars sang together, and the sons of God shouted for joy," but at the advent of the Son they ascribed glory to God in the highest, and—

"More just those acclamations  
Than when that glorious band  
Chanted earth's deep foundations  
Just laid by God's right hand."

Is the revelation of God in His true character, and in a way never before declared, His Son being treated as sin deserved, His being forsaken by God, His death and burial, His triumphant resurrection, His session on the right hand of God, the advent of the Holy Spirit, the proclamation of glad tidings to the whole world, the forming of Jew and Gentile into the one body of Christ, no longer Jew and Gentile but one new man in Him; is all this a secret hidden from angels fallen or unfallen? Far be the thought! The devil has known it in his humiliating defeat, and all his followers are left to bewail the disaster of their enterprise. Their hostility to God, His Son and His followers, remains unabated, but their power has been broken, and we have nothing now to fear from him. The elect angels have a joyful assurance of all that has taken place. As I have said, they celebrated His advent here with praises, they ministered to Him in the desert and in the garden, rolled the stone away from the sepulchre, sat in His

empty tomb, and to the women who mourned Him as dead, they spoke of His triumphant rising; and are they not all ministering spirits to those who are heirs of salvation? What of all this do they not know?

We do not know all that took place on this earth before the making of it as an abode for man—revolt, I have no doubt, against the authority of God, violence also, in which creatures of whom we know nothing took a guilty part, but all, whatever else it may be, concerns us nothing in comparison with the things that took place in this earth during the history of mortal man, with the results of which every creature is certain to be greatly and eternally affected. The knowledge of these things will make the light in which the elect angels shall serve infinitely more glorious, and it will make the darkness in which all rebels shall dwell infinitely more terrific.

I come back to Proverbs 8., where we find the One who, when man after the flesh had utterly failed, was the resource of God. There was no way previous to the cross by which man could be tested, other than those which had been used, and which had utterly failed to bring the rebel race into right relations with their Maker. Men had never been left without light regarding the way that became sinners in their approach to Him against whom they had sinned. Besides the Holy Spirit was striving with them against their rebellious ways, and even conscience was "accusing or else excusing." One would think that it would have been simple for all to have approached God after the pattern set by Abel, acknowledging thus their sinful condition and the need of a sinless victim to die in their stead. But it seems that in the majority of cases this way of acceptance was rejected, and even where this way

was taken it was taken at the peril of the life of the offerer.

God was rejected, and corruption and violence filled the earth, and so filled it that God was compelled to destroy it with a flood of water, saving Noah, his wife, his three sons and their wives. But his posterity did no better. They worshipped idols, broke the law, stoned the prophets, and murdered the Son come in grace and infinite love. This fell act ended all relationship between God and the rebel race of Adam. What now?

“The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.” Here is the resource of God, the Man of His counsels, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace. Here is the wisdom of God, the One in whom is the solution of every moral question. Here is the One who created all things, and who will change all things, and bring to pass a universe in which God will find His pleasure and eternal rest.

It is only as we get a knowledge of Him by the Spirit that we are able to take in the vast design of God in creation, and in bringing intelligent beings into that creation, and also placing them in a position in which they were to maintain themselves by obedience to the divine decree, not bringing about the fall of any, but allowing that fall to take place where the creature revolted from allegiance to his Creator. Myriads of others were upheld by His power, and not allowed to fall. Such angels (1 Tim. 5. 21) are called elect. But, as we see, man has fallen, and has wasted all the resources that God had for him as a responsible creature, even the gift of His own Son was not withheld; and this was the last and greatest attempt (if I may use

such an expression) to win back the rebellious race to right relations with Himself. “He sent Him last unto them”; and because they recognized in Him the Heir, they killed Him.

In the death of Christ all that fallen man is came to light and was there judged by God, and *judicially* ended. The holy, spotless Son of the living God, come in the likeness of sinful flesh, bore in His own body the judgment of sin, and in His holy sinless flesh, which represented sinful flesh, sin was judged; and in its judgment sin and the flesh which in us was dominated by sin, were brought to an end for ever. All after that order is now for ever cast out.

Now we behold in resurrection glory the One the Lord possessed in the beginning of His way, before His works of old; the One who was ever by Him, as one brought up with Him (or the nursling of His love), daily His delight; the One upon whom depended the fulfilment of eternal counsel, the revelation of the invisible God in His true character and very nature, who would glorify God where He had been dishonoured, restoring that which He took not away, and fill the vast universe with the light and love of a Saviour God. He who made all things descended to the very deepest depths of darkness and dishonour, into a distance from the sunshine of God's face, and into a region which, as far as we can learn from the Holy Scriptures, no one, be he angel or man, has ever yet trodden, for He was forsaken of God. He descended into the lower parts of the earth. He has gone to the utmost bottom of creation, being three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

But now is He gone far above all heavens. It is not only that He has gone *into* heaven, or that He has gone

through the heavens, but He is gone far above all heavens. Thus in the accomplishment of redemption and in making a way for the righteous fulfilment of the eternal counsels of love has it been found necessary that in humiliation and exaltation the universe should be spanned by Him. The depths have beheld Him in His passage beneath them, and the heights have beheld Him in His passage far above their glory-crowned heads. Death has felt the terrific blow of His almighty arm and the utter loss of its envenomed sting, while the devil, sore wounded in the head, must now fly with coward feet from the resistance of one of his erstwhile captives. The Man Christ Jesus has triumphed gloriously, the horse and the rider has He thrown into the sea. The infernal forces have been thrown into consternation, and there is not one of them who does not know that he must bow the knee to a *Man* (however weak and feeble he found man to be on his first acquaintance with him in Eden's garden), and not only must he bow the knee to Him, but must confess Him Lord, and at His hand receive the sentence that will put an eternal end to his mischievous career.

“The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His way.” Without Him, if I may thus speak, the work had never been begun. What a possession! We can well understand why the bosom of the Father was His everlasting home. The One on whom the fulfilment of eternal counsel depended could not be other than infinitely dear to the heart of the Father, as the Father was infinitely dear to the heart of the Son. God could look forward to the glorious creation which marvelously set forth His creatorial wisdom, and He could see it defiled by the instrumentality of Satan, a creature whom He had exalted to the highest

position a creature could occupy, and whom He had covered with every brilliant that creation possessed (Ezek. 28. 12-15). A creature fallen from his allegiance to God, and cast down from the eminent position in which he had been placed, and for ages working wickedness and spreading ruin throughout His works of infinite wisdom and skill. He could see this powerful being and his satellites receiving from fallen man whom He had made in His own image and likeness the worship that was due to Himself, and the world in which He had placed him filled with violence, cruelty, corruption and death; and all the result of his rebellion against His beneficent authority.

How was He to meet this state of things and rescue those who were the objects of His gracious purpose, and who were under the power of this inexorable being? They were under His own righteous condemnation also on account of their enmity against Himself and also on account of their wicked works. To give effect to the counsels of the Father His glorious Son came forth, as we have seen, and laid a firm foundation, on the ground of which would be established every thought of the heart of God. His delights were with the sons of men. But to be with them, and to redeem them out of their lost estate, He became a man, took flesh and blood: not to continue with them on their side, but to have them with Him on His side—a heavenly company brought home to glory. Because the condemnation rested on flesh and blood—what we were as children of our primal fallen head—He took part of the same; in order that, as I have already said, that order of man might be brought to an end in His cross, and that He might have us with Him in glory, according to love's eternal thought.

(To be continued.)

# DANGERS THAT THREATEN.

(F. B. HOLE)

## 2. Defection. Galatians.

THE assemblies of Galatia had not been converted for very long when Paul had to write to them in the severe tone that marks his epistle. They were not, however, mere novices like the Thessalonians, and hence their case was a far graver one. To be deceived is indeed serious, but to start on the slippery incline of departure, which has as its end thorough-going defection, from the truth of the gospel, is far worse. And this was their plight, though evidently they were not conscious of it.

The trouble entered amongst them in a very insidious way. Men who posed as teachers appeared in their midst and sought to make them, though Gentiles, conform to Jewish usages, and in particular adopt the practice of circumcision. It is quite possible that they did not advocate it as being absolutely necessary to salvation, as had previously been done (see Acts 15. 1), but they evidently advocated law-keeping—of which circumcision was the symbol—as necessary to holiness of life, and also claimed the authority of the Jerusalem apostles as behind them. It is very instructive to see how Paul, inspired of God, treated the apparently trivial matter of these Gentile believers submitting to circumcision.

At the close of the epistle, the apostle plainly declares that, "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision" (6. 15; see also 5. 6). The thing had lost all its force and significance for those in Christ Jesus, and hence, in a place where as yet circumcision had not been made a test question by Judaizing teachers, he had circumcised Timothy so that thereby he might have

full access to Jews in his service, which would otherwise have been impossible since his father was a Greek and they knew it (see Acts 16. 1-3). When, however, he had previously gone up to Jerusalem, as recorded in Acts 15., about this very matter of circumcision—since the Judaizing teachers had made it a test question both at Jerusalem and Antioch—he took with him Titus, who was not like Timothy, partly of Jewish blood, but wholly of Gentile blood, and stoutly refused to circumcise him under any consideration. This he relates fully to the Galatians in chapter 2. 1-10.

Circumcision was thus being advocated as a sign of subjection to the law of Moses; if not as determining their standing before God as justified, at least as determining their place before Him in holiness. Consequently if one of these Gentile believers submitted to the rite, he thereby signified his adherence to the law and he became "a debtor to do the whole law" (5. 3). James has informed us that "whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in *one* point, he is guilty of *all*" (2. 10). Paul here enforces a corresponding fact, viz., that whosoever puts himself under the law as to *one* detail is considered by God to be under it in *all* its details. We cannot pick and choose out those of the law's commandments which we happen to like. We must be either under it all or not under it at all. Snap one link in a chain and the chain is broken. Attach a boat to but one link in a chain and to the whole chain it is made fast. The Galatians, therefore, in adopting circumcision, were being entangled in the "yoke of bondage" and Christ would profit them nothing; and if indeed

Christ was "become of no effect" unto them they were "fallen from grace" (5. 1-4).

To "fall from grace" has become in some quarters a rather hackneyed expression, and it has acquired a significance very different from that which it has in Scripture. The Galatians had not lapsed into the world, nor gone back as a washed sow to her wallowing in the mire, and so fallen out of the position in which God's grace had set them. On the contrary, they were adopting a rigid legalism and pursuing justification and holiness—not licence—by going over to law-keeping; and in so doing they were forsaking, *in their own consciousness and experience*, grace for law. In their own thoughts they no longer stood before God on the grace platform, but the law platform; they no longer viewed themselves as sons with the Spirit of God's Son in their hearts, but as servants under the regulations that prevail in the servants' hall (see 4. 1-7). The difference between these two platforms is so great that to step down from the one to the other amounts to a fall. Thus in their own *state and experience* they had fallen from grace. As to their *standing* before God in grace, of which Romans 5. 2, speaks, this standing was theirs unalterably in Christ, if indeed they were really the Lord's and so justified by faith.

In the light of this we may more fully appreciate the indignant outburst of the apostle in chapter 1. They had been brought into the enjoyment of the grace of Christ by God Himself who had called them into it. They had now listened to "another gospel" which based itself upon circumcision, the symbol of law-keeping. To exchange Christ for the law of Moses, to embrace the demands of the law instead of the grace of Christ, and thus

depart from the One who had called them out of the one and into the other, was such incredible folly that the apostle marvelled. They were like people "bewitched," and in chapter 3. 1, he plainly calls them "foolish" or "senseless." Later on he has to say, "I stand in doubt of you" (4. 20).

How would the Apostle Paul view Christendom to-day? How does modern Christianity stand in the light of this portion of the Word of God? At the doors of how many of us can similar folly be laid? Are any of us marked by defection from the truth of the gospel by reverting to the law as in any way determining our status before God?

These are searching questions, and we do well to ponder them. The matter of circumcision is hardly a live issue to-day: that of the Jewish sabbath is a very live issue, however, at least in some directions where subjection to it is much pressed. Inasmuch as the sabbath was given to Israel as "a sign" between Jehovah and them (see Ezek. 20. 12), it is equally with circumcision a symbol of law and law-keeping, and the inspired reasonings of the apostle as to the one would apply to the other; and other things there are of a yet more subtle nature. It is not very difficult to "fall from grace," in the Scriptural sense of the term, if we remember that the essential principle of law is that our standing before God is determined and regulated by what *we are* and *do*: whereas the essential principle of grace is that what *God is* and *has done* determines and regulates our standing as believers in His presence.

How did the apostle meet the state of defection that had developed amongst the Galatians? By bringing before them the truth, both as to the cross of Christ and as to the Spirit of God. In both cases the truth is

set forth experimentally and not doctrinally. The truth of the cross is set before us doctrinally in Romans 6., but experimentally in Galatians 2. 19-21 and 6. 14, and consequently Paul writes there in a personal way, leaving the plural for the first person singular, for experience is of course an individual matter. The truth as to the Spirit of God is unfolded doctrinally in Romans 8., but experimentally and practically in Galatians 5. 16-26 and 6. 8.

1. THE CROSS OF CHRIST struck at the very roots of the ideas and practices which had started the Galatian defection, inasmuch as at the cross Christ died for us under the curse of the law which we had broken (3. 13), and consequently we believers died representatively in Him beneath its sentence.

This the apostle takes up and applies to himself in an experimental way, saying, "I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ." For him, therefore, the condemning grasp of the law had been relaxed and that by the law's own act. He was legally dead to legality, in order that he might live unto God.

Let those words, "THAT I MIGHT LIVE UNTO GOD," be greatly stressed. Paul did not reckon himself to be dead to the law in order that he might live to himself and his own will, which would have been pure lawlessness, but that he might live with God Himself as the End and Object of his life. Formerly the law had controlled, or rather failed to control, him. Now God really did control him. While as yet God was only partially revealed as at Sinai, the law—holy, just and good—was set up as schoolmaster. Now that He is fully revealed in His Son we pass from under the control of law to the control of the One who gave it—which is infinitely higher and exerted upon the opposite principle of grace.

This life which is "unto God" can only be lived, says Paul, "by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me," for God is now known to us in His Son, and "faith's vision keen" alone makes Him to us "a living bright reality" and His love the moving and constraining force in our lives. We live unto God in the bright light of the Son of God and in the warmth of His love.

But all this, *not apart from the cross.* "I," says Paul, identifying himself with the Adamic life and nature of which he participated in common with the rest of us, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I"—the "I" here being just Paul himself, the person, the "ego," as we speak—"I live; yet not I"—here again Paul as the man who expressed the Adamic life and nature because participating in it—"but Christ liveth in me." Paul was living now in the life and nature of the Risen One who was the Object of his faith. *The Cross severed him from the old life of Adam that he might live, even while here upon earth, in the life of Christ.*

The law with all its demands, its ceremonies and its symbols, whether circumcision or sabbaths, addressed itself to the life of Adam. The cross of Christ has severed the believer from both the life of Adam and the law which applied to it. To go back to law in the principle of it, though apparently only taking up one of its symbols, is to do violence to the cross of Christ—then, "Christ is dead in vain."

2. THE SPIRIT OF GOD is possessed by the believer as the directing power of his new life. Of old all our thoughts and actions were dominated by the flesh within us. We were sowing to the flesh and of the flesh reaping corruption. What is the remedy for this? Is it to sow to the law, and of the law reap bondage and condemnation? No.

It is to sow to the Spirit and "of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (6. 8). If the cross puts the sentence of death upon the flesh, the energy of the old life, the Spirit indwells us as the energy of the new life. If we walk in the Spirit we do not fulfil the lust of the flesh (5. 16). If we are led of the Spirit we are not under the law (5. 18).

The expression "led of the Spirit" carries us back to the earlier passage, 3. 23—4. 7. Formerly the law took our hand and led us about as a school-master or tutor. Now, redemption being accomplished, we are sons of full age, and the Spirit of God's Son is sent forth into our hearts saying, Abba, Father. The indwelling Spirit now fulfils the office formerly undertaken by the external law—only He does so with much greater fulness. We cannot be under the leadership of both at the same time.

We *live* in the Spirit (5. 25). We

are *led* of the Spirit. Now let us *walk* in the Spirit. Walking is the most normal and universal and healthy of all man's activities. It consequently signifies *activity*. All our activities are to be in the Spirit.

The truth thus presented in this inspired epistle completely met the Galatian defection. Let all that is implied by the cross of Christ and the gift of the Spirit be grasped, and defection from the truth of the gospel in all its forms will be met. The cross of Christ shuts out fallen man, his wisdom, his reasonings, his world. The Spirit brings God in, His purpose, His grace, His Christ, His Word.

Established in these things, Christ is formed in us (4. 19) and we stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free (5. 1). Consequently we do not remove from Him that called us into the grace of Christ.

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## PRAYER FOR OURSELVES AND OTHERS.

WHEN we go to God in prayer, the true effect of it should be, not the feeling that we are going to get what we have asked for, for that may be mere selfishness, but that God has our affairs in hand. This brings quietness and peace into the heart. With what quiet dignity we should go through the world if we lived in the sense that God is for us, and that as needs and questions arise we can speak to Him about them, can pour out the whole contents of our hearts in His ear, and know that everything that concerns us is in His hands, who loves us. Thus it should be in regard to all our personal needs. But in coming to Him thus we must do it with thanksgiving. We must remember what He has been to us in the past—through how many difficulties He has already brought us, how often He has delivered us when our way seemed altogether

closed up. We must keep up the recollection of His goodness, it is good for the soul not to forget all His mercies.

The first great parable about praying is that in Luke 11. The man would not go away without his friend giving him the loaves, because he wanted them, *and had no other way of getting them*. We do not go rightly to God if we have some back door, some plan of our own to fall back upon. The great principle of prayer is that we own that God alone is our resource, He alone can do for us what we ask. Why people often make no progress in prayer is because they have some plan of their own in the background. If we pray aright God gives us His own peace, and what a favour is this! He might give me the whole world and not His peace. But if He gives me His own peace I am in the same state as He is.

# THE MASTER'S WORDS.

(JAMES MCBROOM.)

## Notes on Matthew's Gospel, Chapter 6.—No. 5.

IN chapter 6. the Lord sets His disciples before the Father with regard to acts of kindness and devotional exercises: all they did was to be done before Him who knows the heart. How effectually must His words have swept the ground from beneath the feet of the accredited teachers of the day! He had said, "Unless your righteousness surpass that of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter the kingdom of heaven" (5. 20). The body of chapter 5. showed the hollowness of their teaching; what comes out in chapter 6. exposes their practice.

The chapter divides at verse 18, the first half falling into three paragraphs which treat of almsgiving, prayer, and fasting; the second, 19-34, practical exhortations relating to earthly treasures and single-mindedness and anxiety about the future. Almsgiving (verses 1-4) relates to our fellow-creatures, prayer (verses 5-15) to God, and fasting (verses 16-18) to ourselves. It is helpful to see that grace teaches us to live soberly, righteously and piously in this world, and these three things cover the same ground. Soberly as to say to ourselves, righteously to our fellows, and piously to God. This again is confirmed in the beautiful cluster of fruit mentioned in Gal. 5. 22, 23, that can only be produced in us by the Spirit of God: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, self-control; against such things there is no law." These nine features are easily seen to fall into three groups of three each, which may be seen to work out personally in relation to others and toward God.

*"Take heed that ye do not your righteousness before men to be seen of*

*them"* (R.V.). He puts His finger upon the tendency which is inherent in every human heart to seek greatness in the eyes of others, and shows how the works of charity and devotion done in this world must be done before the Father and His world. Happy are they who are delivered from the mere appearance of things, and from the value that fellow-mortals may put upon their works, and who value only the approval of Him who sees in secret. Their reward is certain, a reward that will not perish with man and his world, but will abide for ever. Surely it is a mark of Heaven's grace in this world to be able to carry on works of kindness in it, but the effect upon and result to ourselves is the point here. Not only is there a secret chamber into which we may enter and close the door (verse 6), but a secret place in our souls where the record of such gracious acts is concealed, that none but the Father who sees in secret may know and reward openly. *"Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand does."*

*"But when thou prayest thou shalt not be as the hypocrites; . . . Enter into thy chamber, and having shut thy door, pray to thy Father who is in secret."* The Pharisee of Luke 18. is an example of that which is here condemned, but the centurion of Acts 10. beautifully illustrates what the Lord here sets forth. The ostentation and the pride of the Pharisees and the senseless babble of the heathen are mentioned that the vanity of it all may be exposed. The Father knows all the needs of His own before they ask Him. Hence much speaking is an offence, and prayer should be marked by brevity and simplicity, as becoming a creature speaking to His God.

Then the Lord gives a prayer in words unequalled in simplicity, depth and brevity, which was well suited for the disciples in their then position.

Was this that is called "the Lord's Prayer," given to be used as a mere recitation for millions of people all over Christendom apart from any definite sense of their state of sin or of need before God? The prayer is not understood because the dispensational bearing of the whole discourse is unknown. On two different occasions we read of Jehovah giving to Israel a form of words to address Himself, but we do not read of them being perpetually recited afterwards (Deut. 21. 7, 8; 26. 13-15). John taught his disciples to pray—the Lord here does the same. And this prayer is far beyond the Old Testament prayers, as may be seen by comparing it with the Psalms. It is beyond, in all probability, what John taught his disciples, but in the nature of things it is not up to the increased light brought in by accomplished redemption.

It should be remarked that it is not the prayer for a penitent sinner seeking mercy, but for those who are in a certain relationship with God, who have direct dealings with Him as Father in relation to their need. The petitions divide it into two distinct parts: the first three express the desire for the glory of God, and the last four express the creature's dependence. It is beautiful to see the spirit of worship in the way the Name, the kingdom and the will of God are put in the front. In another connection the Christian knows that these three things cover the whole scope of the counsels of God, and go far beyond what could be known then, extending even to God's eternal day. The four petitions in the second part are the expression of dependence and obedi-

ence. The whole may be said to show the three main thoughts in true prayer: God's glory, and the creature's need, first in the temporal and then the spiritual spheres.

We should distinguish between the prayer given here and that in Luke 11. 2-4. Though there is little difference in our Authorized Version, it is well known that Luke takes a wider view and gives an advance on what is here. The Lord goes on there to speak of the gift of the Spirit which links on with the fuller instruction in John 16., the latter being connected with *full Christian prayer* as seen in the Epistles, which the prayer we are considering is not. (See the New Trans. and R.V. for the prayers in Matt. 6. 9-13, and Luke 11. 2-4.)

It should be remembered, however, while giving due attention to the different readings, that the evidence is not merely external. The ordinary reader who has an insight into these things by divine teaching will see the difference and the moral necessity for it. This difference hangs upon the aim of the Spirit in each Gospel. In Matthew the Lord is teaching in connection with the Messianic kingdom as Son of David for the Jews, but in Luke He is specially before us as the Son of Man, and of necessity in that Gospel the Mediatorial kingdom has its bearing towards the Gentiles as well. This accounts for the difference in words, and teaches that while Matthew shows the remnant preparing for the King, Luke has the same company in view but as about to be introduced into the Christian faith. This is further confirmed by the fact that the prayer is placed in the first Gospel before the question of the King's acceptance was decided, but in Luke's Gospel it is given to us after the King had already been refused, and when the preparation

of the disciples for the Church, as a new and heavenly company, was going on. In each case that which was needed for disciples in their circumstances was given, but the Spirit in Matthew had not only the remnant of that moment in view, but those also who will await the coming back again of the Messiah.

In the instructions as to fasting (verses 16-18) the Lord again exposes the desire for display, as He had done in connection with almsgiving and prayer, and shows that that only is of value that is done in secret, i.e., before God. All true prayer supposes not only the refusal of what is evil but the avoidance at times of what may in itself be right. Man is not only a spirit being but has a physical body,

and he may be drawn into sin by the very needs of that body. Men may fall both by eating and drinking, as Adam and Noah. On the other hand, people may be deluded into the denial to the body its dues for the sake of appearance (Col. 2. 23). There is, however, a deep moral connection between true prayer and fasting, as all spiritual minds have felt, and its blessedness lies in the fact that a Christian may be so engaged with God and His things as to forget for the time the needs of the body, and even when these make their appeal he may be so filled with God as to be able to deny the natural in the power of that which is spiritual. Such a state, it is needless to say, is far removed from the eye of one's fellow-men.

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

### To the Praise of His Glory.

In Ephesians 1. I find the expression, "To the praise of His glory," mentioned three times, in verses 6, 12 and 14, evidently in connection with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit respectively. Will you please explain the last connection in verse 14 in the light of John 16. 13-16?—C. S. M., TEHERAN.

**T**HIS expression occurring three times in this chapter, as our correspondent points out, is both interesting and instructive. In the first instance it is connected with the *past*: before the foundation of the world God chose us in Christ and predestinated us to the place of sons before Him. He did this for the praise of the glory of His grace. The second instance connects specially with those from the Jews who had believed, who had pre-trusted in Christ. Before the whole nation receives Him, as they will when He comes in power, a remnant had been wrought upon by the Holy Spirit and had believed and placed their hopes in Him. They have a more blessed place than the nation will have (see the Lord's words to Thomas, John 20. 24-29). But this was God's

work in them, and this also is for the praise of His glory. The third instance looks onward to the future, when God's sovereign choice in the past and the wisdom of His work in the present will have their consummation in the redemption of the purchased possession. Until then the Spirit dwelling within is the earnest to us of our part in it all, the pledge and the foretaste of it.

We do not think that John 16. 13-16 describes the Spirit as the earnest. He is there as the One who has come to us to speak of Christ, of His present glory and His glory yet to come. His whole subject is Christ, though no doubt our being guided into all truth has in view all the truth that was afterwards revealed to the apostles, and that would include the Epistle to the Ephesians.

## The Children of the Devil.

Is it true that we who are now the children of God were once the children of the devil? It is said that we were, and this is based upon the Lord's words to the Pharisees (John 8. 44).—  
ONTARIO.

WE do not think it would be right on our part definitely to describe any people as children of the devil. The Lord could do this, for He knew all men and all about them. Moreover, these Pharisees were proving their origin by their incorrigible and murderous hatred of the Lord. There was no hope of salvation for them, so determined were they to slay the Saviour. They bore the devil's character and did his works. Paul the Apostle addressed Elymas in the same terms (Acts 13.), but he was filled with the Holy Ghost when he did it, and so was able to discern the true character of the man, who was an apostate Jew, a sorcerer and false prophet. Note that there was no call to repentance, nor any repentance expressed on his part, as in the case of Simon (Acts 8.). It would seem that the man's doom was sealed.

In 1 John 3. we read that "he that committeth sin is of the devil." The one who is a sinner in principle and practice is here described, and we were all this before the grace of God reached us and saved us. Sin originated with the devil, we can trace it back to him, and John in his epistle traces things to

their source. But through grace we did not continue in that condition; some do in spite of all the grace of God, and these are manifested to be the children of the devil, in contrast to the children of God (verse 10).

In the parable of the wheat and the tares, tares are the children of the wicked one; such are here now, mixed up with those who are the children of the kingdom in the profession of Christ, a solemn consideration for all, yet we cannot label them, "the Lord knoweth them that are His."

Epithets serious enough are applied to all who have not believed the gospel, for instance, "children of disobedience" and "children of wrath" (Eph. 2. 2, 3), and such we were indeed before God who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, quickened us together with Christ. Children of the devil are those who are in determined and wilful opposition to God, we believe, and this seems to us to be a step beyond the natural enmity of the human heart against God which was true of us all before we were born again.

## WHAT GRACE DOES.

"Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his own hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth."—Ephesians 4. 28.

HERE is a case that is very remarkable. You see it is a very bad case. "Let him that stole steal no more"—that is where most people stop; and in doing so they make it into law, and nothing more. But what will divine power, divine grace, make of a thief? A thief is a *taker*, but grace makes him a *donor*. Let him labour, working with his own hands that which is good. There is a continuous supply of grace for that—and

with what end in view? "That he"—may support his family and take care of himself? No! he will do that, of course, but "*that he may have to give to him that needeth*," and being a giver he becomes like God. This is the work of God's power and grace. The briar that once grew in the tangled hedge, one mass of thorns, is grafted now and transplanted and sheds around the fragrance of the rose of Sharon.

## ESPOUSED TO ONE HUSBAND.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

WHAT a change it makes in a Christian's outlook when he discovers the fact that he is loved by the Lord and that he is precious and desirable in His sight. When this knowledge comes to us—and it is true of every one who has owned the Lord's claims and trusted Him as Saviour—we are lifted on to a new plane in our thoughts of Him. We shall not think less of all that He has done for us, instead, we shall begin to understand the greatness of this better; and we shall still be grateful for all His ways of grace with us, and shall often tell Him of them, but the dominant thing will be rest in His love and, what goes along with that, love to Him in response to it. We shall become conscious that we stand in an hitherto undreamt of relationship to Him, a relationship in which mutual love has the chief place. This is the day of our espousals. Can we reverently contemplate the meaning of this?

This is not mere poetic imagery, for we read in the Scriptures, and wonderful are the words, "*I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ*" (2 Cor. 11. 2). What does this mean? It can only have one meaning. We have been affianced to Christ. He loves us and has chosen us for Himself, and He has made the appeal of love to us, and we have said "Yes" to Him. The marriage day has not yet come, but it is coming, and we may read about it in Ephesians 5. 25-27, and Revelation 19. 7-9.

These are the days of the espousals, and we have been espoused to a PERSON. It is on our hearts to press this, for we fear that the Lord Jesus is not a living, bright reality to many Christians. "Christian Science" is spreading, and though no true child

of God could follow the delusions of that cult, yet the spirit of it is abroad,—an evil, seducing and anti-Christian spirit that would persuade us that Christ is a divine principle or spirit operating in the lives of men, instead of a living Person who can fill and satisfy the heart. "What matters it" say some, "whether Jesus rose from the dead or not so long as His spirit permeates society?" And Satan beguiles many unwary souls by this sort of thing, and the very heart is taken out of their faith, and the Lord Jesus becomes to them intangible, vague and impersonal, and if we lose sight of Him then God Himself becomes shadowy and distant. If there is one thing we desire above another in issuing *Scripture Truth* month by month it is that we may be able to keep before our readers the fact that Christ is a living Person, who loves us, and cares for us and delights in our love to Him and service for Him: a risen, glorified Saviour who desires that we should have part with Him, and hold communion with Him by the Holy Spirit, who has been given unto us.

The joy and beauty of our relationship to Christ is illustrated for us in a wonderful way in the Song of Solomon. Every chapter is fragrant with love, and if we read it, and are taught by the Holy Spirit as we read it, we shall find that the language, though figurative, describes the Lord's delight in us and ours in Him, when we know Him in this sweet relationship. Take the 2nd chapter. There the bride-to-be has discovered that she is beloved, and that the one who loves her delights in her. She is precious to him; this she has learnt, and she exclaims: "*I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys.*" These were not high thoughts of herself. The rose of

Sharon was not the gorgeous flower that we call the rose; more likely than not it was the narcissus, a flower of the field, a fragrant flower no doubt, but not obtrusive and gay; and the lily of the valleys grew in lowly places and out of sight, and had to be sought for by the one who valued it. But these were Spring flowers, this must be noted first, and the fragrant hope of Spring was in them. As they bloomed in the valleys they told of a time when the summer's glory would crown the hills. They figured forth the beginnings of love, but they were prophetic of the time when love would come to its fulness on the marriage day.

Upon this maiden the king's choice had fallen, she was to share his crown and kingdom, but not of this does she think and sing, she is inwardly conscious of something greater than all the display of glory that was to come to her; the king loved her, this was her joy; she was precious to him, this filled her with a glad surprise; and without fear or reserve, she tells out to him what she knows she is to him. Have we reached this point in our secret experience of soul with the Lord? We can only learn it as we are near to Him, for who could teach us this but Himself? This is the beginning of love, it is "first love." It is more than what He has done for us, it is Himself who has done it. We do not lose the benefaction, but we have the Benefactor. We are one spirit with the Lord, for "*he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit*" (1 Cor. 6. 17). The freshness and the hope of the spring flowers are in this experience, and in it there is the pledge that the day will surely come when He will present the church to Himself "a glorious church not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing."

But hear the answer that this great

lover gives to his chosen bride. He takes up her own words, but he adds to them. He adorns them and makes them glow with his love. He makes them the opportunity of showing her the great proof of his great love for her, and so increases her confidence in him and enlarges her affection for him. "*As the lily among the thorns, so is my love among the daughters,*" he says. Let us get at the heart of this, and understand what it means for us in our relationship with the Lord. Dr. Thompson in his well-known book "*The Land and the Book,*" says of the lily: "*Our flower delights most in the valleys; but it is found also on the mountains. It grows among thorns, and I have sadly lacerated my hands in extricating it from them.*" Does the fact that the lily grew among the thorns need any interpretation? If we can say, "I am the lily of the valleys," if we know that we are this to Christ, His answer is, "Yes, but the lily among the thorns." He would have us remember that it cost Him something to secure us for Himself. How lacerated was He in extricating us from the tangled thorns in which we grew! He showed to His disciples His hands and side, when He came to them in resurrection. Nothing could drive the cold unbelief from the soul of Thomas, but a sight of His wounds. And He would not that we should forget them. It is as though He said to us:—

"Behold, with what labour I won thee,  
Behold in My hands and My feet  
The tale of My measureless sorrow,  
The love that made suffering sweet."

His body was lacerated, but His soul was lacerated too, for before He could have His lilies for Himself and extricate them from the thorns, His soul was made an offering for sin. Can anything move the heart like this? We do not love Him and adore

Him because the brightest crowns of heaven shine upon His worthy brow; we are glad that He is crowned with glory, but it is not that that won our hearts: we love Him because that same brow was crowned with thorns, and because He was put to shame upon a cross when He came forth in His great love to tread the thorny way to save us for Himself. To the utmost His love was tried, and it stood the test. It passeth knowledge. When we realize this, and the wonder of it fills our souls, we do not say, "Thank God, WE are saved!" Setting the "we" in the centre of our sentence and thoughts; but we say, "Oh, what it cost HIM to make us His." He is the centre of our sentence, and relief and thanksgiving deepen into wonder and worship.

The suffering is all past but His love abides, and the suffering will not be forgotten, for when the great marriage day comes, and all heaven rejoices in the gladness of it, it is the *marriage of the Lamb* that is celebrated (Rev. 19.), and the bride is the *Lamb's wife* (Rev. 21). Thus are the sorrows of the cross and the joys of love's consummation joined the one to the other; the Lamb who suffered is the one who will see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied on that great day. But while we wait for that day, the love of Christ is a present reality, and we who are espoused to Him may have the joy of communion with Him in it all.

In this communion of love the maiden responds to the king, not now to speak of herself, but of him who fills her thoughts. Her words are great words, and the music of pure love swells in them. "*As the apple tree among the trees of the word,*" she says, "*so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste. He brought me into his banquet-*

*ing house, and his banner over me was love.*" Have we so learnt Christ? If so our vagrant desires, our restlessness of spirit have ceased and we have found satisfaction and a great hope. It was thus with Mary of Bethany at the feet of Jesus, hearing His word, and pouring out her precious ointment upon Him; and with John, the beloved, leaning his head upon Jesus' breast at supper; and with Thomas, of the doubtful mind, when he cried, "My Lord and my God"; and with Paul the Apostle when he exclaimed, "The Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." What a blessed experience this is, and the more deeply it is known in its present joy, the more will the heart long for the day of presentation. Then there will be no more need for watchfulness; faithfulness to Christ in a hostile and seductive world will be called for no more. We shall have reached eternal rest.

We shall be beyond the reach of Satan's beguilings then, but now there is nothing he hates more than this personal intimacy with and joy in Christ. Hence the fear expressed by the apostle in those words of warning. "*But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from simplicity as to Christ.*" His purpose is to draw us away from this "first love." How often he succeeds to our shame, and if the backsliding is not arrested how soon we become neither "cold nor hot," a state of heart that is obnoxious to the Lord.

We would not willingly be untrue to Christ; but Satan is subtle, and if we are to be kept from his snares we must depend upon our Lord. "*He brought me into his banqueting house, and his banner over me is love.*" To abide there is to abide in a safe place, and to be satisfied with Him.

# THE MASTER'S WORDS.

(JAMES MCBROOM.)

## Notes on Matthew's Gospel, Chapter 6.—Continued.

COMING to the last half of the chapter, we shall see that all the instruction is in close affinity with the three thoughts already touched. Laying up treasure on earth poorly qualifies for almsgiving. The single eye supposes that the whole inner man is laid bare in the presence of God in prayer. A body full of light gives the thought of moral influence, and nothing could be finer than this; it was seen in Stephen before the council, and in Paul before Agrippa, and may be seen in the woman whose unbelieving husband is to be won by her Christlike behaviour without the word (1 Peter 3.). It is blessed when the character is so formed that the body can be offered to God. There is a transparency in a man when the whole soul has been poured out to God in the closet and has been formed there by the communications of His love. Decision of character and clearness of spiritual vision must be the result.

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth." Here our Lord contrasts the heavenly with the earthly, the spiritual with the natural, the things of time with those of eternity. His estimate of these is perfect, and He would have us governed by that. The heart follows that which is most highly prized, and if it be the things of earth how great is the loss! Many artificial contrivances are got up to give security in this world where death lies upon all, but there are no insurance societies called for in regard to what is heavenly and eternal—eternal things are the sure things. Spiritual treasures are laid up for eternity, and to have heaven and eternity in view gives clearness of vision. The danger here is that selfishness may darken the

moral sensibilities and weaken the character in such a way that power for decision is lost.

"The lamp of the body is the eye." This would indicate the organ of spiritual sight, the single eye denoting uprightness of motive with unity of purpose. "One thing I do." The body gives expression to the inner state, and in walking with God a person becomes an influence for good; where this is not, there is wavering like a double-minded man who is unstable in all his ways.

Verses 25-34 connect with the middle clause of the prayer—"Give us this day our daily bread," showing that the strength expended in the cares and distractions of distrust means positive loss. What a gain it is when the energy of the soul finds expression in faith! The relative bearing of the natural and spiritual spheres upon each other is touched in verse 33, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things [the things that all the fretting is about shall be added unto you." This seeking depends upon the single eye of verse 22, which again connects with secret intercourse with God and the state produced by it. It was the saying of a dying saint: "Had I trusted the Lord better my life would have been different." To this the writer can feelingly subscribe and doubtless many another. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed upon Thee."

He next presses upon His disciples the need of confidence in the Father for the things of everyday life, so that they might be free from that care which so often withers up the soul. This He does by a threefold illustration.

drawn from the creation, of which our bodies form part. The birds of the air, the human body, and the lilies of the field. The first and last of these He applies to bring home to them the providential care and goodness of their heavenly Father. The way the Lord draws His illustrations from the creation when setting great truths before men reminds us of His wisdom as a Teacher, and by these illustrations we are reminded of the wonders of creation wherein is displayed the grand scheme of His Providence whereby God meets the needs of all His creatures. But men are His special care, and especially those that believe. So He says, "Look

at the birds of the heaven. . . . Are ye not much more excellent than they?" So also in regard to raiment. "But if God so clothe the herbage of the field, which is to-day, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, will He not much rather you, O ye of little faith?" May we not say in regard to ourselves that if the character of the moment were apprehended and the value of these tests to faith laid hold of in their relation to the glory of God and our present and future position, such exercises in regard to them would be cheerfully accepted in the power of prayer and communion with God.

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## BALM AND COMFORT.

"There is a balm for every pain,  
A medicine for all sorrow;  
The eye turned backward to the Cross,  
And forward to the morrow.

The morrow of the glory and the psalm,  
When He shall come;  
The morrow of the harping and the palm,  
The welcome home.

Meantime in His beloved hands our ways,  
And on His heart the wandering heart at rest;  
And comfort for the weary one who lays  
His head upon His Breast."

SO wrote Ter Steegen, and he wrote well and truly; whether we look backward or forward we see what love has done and will yet do for us—the love of Christ that passeth knowledge—and what comfort and balm this yields. But for complete rest in the meanwhile, and for victory in this time of need, we must have more, and love has not forgotten but fully provided for this. Hear what the Word tells us. 1, "We have a great high Priest, 2, Who has passed through the heavens, 3, JESUS, 4, the Son of God" (Hebrews 4.). A very brief consideration of this wonderful statement will convince us of the qualifications of our Lord Jesus to carry us through the greatest trial. He understands the need, and can sympathize, for He is JESUS. No intercession that He makes on our behalf before God can fail, for He is the SON OF GOD, eternally beloved. No foe in heavenly places (see Eph. 2. 2, 6. 12) can intercept the supply of grace flowing to us, for He has passed triumphantly through them. And He has the right to represent us in the immediate presence of God, for He is our great high Priest, and He carries on there a ceaseless and never-failing service of love for us. All this makes us boldly come to the throne of grace, and fully supplied at that throne with mercy and grace for timely help we may face all seasons and every trial with courage and thanksgiving.

# WATCHMAN, WHAT OF THE NIGHT? (JAMES GREEN)

## Notes on the Prophetic Outlook. No. 1.

THE study of prophecy has been brought into much disrepute through the many and contradictory interpretations that have been suggested, so that earnest souls reading the writings of various authors have become distracted, and have turned away from the subject not knowing what to believe. We may be sure that God has not written His Word to this end, but rather that we may know the certainty of the things wherein we have been instructed.

The object of calling the attention of readers of *Scripture Truth* to this matter is first, because of the large place which is given to it in the Holy Scriptures; secondly, because of the assurance that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable (2 Tim. 3. 16, 17), and, lastly, with the desire to trace through those holy pages the way in which the Spirit of God presents the course of events with which prophecy is concerned. We would not forget at the same time to seek the moral profit which is evidently designed for those who with reverence and godly fear search the prophetic word. Thus shall we become not simply informed as to coming events, but worshippers of God, who has revealed in great grace His mind and will.

In 2 Peter 1. 19, we are told that those who take heed to the word of prophecy do well, for it is a light shining in the heart, amidst the darkness of this world, until the day shall dawn and the day star arise. Egyptian gloom obscures the vision of the men of this world, but the receiver of the Word of God has light in his dwelling, the light of the glory of Christ, for He is the Centre and object of all, "The spirit of prophecy is the testimony of

Jesus" (Rev. 19. 10). By this light the thoughts and purposes of God are seen, and as regards the thoughts of men: "Cease from man whose breath is in his nostrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of?" (Isa. 2. 22), for he cannot tell what shall be on the morrow, and as regards God: "Let us walk in the light of the Lord" (Isa. 2. 5) for to Him alone it belongs to unveil the future, and He assures us that "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret to His servants the prophets" (Amos 3. 7). Nor are we left in uncertainty as to the manner and way in which God fulfils His word. Already prophecies relating to great nations have had their accomplishment. The literal fulfilment of predictions concerning Egypt, Tyre, Babylon, Judæa, Israel, and others, leaves the mind convinced that God will fulfil to the letter every word He has spoken. The study of fulfilled prophecy surely delivers the reader from that vague spiritualizing of the prophecies yet unfulfilled, which sheds no light on the dark and sin-stained page of human history, nor reveals the purposes of God which shall have their fulfilment in His own appointed time.

It is of cardinal importance to ever bear in mind the statement in 2 Pet 1. 20: "That no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation." He does not say no Scripture, but no prophecy of the Scripture must be read as if it stood alone, for it is part and parcel of one great whole, which the Holy Ghost has communicated to the holy men who penned the Scriptures of truth. Not the product of the will of man, but of one supreme governing mind. "Knowing this first," for it is of the first importance, Scripture must

be compared with Scripture, and theories must not be built upon isolated passages divorced from their context. With this in mind we may enquire if there is any part of God's word which affords a general view of the prophetic field? And has He indicated any circumstance which points out clearly the grand consummation towards which the Scriptures of the prophets converge? The answer to both questions is "Yes." First, the book of the prophet Isaiah gives just such a general view, and in his opening chapter a complete summary. The outlook is wider than in any other of the prophets, and all the great themes are touched upon, concerning which they give more abundant detail. Second, the transfiguration is a sample of the coming kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ which will seal up the vision and prophecy. By this we know the certainty of the end, and that the prophecies concerning that glorious reign, and the events leading up thereto, are not cunningly devised fables, but serious realities made sure to us by the manifestation of glory and honour which the Father bestowed upon Him on the holy mount (2 Pet. 1. 16-19).

Isaiah, whose name "Salvation of Jehovah" is closely connected in meaning with Joshua the Conqueror and Jesus the Saviour, sets forth the themes with which prophecy is directly concerned, viz., how the subjugation of evil in the world, and salvation for the earth, is to be brought about. For this the glorious person and work of Immanuel are revealed, the foundation

of all blessing whether for heaven or earth. Heaven and eternity, and the Church of God, are not, properly speaking, the subjects of prophecy, which is concerned with the ages of time as they unfold upon this earth. The ages of time are that wonderful parenthesis in the midst of eternal ages during which God is bringing to an issue the great question of good and evil, and using this earth as the stage on which the final solution of this shall be fully demonstrated.

The period known as "Time" is itself divided into three ages.

(aion = age is usually translated "world" in A.V.)

1. *The age that then was* (2 Pet. 3. 6).

This extended from the creation to the deluge.

2. *This present age* (Gal. 1. 4).

Satan is its god and prince, and its characteristic feature is idolatry; hence it is called an evil age. It extends from the deluge to the appearing of our Lord in glory and the accompanying judgment of the nations. Prophecy is principally occupied with the events of this age.

3. *The age to come* (Heb. 2. 5).

This will be the reign of Christ, closing with the judgment of the great white throne.

It will be seen that each age ends in judgment of such an overwhelming character that it cannot be mistaken.

We will in our next paper consider the outline of prophecy contained in the prophet Isaiah.

## WHAT IS A CHRISTIAN?

A CHRISTIAN, in the true sense of the word, is characterized by two things:

(1) His heart is alive with love to Christ, and so he longs and looks for His coming again; (2) He represents Him in the world while He is away. He will study to be like the One for whom he waits and unlike the world that would not have Him.

## AT THE FEET OF JESUS.

(L. R.)

A Bible-reading was really the beginning of this little paper. It is not claimed that the reading is reproduced, but rather, that precious thoughts from different sources are brought together, as though one should thread pearls on a string.

The subject suggested was the three instances in which Mary is found at the feet of the Lord, and the desire was expressed that we might get a little insight into the way that present conformity, in measure, to the Lord is produced.

The believer's goal is, according to the purpose of God, "to be conformed to the image of His Son" (Rom. 8. 29), and his present endeavour "to purify himself even as He is pure" (1 John 3. 2, 3), because of the blessed hope "when He shall appear we shall be like Him."

In the first Scripture (Luke 10. 39) Mary is found sitting at His feet, hearing His word. The thought is, she has taken the place of a disciple. (It will be remembered in confirmation of this, we are told that Paul was "brought up at the feet of Gamaliel.") It is a great joy to the saint to know, that, while there are special times and places when he may turn aside to be still and at rest before the Lord, to listen to Him as the Teacher, yet it is his great privilege to be always, at all seasons and in all places, a listener and a learner; the attitude of his soul and of his whole life being that of a disciple.

It has been beautifully said, "Mary had no house for the Lord, she was in spirit a stranger like Himself, but she opens a sanctuary for Him and seats Him there, the Lord of her humble temple. She knows He was wearied, but she knows also that there was a fulness in Him that could afford to be more wearied still."—J. G. B.

In the second case (John 11. 32) we find Mary as a mourner. Death has come and taken one who was very dear to her. Again she is at the feet of Jesus, but now she is fallen down at His feet. It is the attitude of obedience, of submission, and He, oh! how significant it is! He speaks not one word, but He weeps. Here was a saint who would understand, to whom He need not explain, one who would be subject to His will and who would trust His love. Beloved, it may be, we have known such moments; we have seen the light of our eyes taken from us, and it has seemed strange that He said nothing. But, presently, He showed us that He trusted us, and that, though He would teach us to trust Him unreservedly, none the less surely did He weep with us. We, too, fell down at His feet, and knew that all the way to the place of resurrection He would walk beside us, although our eyes, blinded by tears, could hardly see Him. We understood that soon His voice should sound in power, bidding the dead arise, and that so should we ever be with Him.

One loves to think that what she had learned while sitting at His feet had produced in her that lowly spirit of trust and dependence to which He could show Himself, and that God His Father, looking down, would trace in that simple act a little bit of the present conformity to His Son, so priceless in His sight, greater than all gifts or labours, but out of which offerings and labours would surely come.

Thirdly, in John 12. 3, we see Mary in a season of joy. There is the happy company gathered at the table, Lazarus is there raised from the dead, Martha serves, and Jesus, as was His blessed way, joined Himself to the gladness of His people, sitting with them as

the Lord of life, and the King of glory.

One only among them seems to have understood that what engaged them was but a foretaste of days yet to be, a little green spot in the parched wilderness of this world, but that the time for joy was not yet, and she busies herself at His feet as an offerer, bringing her spikenard very costly—to anoint Him for His burial—“and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.”

Our hearts are rightly touched with His tender words of approval, and well is it for our souls that the desire to do likewise should be begotten in us. How then may we, whose lot is cast in a day so different, and in which He is not here in bodily presence, bring our offering of spikenard to Him? It is very simple, it is nothing mystic or mysterious, but just what simple ones can take hold of. The sweet gospel

story of His perfect pathway here, tells us of His words of praise to His Father, tells us He went about doing good, tells us that He loved His own; and He Himself anticipates our question and explains to us that we may offer our tribute of grateful praise, that we may minister to the poor, and that we should love one another. As, has been said by one, long since with Him, “The fashioning of any kind thought in the heart, towards a brother, the arming of the mind with power to bear and forbear in love, the goings forth of the soul in sympathies—these are the copies of the heavenly patterns.”—  
J. G. B.

Mary had one opportunity—just one—but she was prepared and ready. To us is granted a daily opportunity to bring that which costs us dear, and therewith to anoint His feet anew, in the persons of those whom He has left to our care.

## HUMILITY.

“If thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit down in the lowest room.”—  
Luke 14. 8.

No man can humiliate you and clothe you with shame if you are always clothed with humility.

All true humility will come to its head in heaven, and in that glorious kingdom that is coming, the last shall be first. If we are looking for that blessed hope and glorious appearing of a great God and Saviour Jesus Christ we shall not have high notions of ourselves. No, we shall be those who have

“Low thoughts of self  
Befitting proclaimers of His praise.”

True humility lies in filling one's appointed place. The stars above are greater than the daisy beneath, but it in its lowliness can open its eye wide, when the glorious sun has put out the light of the stars. Yes, the lowly daisy looks into the face of the sun and enjoys its warmth and favour. The sun looks upon the daisy and the daisy on the sun. “To that man will I look,” saith the Lord, “even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit.” In the joy of God's favour and care we may well be content with such things as we have, and in humility and contentment there is quietness and rest.

“God has given to each his station;  
Some have riches and high place,  
Some have lowly homes and labour;  
ALL MAY HAVE HIS PRECIOUS GRACE.”

# THE MAN CHRIST JESUS.

(G. J. STEWART.)

## Hebrews. Chapters 1-4.

**WE** have a wonderful unfolding of the truth of our Lord's Person, God and Man in one Person, in these four chapters (Heb. 1. to 4.) with chapter 5, verse 7.

He is God, the Son eternal ; Son born in time ; Son as raised from the dead. Nothing can be added to His glory as Son ! But in infinite grace He has become Man, taken human nature.

Chapter 1. shows Him as essentially one in the Being of the Godhead, and eternally in relationship in the trinity of the Persons. He is essentially God, the **WORD—THE SON.**

Chapter 2. shows equally the reality of His manhood—body, soul and spirit ; together with the absolute impeccability of His holy human nature.

It is the one Person in the two chapters ; combining in Himself Godhead and holy Manhood ; with all the true attributes of God and Man.

The Son of chapter 1. becomes the Jesus of chapter 2., who being made a little lower than the angels, is now through the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour. Angels who are pure spirits cannot die, but to fulfil God's counsels, the Son took part in blood and flesh, and entered upon a pathway which involved the settlement of man's broken responsibilities, and every avenue of that path led directly to death for Him, as leading to deliverance and glory for His own. For this the absolute perfection and glory of His Person as Son, with the completeness and sinlessness of His humanity are necessary, or there could be no such results. Man now, therefore, in the Person of the Son, fills the place God purposed for Him from eternity.

Some of these purposes of God are

shown to be brought about by His death, in chapter 2.

First, Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, by the grace of God tasted death for everything over which He was to rule (verse 9).

Then we have, " It became Him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings " (verse 10). This the majesty of the Creator demanded, and it is God in this character, who perfects Him, putting Him through sufferings which ended in death. By no other means could the sons be brought to glory.

But not only is death the basis upon which they are brought to glory, it is that also by which they are sanctified. " For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren (verse 11). He presents them a sanctified company to God. One with Himself in His own life, and sanctified by blood, that is, by death (see chapter 10. 29). The basis of their glory and the means of their sanctification are both in His death. The shedding of the blood of Him upon whom death had no claim.

Again, not only must God's claims be vindicated and His majesty sustained, but the power of the devil must be annulled and the children delivered, who through fear of death were held by him in bondage. To accomplish this He voluntarily took part in blood and flesh, of which they were partakers. They in a way which subjected them to death and its fear ; He in a way that enabled Him by death to deliver them.

God tells us "The life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood which maketh atonement for the soul" (Lev. 17. 11). This was typically; Christ's blood alone makes atonement. It shows the absolute sinlessness and value of His blood and flesh which satisfies God's claims on man's behalf. But this annuls the devil's power also, who was entitled to claim the sinner for death, but whose power was broken when he involved Christ in death. That which makes atonement alone can defeat the devil.

Here comes out distinctly CHRIST'S FULL MANHOOD. If He was not truly Man, how could He die for men? How could He accomplish God's purposes for man? How could His blood make atonement for the "soul" (in which lies responsibility) if He had no human soul? How, even if He had no true human spirit?

Nowhere is the incarnation more plainly spoken of than in our chapters, and the objects are distinctly affirmed. He is shown in perfect Manhood. And this is absolutely necessary, though not enough in itself, to accomplish atonement. The Man, Christ Jesus, is depicted before us, not as an apparition, neither as then in a spiritual body (though now He is), but in a body of blood and flesh, with a human soul and spirit. The life of the flesh was in the blood in Him, even as in the children. True, He is the Son, diminished as to His Godhead glory to a position lower than the angels, that in His humiliation He may taste death for everything; satisfy God's claims; sanctify the people by His own blood, destroying thus also the power of the devil. It is the Man, Christ Jesus, with the two natures in one Person. Very God! Very Man!

Moreover, He was the only Man with a right to a will of His own; while the only Man who never exercised His own will. Not that He ever gave it up as we may do by grace, because our will is contrary to God's will, but being always in the current of God's will He moved always according to that will. "I do always the things that please Him," He said. His will was always right, but He never did the right thing because it was His own will, but because it was God's.

But while it became the Majesty of God to make the Captain of salvation perfect through sufferings, it behoved Himself also, being Man, having taken part in flesh and blood to be MADE IN ALL THINGS LIKE UNTO HIS BRETHREN. This was in order to Priesthood. He passed through sufferings, being tempted even to death, in which He made propitiation, that He might know how to run to the rescue of those who are tempted. It was an obligation which He accepted as Man.

He became a babe, born of a woman. Unlike Adam, perfect in stature direct from God's hand, He passed through all the stages of babyhood, childhood, youth and Manhood; He led a life of service, conscious in Himself from very sympathy of all the misery and ruin sin entailed while seeing its effect in others. He sighed, groaned, wept; was the Man of sorrows, His form bowed, His visage marred.

By grace, He was made like unto His brethren (sin apart) who were involved in the circumstances of the fall; like them in all difficulties and exigencies; like in all trials and temptations. In all these things He accepted the obligation to endure the result of the sin of others, Himself without sin. "He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows" (Isa. liii. 4). He sighed when He healed and

groaned as He raised the dead ; knowing these things involved His own death. This bowed His form and marred His visage ! These things were His that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God.

But Christ's flesh was not simply as the flesh of Adam immaculate, clean from stain of sin and consequently innocent of that which the fall brought in ; neither was it as the flesh of Adam fallen, sinful, and subject to all the effects of the fall necessarily ending in death. His flesh was immaculate indeed as unfallen Adam's ; but it was holy flesh, impeccable, and could never become sinful as fallen Adam's. Christ was apart from all that which involved the fall ; but by grace He took part in that which the fall involved ; " sin apart " in every way, He became, in grace, subject to and capable of suffering even to death itself. While death claimed every man of the first race, it had no claim on Him, nor could His holy body see corruption. On the contrary, His death annulled the devil's power and delivered the children from bondage.

Other Scriptures affirm this also. " A body hast thou prepared Me." This He inhabited with a " Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God " (Heb. 10. 7). " God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh " ; He could thus become " A sacrifice for sin " (Rom. 8. 3). " That holy thing that shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God " (Luke 1. 35). This was " Jesus Christ come in flesh," who is confessed by every spirit which is of God (1 John 4. 2).

Once allow the thought of sin in any way in connection with the Lord Jesus Christ, save as being " made sin," and " bearing our sins in His own body on the tree," for the satisfaction of God's

claims and the destruction of the devil's power, and all truth is surrendered. His holy body was without sin, His pure and holy human soul and spirit were clear of all defilement of sin even in thought. Scripture affirms that " His soul was not left in Hades, neither did His flesh see corruption " (Acts 2. 31). His spirit (a true human spirit) was committed to the Father (Luke 23. 46). Infinitely pure and holy He came from God, and He went to God as pure and holy as He came from Him (John 3. 3).

Passing on to chapter 4. 15, we see that as He was in all things made like unto His brethren, so He was **TEMPTED IN ALL THINGS LIKE UNTO HIS BRETHREN**. Here the Holy Spirit vigilantly guards, in words unmistakable, the glory of the sinless One. In all His temptations He was " sin apart " (*choris amartias*). He was as absolutely apart from sin in His temptations as He was pure within and without. In His Being, holy ! In His flesh, sinless ! As apart from sin at His first coming as when He shall appear the second time apart from sin unto salvation (chapter 9. 28). The words " sin apart " appear in these two passages and only here in the New Testament, although involved everywhere in connection with the Lord Jesus ; without them all the glory of His Person would be vitiated.

All the temptations of our Lord Jesus were from without ; the devil could not get at Him from within. No unholy lust was in Him, yet He was tempted from without in every way ; the desires of the flesh, of the mind, and the pride of life. They are all illustrated in the beginning of His ministry in the wilderness.

1. He was hungry and it was not wrong to desire bread. He had power to make bread of the stones, and Satan

tempted Him to do so. "Command" said Satan! Ah! but He was Man now and had come to obey. He had no word from God, and this was more necessary to Him than bread. There was no movement of will in the obedient One. The temptation was "sin apart."

2. The devil shows Him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, in a moment of time, saying, "All these will I give Thee . . . fall down and worship me!" The temptation here was to obtain the sceptre of the world without the cross. Christ would not have it (though it was His own) from Satan's hands, nor from man's. Without desire apart from God, He accepts the cross, although His holy soul shrunk from it, and according to the written word, worships God. This temptation too was "sin apart."

3. Display God's care of you and show it openly, said Satan! Cast Thyself down from this pinnacle! God says, His angels shall bear Thee up lest Thou dash Thy foot against a stone. Prove it now! Christ knew God's care, He did not need to prove it. He would not tempt God. The written Word directed Him in this also, He desired no display of self but only God's glory. This temptation was also "sin apart."

But He suffered being tempted. Then the devil left Him for a season and the angels came and ministered unto Him.

After a time of respite from such

personal temptations, the devil returns in Gethsemane. The blessed Lord's special sufferings there are exhibited in Hebrews 5. Though Son He learned obedience by the things that He suffered. In Gethsemane it was man's hour and the power of darkness. These were arrayed against the Holy One. He offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears and was heard for His piety.

Here death—the death of the cross—would immediately ensue if He did not yield. Christ was prepared! He had already said to the Father, "Not My will, but Thine." And as He would not receive the kingdom at the devil's hand, so would He not receive death at his hands nor at man's, but said, "The cup which My Father hath given Me shall I not drink it?" He went into death in the power of—"Thou wilt not leave My soul in Hades, neither wilt Thou suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption" (Psa. 16. 10). Having waited patiently upon Jehovah, He came up out of that horrible pit with a new song in His mouth, even praise unto our God (Psa. 40. 1-3).

This temptation was also personally "sin apart," though here He was "made sin." Here, He "bare our sins." Now being made perfect, He is become the Author of eternal salvation to all those who obey Him.

Amid such scenes was the reality and the perfection of our blessed Lord's true manhood proved. Returned from the fight and ascended on high, He is hailed publicly High Priest after the order of Melchisedec.

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Enquire whether the shadows in your life are caused by standing in your own sunshine.

Prayer is the wing wherewith the soul flies to heaven and meditation is the eye that rests on God.

# THE LORD POSSESSED ME.

(JAMES BOYD.)

## Continued.

*"The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. . . . Then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him, and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him."*—Proverbs 8. 22-30.

IT was necessary for the fulfilment of God's purpose of love that the responsible man should first be brought into existence, and that it might be manifested to the whole intelligent creation that it is not within the power of the creature to keep himself in the position of blessing in which God set him, and that for eternal security everything must be set up in *the power of God*. It was also necessary for the manifestation of God in His character of righteousness and love, so that man, redeemed, may rest for ever in a happiness that knows no limit, and which cannot be disturbed by the intrusion of a thought of unrighteousness or want of affection on the part of God. To know that He is righteous and also to be assured of His love brings a peace to the soul that no power in the universe can ever disturb.

The darkness in which we were by nature; the inability to fulfil our obligations of which we were made painfully conscious; the innate enmity of our hearts against God; the death that lay with all its unutterable horror upon our souls; the painful conviction that we had God to meet on account of our unwillingness to fulfil His demands, while acknowledging the justness of these demands: these evils that so sorely oppressed us, made the intervention of God in sovereign grace an absolute necessity, if any were to be recovered out of the ruin in which the race of Adam was sunk. How was God to intervene?

*"Then I was by Him."* When the first man fell away from his Maker, He had not to retire and consider how

He would meet the difficulty that had so early risen in His fair creation. The "nursling of His love" was there. If *His* heel must, in the conflict between good and evil, be bruised, He shall bruise the head of the fell destroyer of God's feeble, and now sinful creature. The mighty Deliverer was there, and waiting the hour when He in sinless manhood would come down to look upon the burdens of those who trod the habitable parts of the earth, and to take upon Himself their bitter woes, for *His "delights were with the sons of men."* There was the One by whom God had counselled to intervene on behalf of poor devil-deceived men. But—

*"I was daily His delight."* What an infinite bond of affection binds together Father, Son, and Spirit! "GOD IS LOVE." Will the Father give up the Son to test and bring to light, in the first instance, the horrible enmity of the human heart against God? Will He suffer the One who was daily His delight to be the abhorred of sinful, rebellious men? Will He allow Him to be spit upon, to be buffeted, mocked and abused by those whom His righteous and holy law had cursed with a curse? And when He who delighted to do His will is condemned to a gibbet, and numbered with transgressors, will He also abandon Him, and hide from Him the brightness of His face?

It cannot be otherwise. If the Eternal God is not to confess that the making of the universe has been a mistake; that the angels were created in vain; that He has counselled things which He finds impossible to fulfil;

that the bright universe of blessing that was ever in His mind to bring to pass must never have existence ; that He must confess to utter failure, and that the infernal powers have out-mancœuvred Him, and He can do nothing but destroy the whole work of His hands : if all this cannot be allowed to be, then the "nursling of His love," the Man of His counsels, must go down into the deepest depths of humiliation, and when in the deep waters of infinite judgment, He must not intervene at the cry of anguish that shall rise from the soul of the afflicted, but must then refuse Him the help He calls for, and utterly forsake Him.

Will the love of God to His fallen creature, man, stand such a strain upon it as that ? Will the love He bears to the guilty mortals who despise Him answer to such a demand made upon it ? The answer is, He has done it. And the Son has become the willing Victim of man's enmity against God. The purposes of God must be carried out, and they must be carried out in righteousness. He who created the worlds must in the likeness of men be presented to men as the Saviour of the human race, and the depths of the human heart must be sounded and exposed, in order that the intelligences in the heavenly places may learn that, such was the utter ruin of the flesh, there was no other way of life and blessing for sinful men, than in the death of the only begotten Son of God. The flesh of sin must be dis-owned and brought to an end in judgment, and that only by Him, the sinless One, being made sin for us could we become the righteousness of God in Him ; and only by this means, by this infinite sacrifice, could the purposes of God be carried out.

Here the wickedness of the fallen creature was made perfectly manifest,

and also the infinite love of the Creator for the objects by whom this unparalleled wickedness was perpetrated. And as to all this must every intelligent being be enlightened. He who descended to the lower parts of the earth, and from thence ascended far above all heavens, will fill all things with the glory of the redemption that He has thus accomplished, and that glory is all that God is—perfectly revealed, and *God is love*.

Prior to the formation of man there were the various orders of angelic beings, some of them fallen, some of them in their primitive position and glory. At the formation of this earth "The morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy" (Job 38. 4-7). He made them all to serve His purpose, and whatever ways of rebellion against His authority some of them may take, He will see to it that their most mischievous plottings and their most wicked activities shall be made to tend to the fulfilment of His gracious designs. Those who serve Him faithfully will not go without His commendations, and those who do everything to ruin His universe must learn, in the day in which He shall visit their rebellion with unsparing judgment, that they have utterly failed to do anything detrimental to the end He has had in view, but that He has made their accursed activities to conspire to one end, and that end the carrying out of His purposes of love. He cannot be defeated in His own creation by the creature He has made. He makes the wrath of man to praise Him, and He restrains the remainder. He gave to the sea His decree, that the waters shall not pass His commandment. He says to it, "Hitherto shalt thou come and no farther, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed" (Job 38. 11).

(To be continued.)

## PLAYING THE MAN.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

I HAVE received a letter from a young Christian who is studying in a Divinity school. His purpose is to be a good soldier of Jesus Christ, but there sounds in his letter a note of discouragement. He does not find his path an easy one, and the indifference to Christ all about him is a great trial to him. There are many like him I have no doubt in home, office, workshop or school. It may cheer such to consider of what stock they come. This is given to us very quaintly by the inimitable Bunyan, when he describes for us the reception the good Gaius—pattern of a Christian host—gave to Christiana and her company as they journeyed to the Celestial City.

“Is this Christian’s wife, and are these Christian’s children?” said he. “I knew your husband’s father, yea, also his father’s father. Many have been good of this stock; their ancestors dwelt first at Antioch. Christian’s progenitors (I suppose you have heard your husband talk of them) were very worthy men. They have above any that I know, showed themselves to be men of great virtue and courage for the Lord of the pilgrims, His ways, and them that loved Him. I have heard of many of your husband’s relations that have stood all trials for the sake of the truth. Stephen, that was one of the first of the family from whence your husband sprang, *was knocked on the head with stones*. James, another of his generation, *was slain with the edge of the sword*. To say nothing of Paul and Peter, men anciently of the family from whence your husband came, there was Ignatius, *who was cast to the lions*; Romanus, *whose flesh was cut by pieces from his bones*; and POLYCARP, **THAT PLAYED THE MAN IN THE FIRE**. There was he that was hanged up in a basket in the sun for the wasps

to eat; and he whom they put in a sack, and cast him into the sea to be drowned. Nor can I but be glad to see that thy husband has left behind him four such boys as these. I hope they will bear up their father’s name, and tread in their father’s steps, and come to their father’s end.”

“Indeed, sir,” said Greatheart, their guide, and that most valiant of the King’s band, “they are likely lads; they seem to choose heartily their father’s ways.”

How marvellously does Bunyan put things! That description of these young pilgrims as “likely lads” could not be improved upon. And in such a way will I describe my young correspondent and all his like. Having in their youth owned Jesus as their Saviour and Lord, what wonderful possibilities lie before them. “I hope they will bear up their father’s name,” said Gaius of these likely lads. That name was CHRISTIAN. Wonderful name for anyone to bear! It means, “Ye are Christ’s.” And those who bear it will have to suffer for His Name’s sake. “But,” says Peter, “If any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God on this behalf” (1 Peter 3. 16).

But if this name is to be truly borne by any *they must play the man*, as Polycarp did, not at the stake, of course, the devil has given up burning Christians; he discovered that it did not pay him, and he endeavours now to weary them by their lukewarm surroundings. It were better that they were either cold or hot, for the Laodicean influence is deadly indeed. It is, in fact, fatal to the pilgrim, unless he hath purpose of heart, cleaves to the Lord, and plays the man.

But it will surely stir the hearts of

the young Christians to run over again the names of these noble martyrs of the Lord whom Bunyan calls our progenitors, and to dwell for a while on Polycarp specially, who played the man in the fire.

We learn of him when he was brought to the stake, the Roman officer, who had charge of the execution, a soldier with a humane heart, felt for the old man, and said, "Have pity on thy great age. Swear by Cæsar. Reproach this Christ of thine by but one word, and I will set thee free." The noble pilgrim, enfeebled and bent with years and suffering, replied, "Eighty and six years have I served Jesus Christ, and He has never once wronged or deceived me, how, then, can I reproach Him!" Then as the executioners were binding the aged saint and preparing the fire for his martyrdom, some who stood by wrote down this prayer as it issued from his lips. "O Father of Thy

well-beloved Son, Jesus Christ. I bless Thee that Thou hast counted me worthy of this day and this hour. I thank Thee that I am permitted to put my lips to the cup of Christ. And I thank Thee for the sure hope of the resurrection and of the incorruptible life of heaven. I praise Thee, O Father, through our eternal High Priest, Jesus Christ, through whom, and in the Holy Ghost, be glory to Thee, both now and for ever. Amen."

Ah! Polycarp was one of the cloud of witnesses, who bear witness to us that God will never fail, but will uphold by His strong right hand all those who put their trust in Him. Do not fear, young Christian, commit your life with all its problems to God, and in dependence and obedience choose heartily this way in which your progenitors have run, **LOOKING UNTO JESUS THE AUTHOR AND FINISHER OF FAITH.**

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## CONTENTMENT.

THE shepherd boy sings in the Valley of Humiliation:—

"He that is down needs fear no fall,  
He that is low, no pride;  
He that is humble ever shall  
Have God to be his guide.

"I am content with what I have,  
Little be it or much;  
And, Lord, contentment still I crave,  
Because Thou savest much.

"Fulness to such a burden is  
That go on pilgrimage:  
Here little, and hereafter bliss,  
Is best from age to age."

*John Bunyan.*

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If you complain of your foes either inwardly or from outside, your strength is less than theirs; you are unwittingly making Christ inferior to them.

# THE PROSPEROUS MAN. Psalm I.

(G. F. EDINGTON.)

**T**HERE is a wide range of solid comfort and practical instruction to be derived from the prayerful and diligent study of the "Book of Psalms." We miss much if we do not give our earnest attention to that wonderful manual of devotional exercises, prayers, songs and praises, placed, we might say, in the heart of the sacred volume which God has given to us. There is not a single grief, or trouble, among the many to which the flesh is heir, but finds its counterpart and its antidote in its pages. But the joys and blessedness of a life lived in communion with God are also given full expression to, so that the thoughtful student of Scripture will have the privilege of listening to the breathings and exercises of "wisdom's children" of a past dispensation, their ups and downs, their sorrows and trials, their conflicts and defeats, their triumphs and victories, all faithfully delineated by the unerring pen of the Holy Ghost; and although, in the light of an accomplished redemption, and a risen and glorified Saviour at the right Hand of God, our outlook and privileges are infinitely higher than those whose hopes were only bounded by the earth: yet it is the same God we have to do with. And in the light of new creation, we can, in the Spirit's power, see how often and how wonderfully the Lord Jesus Christ is presented: His exercises as a lowly, dependent man down here; His toils, His sorrows, His sympathies and His sufferings, told out in human language as actually felt and experienced, in His passage through a hostile world. All this makes the "Book of Psalms" of the greatest value to us.

In this Psalm of six verses, we have the divine description of a happy, or prosperous man. Verse 1 depicts the

threefold stages in the downward path of evil: the walking, the standing, and the sitting: the subtle way of the enemy in luring his victims down the broad road. The blessed Lord, in His intrinsic holiness, was apart from all this. There was no response in Him to anything that Satan could present or suggest. This is the negative side—verse 2, the positive. "But His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law doth He meditate day and night." Herein lies the secret of His prosperity. We may trace the ways of the Son of Man down here—dependent, obedient, submissive, ever subject to the will of God, never moving a step apart from His Father's word. He could say: "He wakeneth mine ear, morning by morning, to hear as the learner" (Isa. 50. 4). "How sweet are Thy words unto my taste: yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth" (Psa. 119. 103). I will delight myself in Thy commandments which I have loved" (Psa. 119. 47). What a theme for our contemplation is this glorious Person! He who stooped from glory's heights, to the darkness, and distance and abandonment of Calvary, that rebel, bankrupt sinners might be freed from the enemy's grasp, and by the shedding of His precious blood be brought into cloudless favour and acceptance with a holy and sin-hating God.

"And He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; His leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper" (verse 3). How could it be otherwise?—a real Man, perfect in all His ways, yet God over all, blessed for ever, passing through a sinful world amid shame and rejection, scorn, reproach and hatred; and at the same time the object of Heaven's

delight, again and again expressed by God the Father through the opened Heavens (Matt. 3. 16, 17; 17. 5; John 12. 28).

In His lowly pathway through this world He told out, in all His words and ways, the heart of a Saviour God. All He did was in due season: whether in denouncing the hypocrisy of the Scribes and Pharisees, or speaking peace and forgiveness to a penitent sinner in Simon's house: whether, in holy zeal, driving out the desecrators of the Temple, or taking the little children in His arms; healing the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda, or stilling the storm for His troubled disciples on the Lake of Tiberias; causing the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak, the blind to see, or raising the widow's son to life—all was in season. His leaf was ever green. How fittingly

it could be said of Him, "For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous"; "and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand" (Psa. 1. 6; Isa. 53. 10).

What a comfort to know that there has been one Man in this world who could give a perfect answer to the mind and heart of God, and that He is the one whom we are called upon to follow (1 Peter 2. 21). He has trodden the path of faith and completed it. He has reached the goal in triumph, and from thence has sent down the Holy Spirit to connect our hearts livingly with Himself at the right hand of God. Meanwhile, until we hear His welcome voice calling us to be with Him in His Home of eternal rest, we are left down here to spread His fame, and share His reproach in the scene of His deep dishonour.

*The beloved writer of the foregoing sweet meditation on the perfections of our Lord Jesus as a Man on earth has heard the "welcome voice," and is now in the Home of eternal rest of which he speaks in the last paragraph of the paper. The paper was the last communication that we had from him before his home-going.*

## CHRIST IS THE TRUTH.

[F we speak of the truth we mean that it is a person speaking exactly what is true about everything. CHRIST tells us the truth about GOD. Satan takes very fair forms, as in the case with Peter, "Be it far from Thee, Lord: this shall not be unto Thee"; but CHRIST says, "Get thee behind Me, Satan; thou art an offence unto Me." He told the truth about that; it looked a very fair, gracious speech, but it was really denying all that HE had come to do, and CHRIST tells the truth about it. And so about man; who would have suspected that man would have done such things as he did when CHRIST was

here? There you get the truth about man, all his will was brought out; it was not fully detected till CHRIST came. So, too, I do not know what sin is till I see it in the Cross of CHRIST; and just the same about righteousness, CHRIST is the Truth. Whether it is God, or man, or Satan, or righteousness, or sin, the truth about everything is in CHRIST, and if we have CHRIST we have the truth. When we have to discern our way in the midst of good and evil, we do not know the truth unless we have got CHRIST; the truth is in HIM and not in us.

# DANGERS THAT THREATEN

(F. B. HOLE.)

## 3. Division. I. Corinthians.

AT this late hour in the church's history the state of division into which it has fallen is all too manifest. So manifest is it and so complete, that it might be thought that this particular evil could hardly go further than it has gone, and that to deal with the subject is a waste of time—a kind of shutting of the stable door after the horses are fled. We are assured, on the other hand, that however widespread may be the trouble it is one that never ceases to threaten the people of God, and that, therefore, the Scriptural sayings on the subject are always timely and to the point.

When the Apostle Paul wrote his first letter to the Corinthians the divisions that existed among them were of an incipient nature and not as yet open and avowed breaches. Twice does the apostle speak of "divisions" (I. 10; 3. 3; II. 18). Once he uses the word "heresies" (I. 19), and once he speaks of "contentions" (I. 11). They were forming parties or schools of opinion—which is what the word "heresies" means—and those, of course, gave rise to contentions and divisions. Yet the divisions were found amongst them when they came together "in the church" or "in assembly" (II. 18), so that they evidently maintained outward unity, though these sad cleavages or rents were present.

It is worthy of note that the divided state of the Corinthians was brought under Paul's notice by a report which reached him, and that in taxing them with it he plainly stated who his informants were, and also was quite specific in the charge he brought against them. How often have reports concerning the low estate or wrongdoing of some of the saints of God been

brought by their fellow-believers, who having poured forth their tale have at once tried to bind down the one who has listened to their complaint to absolute silence as to their names! They are wishing to bring the charge, but not willing to put their name to it, so that should it be unfounded or only partly correct their responsibility may not be brought home to them. It was not thus with these believers "of the house of Chloe."

Nor did the apostle permit the point of his charge to be lost in vague generalities of a sort that are fairly easy to establish and very difficult to deny. He made his charge quite clear. "*Now this I say,*" or "*But I speak of this,*"—that each of you say, "I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ." They were turning into party leaders men whom they esteemed to be great.

It was not that they were actually ranging themselves under the banners of Paul or Apollos or Peter, as verse 6 of chapter 4. shows. With Christian delicacy the apostle avoided mentioning the real names of the men who were making themselves into, or being made by the Corinthians, into party leaders. He spoke "in a figure," and transferred the matter to himself and to Apollos, desiring that in that way they might learn the lesson not to be puffed up for one man against another. The men they were really puffed up for, were either men of note in their own local assembly, or possibly some of the false and Judaizing workers who got amongst them, as chapter II. of the second Epistle shows.

In their unconverted days the Corinthian believers had been familiar with the philosophies of the Grecian

world and accustomed to range themselves under their leaders of thought into philosophic schools. They had boasted in all this human wisdom—"the wisdom of this world" and of "the princes of this world," for without a doubt many of the leaders of Greek thought were princes in the realm of intellect, as the Romans were princes in the arts of government. They committed the folly of importing these worldly ways into the midst of the church of God, and assuming that leading Christians were to be esteemed as princes in things religious—were to be followed and magnified into leaders of schools of religion.

Why did they think after this fashion? The apostle's diagnosis of their case is very simple, and stated with great plainness of speech: "Ye are yet *carnal*," he said. "Whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not *carnal*, and walk as men?" (3. 3). Spiritually they were still but babes, in an infantile condition, and they were fleshly and not of spiritual mind.

Before the eyes of the carnal believer *man* always looms as an imposing object. If he does not exactly see men as trees walking, he certainly sees them as of mountainous proportions, and hence in these early chapters of I Corinthians, Paul proceeds to put man, together with his works and his wisdom, into his proper place of nothingness, by exalting Christ and His cross. When first he arrived at Corinth he was led of God to know nothing among them "save Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (2. 2). That they needed at the outset, and that they needed still.

In the first nine verses of the Epistle he reminds them that Christ is all.

Upon what Name did they call?

"Upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord" (1. 2).

How had the grace of God reached them? It had been, he says, "given you by Jesus Christ" (1. 4).

What was the character of the apostolic witness which had reached them? It was "the testimony of Christ" (1. 6). What was their hope? "The coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1. 7). And, what the character of the time for which they waited? It was "the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."

What was their position on earth while waiting? They were "called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord" (1. 9).

How high and holy the dignity and privilege connected with a calling such as this! We have but to awake to it to become instantly conscious of what a poor and paltry thing it is to be of Paul or Apollos or Cephas. To say, "and I of Christ," in such circumstances—that is, to treat the Lord Himself as though He were to be ranked with His servants, as though He were but worthy to be a party leader in the church instead of being Head of the church—is even worse. It is to commit in principle Peter's mistake on the mount of transfiguration and to suggest erecting a tabernacle for Christ alongside tabernacles for Paul, Apollos and Peter.

Having set forth the paltriness of their divisions in the light of the incomparable glory of Christ, the apostle expounds the cross as the power and wisdom of God, which has "made foolish the wisdom of this world." Why had the Corinthian believers become enthusiastic partisans of one or another of the clever or gifted men who had been or still were amongst them? Because they intensely admired them. They were enamoured of the brilliant intellect of this one, or the flowing

eloquence of that one, or the pushful energy of a third; instead of perceiving in them simply "ministers" or "servants" possessed it is true of differing qualities as also of differing gifts, but even these, "as the Lord gave to every man" (3. 5). Hence, instead of glorifying the Lord who had gifted and enabled them, they glorified the servants who were but instruments or vessels, and it may be that they glorified clever men who could hardly be ranked as true servants of God at all. It was as though one should attribute all the virtue and glory to the jawbone of the ass instead of to the power of God that moved the mighty muscles of Samson's arm.

How often we are like these first century believers at Corinth! How little have we learned the grace and meaning of the cross of Christ from this standpoint, even though we rejoice in it as that which has wrought expiation for our sins. The very thought of "the cross" is that of a death under judgment, a death of shame; and we believe that almost invariably the passages in the Epistles that speak of the death of Christ as "the cross," contemplate it as that which *puts under judgment and under the brand of shame.*

Let us all make sure that by the help of God we understand this point. The Lord Jesus humbled Himself to death—"even the death of the cross." Stretched forth upon a Roman gibbet, lifted up from the earth, He was *put publicly under MAN'S judgment and openly branded with shame.* The thing was not done by the fools and degenerates of this world. It was "the princes of this world"—princes in authority and intellect and religion—that "crucified the Lord of Glory."

The central cross, then, lifted on high as an object of scorn, the LORD OF GLORY, who suffered Himself to

be thus eclipsed—as we may speak—for a brief moment in the history of eternity. To all outward appearance He was judged and put to shame in man's rebellious and foolish little world. He was not *really* put to shame, but rather He was glorified, and God was glorified in Him, as never before. His own words in John 13. 31, anticipate this.

The cross then, as God saw it, as the holy angels saw it, as believers to-day see it, and as presently the whole universe shall see it, was not the putting to shame of Jesus under the judgment of the superior wisdom and power of the princes of this world, but the glorifying of the Son of man and *the solemn putting of the princes, and their fancied wisdom and power, under a sentence of shame and judgment from GOD.*

The cross was judgment indeed. But it was the judgment of this world. It was shame, indeed. But it was the wisdom of this world that was "made foolish" there. It was death—death dropping like a curtain and closing the story. But though the princes aimed to "destroy Jesus" (Matt. 27. 20), it was not Jesus who was destroyed. It was rather the fulfilment of that which had been written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent" (1. 19).

We solemnly urge upon all our readers the question—Have you so learned the cross of Christ? If you have you will know well what "the offence of the cross" (Gal. 5. 11) means, and why there are to be found "enemies of the cross of Christ" (Phil. 3. 18), and why preaching the gospel "with wisdom of words" must help towards making the cross of Christ "of none effect" (1. 17), since it would be tantamount to proclaiming with a flourish of worldly cleverness that

which sets aside all worldly cleverness. A truly stultifying procedure, since people always lay more stress on our practice than on the mere affirmation of principles.

The truth of the cross clearly shuts out man and his self-importance. Be it even Paul, or Apollos or Peter, all are swept away, and the divisions that would centre in them are excluded.

But if the cross shuts man out, the Spirit brings God in; and chapter 2. is the chapter of the Spirit of God.

The Corinthians might have thought that since Paul had come amongst them with nothing "save Jesus Christ and Him crucified," there was nothing further for them in the things of God. This was not so. These are "the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him"—the things which are to be ours as the fruit of the cross and according to the counsels of God. In these things are told out "the wisdom of God . . . the hidden wisdom," and hence they lie outside man's range altogether. Of them it is written, "Eye hath not seen"—so we cannot discover them by *observation*; "nor ear heard"—so we shall not find them in *tradition*; "neither have entered into the heart of man"—so there is no hope of arriving at them by a process of *intuition*. If we are to know them at all we are shut up to God.

Now God *has* acted. He has revealed them by His Spirit to the apostles and prophets (verse 10), and then empowered them to communicate what was revealed to them in words taught by the Holy Ghost (verse 13). Hence we have inspired communications. Thirdly, by the Spirit of God these things can be received or appropriated by the believer (verses 14, 15). Man in his unconverted condition—"the natural man"—cannot receive them at all.

All that we know, therefore, of the things of God we know not by observation, nor tradition, nor intuition which are purely human, but by *revelation*, and *inspiration*, and *appropriation*, which are all by the Holy Spirit of God.

Let us only lay hold of the truth that centres in "the cross" and "the Spirit," and our souls are at once lifted from mere religion upon a human plane, which may have its great leaders of thought and its schools of opinion and parties, into an order of things which is divine. We then begin to forsake the carnal for the spiritual and to get away from the spirit of division.

Division is nowhere in Scripture presented as an evidence of spirituality but always of carnality. "Ye are yet carnal," was the Apostle's indictment. How did he prove his charge? By simply saying, "whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?" (3. 3). Similarly in Galatians 5. 20, "heresies" or "schools of opinion" are cited as amongst "the works of the *flesh*." If carnality prevails, divisions are sure to raise their ugly head. Hence, when the report of the divisions at Corinth reached Paul, it did not take him by surprise. "I partly believe it," he writes, "for there must be also heresies [schools of opinion] among you" (II. 18, 19). Emphasize that "*you*." There was no such "must" in the case of the faithful saints at Ephesus, or Colosse or Philippi. But amongst "*you*"—the carnal believers at Corinth—there are sure to be these "heresies" as the inevitable fruit of your carnal state. That God knows how to overrule even heresies and make them serve towards the making manifest of those who are approved of Himself—those not infected with the spirit of division—is no excuse for the heresies or divisions.

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

### To "Pass Over."

Does the expression, "I will PASS OVER you" (Exod. 12. 13) mean hover over you like a bird protecting its young? See verse 23 and Isa. 31. 5.—**ABERDEENSHIRE.**

**T**HE word used in Exod. 12. 13, 23, is the same as in the latter part of Isa. 31. 5, and only on these three occasions does it occur in the Old Testament. It certainly does not mean "pass by" as is often supposed, but pass over; the Lord would Himself defend the house where the blood was. It is more than simply hovering over, it describes the putting forth of energy in the defence of a loved object. This Old Testament type is full of comfort for us if we are sheltered by the blood of Jesus Christ.

That blood does not keep God as a Judge at a distance from us, but brings Him near to us, and us to Him, the meaning of it is found in the wonderful statement in Rom. 8. 31. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Not merely is His mercy on our side, or one or other of His many attributes, but He Himself, who gave His Son for us, and who has justified us. He is on our side. He has passed over us, and has become our shield and refuge.

### Repentance.

"The question arose as to whether repentance or conversion takes place first in a soul. It was pointed out that repentance must go before believing on the Lord Jesus, and then a Scripture was asked for in which a Gentile was told to repent before believing in the Lord. . . . Will you give a little help?"—**GATESHEAD.**

**W**E often use Biblical words and phrases in a loose sort of way. The word conversion is an instance of this, it is often made to cover both repentance and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, yet really it merely means a change or a turning, and this is what repentance is, a change of mind, and a turning to God. Perhaps it would be right to say that repentance is the inward work, and conversion the outward effect of it; but they are practically simultaneous.

Repentance was certainly preached to the Gentiles. The text that comes most readily to the mind as proof of this is Acts 20. 21, "Testifying both to Jews and also to Greeks, repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ." The commission given to the disciples in Luke's Gospel, which is specially our

commission, contains this sentence, "That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name among all nations." And these two passages would show that repentance comes before faith. It is the ploughing up of the heart that prepares it for the good seed of the gospel. It is a door opened through which men may turn to God, and turning to Him they discover that He is a pardoning God, offering to all the forgiveness of sins through our Lord Jesus Christ.

But while there must be repentance before salvation, which is by faith, it does not follow that repentance ceases when salvation is known, for the more we learn of the goodness of God and the badness of self, the deeper will be our repentance, our turning away from self to find our satisfaction and rest in Christ.

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What does your anxiety do? It does not empty to-morrow, brother, of its sorrow; but it empties to-day of its strength. It does not make you escape the evil, but it makes you unable to cope with it when it comes.

There are no times in life when the opportunity to gather wealth into the soul as when it has to suffer. If a man looks to God in his suffering it is the turning hour in his life.

# THE SOWER, THE SEED, AND HARVEST.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

## Report of an Address.

*“He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing His sheaves with him.”—Psalm 126. 6.*

[N view of the increasing indifference to the Word of God in Christendom, I want to speak to-night on the absolute necessity of it, not only for the blessing of men, but for that which is of greater importance, the fulfilment of the purposes of God. The parable of the sower ought to teach its lesson to us without any explanation, and it is evident from the Lord's own words that if we do not understand the meaning of it we do not understand any divine truth at all, for He said to His disciples, “Know ye not this parable, then how shall ye know all parables?” (Mark 4. 13). That which is taught in the parable of the sower is elementary, it is introductory, it lies at the threshold of all divine knowledge.

What, then, is it that the parable would teach us? Plainly that there can be no harvest for God apart from the Word of God. It means that apart from the intervention of God by His own life-giving gospel there can be nothing for God in the lives of any people, nor blessing for them.

It is of intense interest that the Lord propounded the parable of the sower in the Gospels when it was plain that the people would not receive Him as their Messiah. He must begin anew if He was to have any harvest at all. All appeals to men on the ground of what they ought to be are in vain. They neither can nor will yield to God His due. The soil of the heart can bring forth no fruit for God unless there is cast into it the Word of God. It is just as well to be clear as to that, and as there are some here who preach to the people, let me press

this home: that which alone can bring forth fruit for God is the Word of God, the truth of the gospel, and apart from that there can be no fruit. In the popular preaching in Christendom it is increasingly left out; the Word of God is set aside. The Higher Critics and Modernists have other plans, other schemes. They do not love the gospel and have little use for it. They imagine that all that man needs is a system of ethics, a little cultivation. Raise the standard of living, educate him, give him a right environment, then he will be all that he can desire to be and all that God can reasonably expect him to be. That is their idea. The ritualist brings in his forms and ceremonies, and hopes by an outward cloak of religion to improve and uplift man.

What a delusion is this! It is not the environment or the circumstances that make men what they are, nor can dead externals change them; the man himself is wrong, and that is the question that we have to face. In preaching the gospel the more truly we understand that, the more successfully shall we preach it. Let me illustrate. Here is a farmer—he is one of the up-to-date sort. As to sowing wheat in the field, well, of course, his father did that before him and his grandfather, and right away back to Adam—that is how they got their harvests, and some of them were very good harvests; but he is not so old-fashioned as to tread in their steps. He has got an up-to-date plan. His plan is to see that the ground is properly nourished and beautified, he will plant rose

bushes round his field, and if it does not rain he will irrigate the land. He won't sow the wheat, oh, no! he is too scientific, that is the old-fashioned way! When that farmer's neighbours rejoice in a plenteous harvest, will he have a harvest? Yes, he will; but it will be a harvest of weeds and thorns, for the earth yields crops of that sort without sowing, but he will have no golden grain with which to fill his barns. There never was such a fool, you say, but I tell you that those men who hope to reap a right harvest from men without the good seed of the Word are just such fools, only a hundredfold more so. This leaving out the Word of God and going in for the culture of man apart from it will yield its own harvest, but it will be a harvest of thorns and thistles; misery for man now and damnation hereafter. We who preach must have greater confidence than ever in the Word of God.

Let us understand what is meant really by the Word of God. The seed is the Word of God, and the Sower the one who sows the seed. It is interesting to see that in the three Gospels in which we have this parable given, there is emphasized in each of them, each of the three things necessary for a harvest. In LUKE it is the Word of God. He says, The seed is the Word of God. In MARK it is the sower. He says, The sower soweth the seed. In MATTHEW it is the soil. He says, When one heareth the Word. You have the seed, the sower and the soil. I want specially to speak of the Sower and the seed. Indeed, I cannot separate the two. The Lord Himself is the One who has sown the seed, and that beautiful passage in Psalm 126. has reference to Him. It says, "*He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing His sheaves with*

*him.*" To whom could that possibly refer but the Lord Himself? Was He not the One who came forth weeping, bearing precious seed, and is He not the One who will come again with rejoicing bringing His sheaves with Him! The seed that He sowed is the Word of God. He brought into this world the full revelation of God. He came to make known what God is. In the midst of the darkness He came with the light. He brought into a dead world the living Seed. He came bringing with Him the full knowledge of God's love—so the seed that He sowed was the full knowledge of God. My friends, it is most edifying, most blessed for us who are saved, and who preach the Word, to consider that blessed Sower. Consider Him coming into this world from Godhead's fullest glory. His life was one of suffering. He was the Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. His sacred cheeks were often wet with tears. He could not have sown the seed apart from sorrow, for He sowed it in the midst of men who did not want God. He sowed the seed in the midst of a devil-oppressed and sin-blighted world. We see sin, stark and naked and loathsome, and we shrink from it, but what must it have been to our Lord Jesus Christ! He was absolutely holy. He knew what sin was in all its hideousness in the sight of God, and all its dire consequences to men. One sin would be more terrible in His sight than ten thousand in ours. What must it have been to Him to have been in the midst of this world that reeks with moral putrefaction and heaves perpetually beneath its weight of sorrow? His eye saw every sin, and every sigh that rose from every broken heart entered His ear. No wonder that He was the Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Yet He fulfilled His mission, undeterred and undismayed, and by His words

and ways amongst men He declared what God is, the only remedy for all the woe.

The people took notice of His works and words. They said, "He hath done all things well," and, "No man spake like this Man." There was something wonderfully attractive about His words and works. But in them all He was sowing the seed, heavenly, divine seed, making known to men what God is, for His words were the Father's words and the works were the Father's works. See Him gather children into His arms, and by the way He did it make known the deep tenderness of the heart of God. Hear Him when, with heart moved with compassion, He says "weep not" to the broken-hearted mother, and in those words learn how compassionate God is. Stand by and behold Him make the five thousand sit down upon the green grass, and then take the bread and fishes and make them sufficient to satisfy the hunger of that multitude, and learn how God cares for His creatures here below. Hear Him, as the world's misery rolls in wave upon wave before Him, saying, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," and learn in those wonderful words God's desire to bring every creature into blessing. So through all His works and in all His words see Him bringing into manifestation what God is. He that hath seen Him hath seen the Father. But if He had only lived His life and returned to heaven we should not have benefited. We might have been filled with amazement, but we should not have been saved. It was necessary for this same blessed Person to go into death. He who wept must also bleed, and in nothing was the heart of God so fully declared as in the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. Oh, Christian, consider Him! See

Him in John 19. It is recorded: "*They led Him forth.*" In that their sin came to its climax. That is one side of the story. We also read, "*Jesus bearing His cross went forth.*" In that His love rose higher than their sin. *They led Him forth.* That is their side. That was the revelation of their sin; *but He went forth* in all the holy dignity of absolute subjection to the will of God. That was God's side; and in that we see coming into full revelation the love of God. The sin of men and the love of God met at the cross. His sacred brow was crowned with thorns, and from His spear-rent side there poured forth the precious blood. There He hung—the great evidence to the world of God's wondrous love. "For God commendeth His love to us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." There we see the whole revelation of what God is, and this is the seed in all its blessedness—the full revelation of what God is—and the gospel preacher just passes it on—he tells again the story of God's great love to men. It is the truth of what God is that transforms the life, that takes root in the heart and brings forth a harvest for the glory of God, and by no other means can any harvest be secured. The seed of good in every man, only needing cultivation, is a figment of human pride; the gospel of the grace of God is an absolute necessity.

There may be some in my audience still unconverted; I would address myself to such. How is it that you are not converted? You have heard the gospel before, it may be many times you have sat under the sound of it, and you are not saved yet. Why is that? The Lord Jesus Christ said, "When one heareth the word, then comes the devil and taketh the word out of the heart lest they should believe

and be saved." If you have been under the sound of the gospel and are not saved, it means that the devil has taken the word out of your heart, and the extraordinary thing is you were glad to have it so. You are in fellowship with the devil in this matter, and not with God. You are a wayside hearer. You have given the devil the right of way in your heart and he has hardened it against the Word, and you have kept God and His Word out of your heart, and that is the reason why you sit here to-night unsaved.

"He that goeth forth weeping, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again rejoicing, bringing His sheaves with Him." The first half of our text may be covered by the words of the Apostle Peter, "The sufferings of Christ." But he also spoke of "the glory that should follow." The great Sower shall doubtless come again rejoicing, bringing His sheaves with Him, in the great harvest home.

In the three Gospels a different result of the sowing in each of them is given. In Luke's Gospel we read the word of God brings forth one hundred fold. In Matthew some one hundred, some sixty, and some thirty. In Mark we are told it bringeth forth thirty, sixty and one hundred fold. We may be sure that it is the wisdom of the Spirit of God that brings out these different results and that there is no discrepancy here, and it is for us to understand what is meant by these different measures. In Luke's Gospel we have presented the grace of God going out to the Gentiles. The Gospel was written by a Gentile and written to a Gentile. Luke is the one who records the ministry of Paul the Apostle, for he also wrote the Acts. The truth of the church was Paul's ministry. The moral foundations of it are in Luke's Gospel. The church is

reared upon the grace of God. So that I believe that the hundred fold in Luke's Gospel is the church. The great result from the sowing of the word in this present dispensation is the church, the body of Christ, soon to be the bride, the Lamb's wife. In the assembly God will find His hundred fold. It is in the assembly that Christ sees of the travail of His soul and is satisfied. It is through the assembly that God will get glory through Christ Jesus throughout all the ages (Ephes. 3.), throughout all eternity. We ought to be deeply thankful to God that we have been born in this period of time. Every saved person has a more wonderful position than that of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. We form part of God's assembly, that in which He is to find a full answer to the sowing of the seed by His beloved Son on earth. Think of that moment when out of heaven Christ shall come to meet the church and to present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing. Then in eternity she is to be as a bride adorned for her husband—that means the church will fully satisfy the heart of Christ. He will find in the church a full answer to all His sufferings. She will be for Him alone. She will receive His love into her heart without measure and will respond to it without reserve. There will be no rival to Him in her affections. She will never leave her first love, and for ever the Lord will have the hundred fold of His sowing in His church. Thank God we are to have our part in that. Souls saved by the gospel in this present period of time form that which will yield throughout eternity one hundred fold of joy to Christ and glory to God.

Matthew's Gospel is the Gospel of the Kingdom. There the Lord is presented to Israel as her King. You remember

that the wise men from the East came asking, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews?" And upon His cross, this accusation was written, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews." When He takes up His great power and sits on the throne of His father David, His church will come with Him, for she is to share His glory. The vast inheritance that is His He shares with her. All His glory He is going to share with His church. So the church will be with Him when He comes. But He will have Israel also. He loves Israel. It is of Israel He said, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love and with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." He said, "Thou art graven on the palms of My hands," and over her He wept in the days of His flesh, and for her He bled. And all Israel shall be saved. Then shall be fulfilled the word, "The Lord thy God is in the midst of thee; He will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love; He will joy over thee with singing" (Zephaniah 3. 17). In Israel the Lord will find the sixty fold. But in that day of His glory He shall sway a universal sceptre. All nations shall adore Him, all peoples sing His praise. The nations that are saved and blessed

as we find in Matthew 25., will rejoice in Him as their Lord and King. They will get great blessing under the beneficent sway of our Lord, but they will not be as near as Israel, nor will the Lord get the same glory through them; they will be the thirty fold. Imagine three concentric circles—first, Christ and His assembly, then Israel, and then the nations of the earth. Christ, the centre of all the glory and the church with Him, nearer to Him than all beside, the hundred fold; Israel in the second circle, the sixty fold; and the nations in the great outer circle, the thirty fold. What a wonderful day that will be when the One who was rejected by man, crucified as the malefactor, the One in whose face men spat in their contempt of Him, sits upon His universal throne, and when to the utmost bounds of His Kingdom joy and blessing will radiate from Himself, the centre. What a day that will be when every tongue confesses Him, when every knee bends before Him, then will He see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. Then will He reap the harvest of His sowing, the hundred fold, the sixty fold, and the thirty fold.

*(To be concluded.)*

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## COMPENSATION IN LOSS.

HAVE you suffered some great loss?

Well, there is no doubt that the Lord could have prevented that, but He did not. What, then, is He against you? No, He is for you, and would be not only your resource but your abundant compensation. As your resource He can enable you to meet your changed circumstances, whatever they may be, with fortitude, and be more than a conqueror in them; as

your compensation He will enrich you with the knowledge of His love and excellencies so that your cup will run over. What had Abraham in exchange for his country, kindred, and father's house? He had God as his exceeding great reward. What had Paul when he had suffered the loss of all things? He had the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord.

# THE MASTER'S WORDS.

(JAMES MCBROOM.)

## Notes on Matthew's Gospel. Chapter 7.

[F we have followed the line of this precious Discourse in the two previous chapters it will not be difficult to understand what is here. If we live before the Father in simplicity and sincerity, our dealings with others will be marked by kindness and consideration rather than fault-finding, which seems to be the sense in which judging is used in this first verse. It is not that we are not called to judge between good and evil, for had it meant that there could have been no abstaining from evil, but that we should be free from a censorious spirit, which is a very great evil. "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, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ hath forgiven you" (Eph. 4. 31, 32). It is never right to judge motives unless it be our own, for love thinks no evil and will not condemn until it has proof. Should we be, on the other hand, judged wrongly and misrepresented by others, the way out is put before us in chapter 5. 44: "*But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.*"

"*Judge not, that ye may not be judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged.*" A wrong spirit is soon seen and condemned by others. "He hath digged a pit and hollowed it out, and is fallen into the hole that he made. His mischief shall return upon his own head" (Ps. 7., see also Esther 7.). In the school of God where the daily exercises prove the imperfection of all, ability to look upon our brother for good should be cultivated.

It brings its gain as the opposite brings its sorrow.

The warning as to the mote and the beam of verses 2-5 recalls the single eye of 6. 22, and as the soul answers to these solemn words there is ensured a right state both with the Lord and with one another. The beauty of character described at the beginning and sustained in the middle of the discourse by prayer is far removed from the petty jealousies which often destroy the happiness of the children of God.

Comparing verse 6 with the above, we see that if a censorious spirit is condemned, careful discrimination is called for in our dealings with those that are outside. It does not seem to be the ordinary unconverted person which is in view here, but that class of profane person, such as Herod, to whom, at a later time, the Lord would not answer a word.

"*Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.*" Here it is our dealings with God. We are taken back to the section on prayer, and reminded of the hungry and thirsting of the fourth Beatitude. There were those who asked amiss, that they might use it for pleasure (James 4. 3); others sought, but not in faith (John 6. 34); and some will knock to be refused admission (Matt. 25. 11); but the Lord encourages His own to simple direct dealings with their Father in heaven. This is the opposite to all vain repetition, and teaches that the Lord's disciples were not bound to the recitation of the form of words He had put before them in the previous chapter, but free to voice the deep feelings of their souls to God and to

present their needs to Him. The illustration drawn from human relationships was calculated to encourage them, for it shows the delight of God in giving. If man in spite of his fallen condition recognizes the claims of nature, and fathers after the flesh give good gifts to their children, what shall we say of the giving God? He it is who delights to be enquired after, and "He is a rewarder of them who seek Him out" (Heb. 11. 6).

The mention of the law and the prophets in verse 12 seems to indicate that a point is reached where He will sum up what has been said and conclude: "*Therefore all things whatsoever ye desire that men should do to you, thus do ye also to them; for this is the law and the prophets.*" In the first sixteen verses of chapter 5. He describes the character suited to the Kingdom of Heaven; in the next four verses His own position in regard to the law and the prophets, after which He shows the bearing of the law in its inner spirit upon the human heart in relation to the details of life. This in the nature of things was bound to expose the falsity of the current teaching of the day. In words of surpassing beauty in chapter 6. He directs His disciples in what is becoming in acts of kindness to men, and in their approach to God, all of which must have been a solemn rebuke to the hypocrisy of the leaders of religion. Here in few words He shows all that is required for the fulfilling of the law and the prophets. A beautiful parallel is given in 1 Tim. 1. 5: "But the end of what is enjoined is love out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and unfeigned faith." It is as if the writer had said this is a full summary of true Christianity.

"*Enter in through the narrow gate.*" What is of God can never be popular in a world of fallen sinners. As the

dupe of Satan man has lost his bearings, and consequently the road which suits the masses is that which ends in destruction. For them the virtues and graces of Matt. 5. are a narrow way indeed, but how great the difference at the end! There are those who appreciate Him and His way and rejoice in the favour of fellowship with the rejected Christ, knowing it is a way that ends in life. For this, let God be praised.

"*Beware of false prophets.*" Here comes in the religious element. How solemnly He likens them to prowling animals which go about to destroy and devour! Whatever their profession they cannot be anything else but what they really are. "By their fruits ye shall know them." A worthless tree cannot produce anything but bad fruit. This anticipates the words of Rom. 8. 7, 8, about the carnal mind, the enmity of which was proved at the cross of Christ.

And now note, in closing, the solemnity of His words. The supremacy of Immanuel shines out here. "Not every one that says to Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of the heavens, but he that doeth the will of My Father who is in the heavens." He looks down the ages to the last final judgment when He will have to say, "I never knew you." Their estimate of their service will have to give place to His, that which they thought works of power will then be seen as evil, and the result will be their final doom. How deeply solemn for all who take part in the service of the Lord! Trafficking in holy things is perhaps the worst sin of all.

Mark the words "hearing" and "doing" in verse 24 and compare with verse 21: "Whoever therefore hears My words and does them, I will liken him to a prudent man." Here again

in the simplest of words is the cleavage set forth. There are two builders, two houses, two foundations, two storms, and two results. Let us note the solemn finish. "And every one who hears these My words and does not do them, he shall be likened to a foolish man, who built his house upon

the sand; and the rain came down, and the streams came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house, and it fell, and its fall was great. Blessed are they that through grace belong to that kingdom which cannot be moved, who, founded on the rock of ages, are secure for time and eternity."

## THE SEVENFOLD UNIQUENESS OF CALVARY.

(SAMUEL LEVERMORE.)

THE Atoning and expiatory sufferings of our Lord were unique for many reasons—

FIRSTLY—

### BECAUSE HE SUFFERED ALONE.

No mortal ever did or could suffer as He. Hear His bitter cry in Psalm 102. 7, "I watch and am as a sparrow *alone* upon the house-top." Who, as the busy crowds pass along the street, thinks of the sparrow "alone upon the house-top"? Again in Isaiah 63. 3, "I have trodden the winepress *alone*" (verse 2), "None with Me" (3), "None to help" (4), "None to uphold" (5). But (Rev. 19). "His vesture shall be dipped, not in His own Blood, but the blood of others."

Further, consider *the solitariness of Jerusalem* in Lam. 1. 12, and her afflictions; compare chapter 1. 1-12—culminating in her heart-broken cry (12), and then 2. 15; 4. 12; Micah 3. 12; Hosea 3. 4. Then the change of person and gender, Lam. 3. 1. The panorama unfolds itself, and the city passes, with its domes, cupolas, and ruined loveliness, and fades into the face of a Man—the "Man of Sorrows"—and, as we hear His cry, we know that the affliction of Jerusalem is only a faint figure of a far greater sorrow—even that of the lonely Sin Bearer. And so in verse 19 we have

the "wormwood and the gall," and in verse 27, "He sitteth alone."

The scene changes and we see (Lev. 16. 21, 22), the "Fit Man" leave the door of the Tabernacle with the Scapegoat. Passing the watching crowds it loses itself in the vast immensity of the solitudes before it. Oh, what a weary journey! Gone the habitations of men, and the stream from the rock; and as they pass along they hear ever and anon the bitter cry of the outcast leper, "Alone! Alone." The "Fit Man"—the Holy Spirit—knows full well that the loneliness into which the Victim is plunging is the only way whereby that poor leper may hope to be healed and restored; and so, on and on they go. I seem to see the Scapegoat being led along by the Fit Man as in Heb. 9. 14. I see our Redeemer being conducted all the way to Calvary. He "sets His face as a flint to go up to Jerusalem," and the Spirit leads Him through the dark shades of Gethsemane into the desolate land not inhabited, and by-and-by there rings throughout God's universe, the cry of the "Forsaken," "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" And so the Scapegoat goes on and on. Its lips are parched—its limbs are trembling—it sinks amid the desert sand, and dies.

People talk of *their* "Gethsemane"

and their "Calvary" with a profound ignorance and a culpable presumption.

"Alone He bore the Cross! Alone its grief sustained.  
His was the shame and loss, but He the victory gained.  
The mighty work was all His own,  
Though we shall share His glorious Throne"

In Isaiah 49. 21, our Lord, in view of His Messianic sufferings cries, "I was left alone," and then after a solemn silence, "These, where had they been?" Yes, indeed! we had been under God's wrath, but for His solitary desolation.

John 12. 23, 24, puts this in concentrated form, and narrows the issue. Jesus must die "alone" or "abide alone." The entire population of the new heavens and the new earth owes its very existence to the death of the Seed-corn. Here, surely are thoughts to stir our hearts, and inspire our worship. Think of these three eternities of two words each: *dying alone—abiding alone—and much fruit!* Unfathomed oceans—unexplored worlds of pain, passion, and paradisaical delights.

Our Lord's sacrifice is unique also,

**SECONDLY**—*Because He made His "Soul" an Offering for sin.*

His "soul" mark you. His material or physical sufferings were only a tiny drop in the boundless ocean of His soul agony.

Isaiah 53. 10, says, "When thou shalt make His *soul* an offering for sin"; and verse 12, "He hath made His *soul* an offering for sin"; Matt. 26. 38, "My *soul* is exceeding sorrowful"; and John 12. 27, "Now is My *soul* troubled" (*italics mine*).

**THIRDLY**—*Because His Blessed Body was unique.*

He was "out of Heaven" (1 Cor. 15. 45), just as we were out of the

*dust*. The Second Man is the Lord from (or out of) Heaven.

His body was of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 1. 18, 20), (Luke 1. 35)—*absolutely unique*. It was "prepared of God" (Heb. 10. 5).

**FOURTHLY**—*Because His was a Voluntary Sacrifice* (John 10. 17, 18).

He was the Burnt Offering—All for God.

He was all of God—He was God.

**FIFTHLY**—*Because He Himself was unique.*

"There is none beside Me." "There is none else" (Isaiah 45. 21, 22).

**SIXTHLY**—*Because its object was unique.*

It was absolutely disinterested. Embracing worlds in its reach. Shaking the foundations of hell, and peopling the heights of heaven, yet all comprehended in that wondrous word of His in John 17. 4, "I have glorified Thee on the earth, I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do."

**SEVENTHLY**—*Because its RESULTS are UNIQUE.*

Can we measure the joys of Heaven, or the pains of Gehenna? Can we put in the compass of words those things which eye hath not seen, and which ear hath not heard—the things which He hath prepared for those that love Him?

Is it possible to express by word, by writing or by painting the seven-fold perfection of the Eternal State? (Rev. 21. verses 1-5). Oh, the blissful tranquillity! Oh, the unutterable peace of a sinless state! Oh, the inexpressible felicity of absolute perfection, with an unending capacity to enjoy it. And all because of His sacrifice in its seven-fold uniqueness. Glory!—glory for ever, be to Him that sitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

## DANGERS THAT THREATEN.

(F. B. HOLE.

## 4. Disintegration. 2 Corinthians.

THE first Epistle which Paul wrote to the Corinthians evidently produced a very powerful effect upon them. The second Epistle makes this manifest. The evil-doer who had been in their midst had been excluded in a spirit of zealous repentance (2 Cor. 2. 6; 7. 9-12).

Moreover they had been largely lifted out of the sectarian spirit that had threatened to engulf them. He writes of their being established in CHRIST (1. 21), and "manifestly declared to be the Epistle of CHRIST" (3. 3). Not Paul nor Apollos nor Peter was written on the fleshy tables of their heart, but Christ.

And, further, their intellectual doubts on the subject of the resurrection had been dispelled, for he says, "*We know* that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God . . ." (5. 1), referring to the resurrection body which awaits the saints.

Thus far all was well, and the Apostle rejoiced and told them about his gladness of heart in a strikingly beautiful passage (see 7. 4-16); yet there were still things in their midst which caused him grave anxiety. With great warmth and tactfulness he acknowledges in the early part of the Epistle all that grace had wrought in their midst, and it is not until he reaches his farewell words that he plainly expresses his fears concerning them, and thereby indicates evils that were still at work among them.

He says, "I fear . . . lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults; and lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I

shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed" (12. 20, 21). In his first Epistle he had laid certain definite charges at their door upon the evidence of reliable witnesses. In his second Epistle he writes with greater freedom of spirit, which he expresses in chapter 6., verse 11, and consequently he is bold to tell them what he *feared* concerning them.

The Apostle well knew the devices of Satan, as he tells us in the early part of the Epistle, and the subtle workings of the flesh. In reference to the shocking immorality exposed in the first Epistle, he had reminded them that "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." Hence he deduced that the leaven of immorality had worked and that others besides the man who had been put away from their midst had been guilty, and he feared lest, their cases not having been specifically brought to light, repentance had not really been wrought in their hearts—repentance to salvation from the evils that had overcome them.

Further, he knew that "false apostles, deceitful workers" had gained access into their midst, and he described the moral features of these men in chapter 11., verses 1 to 4, and 12 to 20. They appeared in the midst of the primitive assemblies as the very apostles of Christ, yet the effect of their teachings was to turn aside from the truth of the gospel (verse 4), and to corrupt from simplicity as to Christ (verse 3). Instead of condemning the flesh as a judged thing they gloried in it (verse 18) and they exercised, as might be expected, a highly fleshy "ministry"—

exalting themselves, brow-beating the saints, devouring them by extracting money and possessions from them, and bringing them into spiritual bondage to their false teachings. All this verse 20 shows.

Inspired by the Spirit of God, Paul well knew what would be the effect of the mischievous activities of these men. Glorifying in the flesh themselves, they would promote the activities of the flesh in all who fell under their influence, and thus fill the assembly with strife and confusion. No less than eight words are used in verse 20 of chapter 12. to describe the conditions which the Apostle feared must prevail in their midst—words all of which portray the out-workings of the evil spirit of jealousy and envy.

*Let us faithfully apply this warning portion of the Word of God to ourselves.* It is true that men have always cultivated the flesh, but in our days the thing has been reduced to a fine art. Modern theories of education insist that the great thing is to instruct the rising generation in "self-expression," so that every ability and impulse may be developed and not restrained. This *may* mean the development of latent powers in the fields of art and science and invention. It certainly *must* mean a development of flesh in its most self-assertive and pugnacious form. Let the infection of these ideas spread in the church of God, and debates, envyings, wrath, strifes, back-bitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults, will be more than ever manifest; and the unedifying spectacle will be seen of even true believers filled with envyings of each other, puffed up in their mind, resulting in angry arguments, the whispering of stories to each other's discredit behind the back, and positive disorders.

When these things come to pass, a

process of disintegration has set in, which, if not checked by the grace and power of God, must ultimately lead to dissolution.

Can we discern, in the case of the Corinthians, anything which predisposed them to fall victims to this particular danger? Is something of a fundamental nature disclosed to us which lay at the root of all these troubles? We believe that the passage, chapter 6. verses 11 to 18, supplies the answer. They were, alas! maintaining alliances with the world. They had not accepted as yet that clear-cut separation which took them out of the zone of the world's infection—if we may so speak. Maintaining alliance with the world-system, religious teachers who sprang from the world-system (for "religion" forms a well-recognized department of world order) found an easy means of slipping into their midst, and their teachings and influence promoted the very evils which are before us.

In this great passage the Spirit of God contrasts Christianity proper with the world. Both are set forth in their essential characters. The one is characteristically righteousness, light, Christ, a believer, the temple of God. The other, unrighteousness, darkness, Belial, an unbeliever, idols. No modifying circumstances are allowed to obscure the issue. It is true, alas! that Christianity is not always displayed according to its essential character. It is equally true that the world wears many dresses fair to behold and by no means always displays itself in its true guise. Still that is what the world-system is, and from it the believer is to be free.

It is *unrighteousness*, for it is wholly out of right relations with God, and consequently right relations as between man and man are absent too.

It is *darkness*, for the light of the

knowledge of God is lost and unknown, and no mere light of science lit by man's devising—even if it be true science and not that "science, falsely so-called," which consists of speculations and guesses—can make up for the absence of the true sun from the firmament of man's mind.

*Belial* is the god or prince of this world, dominating, though secretly, its councils and its plans.

*Unbelievers* are the units that go to the making up of the world-system. The system itself had its rise in the minds of the unbelieving, and it now utterly dominates the mind of mankind wherein it had its birth. Unbelievers are the subjects of the kingdom dominated by *Belial*.

*Idols* are the many things, often trifling in themselves, which men pursue as objects of desire and which consequently usurp in their souls that place of supremacy which properly belongs to God alone. By means of idols *Belial* maintains his sway over the minds of unbelievers, blinding them to the "light of the glorious gospel of Christ" (4. 4), keeping them in darkness and in unrighteousness as regards their relations with God.

With such a condition of things there can be no compromise without grave damage to the Christian. What fellowship, what communion, what concord, what part, what agreement can there be? None whatever, and if any be ever attempted it can only result in the introduction of infection from without into the assembly of God. It will also result in terrible loss of power to the assembly, since alliance with the world is like a breakdown of insulation in an electric plant. We have no need to wonder at the many ills that afflict the church of God to-day nor at the small measure of the energy of the Spirit available to counteract them.

The introduction of the world and its principles, by unholy alliance with it, works disintegration in the church of God. What will act as an antidote to this state of things? The affirmation of truth, even heavenly truth as in chapters 3. 6 to 5. 9; or of the searching truth of the judgment seat as in 5. 10 and onwards, is not of itself enough. **THERE MUST BE THE SEVERANCE OF THESE WORLD LINKS.**

"Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing." We come into contact with all sorts of men in our daily business or employment. Had we to be separate in that sense, then we "needs go out of the world" (1 Cor. 5. 10). We are not, however, to be unequally yoked with them. It is the "yoke" we have to beware of, for it is well-nigh impossible to be *equally* yoked with an unbeliever.

Are there any "yokes" to-day? Why, they simply abound. They are multiplying at a great rate. Societies, unions, federations, guilds, orders, sodalities, exist in appalling profusion, and—we write it with sorrow—the Christian who is not enmeshed by them is a rarity indeed. Here, lying right before our very eyes, is the thing that largely accounts for the sad disintegration and lack of power which are so manifest and so much deplored amongst Christians.

What are we going to do about it? There is only one thing to do—OBEY. "Come out . . . and *touch* not the unclean thing, SAITH THE LORD," and we must *obey*. No light as to the truth of God, no correct church position exempts us from the obligation of obedience.

Obedience, however, it will be urged, is certain to entail suffering and loss. Precisely: and hence those gracious

words also covered by the "saith the Lord"—"I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." These words are not the declaration of relationship as are the words in John 20. 17, but rather the One who is our Father saying that if men refuse us He will receive us, if they would antagonize us, He will fulfil to us the Father's part. He will "father" us indeed. In the light of such promises we need not fear. We should rather be encouraged to "cleanse

ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit" (7. 1); seeing to it that we are not content with an outward separation, however necessary, but supplementing it with that cleansing of spirit which perfects holiness in the fear of God.

Shall we not, one and all, seek from God an enlargement, by obedience to this commandment from the mouth of the Lord? It would check disintegration. It would promote an integration that would be according to God.

## The Lovingkindness of the Lord.

"Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the Lord."—Psalm 107. 43.

NO matter what sort of trial a man may be in, if he cries to the Lord he will be heard. This is the theme and witness of Ps. 107. First, we are told of men who were hungry and thirsty and faint. There was no sin in that, it was just ordinary need in a world of trial. What was their resource? "*They cried unto the Lord in their trouble.*" And He heard them, and not only delivered them, but took charge of them and led them forth by a right way, that they might go to a city of habitation. Let us be wise and observe that, and learn that it is good to be wholly in God's hands, and that He does not turn away His ear from a cry of need.

Then there comes under our observation another sort of trouble: "*They rebelled against the words of God and contemned the counsel of the most High.*" Darkness, bondage and affliction could only result from that: but, what then? "They cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and He saved them out of their distresses." Yes, He shows His lovingkindness to the rebellious when they cry to Him, for there is forgiveness with Him that He may be feared.

The third case is the worst, for these fools not only despised the counsel of God, but were deliberate transgressors of His command, they had departed from His ways and brought themselves to the very verge of destruction. Then they cried unto the Lord and He pitied them and by His word He healed them and delivered them. No man can sink too low in the mire and sin of this world for the mercy of God. Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

The fourth case shows us men who in the battle of life were worsted. In their own power they had made a fight of it but were beaten. Had they a resource? Yes, "They cried unto the Lord in their trouble and He heard them" and brought them to their desired haven.

What a resource men have in God, and how great is His lovingkindness! All men might prove this if they would, but it is the joy and comfort surely of the redeemed of the Lord, and if men refuse to observe His goodness and His wonderful works to the children of men, yet let the redeemed of the Lord say, "His mercy endureth for ever."

# WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE "IN CHRIST"?

(A. J. POLLOCK.)

WE often use Scriptural expressions loosely, and when challenged as to their meaning we frequently discover that we have a very hazy idea of the expressions used.

The expression, "*In Christ*," occurs often in the Scriptures. What is the meaning to be attached to it? is the inquiry of this paper.

Perhaps the best Scripture to draw attention to first is 1 Cor. 15. 22: "As *in Adam* all die, even so *in Christ* shall all be made alive." Here being "*in Adam*" and being "*in Christ*" are contrasted. We often are helped by looking at contrasts. What, then, can we gather by the contrast given to us in this verse?

We begin by asking, How does a man arrive at the state designated as being "*in Adam*"? Clearly he is "*IN Adam*" because he is *OF Adam*. It was as head of the human race that its progenitor gave to his descendants the status of "*In Adam*." And remember, like could only beget like. "After his kind" is repeated again and again in Genesis 1.

The name Adam, as a fact, was not a personal name originally, but simply meant "red earth," and was used to designate our first parent, describing his origin. It is simply the name for *man*. It was as a fallen sinner that Adam became the progenitor and head of the human race. He could only reproduce his own kind, his own sinful nature with its characteristics, qualities and limitations. He produced a race of sinners like himself upon whom the sentence of death lay. All under that headship are under the same condition and doom as marked the head.

"*In Adam*" is *state*, and *state* always carries a corresponding *standing*. For

instance, if a man is in the marriage state, he has the *standing* of a husband. It would be well to apprehend clearly what is the meaning attached to the word *state*. We use it in this article to describe condition in the *absolute* sense of the word. For instance, a husband is in the marriage state or condition, whether he be happy or miserable.

We talk, and rightly so, about a good state or condition and a bad state or condition, but we use the word "*state*" in this article in its *absolute* sense, that is, the actual state or condition without reference to the happiness or otherwise, the success or otherwise, of the person involved.

For instance, we can speak of the state or condition of being a Christian—Christian state—that is *absolute*, and then we can speak of the Christian being in a good state or condition or a bad state or condition, that is *relative* to the state or condition.

And it is because the Christian is in the Christian state in its *absolute* sense that we have grounds for exhorting him to right behaviour in that condition in such a manner as to be able to say that that Christian is in a good state of soul.

Now we read in Rom. 5. 12 et seq. of the two headships—Adam and Christ—and the result of these headships to all who are ranged under them. We read in verse 14 of Adam, "who is the figure of Him that was to come," that is Christ, and we have already seen how Adam and Christ, in their respective headships, are contrasted. We have dealt in detail with what "*in Adam*" means. Let us now see what is meant by the expression "*in Christ*."

Just as "*in Adam*" means to be *OF Adam*, so "*in Christ*" means to be *OF Christ*. "*In Adam*" is in relation to

the *old* creation; "*in Christ*" is in relation to the *new* creation. There is one very illuminating verse in connection with our subject: "Therefore if any man be *in Christ*, he is a new creature [*literally* there is a new creation]: old things are passed away: behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5. 17).

And this could only be true in resurrection, for immediately the apostle moves on in argument to the doctrine of reconciliation, and for this the atoning death of Christ was needed: "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).

Again we read, "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature [*literally*, a new creation, N.T.]" (Gal. 6. 15).

The Lord Himself put it as the result of life and nature when He said, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12. 24). Clearly "the much fruit" is OF the corn of wheat *in death* AND RESURRECTION—every grain of it—fruit of the same order and quality. But how moving to our hearts when we contemplate who it is that has died for us, when we contemplate all the meaning of His death to God, to Himself, to us; and contemplate the great and glorious scheme God had in view in the Headship of Christ. Thus we begin to understand what "*in Christ*" means. *It brings us to new creation.*

Even Christ in resurrection was not to be known any longer after the flesh. So we read, "Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him

no more" (2 Cor. 5. 16). When on earth the Lord recognized the natural relationships of life, as witness His care of His earthly mother on the cross; His submitting to the powers that be in the matter of tribute. But once He died, He died to the whole circle of earthly links; that order of things was broken, and He was to be henceforth known according to resurrection life—according to the Headship which He acquired through death and resurrection—in new creation.

Hence Mary was not allowed to touch Him on the resurrection morning. She was joyfully about to resume the old links, when He said to her, "Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father; to My God and your God" (John 20. 17). He was to be known in resurrection circumstances. And in this relation the apostle wrote, "Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh." That is to say, under this Headship of Christ, involving new creation, we are introduced to new principles and new relationships. By-and-by it will be literally true that old things will have passed away, and all things will have become new, when we find ourselves in the new heaven and the new earth. For faith and morally this is true now, but we wait for its full and actual fulfilment.

Meanwhile this line of things is seen in the conduct of saint with saint. When we are gathered in assembly, for instance, social and natural distinctions vanish. Employer and employed, master and servant, parent and child, may be there, but those relationships are entirely in abeyance for the moment. They meet as "*in Christ.*" There may be different nationalities in an assembly, but they are all one "*in*

*Christ*," "where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free" (Col. 3. 11). This is beautifully illustrated in the closing chapter, when the apostle writes of the erstwhile runaway slave, Onesimus, as "one of you," that is "a faithful and beloved brother" in the assembly. We then get Luke, "the beloved physician." What a contrast socially between the slave and the doctor? We get Jew and Gentile in this beautiful chapter blended together in the salutations.

Of course, whilst this wonderful truth has its effect upon us in the assembly in the way we have indicated, yet as long as we are down here we are

reminded that we are down here. Man is the head of the woman. The brother is free to take audible part as led of the Spirit; the sister is forbidden to speak in the assembly. There are the bishops or elders, in whom the question of the maturity of age is a factor.

Whilst briefly indicating these lines of thought, what will keep us all in our true place is 1 Cor. 13., where we read that love "doth not behave itself unseemly" (verse 5).

Enough has been written to show what "*in Christ*" means in its broad outlines. Connect it in your mind with *new creation* and the Headship of Christ in resurrection, and you have the key to its meaning in your hand.

## "AS I HAVE LOVED YOU."

*"This is My commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you."*

**H**ERE is a measure that we cannot surpass in our love for one another, but it also gives us the manner of the love that we have to show; it is a pattern for us. The Lord was above all the infirmities of His disciples. We can only be above the infirmities of our brethren as we are upheld by the grace of the Lord. If an infirmity in my brother meets an infirmity in me, we clash, and "behold, how great a fire a little matter kindleth." We must be watchful, but it requires much grace to

see grace in one another. Christ was, in His unselfish love, unaffected by the failures of His disciples, and so He was able to meet each need as it arose and turn the very failure to profit. And He sets Himself before us as our pattern; we must turn that which irritates us into profit. Like the oyster that turns the grit that has invaded its shell into a pearl to enrich a royal crown.

"Love is not love  
Which alters when it alteration finds."

## The Heart of the Lord.

**H**IS heart is the greatest favour the Lord can give us. It is beyond His hand. It is when His hand is apparently against us that He makes known His heart, and that is far beyond anything His hand can do for us. It is better to know His love than His power. It was when He abode two days still in the place where He was *apparently* indifferent to the urgent appeal from Bethany, that we are told of His personal love for each member

of the stricken family there (John 11.). If trouble has visited you, draw near to Him and expect a fuller revelation of His love to you. It was when Joseph's brethren had lost their father—a very dark hour for them—that they learned how full and unmerited was Joseph's love for them. It is the knowledge of His love that quietens the heart in all circumstances. Be more zealous to know the heart of the Lord than His hand.

# THE LORD POSSESSED ME.

(JAMES BOYD.)

## *Continued.*

*"The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. . . . Then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him, and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him."*—Proverbs 8. 22-30.

OF God's ways in creation before He began to form this earth as a dwelling-place for man, we know very little. But we do know that a fall—perhaps more than one—had taken place, and that the earth as originally created had been brought into a condition in which it is described as "*waste and empty.*" But whatever was the cause of the various convulsions that punctuated its wondrous history, by these throes through which it passed, it gradually became more and more fit for the testing and trying of the creature who was to be made in the image and likeness of God. It may have had a history of many millions of years before man was placed upon it; but millions of millions of ages are as nothing with Him who lives for ever.

If, however, we do not know the age of the world, in which we are placed that we may become acquainted with Him in whose house we shall for ever dwell as sons before His face, conformed to the image of His Son, we do know that, not angelic beings, but man was the object of all the counsels of God, and that such wondrous and eternal results were to be brought to pass through the ways of God with man; it would be foolish of us to think that there was any part or portion of the whole vast creation that had no relation to the trial, the rebellion, and the redemption of sinners. The part the various starry systems have to play in this marvellous and spiritual drama, or what light and blessing may reach them, we may not understand, neither, perhaps, have we been interested enough to learn, but we do know that the Man Christ Jesus inherits all things,

and that because He made all things and tasted death for all things, He shall fill all things. Then, again, God says to us who believe on Him, "All things are yours." We inherit all things along with Him: "How shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"

I cannot doubt that the attention of the universal intelligences, if it has not yet been, shall surely be, directed to that manger in the city of Bethlehem, in which the advent of the Son of God took place, and shall follow with adoring eyes His lonely man-rejected pathway to where it ended on Golgotha amid the insane execrations of leaders led in revolt against the Lord and His Anointed, and all driven to the accursed deed by the craft of their fell destroyer—the devil. Nor can I doubt that His empty sepulchre and His session at the right hand of God must to every one of them not only be well known, but wake throughout the vast realm of God eternal praise. What unfallen being was there that shuddered not as the heavens drew the thick curtain over their face, to hide from the angels—who dare not intervene—the murder of their Creator and their Lord? And what world was there, except this one, that did not light up its vast circumference with gladness and rejoicing as it saw Him rise triumphant out of death! I do not contemplate in all this the infernal regions which His triumph filled with gloom and consternation; I speak of His impeccable celestials.

When I open the book of the Apocalypse and turn to chapter 5., where the Lamb is viewed as taking the seven-

sealed book out of the hand of Him who sat on the throne, I read: "And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the living creatures and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." Here we have an indefinite uncountable number of angelic beings who seem well acquainted with the history of the sorrows of the Saviour. Then, as I have pointed out, all things are His—He tasted death for everything—of old He laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of His hands, and these He shall fold up, and a change shall pass over all, He Himself remaining, "*The Same* yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

And if the angels desire to look into the grace that has come to us once objects unworthy of the smallest mercy (1 Peter 1. 12), are they to remain ignorant of the termination of our history as after the flesh, which took place in the judgment of the cross, and of our spiritual derivation from the last Adam, the Christ of God, of whose body we are the living members? Certainly not, for God through the assembly is making known to the principalities and authorities in the heavenlies His all-various wisdom (Eph. 3. 10).

The race of man after the flesh was, as represented by the nation of Israel, placed in responsible relation with God, in order that the incorrigible wickedness of his fallen nature might to all intelligences be demonstrated, and when this was finished by man's crowning act of rebellion in crucifying their Messiah and Son of God, the end of all

flesh as in relationship with God came to pass, and no longer is that evil and corrupt race in any relationship whatever with God, except as God's creature subject to His judgment.

All who come under the life-giving power of the Son of God, who is the last Adam and life-giving Spirit, are of His order and in the closest relations with Him in which it is possible for the creature to be placed, for they are in the same relations with God as Christ is: "As He is so are we in this world" (1 John 4. 17). For such there is no judgment. The grace in which they stand; the relationships which are theirs with the Father; the love that ever rests upon them; the home to which they have been called; the glorious things that eternity has in store for them; the inheritance that is theirs as the children of God; the glory that shall one day break upon their eyes; the position they shall for ever occupy as the tabernacle of God in which He will dwell with redeemed men; all is a question of Christ and His worthiness, for the relationship and blessing that are His determine ours.

It was God's purpose before this world to have us before Him in Christ. He predestinated us to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren (Rom. 8. 29); and also that we might be His bride and body (Eph. 5. 25-32). Therefore our hope is to be *for ever with Him* (1 Thess. 4. 17). Where the Head is the body must be; and the place of the wife is by her Husband's side: "So shall we ever be with the Lord."

Much has transpired between the conception of these marvellous mysteries and the completion of them—the creation, the history of this earth previous to its being made a dwelling-place for man, and its history subsequent to that

six days' work—but God is not like man: He can wait upon the accomplishment of the work in which His whole heart and mind are engaged, and there is nothing that can retard or hasten His steps upon the path He has chosen, and by which lies the complete success of all that He has set Himself to do. Every thought of His heart shall yet be established. The thing we have long expected—and perhaps with a measure of impatience looked for—has not yet arrived, and the tendency of hope deferred is to make the heart sick; but our desire shall come, and when it does come we shall find it “a tree of life” (Prov. 13. 12). God is more interested in the completion of the things purposed in His love than we are. But every step of His journey toward the end before Him is taken with all the deliberation of infinite wisdom and in the power that cannot fail regarding the final issue.

The hour is fast approaching in which we with adoring hearts shall witness the perfect accomplishment of all the purposes that filled the benevolent mind of Him whom we have loved to call our Father and our God. We shall in that hour behold the work of His *hands* supplanted by the work of His *heart*, and every world to the utmost limits of the universe shining, not as we see the host of heaven now, shining with the creatorial glory of their Maker, but with the glory of eternal redemption, and of the Father revealed in the Son of His love. And who could rightly estimate the brightness of that glory?

Compared with other worlds that look down upon us through the midnight gloom, this earth of ours may seem but a speck of dust amid the vast globes with which it is surrounded, and man himself but a tiny being when compared with the creatures that

inhabit earth's dark places; but the intelligences who are privileged to contemplate and consider the wondrous works of their Creator have witnessed on this little planet all the most astonishing and most marvellous works of both the creature and the Creator—the most audacious and horrible evil on the part of the creature in rebellion against God, met with the patience, mercy, grace, and infinite love on the part of the Creator.

Then when all things are made new, it is in connection with this earth that “the tabernacle of God is with men.” The assembly of God, the bride of Christ, shall be that tabernacle. In it God will dwell. He dwells in it *now* in love (1 John 4. 12). Now in it He is but very imperfectly presented to the eyes of an unbelieving world, but then there can be no failure. With regard to our glorious privileges there is little else than failure; with God failure is unknown. All that He has purposed shall be brought to pass, and all according to His original plan, not one item wanting, and not one item added. All shall be in that day according to His original intention.

That we may be able to take into view the vast scope and glory of this wondrous scene, the Apostle of the Gentiles bows his knee to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying that He would grant us, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith; that we, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to apprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ that passes knowledge, that we may be filled to all the fulness of God (Eph. 3.). And this in the vision of God we may now contemplate.

Here in the eternal state is this little world, the centre of the vast universe, because in it the bride of Christ resides for ever with her Husband, who loved her and gave Himself for her ; and she is also the tabernacle of God where He shall for ever dwell among the vast companies of those redeemed out of all countries, peoples, and tongues ; and not only redeemed but of the will of God begotten again, and made fit to stand in the light of His face unveiled. And when we think of the things enacted here—the fall of the man made in His image and likeness—the rebellion of the worm of the dust—the patience of God exhibited in His ways with such a rebel—the gift of His Son—the rejection and murder of that Son—the atonement He made—His death and resurrection—God revealed—the darkness and the light—the curse and the blessing—the hatred and the love : what else could we think than that this little planet has been, and shall ever be, the centre supreme of the ways and of the dwelling-place of God ?

And it will be the centre of the universe, because He who is and must be the Centre of all shall have His abode there. God and the Lamb shall be in the tabernacle when in the thousand years of the reign of Christ it shall shine in its administrative character as the Holy City. But we see that it shall never be vacated by these divine persons : “ The tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell with them,” and then and there shall there be no evil occurrent. There God shall find His everlasting rest. And this rest shall be in His eternal love.

“ That rest secure from ill,  
No cloud of grief e'er stains ;  
Unfailing praise each heart doth fill,  
And love eternal reigns.

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

“ God and the Lamb ! 'tis well !  
I know that source divine,  
Of joy and love no tongue can tell,  
Yet know that all is mine.”

## CHRIST IS ENOUGH.

HAVE you ever seen the world a bleak, barren desert, and you yourself left alone in it like a solitary tree ? And could you then say, Well, there is One who sits on the throne, and He is enough for me, though all else is withered ? He is enough for my need, no matter how great that need

may be, therefore I will trust Him about it all ; but He is also enough for my heart, and He alone is enough for it, therefore I will make Him my object. Thus with Christ as my portion I may be free from all worry, from things without, and satisfied within.

## HOW TO PRODUCE RIGHT ORDER.

MANY are engaged in the endeavour to secure strict church order, and for this they are very much occupied with their brethren and their ways. A poor business that, and waste of time and energy. Be in right trim yourself for the coming of Christ ; get your heart right, let it be saying in unison with the Spirit, “ Come, Lord Jesus,” and you will find that you yourself will be orderly ; and being right yourself you will influence and not irritate others. If you are occupied with Christ, you will become according to Christ and gladly subject to His word.

# WATCHMAN, WHAT OF THE NIGHT? (JAMES GREEN.)

## Notes on the Prophetic Outlook. No. 2.

As space forbids the printing of all quotations in full, the reader of these notes is earnestly requested to set his Bible open before him, and to pass over no reference without reading the passage attentively.

THREE divisions are clearly seen in the book of the Prophet Isaiah:—

### 1. Chapters 1. to 35.

The framework of God's dealings with Judah, the restoration of Israel, and the judgment of the surrounding nations.

### 2. Chapters 36. to 39.

Three historical incidents having a prophetic significance: (1) The destruction of the Assyrian; (2) The restoration to health of the son of David; (3) The captivity in Babylon.

### 3. Chapters 40. to 66.

The moral relations of the people with God, and their consolation as a nation. In this last part is brought out the two great controversies God has with Israel and Judah—firstly, for their idolatry; secondly, for their rejection of Immanuel. The one ending with chapter 48. 22, the other with chapter 57. 21. The closing chapters being occupied with the mercies of God, which will create Jerusalem a rejoicing and her people a joy.

Thus much has been said to show the wide outlook of the book; we can now consider the prophetic outline given in the first chapter. It is indeed a summary of the whole scope of prophecy from the calling of Israel to the last judgment of the wicked. We will trace it verse by verse. It commences with the call of the nation which had its roots in Abraham.

Chapter 1. verse 1. The prophecy is specially addressed to Judah and

Jerusalem, for these are directly concerned in the prophet's vision; cf. chapter 2. 1, 2.

Verse 2. The origin of Israel, and their rebellion.

Verse 3. Their history as "a people" up to the time of Samuel.

Verse 4. Their history as "a nation" during the kingdom. Isaiah lived in the reigns of four kings, *circa* 750 B.C. His vision from this point is projected forward.

Verse 5. They are given over to captivity; cf. 2 Chron. 36. 14-17.

Verse 6. The moral condition that necessitated this.

Verse 7. The state to which their land was reduced by Assyrian and Chaldean.

Verse 8. The sorrowful condition of Jerusalem; see The Lamentations of Jeremiah.

Verse 9. The mercy of God restores a remnant; see Nehemiah and Ezra.

Verse 10. Whose moral condition became as bad as their forefathers.

Verses 11-15. The services of the rebuilt temple were maintained with increased ritual, but without the reality in which God could delight. It was during this time that the sects of the Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes and others arose.

Verses 16, 17. Then John the Baptist came with a call to repentance.

Verse 18. The ministry of Christ, and the work of the cross by which they might have cleansing from sin.

Verse 19. The times of refreshing and the return of Christ are offered to them (Acts 3. 19-26).

Verse 20. But they refused the offered mercy, and wrath came upon the Jew and Jerusalem to the uttermost (1 Thess. 2. 16). The sentence of judgment closing their history for the time being, finally pronounced by Paul (Acts 28. 25-28).

All this reads to us as history, but when Isaiah wrote, none of these things had taken place. Only the Spirit of Christ which was in him could have given such a forecast, affording to us, upon whom the ends of the age are come, an example of how God has fulfilled, and will fulfil, His word. The rest of the chapter carries us forward into things which as yet are unfulfilled, and it is here that the prophecy must be divided in a straight line (2 Tim. 2. 15), for between verses 20 and 21 lies the present Church interval, of which there is no mention in any Old Testament prophet.

Verses 21-23. Jerusalem is once more in view, and its inhabitants are the continuation of the "evil generation" of our Lord's day, in fulfilment of His word (Matt. 24. 34). Notice the similar language of verses 17 and 23 of Isa. 1.

Verse 24. God will take the matter in hand and judge not Israel only but the whole world by the great tribulation.

Verse 25. He will purge Jerusalem by the spirit of burning (Isa. 4. 4).

Verses 26, 27. And will make good all His promises on the ground of the death of Christ; cf. Jer. 23. 6; 33. 16.

Verse 28. Sinners shall be consumed out of the earth and the wicked be no more (Ps. 104. 35).

Verses 29, 30. Shows the end of the unclean spirit of idolatry which will once more have returned, and the judgment of the apostate nation.

Verse 31. The final judgment of the lake of fire; cf. Isa. 66. 24; Mark 9. 44.

If this Scripture has been carefully observed, one fact will have stood out with great prominence, viz., that the people with whom it is concerned are the seed of Abraham. This is of all importance, as it saves us on the one hand from applying the Old Testament prophecies to the Church, or on the other of distorting them so as to apply in their fulfilment to the Gentile nations of the present time.

The seed of Abraham is the family in which the righteous government of God on the earth is brought to an issue, and by means of them He will take possession of the inheritance of the earth. They are the centre from which the rays of His glory will enlighten the heathen world around them, finally reaching in its beneficent light all mankind. Jerusalem is the metropolis to which all nations shall be gathered, in the first place for judgment (Joel 3. 12) and afterwards for blessing (Zech. 14. 16; Isa. 2. 1-4).

In the 1st chapter of Isaiah we find the seed of Abraham in three conditions:—

Chapter 1. verses 2-6. Owned of God. "My people." Ammi. From the call of Abraham to the captivity.

Chapter 2. verses 7-24. Disowned of God. "Not My people." Lo-ammi and Lo-ruhamah (Hos. 1. 6, 9). From the captivity to the reign of Christ.

Chapter 3. verses 25-31. Restored of God. "My people." Ammi and Ruhamah (Hos. 2. 1). During the millennial kingdom.

The period during which Israel is Lo-ammi is called "The times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21. 24), the government of the earth being meanwhile given into their hands. This is the overturning spoken of in Ezek. 21. 26, 27, God's original plan, in which the top place was given to Israel, being reversed (Deut. 28. 13, 43, 44). The prophecies of Daniel and Zechariah are chiefly concerned with this period, as we shall see in considering their writings. For the present let it suffice to say that it is the close of these "times," the last seven years, on which the interest of the prophetic Scriptures is chiefly concentrated. In Isaiah 2. to 4. will be found a rapid sketch of these last days, as they concern Judah and Jerusalem. Chap. 2. 1-5 shows first of all the end that is in view, followed by a description of the circumstances which will bring it about. Well may we give heed to the exhortation, "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?"

Everything in which the world boasts comes under judgment: wisdom, wealth, idols, pride, commerce, military power, science, art, the vanity of women—all shall be bowed down, "and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day." Twice these words break in as the narration proceeds (verses 11, 17). Then, as the storm gathers, and the threefold glory of Jehovah's majesty is revealed from heaven, striking fear into every heart (verses 10, 19, 21), twice over as with thunder-crash the words are heard, "When He ariseth to shake with quivering terror the earth."

Vain are the thoughts that would make the sweet influences of the gospel the means by which a millennium of peace will be reached; vain to expect that such a time will be evolved from the boasted civilization of the present day, or that the combined Parliaments of the world will one day lead men to beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning-hooks. Not by these means, but by the stroke of divine judgment, will the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness (Isa. 26. 9). Once and yet again shall the nations rage, and the ruling powers set themselves against Jehovah and against His Anointed; yet His enemies shall be set as the footstool of His feet, and under the righteous sceptre of the Son of God the whole creation shall hush its groan, and the desert lands shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. Then it shall be seen that the work of righteousness is peace and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. War, famine, disease, shall be banished, death shall be swallowed up in victory, and peaceable habitations, sure dwellings, quiet resting-places, shall bear witness to the beneficent sway of Christ the King (Isa. 25. 8; 32. 17, 18).

Solemn indeed in their gloom and darkness are the last days that shall precede this glorious end, but they have no terror for the heart that knows its Saviour from the coming wrath. Such an one is not in darkness, that that day should overtake him as a thief. He is a child of the light and of the day—not appointed to that night of wrath, but to obtain salvation from it by our Lord Jesus Christ. Cf. 1 Thess. 5. 9; 2 Thess. 1. 7; Rev. 3. 10.'

*(To be continued.)*

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

### The Holy Spirit before and after Pentecost.

“Did men receive the Holy Spirit before Pentecost when they believed and were baptized by John’s baptism? Acts 19. 1-7 appears as though they did not, but why?”—ONTARIO.

JOHN 7. 39 states that “the Holy Ghost was not yet given because that Jesus was not yet glorified.” That is the answer to the, Why? It is true that all the work of God in the souls of men before Pentecost was done by the Holy Spirit; if they repented and believed the word God sent to them, it was the result of the work of the Holy Ghost, but He did not dwell in them. This great blessing was reserved for this present period, and this period is marked by this great fact—*Jesus is glorified*. The work of redemption is done, the precious blood has been poured out, Jesus has

been raised from the dead and is now glorified at the right hand of God. The Holy Ghost has come from Him, not only to produce repentance and faith in men, but to seal those who believe as belonging to Christ and to unite them to Him, forming them into one body, of which Christ is the Head. Those men in Acts 19. had only heard John’s preaching, which simply announced the coming of the Lord; they had yet to hear of the finished work of Christ, and of His ascension and glory, and of the coming of the Spirit.

### Baptism before and after Pentecost.

“Was there any difference between the baptism of John and that after Pentecost?”

YES, the two are quite different. John’s baptism was unto repentance; those who submitted to it, did so confessing their sins and owning that death was their desert, for baptism in Jordan would speak of this; but they remained Jews on Jewish ground, looking for the Messiah to fulfil their Jewish hopes, they were not baptized unto the death of Christ, for He had not died. John’s baptism was not Christian baptism.

In Christian baptism we are baptized unto the death of Christ, His Name is put upon us in this outward way, and in

it there is the end of all earthly hopes such as the Jew had; for by baptism we are identified with the One who was cut off from the earth. It was this that impressed the Eunuch (Acts 8.). When he heard that the life of Jesus was taken from the earth. He said, “What doth hinder me to be baptized?” His heart had been won and he desired identification by baptism with the Lord who had died for him. In this baptism the Jew ceases to be a Jew, and the Greek ceases to be a Greek; they come unto Christian ground, outwardly of course, for no ordinance can change the heart.

### The Baptism of the Spirit.

“What is the difference between water baptism and spiritual baptism?”

WATER baptism is outward profession and many who have no reality within submit to it. Simon, of Acts 8., was the first of these, as far as we have any record. The baptism of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12.) includes all who are really saved, all such are members of the one body by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. The baptism of the Spirit, spoken of by John the Baptist and promised by the

Lord, took place on the day of Pentecost and also in the house of Cornelius (Acts 10.). The Jews in the first instance and Gentiles in the second were brought into the body of Christ by the Holy Ghost coming upon them. The body was then formed, and the baptism has not been repeated; all who have since believed the gospel have come into it by the sealing of the Holy Spirit.

# THE WAY HOME.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

*"I am treading a path of sorrow, but thousands of God's pilgrims have trodden it before me, and He who sustained them in it will also sustain me, for His grace and power are always the same."*—From a Letter.

[T is a rough road that many whom the Lord loves are treading, but **IT IS THE WAY HOME**. They are learning as they tread the road that earth can yield no rest for their bruised and tired spirits; but it should cheer them to know that **THERE REMAINETH A REST FOR THE PEOPLE OF GOD** (Heb. 4. 9). Tears of sorrow are often on their cheeks, but their experience of God's ways with them in their homeward journey shall not end in sorrow, for from the lips of the Lord have come those startling and hope-inspiring words, "Blessed are ye that weep now: for **YE SHALL LAUGH**."

We wish to say to our fellow travellers to the heavenly home, Don't let the devil dim the eye of your faith or obscure for you the glorious outlook by questions as to whether God is good to you or not; lay firmly hold of His sure word and find strength in the promises of **HOME** with the **REST** and holy **LAUGHTER** that belong to it—blessed compensation for the pilgrimage and the labour and tears of the way to it.

"I have a home above,  
From sin and sorrow free,  
A mansion which eternal love  
Formed and designed for me."

Not all God's children are tested in the same way in this homeward journey. Some hearts are burdened with anxiety for loved ones far away. Some are well acquainted with bodily pain and weakness, with weary days and sleepless nights; others are misunderstood and persecuted by those they long most to bless. Many suffer

keenly as they see those suffer who are dearer to them than life, and still others have the deeper and, if it were not for the sure hope of resurrection, the darker sorrow that Death lays heavily on the heart as he swings his sharp and effective scythe. No wonder that many sigh and weep, nor can we condemn them, for "Jesus wept," and the heart that is not moved by sorrow and trial is a hard and insensible heart.

The Christian in a world of sorrow cannot claim an immunity from tears, nay, it sometimes seems as though he had more weeping times than those who know not God; but God has His own gracious way of bringing forth meat from the eater. He is the great and only true Alchemist who can transmute our tears into priceless gems; He can and does turn that which threatens to be wholly evil into our greatest good, and so the Christian has a deeper joy in his sorrow than the worldling has in his pleasure. And the road along which **GOD** leads His children is **THE WAY HOME**. It is this that we wish to emphasize.

"High in the Father's house above  
Our mansion is prepared;  
There is the home, the rest we love,  
And there our bright reward."

The thought of home makes the mariner cheerful in spite of the waves that dash and foam about the ship; he can whistle in the very teeth of the gale if the prow of the boat is turned to port and the sure hand of the skipper holds the helm. And so the Christian

can sing, in the joy that the knowledge of Christ's love yields—

“And though by storms assailed,  
And though by trials pressed,  
Himself our life He bears us up  
Right onwards to our rest.”

We want the thought of heaven as our home, and of the One who has made it home for us, and who will come again to take us there, and of the Father whose welcome awaits us, to give our hearts a strong tug in that direction and thrill us with fresh hope.

“Home, home, sweet home :  
Our great Friend is Jesus,  
And heaven is our home.”

There is another thought not less sweet, and most wondrously sustaining, it is that the love that has prepared a home for us beyond the clouds and the sorrow will not neglect us on the way to it. And we have brought together in Hebrews 4. some of the great provisions of God's love for us while we labour to enter into His rest.

THE WORD OF GOD, in verse 12, is that which discerns and makes manifest every thought and intention within us that would make our feet falter in the road home. It comes to us directing our steps, enlightening our path, cleansing our way. It warns us of by-paths, flashes its light upon the devil's snares and pitfalls, it searches the innermost recesses of our souls and rebukes every unbelieving thought that might spring up in our hearts. How priceless is the Word of God! how absolutely necessary it is to us, and how all-sufficient in its own sphere! God grant that we may never harden our hearts against His Word. *To those in special trial*—we would say, give the Word of God a greater place in your thoughts and lives than ever; it will not fail you.

THE GREAT HIGH PRIEST, in

verses 14 and 19, is also for us; He undertakes our cause in our heaven-bound way. And here is a theme that might well occupy volumes printed in gold, but how little it is understood! If you have not considered it, do so now, for victory in the homeward way depends entirely upon the grace and mercy that you receive through the intercession of Jesus in this character. The great High Priest is Jesus, the Son of God. Does not the heart swell with holy exultation at the thought of His greatness? The service to which He devotes Himself in this character is that of bearing up His pilgrim saints in intercession before God, and He does this with truest compassion and deepest sympathy. He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities—marvellous thought! It means that every pang in every heart that loves Him is felt by Him. You may not be able to understand it; you are not asked to do so, it is too great for your small mind, but He asks you to believe it, and if you don't you will grieve that heart that loves above all things to be trusted. He would have you to believe that He is serving you every hour because He loves you; yes, loves you with the same love that led Him to Calvary for you. The birth pangs do not exhaust the mother's love for her babe; she would be willing to lay down her life for it at any time.

“Yet she may forgetful prove;  
He will never cease to love.”

How could He cease to love? He is JESUS. And what does that name mean to us? It tells us of the love that brought Him from the eternal throne to Bethlehem's manger; it tells us of a life of suffering-service that led through sorrow and shame and loss to the cross of Calvary; it tells us how His love declared itself there. The waves of death uplifted their awful

crests and rolled upon Him to engulf Him; the billows of Satan's power roared about Him to destroy Him, and He went down beneath the deep waters of God's judgment against sin on our behalf. But though He stood for us where all the seas met upon Him, yet was His love not quenched. It burned with a fervent flame amidst the fierce waters, and shed its wondrous light in the darkness of that awful hour, and there it triumphed—and now the Lord is risen: He lives upon the throne of God for us:

“And we stand beyond the doom  
Of all our sins through Jesus' empty tomb.”

His love has not changed one whit; it is as deeply interested in your welfare to-day as it was when it bore your sins on the tree. Were it otherwise, Jesus would no longer bear that precious name for us, and we should have neither Saviour, Priest, nor home.

But Jesus is the Son of God, for so our text presents Him, and while “Jesus” carries us in thought down to the very depths of the humiliation into which His love carried Him, “THE SON OF GOD” presents His glory, His magnificent greatness, the unmeasured splendour of His Person and inheritance. But there are other thoughts than these in the bringing together of these names and titles that should talk eloquently to our hearts. “Jesus” tells us of His preciousness to us. “The Son of God” tells us of His preciousness to God. “JESUS” TELLS US THAT, SINCE HE LOVES US SO WELL, THERE IS NOTHING THAT WOULD BE GOOD FOR US THAT HE WILL NOT ASK FOR US WHEN HE INTERCEDES BEFORE GOD FOR US; AND “SON OF GOD” TELLS US THAT GOD WILL NOT DENY HIM ANY REQUEST THAT HE MAKES. So that

the fact of Jesus the Son of God being our great High Priest means that we are put into contact with the eternal and infinite resources of God, and that eternal and infinite love sets these resources in motion for us, for God loves His Son and Jesus loves us, and Jesus is the Son of God.

Our limited space forbids that we should enlarge upon this most blessed theme, but we would urge upon our readers, and especially those who are passing through trial and sorrow, to consider the High Priest of our profession—Christ Jesus. He it is who can and will sustain you. He has passed through the heavens from the very lowest point of suffering and shame; He has gone to the highest point in glory, and no watchful sentry rang out the challenge, “Halt!” for every gate was thrown open wide for Him to pass triumphantly through, and He is our Forerunner as well as our Priest. He has passed into the glory which is our HOME before us, and for us, and the welcome that He received is the welcome that awaits us. There is not a difficulty or hostile power that He has not met in the way that we travel as we follow Him. He was tempted in all points as we are apart from sin. And now He lives in the glory to succour us with gracious help *from thence*.

THE THRONE OF GRACE, in verse 16, is also available for us. We may come boldly to it, and when we do we shall discover that our best Friend sits upon it, and there we shall obtain mercy and find grace for seasonable help.

Here are some of our resources, and as we draw upon them we shall hold the full assurance of hope unto the end, and THE END IS HOME.

## “ACCEPTED IN THE BELOVED.” (A. J. POLLOCK.)

“HE hath made us accepted in the Beloved” (Eph. 1. 6). What a world of meaning lies in these wonderful words! Heavy and dull as we are in these bodies of clay, what will be our ecstatic delight when, in our bodies of glory like our Lord, “knowing as we are known,” we shall realize in wonderful fulness what it means to be “accepted in the Beloved”!

But if we sit down and seek to meditate on this wonderful theme it will amply reward us. We are not accepted in ourselves, we are accepted in Christ. If we were accepted in ourselves, then there would be gradations of acceptance—some would be accepted in a fuller way than another, if any were accepted at all.

But if we are accepted in the Beloved, then the acceptance of the humblest, weakest believer is as full as that of the greatest saint. “Quartus, a brother” (Rom. 16. 23), of whom we know nothing beyond his bare name, was as much accepted as the Apostle Paul with all his gift and devotedness. What a firm, unshakable, inalienable ground this puts things on!

This is the only passage where the Lord Jesus is described as “the Beloved.” Now, we suppose, it would be sound theology to say that the believer is accepted *in Christ*, but the inspired Scripture says we are “accepted *in the Beloved*.” Believing as we do that every word of the original Scriptures is inspired, we ask ourselves the question, What is the mind of the Spirit in using this description of the Lord—“The Beloved”?

We believe the answer is that it is to assure our hearts of the *warmth* and *fulness* without reserve of the acceptance. It is not merely a doctrinal tenet—it is a divine fact palpitating with divine warmth and tenderness.

Instead of being the neutral tint of an ordinary photograph, it is, as it were, a bit of spiritual colour photography.

The burnt offering, in contrast to the sin offering, illustrates what acceptance means.

In the burnt offering we have *acceptance* typified—in the sin offering *clearance*. It is one thing—and most wonderful and blessed, too—to have our sins forgiven, to be cleared of all charge of guilt; but it is another to be accepted by the One who has cleared us.

Let me give a simple illustration. A young man is charged with some serious offence. A sentence of imprisonment, or a stiff fine as the alternative, is passed upon him. The fine is paid. The young man is cleared. He has as much right as the judge himself to leave the court unchallenged.

Suppose as he leaves the court the judge happens to be walking down the corridor towards the exit at the same time as the young man. The young fellow in the relief of his clearance offers his hand to the judge. The judge looks at him sternly. He says, “Young man, it is true you have as much right to leave the court as I have—you are cleared, but I do not accept you as a friend,” and he walks away. Clearance is not necessarily acceptance.

How wonderful that God not only righteously clears the believer on the ground of the atoning death of Christ, but He accepts us—accepts us “in the Beloved.”

This we see is blessedly typified in the sin and burnt offerings. In the sin offering the victim was slain, and its parts carried outside the camp and consumed. The word used for the burning of the sin offering (Hebrew, *saraph*) is altogether different from the

word used for burning in connection with the burnt offering (Hebrew, *gatar*). The former word is a terrible word, signifying the fire descending in righteous judgment on that which was offensive to God, and exhausting itself in the utter consuming of the victim. Needless to say the offering was identified with the offerer, and charged with his sin, and thus treated accordingly.

Our adorable Lord, if He had not been personally pure and holy and without taint of sin, could not have died the death He did. So we get that marvellous verse in which our Lord, pure, holy, without taint, inexpressibly dear to God in Himself, taking our place, is charged with all our loathsomeness: "For He hath made Him to be sin for us" [some commentators would translate *sin for us* as *sin-offering*, for there is only one word in the original for sin and sin-offering, so identified is the holy offering with the sinful offerer] "who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5. 21).

But passing wonderful as this clear-ance is, the burnt offering goes further and introduces us typically to the thought of acceptance. What, then, is

the meaning of the word—*gatar*—for burning used in this connection? It is the word used for the burning of incense upon the golden altar—the setting forth of worship typically—and is the word always used in connection with the brazen altar. All the offerings on that altar were *sweet savour* offerings; those otherwise were burned outside the camp. *Gatar* means that the burning releases all the sweet savour of the sacrifice, carrying it up for the delight of God, and sets forth a wonderful aspect of the death of Christ. So we read in Lev. 1. 4 of the burning offering, "It shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him" [i.e., the offerer].

How sweet it is to know, then, that the weakest believer in Christ is "accepted in the Beloved"—accepted in the measure in which Christ Himself is accepted!

"So dear, so very dear to God,  
We cannot dearer be;  
For in the Person of His Son  
We are as dear as He."

What more could we have in favour before God, to share with our Lord Jesus Christ all that He has acquired as the result of His glorious work upon the cross!

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## PROSPERITY.

PROSPERITY is a very interesting word in Scripture. You get it in Psalm 1.

"Whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." That is said of the man who makes the law of God his delight—the will of God is to him good, perfect, and acceptable. When the Lord Jesus was here upon earth He was the perfect Pattern for us in this respect. Again: "The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand." And that because the will of God was everything to Him; to fulfil it He went unto suffering and death. The will of God is the way of true prosperity.

The peace-offering is called the prosperity offering. It was an offering that was brought to God by the free-will of the offerer, and God had His portion in it, and the priest, and the offerer also. He had his share in that which delighted God. In type it speaks of that energy of soul that can not only delight in what Christ is as Saviour, but can enter into God's thoughts of Him and share in blessed communion with Him those thoughts. And that is the highest prosperity of soul that we can know either on earth or in heaven.

# WATCHMAN, WHAT OF THE NIGHT? (JAMES GREEN.)

## Notes on the Prophetic Outlook. No. 3.

### THE PROMISES TO THE SEED.

**GOD'S** promises are prophecies and will without doubt be fulfilled in their appointed time. God can never break His word, and that which He has promised He is able also to perform. Where the promises are unconditional they cannot be made void by any failure on the part of the objects of His goodness, for His gifts and calling are without repentance or change of mind on His part. (Cf. Num. 23. 19; Rom. 11. 29.) Where conditions are attached to the promise, and the fulfilment is made consequent upon obedience to those conditions, then in the case of disobedience, His breach of promise (Num. 14. 34) is an additional witness of the unerring truth of His word, which gave warning of the consequences that would ensue. In Lev. 26. the lease of the land to the children of Israel and the conditions on which they were to hold it are plainly stated, as far as verse 13. Then comes the result if the covenants of the lease are not kept. Nevertheless He does not forget His promise to Jacob, Isaac and Abraham, verses 42, 45; and this He will fulfil as surely as He has the sentence of His judgment.

Abram was called out by the God of glory from Ur of the Chaldees, a great and prosperous city, as recent discoveries have shown, and the centre of the idolatrous worship of the world of his day, in order that he and his descendants should be witnesses to the one true God. (Acts 7. 2, 3; Isa. 43. 10-12.)

That this testimony should be secured even though Abram's seed should fail to maintain it, and in result become as idolatrous as the country and

kindred their forefather had left, God gave to Abram promises which were unconditional. The land of Canaan where Jehovah alone was to be supreme was three times over promised to Abram and his seed for an everlasting possession (Gen. 13. 14-17; 15. 18; 17. 3-8). This promise was repeated to Isaac (Gen. 26. 3), and again to Jacob (Gen. 28. 13). The word of God thus given was enough to ensure its fulfilment, but in order that faith should have the surest ground upon which to rest, during the long period that must elapse before the promise would be fulfilled to the seed that should come, God confirmed His promise by His oath (Gen. 22. 15-18; cf. Heb. 6. 13-18). Regarding the seed that should come, Gal. 3. 16 shows that God ever had in mind, not Israel after the flesh, but Christ the true seed of Abraham in whom all the promises of God are yea and amen. "He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." A distinction is here made between Abraham's natural descendants "seeds" and "the seed" which is Christ. This distinction may be clearly seen if the passages in Genesis are carefully read. Thus, in chapter 12. 2, it is the natural seed which is to be great, in verse 3 it is Christ the true seed, in whom all the families of the earth are to be blessed (cf. Acts 3. 25, 26; Gal. 3. 8). Now just as the first man Adam was a figure of Him that was to come, so Isaac, in type raised from the dead, sets forth the risen Christ in whom the covenant is ordered in all things and sure. So in chapter 22. 17 it is the natural seed that is to be multiplied as the stars and the sand, but in verse 18 Christ is the seed from whom the blessing is

to flow forth to Israel first and then to all nations

We have before pointed out that the spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus, and this is the reason why the books of the prophets are so largely occupied with the failure and sin of the natural seed, which brings upon them the judgment of God, and show at the same time, shining through the dark clouds, the light of His unalterable purpose in Christ. In accordance with this there is abundance of prophetic type and shadow, as well as direct statements foretelling, with marvellous accuracy, His birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension, to say nothing of the rich and glorious announcements of His reappearing and triumphant reign. We who are living to-day are witnesses of how completely the former things concerning Himself have been fulfilled, and with what sure confidence may we anticipate "That blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2. 13). Blessing whether on earth or in heaven for Jew or Gentile must rest alone upon the work of the Son of God, the true "seed," who is no uncertain yea and nay, as are the natural "seeds," but God's sure yea. Happy they who, as Israel will in the coming day, accept the judgment of God against themselves, and learn in Christ the depths of the wisdom and foreknowledge and mercy of God.

The covenant with Abraham was unconditional (Deut. 1. 8; 9. 4), and the conditional covenant of the law, which was 430 years afterwards, in no wise disannuls it, so as to make the promise of none effect (Gal. 3. 17, 18). The first rests upon God's "I will," the second upon "If." This latter is the covenant which Paul says, in Heb. 8. 13, decayeth, waxeth old and is

ready to vanish away, giving place to the new covenant which will be made with the houses of Israel and Judah in the days to come. A comparison of Heb. 8. 8-12, Jer. 31. 31-34, Gen. 17. 7-8, will show the similarity of this with the promise to Abraham, "I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." Until that takes effect for Israel literally, the spirit of the new covenant is ministered to all who at the present time are brought to God through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, namely, forgiveness of sins and the knowledge of God.

The effort of Satan in all dispensations is to counteract the witness which it is the desire of God to maintain. Thus, for "Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our God is one Jehovah" he substituted many gods; for obedience to God's holy law, the disobedience of lust; for sovereign mercy to the returned remnant from Babylon, self-righteousness; grace has been confused with law; the spiritual house of God, composed of living stones, has been imitated by the materialism of Rome; and the one body of Christ has been nullified by a sectarian spirit which has scattered the sheep of His flock. Israel was corrupted by the worst forms of demon worship, so that the witness for which they were called out was entirely lost (cf. Rom. 2. 24; Ezek. 36. 20). After long patience and many warnings, judgment for this iniquity fell first of all upon the ten tribes in the sixth year of Hezekiah, 721 B.C. (2 Kings 18. 10). Thus the prophecy of Ahijah spoken 260 years before (1 Kings 14. 15) was fulfilled, and Israel was carried away eastward of the river Euphrates. God still bore in patience with Judah, until over a hundred years had run their course, but alas, without result, every warning remained unheeded (Hosea 4. 15; Jer. 3. 6-11). Then the

sentence of judgment was executed upon the whole nation. They were given into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, and from that day to this they have been "Lo-ammi"—"not my people." The ten tribes have never returned as a whole from the captivity of the Assyrian power, and although their whereabouts seems to have been known as recently as New Testament times, after the breaking of the brotherhood between Israel and Judah by the rejection and death of Messiah, they became lost as far as man's efforts to find them are concerned. So they remain in face of the ingenious theories which would identify them with the Scythians, and make these the progenitors of the Anglo-Saxon race. With Judah it was different. A remnant of them was brought back from the captivity in Babylon after seventy years (Jer. 25. 11 ; 29. 10) that they might be ready for the coming of Messiah the Prince. They were warned by the last of the prophetic

writers (Mal. 3. 1) that He would suddenly come to His temple, and He came. But not, as they expected in conquering majesty, in a way which would have appealed to their fleshly pride, but in human weakness, a babe in His mother's arms. A Simeon and an Anna recognized Him, but Judah and Jerusalem had no room in their self-righteous hearts for One who was meek and lowly. Their treatment of Him had been foretold by Isaiah (chapter 53. 1-3, and Micah 5. 1). After this there was no remedy, the fig tree had been proved worthless, and it remained but to cut it down with the axe of judicial blindness (Micah 5. 3 ; Rom. 11. 8), until God's present purpose of taking out of the Gentiles a people for His name shall be fulfilled. After this the tabernacle of David shall again be raised up and the captivity of Israel and Judah be ended in mercy (Amos 9. 11-15 ; Acts 15. 14-18).

(To be continued.)

## FAITH'S VICTORY.

*"Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite unto this day, because that he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel."*—Joshua 14. 6-15.

HEBRON was the place of the giants, and the thought of the giants reduced all Israel to a state of terror. Why? They had no faith, but the very place where they dwelt became the possession of the man of faith. Where there is most against you, there you may record your greatest victory. Why? Faith brings God in, and God is greater than circumstances and foes. Faith is invincible and victorious. "One man of you shall chase a thousand: for the Lord your God, He it is that fighteth for you." *"And Caleb drove thence the three sons of Anak, Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Talmi, the children of Anak."*

## Doctrine and Practice.

IT is never right, Scripture does not do it, to separate doctrine from practice.

The gospel of Christ claims to have as much to do with the formation of our characters and the regulation of our affections, as it has to do with the saving of our souls. In the apostolic epistles ordinarily, the truth as to the believer's position in grace and relationship with the Lord is first given and then the suited conduct and spirit are enforced.

# HE LIVES !

"The Lord liveth ; and blessed be my rock ; and let the God of my salvation be exalted."—Psalm 18. 46.

DR. DALE, of Birmingham, preacher and expositor, was passing through a time of deep discouragement when those two words blazed before him. "He lives !" he cried ; "then all is well." It was his renaissance. He never looked back.

Whether shouted by David as a song of triumph over his enemies ; used as a greeting and salutation by the Lord's hidden ones in the five hundred miles of Catacombs in Rome during the pagan persecutions—the dying invocation of thousands in the Colosseum—or by the millions of holy martyrs during papal outbreaks of hellish hatred of God's saints and of His immutable truth,

"HE LIVES" — "HE LIVES" breathed forth amid streams of flame in the cruel Auto-da-fé, or unheard for the howls of an infuriated crowd in Smithfield, Oxford, Lewes, or elsewhere !

"He lives !" The "very present help" in the fearful sufferings of the *Albigenses* as they were driven as sheep to the slaughter by Rome's champion butcher, the infernal "Saint" Dominic, and that sanguinary monster Simon de Montfort.

Or of the *Vaudois*, or *Waldenses*, or *Camisards*. Whether crushed out of life by the torture chambers of the Spanish Inquisition—or hurled over the precipitous escarpments of the Cevennes and the Alpine ranges—or sabred by the Dragoons of the "Grande "

Monarch—or butchered by thousands on their own green mountains of Savoie by that incarnate fiend François de Sales. Yea, time and space fail us to touch even the fringe of the history of her whom the Spirit of the Living God—not "bigoted protestants" as they say—calls "The mother of harlots and abominations of the earth" (Rev. 17. 5, and Rev. 18. 24), "In whom was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of *all that were slain upon the earth.*" And all alike hung upon those heaven-exulting and hell-destroying words, "HE LIVES."

"And," cries David, "He is my Rock"—*Mine!*

"And blessed be my Rock."

And is He the Rock of Ages? Yes, indeed ; who else could it be?

When He was going into death He declared, John 8. 58, "I AM," but when He had come victoriously out of it, He appears to John in the glory of His triple office of Prophet, Priest, and King, crying those blessed words of identification with Psalm 18. 46, "I am He that liveth" Rev. 1. 18, and "Because I live, ye shall live also" John 14. 19. "And, behold ! I am alive"—not for a day, or a dispensation only—but "for evermore." I was dead, and I have destroyed it for you. **DEATH IS IN THE PAST TENSE FOR EVERY CHRISTIAN.**

For "He that believeth in ME shall never die" (John 11. 26).

## When Things Decay.

IT is in the nature of things that any divine movement of truth and grace in this world should gradually lose its force when its first freshness in the minds of men begins to decay ; and individual souls can only be kept in their first energy as they are near enough to the Lord to receive from Him the constant communications of His grace. It is only Christ who never changes, and His grace that is sufficient for us.

# THE MASTER'S WORDS.

(JAMES MCBROOM.)

## Notes on Matthew's Gospel, Chapters 5.—7.

A FEW words are necessary on the Sermon on the Mount as a whole, which may help still further to clear the position. We begin with the enquiry, Why is it that the Sermon on the Mount is so much spoken of with apparent appreciation by many who refuse the full truth of the gospel? To answer this we must take account of its place in relation to what went before and what came after. It comes in as a link between the position of the faithful in the Old Testament and the place of the church which is called into the full revelation of God in the New Testament. The relationship in which those addressed stood was with the Father in heaven, and it shows a knowledge of God which the saints of earlier days could not have had, consequently the standard of holiness is raised much higher. Evil is traced back from the outward act to the heart, and the good is elevated from Old Testament practice to the ways of the Father, so that praying for enemies and doing good to them that despitefully hurt, contrasts strongly with many Psalms which call down vengeance upon the enemies. The Messiah was present, and consequently the advance on the position held by those who had waited for Him was very great. The discourse was, therefore, a great advance on what had been before, and an illumination worthy of Him who spoke.

It is for this reason, however, that we need to distinguish carefully between what is set forth in the address and what came out later in Christianity by the gospel. At this time it was still undecided whether He would be received or not as Israel's Messiah; the people had to be tested as to this. The trial of man in the flesh which had been going on through the ages

and which came to an end later at the cross was still proceeding, consequently responsibility is made prominent while redemption is left untouched. The gospel as we know it to-day comes from a glorified Christ whose work at the cross brought the trial of the first man in his race to a close. It is because this is not laid hold of that this grand discourse is so much misused and so badly misunderstood.

It is needful to account for the two-fold bearing of the Lord's position at that moment. He stood before Israel as proof of the faithfulness of God to all His promises, and was ready, if received, to set up the Kingdom. It was foreknown, however, that He would be refused and crucified, so that we can also view Him as come to die, that by resurrection He might establish a new order of life and manhood on the other side of death. Having accomplished this, He then took His place at the right hand of God, that the gospel might come from Him there to the world which was guilty of putting Him to death. When the gospel did come man was no longer under trial. Until the cross, and therefore when this discourse was given, man was being tested, that his incapability to stand before God in his own righteousness might be demonstrated. After that solemn event he is no longer treated on his own responsibility for blessing, but provided with righteousness from God in the gospel. The enormous advance of blessing brought in by the gospel shows that the believer is accepted in Christ, the risen Head of a new race, and all who believe have a new life and are brought into a new creation in Christ.

The Father's name occurs many times in the discourse, and it may be

said that this is the Christian revelation. This, however, is not the full truth, for although there was a partial revelation of God in that relation so that the disciples could look up and address Him in that way, there could not be the full revelation of this till the death and resurrection of Christ. It was the knowledge of God as a Father by a people on earth who were associated with Christ in humiliation, and without the knowledge of redemption. One who cared for them and valued them far beyond the fowls or lilies, knew their needs, sought their trust, and would care for them all the way through. The gospel, on the other hand, gives association with Christ in glory, "Part with Me" in a life in resurrection where neither needs nor cares can come. The one does not displace the other, but it is not difficult to see that the latter is the greater. Here the Father is made known to the adoring heart in the fulness of His love and counsels of grace, made known by the Son as First-born of many brethren to those whom He is not ashamed to call brethren. The reader will note that, while it was impossible for the believing remnant of Israel before the cross to know the full Christian position, for it was not then revealed, we who have come in afterwards, and enter now into the full revelation of the Father's name in association with the Son who is in the glory, share with them all the Father's grace and care as being associated with a rejected Christ upon the earth.

In the thought of God these Jewish believers were to be lifted into the full blessing by the exaltation of Christ and the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost. The Epistle to the Hebrews and first of Peter show the enormous advance for those who had received the Messiah. Along with these came the revelation of

the church's place through Paul and the corresponding heavenly character of the new thing through John, concluding the apostolic testimony. We know from the Acts that this glorious transfer was not generally accepted by believing Jews, for many of them clung to Judaism and were zealous of the law. This an ever-gracious God bore with for a lengthened time, and the Epistle of James is the message of the Spirit to such. This explains how that this epistle gives more allusions to the Sermon on the Mount than all the rest of the New Testament put together.

The destruction of Jerusalem ended this state of things for the Jews, but what of Gentile Christians into whose hands was put the responsibility of the testimony of God? It can easily be shown that before the church had been in existence a century, saints to whom the truth had been committed allowed it to slip, even that as elementary as the forgiveness of sins and justification by faith, so that instead of learning and knowing deliverance from the world, believers as to their experience were left in a worse position than those in a previous dispensation. This being so, we cease to wonder how that all down the ages even the very best of men have been unable to place this glorious discourse and properly appreciate its beauties. Such expressions as "the new law," "the moral law," and the "laws of the Kingdom," can but add to the confusion which is the result, surely, of the activity of the mind to the exclusion of the Holy Ghost.

How great is the grace that we should be given to see the beauty, order, and precision of God's ways! The Book of Acts shows the workings of God among men during the transitional period, but the time of the calling out of the church as a whole fits in

to the parenthetic gap between the sixty-ninth and seventieth weeks of Daniel's prophecy. Further revelation shows that the church, like Enoch, will be called from earth to heaven, making room for the resumption of divine dealings with Israel in fulfilment of the promises to the fathers. The future remnant will be waiting for the Kingdom which will be set up at the coming of the King. The interval between their call and the appearing of the King will be a time of unprecedented suffering, many will be slain and pass into heavenly blessing, while the sealed ones will enter into full blessing on earth with the King. This, as we said, explains the difference of reward mentioned by the Lord in chapter 5. verses 5 and 12.

The Lord in these last days has been

pleased to recall our hearts to the truth which is for the whole church, and there are those who have learned through mercy something of the beauty and preciousness of this discourse in its proper setting. In the wealth of ministry coming out from these it has been remarked how little is said on Matt. 5.-7. The fact of its Jewish connection and that it is not properly Christian may account for this. To apprehend it in its dispensational bearing requires a knowledge of both Old and New Testaments, while in its moral and spiritual setting it provides a fund of heavenly wealth. This gives the balance; may we be preserved in that balance, and may the Lord create in us all a keener appetite for the things concerning Himself, for His name's sake.

## THE LOVE OF CHRIST TO HIS CHURCH.

*"Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it."*—Ephesians 5. 25.

WHO shall tell how dear to the heart of Christ is His church! Or what the possession of it means to Him! You get indications of it in the Old Testament in the types that are given to us there: Rebekah was loved by Isaac, and she became his comfort when Sarah was dead—Sarah was a type of Israel, whom for the time being is lost to Christ. Asenath was given to Joseph when he was a stranger in Egypt, away from his brethren and his father's house—they were another type of Israel, who having rejected Christ are estranged from Him; but as Rebekah and Asenath were a compensation and a comfort to those great men to whom they were given, so the church is the compensation and comfort to the earth-rejected but glory-crowned Man, Christ Jesus.

It may be contended that the church has greatly failed, and is very feeble, and things are greatly disorganized, but has all this changed the heart of Christ? Does a good man love his wife the less because she is feeble? Why, her very feebleness draws forth renewed expressions of his love. Christ gave Himself for His church when it was in the very lowest depths. Can that love diminish? Never. And every throb of love towards Himself from it is precious to Him, a wonderful compensation for all that He suffered to win her, and a comfort to Him in this time of His patience. He has yet to look upon her as "a bride adorned for her husband," but meanwhile He loves her and serves her. She is nourished and cherished by Him. And there is not a saint, no matter how young and feeble and failing, but comes within His cherishing arms and care, for all have their place and part in His church, and it is a red-letter day in the spiritual history of a Christian when he wakes up to this great truth.

## THREE LOOKS.

(L. R.)

"Looking upon Jesus as He walked."—John 1. 36

THESE words were spoken of John the Baptist, and we are constrained to ask what was the wondrous sight on which this dear man's eye rested? What was it that made him so eager a disciple, so faithful a witness, that led him to testify, "He that cometh from above is above all" (John 3. 31)? Why was he willing to decrease that Jesus might increase, willing to see his followers leave him, if only they went after Jesus?

He had seen the Lord of glory, the Maker and Upholder of all things, moving among guilty men, full of grace and truth; coming to His own, only to be refused by them, yet unchanged by their hatred, unwearied in His compassion, His love. He had seen the Anointed of Jehovah, on whom the Spirit descended and remained, to whom the voice from heaven had said, "Thou art My Beloved Son; in Thee I am well pleased" (Luke 3. 22). And John, as he gazed on Jesus, found strength for a life of toil and testimony, and for a cruel death in prison, by the sword of Herod.

Beloved, let us ask ourselves, Is it our habit to look upon Jesus as He walked? There is power in this look—peace—joy. In Him we see the kind of walk that God could be pleased with, and on which He looked with unchanging delight.

*Stephen, "being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God" (Acts 7. 55).*

Here was another look indeed! Stephen beheld Him, not as the lowly, soon-to-be-crucified One, but as the One Who had passed through death,

having broken the bars of the grave—a risen Lord, standing, waiting, if even now His own would receive Him; and Stephen, looking, is conformed, in measure, to His likeness, and kneeling down prays, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this he fell asleep" (Acts 7. 60)—the church's first martyr.

Lord, teach us, we pray, who come after these, so slowly and with such halting steps, how to look thus.

Yet another look! A strong man, on the Damascus road, breathing out threatenings and slaughter, smitten down and blinded by the glory of the light that shone from One saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" (Acts 9. 4). And he arose, and ever after the glory of that light filled his vision, impelling him to a life of pain and labour, of bitter persecution, of famine and nakedness, of stripes and imprisonments, to end as with John and Stephen in a martyr's death, all most gladly endured, because, as he himself explained, "last of all He was seen of me also" (1 Cor. 15. 8).

May we, as these who have gone before, of whom we write, be "looking upon Jesus"! "We see not yet all things put under Him, but we see Jesus . . . crowned with glory and honour" (Heb. 2. 8, 9).

If we look around, we see an ever-deepening darkness; if we look within, our hearts must needs be sad; but "looking upon Jesus," and, by the help of His Spirit, the mighty Comforter sent by Him, "looking unto Jesus," we can say:

"We look until His precious love  
Our every thought control,  
Its vast constraining influence prove  
O'er body, spirit, soul.

## DANGERS THAT THREATEN.

(F. B. HOLB)

## 5. Diversion. Colossians.

THE believers at Colosse were not babes in Christ like those at Thessalonica, nor were they in a carnal state like the Corinthians. On the contrary, the Apostle Paul could address them as "saints and faithful brethren in Christ," for "the word of the truth of the gospel" had come to them and brought forth fruit in them. They were marked by "faith in Christ Jesus" and "love . . . to all the saints." All this the apostle acknowledges in his opening words, and in chapter 2. he supplements it by crediting them with "steadfastness" as to their faith in Christ and also with "order."

Among the Thessalonians there were those who walked in disorderly fashion as regards their personal lives and behaviour (see 2 Thess. 3. 6). Among the Corinthians there was much disorder in their assembly life and gatherings together, so that a long passage (1 Cor. 11. 17-14. 40) is taken up with instructions of a corrective nature, and even then the apostle has to say, "The rest will I set in order when I come" (11. 34). The Colossians were in happy contrast to all this. They had received the instructions that relate to Christian life and activity, whether of a personal or assembly nature, and they were governed by them. Under the leadership of various able and gifted men Christians may have adopted in turn a dozen differing forms, all of which may appear very orderly, but which, nevertheless, would be every one of them but *disorder* because *astray from the divine ordering*. The Colossians, however, could be truly credited with "order" since they were *obedient to the divine ordering*.

All this was very good, and the Colossian believers as a result were a cause of much thanksgiving and joy to

the apostle even though, having been converted through the instrumentality of others, they had not seen his face in the flesh. Their condition was a spiritual one, and we might almost speak of them as advanced Christians. Yet Paul's loving heart discerned a threatening danger even for them, and in verses 8 to 23 of chapter 2. he exposes it.

The danger was that of being *diverted* from Christ who is the all-supplying, all-sufficient Head of His body, the church. The subtle adversary aimed at bringing in that which would prevent them "holding the Head"—maintaining, that is, an intimate contact and communion with Him, so that He should be the Source and Governor of all our thoughts and ways. The Head securely "holds" us, the members of His body, but do we "hold" Him? The adversary knows well that if this diversion of the saints from Christ can be effected innumerable mischiefs, innumerable spiritual diseases, will arise.

And what was it that threatened to accomplish this serious diversion for the Colossians? The answer may be thought surprising, but this is it nevertheless—*human intellect*. The danger was consequently one that would especially threaten intelligent and advanced Christians, such as they were.

"Beware," said the apostle, "lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." The force of the word "spoil" is not to *mar* but to *capture*, i.e., to take as a spoil or prey. Nothing does more easily capture intellectual people than the philosophy of the world-teachers, because it is so very abstruse and involved. It represents the highest flights of the reflective

and imaginative powers of the human intellect. Here, however, it is coupled with "vain" or "empty" deceit, which affords us a sure insight into what it really is according to the divine view.

Having surveyed very imperfectly some part of the material universe and observed or deduced what they believe to be the laws governing it, men love to speculate upon the mysteries of its origin and its character. They attempt the solution of a problem only knowing, and that imperfectly, some tiny fraction of the factors involved in it. Is it likely then that their philosophies will stand? Moreover, could they become possessed of ALL the facts governing the case their minds would break down under the weight of them, for only a mind equal to the mind of God would be capable of comprehending the inter-relation of all the facts and so drawing correct conclusions. What hope is there, then, in philosophy? It is only "after the tradition [or, teaching] of men, after the rudiments [or, elements] of the world," and we Christians should know something of what men and the world are. It is not "after Christ," and hence has the effect of diverting from Him.

The human intellect, however, works very busily in another sphere altogether. There is also the unseen universe—what we may call the sphere of *religion*—and subtle forces were at work here to divert the Colossians from Christ. There were those who would have ensnared them by a reversion to Judaism, judging them "in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ." The substance, being available there must be great loss in turning back from it to that which is merely the shadow

of it, and this loss is enhanced when the substance is "of Christ"—that which proceeds from and is identified with Him. Judaism, even a tinge of it brought into Christianity, diverts from Christ. This the adversary knew full well.

To many minds, however, it would appear a rather feeble and reactionary thing to hark back to Judaism. "What!" they would exclaim, "are we not capable of thinking for ourselves in things religious? Let us not be bound hand and foot by the past, but let us make our own independent advance." They have done so with sad results, which call forth another apostolic warning, commencing with the words, "Let no man beguile you of your reward" (verse 18).

The passage extending from this verse to the end of the chapter is not an easy one. It is difficult even as to its translation, as may be seen if the New Translation by J. N. Darby (large edition with full footnotes) be consulted. Still it is quite clear that in it we are warned, firstly, against *angelolatry*—including, of course, the worship of "saints" who after death are credited with angel-like existence and powers. Secondly, we are warned against *ordinances* connected with things that perish in their use, which may be imposed upon us after the commandments and doctrines of men. Thirdly, against *asceticism*, which, though it may appear a proceeding of much humility and denial of self, is really one which ministers to the satisfaction of the flesh in those who practise it. Indeed, this feature, *the satisfaction of the FLESH*, is what marks the whole movement, for the worship of angels, though apparently a very humble kind of thing, is really connected with being "puffed up" as to the "fleshly mind."

We have no hesitation in identifying the danger that is unmasked for us in verses 18 to 23 of chapter 2, as *Ritualism*; just as we have *Judaism* in verse 16, and *Rationalism* in verse 8. The Ritualistic error diverts from Christ as much as the other two, for those who are ensnared by it are "not holding the Head," who is Christ.

Thus far we have listened to the warnings of the apostle. We now turn to the great realities which he brought before them as being in the nature of an antidote.

These may be summarized under three heads: (1) The knowledge of Christ Himself personally. (2) The knowledge of "the mystery." (3) The understanding of the bearing and force of His death and resurrection. If we possess ourselves, through grace, of these three, we shall, indeed, "be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding" (1. 9).

On the one hand, the truth of the gospel is so divinely simple that the mind of a little child, illumined by the Holy Ghost, can sweetly take it in. On the other, the deep things of God, made known to us in Christianity, are of such scope and profundity as to overshadow the greatest human mind ever opened by the Spirit to receive them. Let us make no mistake about this. The truth revealed to us in Scripture will more than fill and satisfy the intellect of widest range and greatest powers, *if that intellect is possessed by one who is self-judged and under the control and teaching of the Holy Ghost*. Taught by the Spirit—whatever be the range of our intellects—we have to cry with the apostle, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the

Lord?" For the truth is beyond us in its depth; yet we may lay hold of it with "spiritual understanding" as opposed to mere natural intelligence, and "in all wisdom" since it will be knowledge not merely theoretic but applied.

In verses 13 to 22 of chapter 1, CHRIST personally is presented with wonderful fulness. He is "the Son of God's love," "the image of the invisible God," "the Firstborn of every creature" because the Creator. He is the Former of all things, the One by whom they hang together. He is "the Head of the body the church," "the beginning, the firstborn from the dead," so that He holds the pre-eminent place in every sphere. On earth He accomplished redemption, and the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in Him to that end. Moreover, that which He was on earth He is to-day, for "In Him *dwelleth* all the fulness of the Godhead *bodily*" (2. 9), and consequently, we are "complete" or "filled full" in Him.

Our completeness in Christ is emphasized in connection with the danger of Rationalism. The fitness of this is evident. In order to be a rationalist you must enthrone the human intellect as supreme, and this must necessarily involve the dethronement of the mind of God as revealed in Christ. The rationalist is of necessity the enemy of *Revelation*, and the revelation of God in Christ is the total destruction of rationalism. Rationalism may admit a human "Jesus" as a great seer or prophet or thinker, but that is all. The knowledge of Christ as the One in whom the Godhead-fulness came into perfect display and revelation dispels the mists of rationalism for ever.

And for ourselves, Christians of the twentieth century, is there any danger from this direction? Most assuredly, —very much so. The so-called "mod-

ernism" is just religious rationalism, and it is spreading as a plague. It can, however, only infect those who have no active, vital faith in the Godhead-glory of Christ. The full knowledge of Christ as presented here lifts the soul *entirely out of the range of the miasma of modernism.*

Then, also, Paul sets before these Colossians "the mystery of God"—that particular part of truth which had been hidden from previous ages and generations, but which was now revealed as the crowning point of God's purposes and the completing of His word. In it (for so verse 3 of chapter 2. must be read) "are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," since it was only when it came to light that the whole circle of God's thoughts and purposes came clearly into view.

A story has been told of the artist Turner standing with an art critic in his studio. The critic inspected one of his pictures, and confessed himself somewhat baffled, when Turner stepped forward and placed with his brush a single dot or splash of crimson on the canvas. The effect was extraordinary. It seemed to set everything in right perspective and make all intelligible and harmonious. So it was when the "mystery" or "secret" of God was revealed through Paul. Its effect at once was to make the whole scheme of God's will and counsel intelligible. His ways and dealings which had before seemed dark and mysterious were made plain. It became the key to unlock the knowledge of His will.

Apart from this, however, the mystery is of great excellence in itself. The apostle writes of "the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (I. 27). It has its own peculiar "glory" and in that glory rich treasures are enfolded. One aspect

only of the mystery is alluded to here and that the *subjective*. In Ephesians we have the mystery considered from an *objective* standpoint—the Gentiles, "fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel" (3. 6). An election of grace from amongst the Gentile nations brought jointly with an elect remnant from amongst Israel into heirship as regards the inheritance and into the same body, which is Christ's body, and into all that is promised in Christ. The character of both the inheritance and the body are developed in chapters 1. and 2. of Ephesians.

The subjective counterpart to this is that Christ is in these elect Gentiles; the hope because the pledge of the day of glory when Christ will fill not merely Gentile believers but "all things" (see Eph. 4. 10). We are "in Christ," and that carries with it our fellow-heirship, our being of the same body, our joint-participation in His promise. Being of His body, Christ, the Head, is in us, and the more truly we hold the Head the more effectively will His life and character be seen in us. Christ in us, Gentiles, is a little sample and pledge of the coming day of glory when all things shall be headed up in Him, and He will fill all things over which He is Head.

If we have the full assurance of understanding in the full knowledge of this, the stark-naked poverty of rationalism, whether as Modernism or in any other form, will be perfectly apparent to us. Neither shall we be enticed by ritualism. Who desires to traffic with angels or ordinances or ascetic practices when we are put into such intimate relations with the Head? Members of the Privy Council who have access to His Majesty's person and councils never betray any desire to interview and accept orders from the chauffeur who drives the royal motor-car or the

footman who opens the door into the audience chamber. Why should they? It would be a strangely inverted procedure to do so. Not more inverted, however, than the procedure of the ritualist, who, overlooking the fact that as Man Christ is his Head, desires to place angels or ordinances between.

Thirdly, there is the bearing of the death and resurrection of Christ upon these matters. We believers are circumcised in His circumcision, that is, we have died with Christ. Thereby the flesh has been disowned (for verse 11 of chapter 2. should read "the putting off of the body of the flesh"). Thereby also "the handwriting of ordinances" has been abolished and principalities and powers have been spoiled. We have also been raised with Him, and this involves being quickened together with Him.

We *are* dead with Christ, and this being so, how can we be subject to the ritualistic ordinances, all of which recognize the flesh which the cross has disowned? We *are* risen with Christ, and this being so, how can we set our minds on things on the earth rather than on things above? How can we then be entrapped in a ritualistic system of religion which cultivates the flesh and occupies its votaries with earthly things?

If, then, we are to be preserved from the danger of being diverted from Him we must just have Himself abidingly before us.—CHRIST in the fulness of His personal and official glory; CHRIST as the One to be expressed in connection with the mystery of God; CHRIST once dead but now risen, our position in relation to all things being simply determined by His.

## THE EAR.

GOD is very jealous as to how we use our ears.

Satan gained entrance to the citadel of man's soul through *the ear* of Eve. We all know the man-degrading and God-dishonouring results of that.

Those who are saved by grace and sealed by the Spirit, are warned again and again in regard to what is permitted to enter their ears. At the cleansing of the leper and at the consecration of the priests, both types or pictures of the blessing and privileged place in which Christians are set by the death of Christ, the blood was put first upon the right *ear*, then the oil was put upon the blood. The ear is claimed by the precious blood, and the Spirit typified by the oil is the power given of God that it might be used well-pleasing to Him (Lev. 14. 14, 17).

In Mark 4. 24, our Lord Jesus Christ

(H. J. VINE.

said, "Take heed **WHAT** ye hear!" and in Luke 8. 18, "Take heed therefore **HOW** ye hear!" Often He said when teaching, "He that has *ears* to hear, let him hear!" and to those who did listen to His wonderful unfoldings, "Blessed are *your ears*!" Moreover, in the final word given as to the assemblies, it is said seven times, "He that has *an ear*, let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies" (Rev. 2. and 3.). And it is solemnly foretold concerning the very days in which we live, "*They will turn away their ears from the truth*" (2 Tim. 4. 4). The reason being they will hearken to what is not the truth of God, for they have "ITCHING EARS."

Our Lord Jesus Christ spake "the words of God," "the words of eternal life." He said, "The words which I have spoken unto you are spirit and

[Continued on page 120

# THE SOWER, THE SEED, AND HARVEST.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

## Report of an Address. *Concluded from page 77.*

*"He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing His sheaves with him."*—Psalm 126. 6.

IN Mark's Gospel we have an entirely different line of truth, and we must view the truth from Mark's standpoint. Here Christ is the servant. Not the King coming to command, but the servant coming to obey. In Mark's Gospel the seed yields some thirty, some sixty, and some one hundred fold. Do we remember those poignant words of the Lord Jesus in the prophetic Scripture, "I have spent My strength for nought and in vain"? So it seemed. He wended His way to Calvary's hill with a cross on His shoulders and without a single follower who loved Him. All His work apparently in vain. Crucified and cast out. Israel was not redeemed, His followers forsook Him and fled. That was the end of the Servant's path. It was the end as far as men could see. But was that the end really? Oh, no! The resurrection morning was the beginning of a new day, the tomb was empty, and our Lord had risen from the dead. Then He ascended into heaven, and when the day of Pentecost was fully come a hundred and twenty of His disciples gathered in the upper room, a very few out of a million and a half of Jews then in Jerusalem. Upon that hundred and twenty there came down the Holy Ghost, and those Spirit-filled men went out to preach the Word, and three thousand were converted; but that was not very many in comparison with the multitude that remained indifferent to the Word. And to this day the saved are but a little flock. The small minority are on the Lord's side. And they are weak and insignificant, for not many wise men, not

many mighty, not many noble are called. This is the period of the thirty fold. The work of the true Servant does not seem to be affecting men much. The seed does not appear to be yielding a big harvest. Why, men say, the gospel is a failure. They do not understand what the gospel has come into the world for. They ask, Hasn't the gospel come into the world to convert the world? No word in the sacred pages of Scripture would lead you to such a conclusion. The gospel has come into the world *to take out of it* a people unto His name (Acts 15.), and the world goes on as if the gospel had never come at all. This is the day of the thirty fold viewed from this side of the truth. When we come to the millennial reign of Christ, then we shall see the sixty fold, for the millennium will not be a perfect state. There will be sinners in that reign and they will die immediately they sin. It will be a time of great blessing undoubtedly, but it will not be a perfect condition of things, because the Lord will go on subduing evil until every enemy is subdued, and then He will give up His Kingdom to His Father in heaven. Righteousness will reign and not rest in that Kingdom, and though sin will be punished the instant it shows itself, yet it will be there. At the end of that reign Satan is to be released from his prison and he will go out amongst the people and lead a host beyond count against God (Rev. 20.), showing very clearly that the state will not be a perfect one. More widespread will the glory of Christ be than in this present time; it will be the sixty fold.

In Rev. 21, we read, "There shall be a new heaven and a new earth, and God shall dwell amongst men and be their God, and they shall be His people." The time is coming when the prayer we have prayed so often, the prayer that the saints of God have prayed throughout the centuries, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," will be fulfilled. When God will find joy in dwelling on the earth in the midst of men. "And He shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away."

That glorious and eternal state will be founded in all its blessedness upon the sacrifice which Jesus made upon the cross of Calvary. There shall be a redeemed earth, and in that redeemed earth God shall find His everlasting pleasure and He shall be all in all, and that will be the result of the coming of Jesus here and of the sowing of the seed that He sowed. That which will fill that vast universe of bliss will be that which was revealed when He was here. Every word and act of His will be seen then in its imperishable beauty. All shall come out in its full blessedness—the joy of every heart in that vast universe. That will be the hundred fold. We look back and see Him in that short space of thirty-three and a half years, He a poor man in the eyes of men, with not a place to lay His head. But what He was and did then will fill eternity. What praise will be His in that day! God the Father will owe all the glory and rest to Him, and every thrill of joy in our renewed beings we shall owe to Him. We shall have communion full and blessed with the Father, for the Son will be the subject of it. We shall have oneness of thought with one another, for every knee will gladly bow to Jesus.

Let us get into the inside of the parable of the sower, let our ears be open to hear its teaching, and to know that everything for God and all the blessing for men depend upon the life and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. Everything depends upon that, and while we dwell upon it and make it our theme we shall be yielding more fruit now for the glory of God. We shall be bringing forth the fruit now that He will gather in the glad harvest-home. We have to spread the story. We have to make it known, the only story that can meet the world's deep need. Think of the misery and sin of this world surging darkly around us. How are weary and broken hearts to be blest? How can sinners be set free from Satan's thralldom? Only through this story that we can tell, the old, old story of Jesus and His love; and we have been privileged greatly, for we have been entrusted with this story, to go and make it known while we wait for His coming again.

Gospel preachers, we have our work to do and do not let us shirk it; we must cry, though the message may not be palatable, All flesh is as the grass, transient and withering, and all the glory of man is as the flower of the grass; the best is no better than the worst, for at the great test of the cross we plainly see that there is no difference, for the princes of this world crucified the Lord of glory. This we must proclaim, but hopeless would be our work and words if they ended there; thank God we have something else to tell. The word of God liveth, it throbs with life, and abideth for ever, it is imperishable. And that word is about Christ, for the gospel of God is concerning Jesus Christ, our Lord; and, thank God, our labour is not in vain in the Lord.

May we all be divinely instructed in our service for the Lord in the gospel.

## WHY COULD NOT WE CAST HIM OUT ?

*“ And when He was come into the house, His disciples asked Him privately, Why could not we cast him out ? And He said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.”—Mark 9. 28, 29.*

WE can understand the dismay of these disciples when they found themselves baffled by the power of the devil, for power had been given to them to deal with cases such as these. They had been able to cast out many devils, and had returned from a mission of this kind exulting in the fact that the devils were subject to them through the name of Jesus. But what now ? Had that power failed ? No, it was as great as ever, but these men to whom it had been committed had failed. When they were first sent out and the work was new to them they would be impressed by the greatness of it, and would surely feel that dependence on the Lord and prayer only could enable them to go through it ; but as they became more familiar with it, had they become proud and self-reliant and so independent of the Lord ? Yes, and perhaps jealous of one another’s success or elated at their own ! All these things they were prone to being what they were, and as they yielded to them, self instead of the Name of Jesus would become prominent. But their failure is a lesson to us and discloses the secret of failure as well as the secret of success.

You are an evangelist, and once the words you preached awoke the consciences of men, and as they heard you they wept their way to the Saviour’s feet. You preach the same gospel, perhaps in the same words now, but your hearers now listen with indifference. They are unmoved by the human efforts that have taken the place of the divine power, and your work seems in vain. Why ? Why cannot the dumb and deaf spirit be cast out now ? The question is a necessary one, is it not ?

There was once a freshness and power about your life, dear Christian, your silent testimony was effectual. People took knowledge of you that you had something that they did not possess. But it is not so now. Others feel it, you feel it yourself, your words and life have lost their unction, and you find that things do not yield before you as once they did. You need to ask the question, Why ?—to ask it earnestly in the presence of the Lord.

The whole secret of this failure is loss of contact with the Lord. Power has been given to us, for the Holy Spirit of God dwells in every child of God, but the Spirit will not, cannot work through anyone apart from contact with the Lord. Prayer and fasting are indispensable. Reliance on the Lord and the refusal of self are involved in these two things, and to rely on self is to so far refuse the Lord.

That tram-car stands fully equipped for service, but it is still and useless. Why ? It has lost contact with the electric wires, and until that contact is restored it will not move an inch.

We have to learn that our sufficiency is of God, that by prayer and fasting we are maintained in contact with Him. We are in the world to be witnesses to the Lord Jesus, and not to display or exalt ourselves ; the Holy Ghost has been given to us that Christ might be pre-eminent in our lives and service, and not that we might become notable amongst men. God will have His Son glorified, and if we are to be means to this end we must have “ Low thoughts of self, befitting proclaimers of His praise.” A sense of the greatness of our mission and of our own insufficiency for it will turn us to prayer and fasting.

## “BRING HIM UNTO ME.”

“He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto Me.”—Mark 9. 19.

THE sad part of the disciples' failure on this occasion was that it reflected on the Lord Himself. “If Thou *canst do anything*, have compassion on us and help us,” cried the father, showing how disappointed he had been in the vain efforts of the disciples, and how almost hopeless of any relief he was. How often is this the case to-day. We fail, often we are as powerless to help others as are those who do not know the Lord, and consequently people doubt our words when we speak of the all-sufficiency of Christ. What blame lay at the door of these disciples for this distracted father's unbelief, and what blame often lies at our doors also!

But how wonderful it is to hear the Lord say, “Bring him unto Me.” He is able, blessed be His Name. No burden is too heavy, no difficulty too great for Him. Sometimes we feel that we ourselves are the greatest difficulty of all. Well, we may bring ourselves to Him, just as we are.

I find it both good and helpful to put myself into these wonderful scenes in the lifetime of our Lord, to stand by in the crowd and watch and listen. How good to see the Lord on this occasion rebuking the evil power, and then taking the lad by the hand and setting him on his feet, the possessor of a new life untrammelled by the enemy's power.

We may say as we watch the scene, Is that the power with which He meets the greatest difficulties? And is that the gracious way in which He intervenes when human efforts are all in vain? And is He the same to-day? Then may we venture, also, in His presence, assured that all things are possible to him that believeth.

The incident, recorded by the Holy Spirit for us, should encourage us to bring our wants and woes and failures to Him, and to put them in His hands. He invites us to do so. We grieve Him and hinder others if we do not.

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

### Daniel's Seventy Weeks.

“I am sending you a copy of a magazine published in America, THE LAST HOUR, and should like your view on the interpretation given in it of the last week of Daniel's seventy weeks (Daniel 9. 24-27).”—EXETER.

THE view in question is that the last week of Daniel's seventy has already been fulfilled. that it represents the interval between the cutting off of the Messiah and the martyrdom of Stephen. From this we entirely dissent.

It is commonly accepted that these weeks are weeks of years, i.e., the seventy weeks cover a period of 490 years. This period is divided into three periods—seven weeks, threescore and two weeks, and one week. After the end of the threescore and two weeks comes the

cutting off of Messiah, not for Himself (verse 26), i.e., He died for others. “He was wounded for our transgressions” (Isa. 53.).

The last week of the seventy, then, remained. *The Last Hour* claims that this remaining week was fulfilled immediately after the cutting off of Messiah; the truth is, we believe, that it remains yet to be fulfilled, and that this long interval in which the church is being gathered out of the world by the gospel has intervened between the sixty-ninth and

seventieth weeks, and as to this most students of prophecy are agreed. The proofs of this are, verse 26, after [the seven and] threescore weeks Messiah was to be cut off, and *the people of the prince that shall come* were to destroy the city and the sanctuary. This second event did not take place immediately after Messiah was cut off, but thirty years after, and that fact alone destroys the theory propounded in the paper in question.

It was *the people* of the prince that should come, the Roman soldiery, that perpetrated the work of destruction, and that in spite of a special proclamation by Titus their general, and son of the Roman Emperor. His proclamation could not prevent the fulfilment of this prophetic word. And it is *the prince that shall come* of this same people, the head of the revived Roman Empire, which is yet to be, who shall confirm the covenant with many, the bulk of the Jewish people, for one week, and break the covenant that he shall make with them in the midst of the week, with the result that they shall pass through "Jacob's trouble," the great tribulation.

*The Last Hour* makes two glaring mistakes. It claims that this covenant is the New Covenant that Messiah makes with the many; if this is so, then it is Messiah that breaks it. That is surely a terrible thing to suppose in regard to our faithful, covenant-keeping Lord. Then it claims that the "remnant according to the election

of grace" are "the many." On the contrary, the remnant delivered from doomed Israel and brought into the Church were *the few*, as is plainly indicated in Romans 11., from which the quotation is taken. The many—"the rest were blinded."

"The many," and the covenant, and the breaking of it, and the trouble that shall follow, are given in Isaiah 28. 14, but even in that day of sorrow that is coming, when "the many" shall make lies their refuge, and the covenant that the prince shall make with them shall be one of the lies, the Lord will preserve for Himself a remnant, but they shall be an "afflicted and poor people, who shall trust in the Name of the Lord" (Zeph. 3. 12). Just a remnant, but they will be the nucleus of the redeemed nation.

Other important considerations are that the seventy weeks have in view "thy people and thy holy city." Plainly the nation and not a remnant of it, and *Jerusalem*; and that the completion of the seventy weeks will bring in everlasting righteousness . . . and to anoint the Most Holy (Daniel 9. 24). That surely looks forward to the bringing in of Messiah's kingdom which is yet future, hence we have not yet reached the end of the seventy weeks. The last week will come in and run its course as indicated in the Word when the Church has been completed and caught up to the Lord in the air, to be for ever with Him.

## The Trinity—or Triune God.

A correspondent in BURMA questions whether it is right to speak of God as the Trinity, since the word does not occur in the Bible. He also raises questions as to whether the term expresses the truth at all, since "there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him; and our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him" (1 Cor. 8. 6).

IT is true that the actual words, "Trinity" and "Triune God," are not in the Bible, yet they convey the truth as to the Godhead, according to the full revelation that has been made to us in the New Testament, namely, that there are three Persons in the Godhead. No one questions that the Father is God, or that He is a distinct Person. John 20. 17 is enough to prove this, "My

Father and your Father, My God and your God."

Scripture affirms equally that the Son is God also. John 1. 1 states, "The Word was God." John 20. 28, "My Lord and my God." and 1 John 5. 20, "This is the true God and eternal life," and Romans 9. 5, "Christ, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen." The truth as to the Deity of our Lord Jesus

Christ is woven into the whole texture of the New Testament, but these texts should be enough for all who accept the Word as divinely inspired.

The Holy Spirit is also presented in the Word as God, and as distinct as to His Person. Acts 5. 3, 4, 9 shows this very definitely, "Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie unto the Holy Ghost? . . . thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." And other Scriptures, John 16. 13; Acts 13. 2; 1 Cor. 2. 10-14; Heb. 3. 7, for it is a Person who speaks and acts, not a power or influence only. Yet there is only one God (1 Tim. 2. 5). Hence we use the term "Triune God."

The three Persons in the Godhead are brought together in Matthew 3. 16, 17. The *Son* was there, distinguished by the

*Father's* words, "This is My beloved Son," and the *Holy Spirit* was there, for He descended upon Jesus in the form of a dove. In chapter 28. 19 they are again brought together—"the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"; and yet again in Hebrews 9. 14, "*Christ* who through the *eternal SPIRIT* offered Himself without spot to God."

Thus is God revealed to us in the Christian faith. The Father is the source of all blessing *for* men, the Son has brought the blessing *to* men, and the Holy Spirit makes the blessing good *in* men. And every heart that has received the blessing of God delights in the fulness of the Benediction: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen" (2 Cor. 13. 14).

## Who will be saved when the Church is gone?

"Is it the teaching of Scripture that after the Church is gone many in Christendom will get alarmed and be saved? Those who teach this base it on Rev. 7. 9, also Rev. 5. 9—'every kindred, people, tongue and nation.'"

SCRIPTURE offers no hope in any future period for *those who hear and reject the gospel of the grace of God*. The idea has been popularized by a pernicious religious novel, but it is entirely contrary to the truth. The first stage of the second coming of the Lord Jesus will be His coming to the air to raise the dead, catch away the living saints (1 Thess. 4. 16, 17). Thereafter, there will only be judgment for those who have neglected or rejected God's great salvation. How could such escape (Heb. 2. 3)? (See also Matt. 25. 1-3 and Luke 13. 23-28.)

2 Thess. 2. 9-12 speaks of "them that perish; *because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved*." And instead of being so alarmed that they seek salvation, the Scripture continues, "And for this cause God shall

send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned *who believed not the truth*, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." We have no need to comment upon this solemn Scripture, except to say that those who prefer the lie to the truth now, will *then* believe that the lie is the truth, for God will give them up to be deceived by Antichrist who is described in verses 9 and 10.

As to souls being gathered out of every nation after the catching away of the Church, there are multitudes in Christendom who have never heard the gospel—from these no doubt many will be saved; and there are also the millions of heathen to whom will be preached the Gospel of the Kingdom—from these will come the hosts that are saved, see Matthew 25. 31-46 and Revelation 7. 9-17.

*Concluded from page 114]*

are life"! These communications are divine, vital, and infinitely blessed! What time or taste have we, then, for the vain and often destructive entertainment of this passing world? From the excellent glory the voice of God

the Father has been heard, saying concerning Jesus, "*This is My Beloved Son, HEAR HIM*" (Luke 9. 35). To do so is to receive into our lives that which brings peace and joy and blessings which abide.

## GOD AND OURSELVES.

(J. T. MAWSON.

**[**F God is real to us we shall pray, and the better we know Him the more often we shall seek His presence and talk with Him. Spiritual life must languish if prayer is neglected ; it will not be neglected if God is to us the living God, who sees us, knows us, and cares for us with a care more tender than can be described in human words.

When we speak of prayer we are not thinking of it as a duty that must be done at stated times, and which we will do conscientiously no matter how irksome it may be, but as something that we cannot live without. A Christian poet has called it our "vital breath," and there is much truth in that, but the importance of it lies in the fact that it is the way in which we come into contact with God, in whom we live, and move, and have our being, and who in His amazing grace has made us His children by faith in Christ Jesus. So that it is not the mere act of prayer with which we would be occupied but the God to whom we pray. "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee" cried the Psalmist, and the man who feels like that will pray ; he must, he cannot live without it.

It should be as necessary for us to pray and as natural, as it is for a little child to call to its mother in its need. Let us set a little child in the midst and learn of him in this matter. He cannot string enough words together to make a sentence, but he knows his mother, and life is not worth living if she is not within reach ; he will certainly wail until she returns. He is no grammarian, concerned about the correctness of his sentences, but he knows that he wants something and expresses his want in cries, and it is marvellous

how the mother-sense interprets those efforts to make his wants known. Mother is his waking thought in the morning and he will not grumble if he has no other companion throughout the day ; and when weary at night, nothing will soothe him but his mother's arms and breast. The child we are considering has no doubt about his mother's ability to meet all his needs ; she is indispensable and enough ; his confidence in her is beautiful. Oh that it were more so with us in our relations with God ! We would that we had more of this child-confidence and dependence before Him ; we should be stronger, and quit us more like men before the world if we had.

In addition to this instructive child-dependence and trust there ought to be intelligence in us. God has revealed Himself that we might know Him, and hold communion with Him, and when confidence in God and communion with Him combine they give to the Christian life and prayer the reality and blessedness that the Bible shows that it has. But we do not put confidence in a theory and hold communion with a doctrine, for these we must have a living person. His mother is the most real thing in life to a child ; is God this to us ? A Zulu Christian said to me as we sat outside his hut in Natal, "God is a greater reality to me than my wife and children," and they were there sitting with us. Some white Christians (?) some miles away who knew less than he did of these things, had refused to hold communion with him because he was black. He felt it, of course, but God was his solace and stay in his isolation, and God was enough for him. It is twenty years ago since I heard those words from his

mouth, but I have not forgotten them ; they went straight as an arrow to my heart—I, a preacher, who had gone to help and comfort a despised brother,

sat and listened, I wanted to hear the dear man talk, for I felt that in that simple yet great saying lay the whole secret of Christian living.

## “BEHOLD THOU ART FAIR.”

(J. A. TRENCH.)

*Notes of an Address on the Song of Solomon 4. given many years ago.*

**I**N the fourth chapter of the Song of Solomon we read, “Behold thou art fair my love, behold thou art fair.” The Lord Jesus, in these words, speaks of people very dear to Him—not primarily His church, but those yet to be manifested after the church is taken home. We can, however, apply them to ourselves. A bride is very dear to the bridegroom. What can be dearer than “members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones,” and He says of us, “Behold thou art fair my love, behold thou art fair.”

Think of whom this is spoken. If we turn to ourselves we know that so far from being fair you and I, knowing anything of our own hearts feel them to be a sink of iniquity. We are sinful in word and act. Look back at yourselves and then hear Jesus say of you, “Behold thou art fair.” We are not fair in ourselves, we are everything foul, iniquitous and sinful, but the words of Jesus must be true, He is not one who would deceive us, and He says of the child of God, “Behold thou art fair.” To each individual believer we can say, “Thou art fair in the eyes of Him who loves thee as Himself.” This is a mystery—it is untrue in our own experience, how shall we explain it? Oh, beloved, He is not speaking of us as we are in ourselves, but as we are in Him, united to Him, accepted in Him. He bore our sins, they have been laid upon Him, judged and con-

demned on Him. “By one sacrifice” He has destroyed the root and principle of our sin and put it away for ever. All our guilt was transferred to Him and as we are united to Him in resurrection, we are accepted as He is, for “as He is so are we in this world.” There is the explanation of the mystery. Turn to Jesus, as He is set down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, from the crown of His head to the sole of His foot there is no unsoundness in Him; from the crown of our head to the sole of our foot there is nothing in us but wounds and bruises. He is spotless, divine, perfect. Scan Him, gaze upon Him—all He is you are this day and He says of you—in the 7th verse—“Thou art all fair my love, there is no spot in thee.”

Look at this for a little moment ; it is very important for our abiding peace to understand what it is to be a child of God and a member of Christ’s body. The poor sinner who has become a child of God, differs from those around him in this, that his sins are forgiven, laid upon Christ, who by one sacrifice has put them all away : his sins have been judged and condemned, put out of God’s sight on the cross and in the grave of Jesus. Every poor sinner who looks with ever so weak and trembling a glance at Jesus is identified with Him, is “as He is” before God. In Christ, the child of God has all he needs to give him a right

and title to sit down at the banqueting table in his Father's house; all he needs to make him "meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light." Paul does not say "giving thanks unto the Father" who is making us meet, or who is ripening us for glory, but "who *hath* made us meet" and this meetness is not in ourselves for we were so bad, so corrupt, we had to be put out of sight, crucified, buried, but we are meet because of His meetness for "He is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption." We have all things in Him, and therefore He says of us, "Behold thou art fair."

There is indeed a disordered affection that overlooks all blemish; a mother is often blind to the faults of her son which are seen plainly enough by everyone else, but, beloved, it is not so with the Lord, there is no disorder in the affection with which He loves us. He knows us, what we are, it is all there before His eyes; He sees down to the deepest thought of our hearts and yet He loves us and says, "Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee." The love with which He loves us does not overlook sin, no "He was *made sin* for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." God did not overlook sin; the flood gates of His wrath were let loose because of sin and yet He loved and saved the sinner. When I see a friend who loves me, I think if he only knew what I am he would not love me as he does; if he knew the cold-hearted, half-hearted love I have for him he would not care for me, but Jesus knows the weakness and the unfruitfulness of our love for Him, He knows how little share He has got in our affections, but I can lay my head down on the thought that He knows it all and yet loves me, for He says that I am all fair and that there is no spot in me.

But, ah! you say, it must be in the dim twilight that He sees me thus. You may have looked at a white robe in a dim light and thought it perfectly clean and pure but when you brought it into the full light of the sun you found it was stained and sullied, but the Lord Jesus is not looking at us in the twilight, He has brought us in with Himself where all the glory shines, into the bright light of God's holy presence, for we are on His breastplate and there is no spot or stain of sin there, all is spotless as He is spotless, all is perfect as He is perfect, for each of us is made one with Himself, "member of His body, of His flesh and of His bones," and not in the twilight only but in the bright light of heaven is he said to be all fair and without spot. What words are these! Again I say the only way to understand them is to think of ourselves as we are in Christ, in myself I am nothing but sin, pollution and iniquity, but that has all been taken away; it is present with me, but it is gone out of God's sight, for on the cross the sentence of death was carried out for my sin, in that death scene all my history as a natural man, as a child of Adam, was ended, and now He says, "Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee."

Now let us look at the 11th verse. "Thy lips, O my spouse, drop as the honeycomb: honey and milk are under thy tongue." Here the Lord seems to speak of the words which we speak for Him. He listens as you tell your friend of Himself, of salvation, of eternal life which is the gift of God, as you try to unfold the way to obtain that salvation, and then He speaks of your words and says, "thy lips drop as the honeycomb." There is nothing sweeter to Him than the word spoken for Him by the child of God. I cannot believe that anyone who knows how He speaks of this, that anyone who has

entered into the enjoyment of these things can be silent about them. When our hearts are full on any subject, we speak, whether we find sympathy or not; if your heart is filled with joy as you think of being ready to meet Jesus, it cannot be that you are silent about it, you must speak of it. Oh, child of God, why are we silent, why is this not often the subject of our conversation? It is because we have a lingering shame to own Him. We are sons of God and heirs with Christ who is "King of kings, and Lord of lords," and we are *ashamed* to speak of Him. Oh shame upon us, why do we keep silence? I speak to myself as well as to you. He knows what an effort it is to speak at times, when we know that His name will be met with a taunt and a scoff and a jeer. He knows it for it is as much so now as it ever was, but just because of the effort it costs us to speak, does He count it sweet. We are apt to make excuses and say we cannot talk about these things. If we could reason, if we were eloquent, then we would speak. But, dear friends, it is the weakest word as well as the most powerful that God honours; it is not the finest words of man's wisdom that are blest, it is by the *foolishness* of preaching that men are saved. It is the word spoken in His name, and for His sake, that Jesus owns and loves to hear.

Let us pass on to the 15th verse. "A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon." You remember when the Lord Jesus was with the woman of Samaria who cared not for Him nor for eternal life, God's free gift to her. As she sat on the well with Jesus, He said to her, "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again" (it was a symbol of all earthly pleasures), "but the water that I shall give him shall be

in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." In such words does He speak to us. We have gone to the world to satisfy our desire for happiness but there was nothing there that could do it. It may have pleased and amused us for a little time but its pleasures passed away. We may have tried to satisfy our souls with sin but that could never satisfy the craving of the soul, but we have found in Jesus the source of all joy and blessedness. There is no drinking too much out of that well, there is no danger that it will fail in summer's heat or winter's cold, for that well is hidden from the effect of everything here. Every earthly hope is doomed to disappointment but the water in this well is ever springing up, ever fresh, ever satisfying, ever quenching the thirst of all who taste it: it is the true and only source of all our blessing. He is hidden from the world but He is one with us and we with Him. You cannot see Him, child of the world, you cannot know anything of our joy or of our peace, you have nothing of it as yet, though you might have it, but you who are children of God have seen the living well, you know it to be a well of living water. And not only is this true but you are tasting of that water—you are living upon Christ.

But not only is there a well of living water but there are "streams from Lebanon" to be the source and channel of blessing to all around. "In the last great day of the feast Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst let him come unto Me and drink, he that believeth on Me . . . out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (John 7. 37, 38). We have not only got Jesus for our own souls' comfort, but this blessing is to flow out from us to all around. We are to minister to God's children, to comfort and to cheer

them by speaking to them of the common hope of glory which is awaiting us; and to those who are strangers to God we are to tell of Him whom our hearts love, if it is with ever so feeble a note, in a strength not our own but His who is able to give dead souls life.

"Awake, O north wind: and come thou south; blow upon my garden that the spices thereof may flow out" (verse 16). The Lord Jesus is calling to the winds to blow, and why? That the *spices* may flow out. He is calling the Spirit to stir up the sleeping ones, to take their Bibles off the shelves where they have been lying forgotten, to search them, to study them; not only to read them morning and evening and then put them aside for the rest of the day, but to take them as a guide to our feet and a lamp to our path, as the source of all blessing to our souls, "that the spices may flow out." And the Spirit has been doing this, He has been shaking the dust of centuries from off the Scriptures that fruit may be found for God. Have you been

bearing fruit to His glory or have you been reading His Word because it is your custom, or to amuse you by studying doctrines and questions, or has it been the voice of God speaking to energize your heart to bring forth fruit? May God grant that when we read we may learn nothing which we do not hold in blessing to our own souls and that we may go forth to tell it to others.

"Let my beloved come into his garden and eat his pleasant fruits."

We want the Lord Jesus to come Himself. It is precious to know that He loves us, but the wife who is absent from her husband longs for his return. We walk now by faith, we know that He is "the same yesterday, to-day and for ever," but that does not compensate for His absence, and so surely as He has been stirring you up to study His word so surely you will long for the presence of Jesus. When He says, "Behold I come quickly," your answer will be, "Even so come, Lord Jesus."

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## THE DIVINE RECONCILER.

(JAMES GREEN.)

An address to Young Men at 15, Aldersgate Street, London. E.C.—(Read Col. 1. 12-22).

OUR subject follows closely on that which was before us on a former occasion (see February issue), when we considered the glorious person of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Eternal Word. In the Scripture read, we are carried on to see what was God's purpose in the Word becoming flesh and tabernacled amongst us. Naturally we think of ourselves first, and that the great reason was, that seeing we were in danger of eternal judgment He came to save us. That is true, but it was

not the first or the greatest thing in the mind of God. Surely, we have forgiveness of sins through His blood, and give thanks to the Father for His wondrous mercy, but the apostle desires us to see what lies at the back of the manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ, namely the great purpose of God to reconcile all things unto Himself.

If we speak of reconciliation, it is evident that something needs adjustment, because it is out of order. A

thing which has remained perfect does not need to be reconciled, but if the parts have become disorganized they require to be brought into proper relationship, the one with the other. That is the idea conveyed by the term reconciliation.

In Col. 1. our Lord Jesus Christ is presented as the image of the invisible God, the One who could bring God in the reality of His nature and character, before angels and men, and at the same time able to adjust all things in heaven and on earth, according to God. It is an assertion of His deity, for only God can reveal God. Next His pre-eminence and greatness are stated, He is the First-born, a title that involves excellency of dignity and power. This is demonstrated by the fact that He created all things. Verse 16 should read, "For IN Him were all things created that are in heaven and on earth visible and invisible . . . all things were created BY Him and FOR Him." "In Him" they bore His character, and were in ordered relation to Him who upheld them by the word of His power. "By Him" as the active agent they were called into being, and they were created "For Him" in order to display His excellence. Thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers wherever found, in heaven or earth, were created for His glory. These are the things which are particularly in view, and, as we know them on earth, such places of authority are not glorifying Him. Regarding the unseen realms, we come up against the mystery that sin existed before it entered into this world. There had been sin amongst the angels before the fall of man in Eden. The simple fact is told us in order that we may know that in the heavens there had been disruption.

A great statement is made in verse 19: It pleased the Godhead to dwell

in all its fulness in Him, the Son, a Man on earth, and for this purpose, that having made peace through the blood of His cross, He might reconcile all things unto God. And further, in Col. 2. 9, He is seen at the present time a Man in heaven, the same fulness dwelling in Him, carrying forward to its grand accomplishment the supreme purpose of the Godhead.

It must be carefully observed that up to verse 20 the subject is the reconciliation of "things." It would be a serious mistake to conclude that this involves the eternal salvation of "persons." We must distinguish between the spheres of authority which have been created for the glory of God, and the beings who, called to occupy those exalted seats, have failed to maintain that glory. The King of Tyre (Ezek. 28.) doubtless figurative of Satan, is a case in point. The place of authority remains, whilst its occupant is cast down to hell; and when that authority is seen in the hand of Christ, who is head of all principality and power on the ground of redemption, it will be reconciled into perfect accord with God. To take an illustration from earthly things, we can easily see the difference between the Crown of a kingdom and the person who may wear it. The throne of England has existed for over a thousand years, but it has had occupants of very varied character, some of whom have been a contradiction of the righteousness for which the throne is set.

Now the apostle tells us in Col. 1. that reconciliation has commenced not with things, but with persons and that on earth. "You, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works" (verse 21). Let us consider this, for "by one man sin entered into the world" and man by disobedience became a sinner, involv-

ing in his fall not only his race, but everything over which he was set as head. The fall of Adam did not involve the things in the heavens, but the earthly creation was made subject to vanity and is groaning and travailing in pain until now. Then man became an enemy of God by wicked works, this was the result of sin. He wanted to give the reins to his own lust, and his conscience told him that the attributes of God were opposed to this. Chafing at the restraint, enmity was produced. This gave Satan the opportunity to foist upon man the lie that God was against him. But the enmity is on our side, not on God's. God is love, but the holy attributes of His character, righteousness, justice, truth, majesty, had been outraged by sin, and before anything could be said about reconciliation, these must be met. But how could love and righteousness be brought into perfect harmony, seeing that justice forbade love passing over and ignoring the fact of sin?

In the solution of this question lies the necessity of the cross. A work must be done which would put the attributes of God in perfect accord with the forgiveness of sins. "Father, I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do," bears witness that He has made peace through the blood of His cross. All the attributes of God are now in harmony, "mercy and truth have met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other," because the work of our Lord Jesus Christ has glorified God. There is no barrier to the activities of His love, righteous justice no longer opposes grace, but on the other hand bears witness to it. Now through the peace that He has made by the blood of His cross He is going to reconcile all things, and put everything into perfect accord with God.

But having died He is also risen, and presents all believers now in His blessed person, the glorified Man, holy, unblameable and unprovable in God's presence. What has become of the enmity? It is slain, for when He identified Himself with us, and was made sin on the cross, He carried the enmity down into death and abolished it. He is risen, and the identification remains, but it means now that we stand in Him "accepted in the Beloved." On this point turns another, that is the change of mind that is wrought in us towards God. We must not make reconciliation rest upon this, but upon that which has been effected by the cross of our Lord, otherwise it would be uncertain. Notwithstanding, if we take account of ourselves as accepted in Christ, there will come a change of mind on our part. Receiving the reconciliation we cannot but joy in God, and give thanks to the Father who has made us so blessedly meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. Then shall we desire that all our ways and concerns shall be pleasing to Him, "accepted" we shall seek in all things to be "acceptable" to Him.

Reconciliation on God's side and its result in us is beautifully seen in Luke 15. and Psalm 139. In the first, God is seeking, searching, saving for His own joy. In the second the one who has the shoes, and the best robe on, is saying, "Search me, O Lord, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Another result of reconciliation is seen in that Jew and Gentile were both at enmity, not only with God but with each other. The cross has ended the standing of both and has slain the enmity. The sinnership of both has been ended before God

in death, and both are reconciled to God on entirely new ground, in one body by the cross. Blessed solution of all enmity, the greatest of fleshly distinctions no longer exists for God, Jew and Gentile are one in Christ Jesus, where neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. Happy they who walk according to this rule and find God's

perfect peace. Well, indeed, does the Divine Reconciler bear the titles of Wonderful, Counsellor. Marvellous grace that the result of His work is already in evidence, commencing with Jew and Gentile dead in trespasses and sins, and ceasing not until every throne, dominion, and principality in heaven and earth shall be filled to the glory of God.

## “HE SUFFERED THEE TO HUNGER.” (W. BRAMWELL DICK.)

### Deuteronomy 8. 3.

THEY numbered an enormous multitude. They had come out of Egypt, figuratively speaking, with banners flying, every fibre of their being pulsating with victory, joy in their hearts, songs of praise on their lips, visualizing their triumphal march, their entry into Canaan, and the mighty conquests that they would achieve there.

One morning they wakened up to discover that there was no breakfast for them. There were the sand beneath and the sky above, but no visible means of obtaining food, and they were hungry. What were they to do? The first thing they did was they “*murmured.*” They forgot God, *His* mercy, *His* power, *His* deliverance, *His* promise. In effect they said: “Even if we did have a rough time in Egypt, at any rate while we were there we did eat bread to the full, but here we have nothing to eat and we are hungry.” Is it difficult to imagine how the enemy would be on their track? How he would repeat the old lie of Eden: “God is not what you thought He was. He *could* have prevented you being hungry and He has not done so; you were better off in Egypt than you are in this wilderness.” All this is implied

in their saying to Moses and Aaron: “Ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger” (Exod. 16. 2, 3).

Before we attempt to fling stones at these people, we had better stop and ask ourselves whether we really can do so or not. Is it not just possible that we have acted similarly in our little history? Let us see! There was the losing of a situation; that bitter disappointment in our life; the breakdown in health; that sore bereavement; and we can each fill in some other detail for ourselves. The enemy whispered: “God could have saved you that trial; things went more smoothly with you before you were converted; since then you have had a chequered career. We listened, we murmured and *God heard* (Exod. 16. 9). How it must have grieved Him to see how little the children of Israel could trust Him! How often must we have wounded His loving heart by showing how feeble was our confidence in Him! But why *did* He do it?

It may be that those who passed through the experience never knew, for the greater number perished in the wilderness, but in recounting it to

their children, Moses let them into the secret. Let us quote it in extenso:—

"And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep His commandments or no. And He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live" (Deut. 8. 2, 3).

Why did God suffer them to hunger? To humble them, to prove them, to know what was in their heart. What a deplorable state of matters it revealed.

Dear fellow believer, tried, tempest-tossed, distracted, have you been asking—*Why?* Here is the answer: to humble *thee*, to prove *thee*, to know what is in *thine* heart. Say! What has He found there? Let us proceed: "He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna" (verse 3). A barren wilderness presented no difficulty to God. *He* fed them from heaven's storehouse, *He* gave them "angel's food" (Psa. 78. 24), *He* "satisfied them with the bread of heaven" (Psa. 105. 40); nor did the supply fail during their whole pilgrimage, for not till they had entered the land and had eaten of "the old corn" thereof did the manna cease (Exod. 16. 35; Josh. 5. 12).

We pursue our inquiry a little further, however. Why did He suffer them to hunger? "That He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceed-

eth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live" (verse 3). He sought to lead them from the earthly to the heavenly, from the material to the spiritual, from that which concerned only the body to that which had to do with the soul. With what effect our adorable Lord, as the dependent Man, used this very Scripture when in the wilderness *He* hungered, and was tempted by Satan, we know well. May it not be that *we* are tried in order that we may be weaned from earth and won for heaven, that Christ may become the object of our hearts and the food of our souls; and that feeding upon Himself we may magnify Him in every circumstance of our life? The love of our God for us is so immense, His desire for our greatest good and our greatest blessing is so great, that all that He does has this end in view. If He makes us to hunger it is that He may feed us; if He allows us to feel faint it is that He may give us power; if He sends the bitter it is that we may taste the sweet; if He sends sorrow it is that we may learn true joy; if He by these things gives us to know our own self, it is that He may give us to know Himself.

Thus His name is glorified, His heart is gratified, His love is satisfied, and we, apprehending, accepting, and, *later*, appreciating what He does, and why He does it, get the full blessing that He has so graciously designed for us.

*Then! then!! THEN!!!* we can sing truly:—

"How good is the God we adore,  
Our faithful, unchangeable Friend;  
Whose love is as great as His power,  
And knows neither measure nor end!"

"'Tis Jesus, the First and the Last,  
Whose Spirit shall guide us safe home;  
We'll praise Him for all that is past,  
And trust Him for all that's to come."

Amen

## DANGERS THAT THREATEN.

(F. B. HOLE.)

## 6. Dissension. Philippians.

OF all the early churches, of which we have any notice in the Scriptures, not one appears to have been in a more healthy condition than that at Philippi. In the epistle that Paul wrote to them we do not find anything that would lead us to infer that they excelled in intelligence and understanding, nor is there any unfolding of the counsel of God. The personal note is prominent right through the epistle, for what specially marked them was their wholehearted love for, and identification with, the apostle who at so great a risk to himself brought the gospel to them, as Acts 16. records.

Paul could thank God upon every remembrance of them. They had him in their hearts—as the marginal reading of verse 7 of chapter 1. puts it—and consequently from the first day until the time of writing their fellowship with Paul in the gospel had been marked. Their large-hearted liberality was remarkable and exceptional as witnessed by verses 10 to 18 of chapter 4., and 2 Cor. 8. 1-5. This latter Scripture—where the apostle was writing about them to others—shows that they were then marked by four things:—

1. A great trial of affliction.
2. Abundance of spiritual joy.
3. Deep poverty.
4. Riches of liberality.

They gave to their power and even beyond their power, exceeding Paul's expectations. Moreover, they began with that which is greatest, giving their own selves to the Lord. It is easy to give of our substance without giving ourselves, whereas if we give ourselves to the Lord, our substance is necessarily

surrendered also, to be used henceforth as He directs. This the Philippians did.

It is evident, therefore, that love of a divine sort was very active among the Philippians, both towards the apostle and towards all saints. That love was to "abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment" (1. 9), for there is always room for enlargement in the divine nature; still, if love is the real measure of our spiritual stature, as 1 Cor. 13 indicates, then the Philippians were to be reckoned amongst the spiritually great. Paul himself called them his "joy and crown" (4. 1).

Yet there was "a fly in the ointment" even with these devoted Christians. Dissension had sprung up between two sisters in their midst, and this threatened their peace and their joy, for it is a highly infectious complaint. Nothing is easier under these circumstances than for others to have their sympathies or prejudices awakened, so that they fly to arms and side with the contending parties; and so the whole assembly may be convulsed over something that in its beginning was a very trivial matter. For the moment it may be but a disagreement between Euodias and Syntyche, but who shall say whereto it may extend if not checked, so that they be "of the same mind in the Lord" (4. 1-3).

Paul evidently felt how important it was that these excellent Christian women should be lifted out of their dispute, and he entreats one whom he calls a "true yokefellow" (probably Epaphroditus) to help them seeing that they were saints of no mean worth who

had laboured with him, or shared his conflicts, in the gospel.

It looks, therefore, as if the dispute between them was not over some worldly matter, not a case of a quarrel based upon idle and foolish talkings, such as are at all times so common, but rather a disagreement over something connected with the Lord's interests and service. Now Paul himself had once been involved in a matter of this sort, as Acts 15. 37-40 tells us, and the contention between himself and Barnabas had been of so sharp a character as to divide them asunder as far as their future service was concerned. With this in mind we can understand how acutely he felt the situation at Philippi, and how urgently he desired that they might be of one mind in the Lord.

As a consequence of this the Epistle to the Philippians is pre-eminently the epistle of the *mind*. The very word itself occurs a number of times.

The first chapter might well be called the chapter of the *devoted* mind. In it Paul is led to speak of his own trying circumstances as a prisoner in Rome with his life hanging in the balance. He is, however, in no state of feverish anxiety to escape. He knew well, for he had already been caught up into the third heaven (see 2 Cor. 12. 1-7), that to depart and to be with Christ is very much better than the life of service here, yet he was well content to stay and toil on if thereby the Lord's interests in His saints should be served. He had before him one thing, and one thing only, that Christ should be magnified in his body, whether by life or by death. Such was his mind, a devoted mind indeed, and he exhorted the Philippians to the same when he urged them to "stand fast in one spirit with one mind [one soul] striving

together for the faith of the gospel" (1. 27).

The second chapter is clearly the chapter of the *lowly* mind. A great deal of the difficulty which comes in amongst Christians lies just here.

The apostle had just experienced most sweetly the "consolation in Christ," the "comfort of love," the "fellowship of the Spirit," the "bowels and mercies" found in the saints of God, in connection with the visit of Epaphroditus, bearing the gifts of the Philippian assembly. All this was a joy to him, but he tactfully intimates to them that one thing remained if they wished to fill the cup of his joy up to the brim. They must be "likeminded, having the same love." They must be "of one accord, of one mind"—or, more literally—"joined in soul, the one thing minding." Here we have that which lies behind the "one thing I do" of chapter 3. verse 13, for the secret of doing one thing is minding or thinking one thing.

We all feel at once how desirable a thing this is. If we have any knowledge of ourselves and of the state of affairs generally among the people of God, we know that it is to all appearance an impossible thing. Yet there is a way by which it may be achieved, and verses 3 and 4 show us that way. Nothing is to be done in the spirit of contention or vainglory, but everything in that lowliness of mind which leads one to esteem others above themselves, and consider the things of others and not only the things of self.

The "one mind" of verse 2 is certainly to be achieved if the lowly mind of verse 3 is produced in us all. A difficulty, however, would still be felt if the lowly mind were to us only an abstract conception. We want it to be a living reality before our eyes, and we have it thus in Christ Jesus.

If there is to be only *one* mind, *whose* mind is that one mind to be?—"Let *this* mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

At first sight it would seem strange that to the carnal Corinthians the apostle should write "we have the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. 2. 16), whereas he exhorts the devoted Philippians to have in them the mind that was in Christ Jesus. The two Scriptures are, however, perfectly consistent, as the words used for "mind" differ. To the Corinthians he says, "we have *the thinking faculty* of Christ"—inasmuch as "we have received . . . the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." To the Philippians he says, "Let *this way of thinking* be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

And what was His way of thinking? The succeeding verses 6-8 present it to us—a passage wonderful beyond all words. The first man, Adam, conceived the idea of exalting himself in the scale of creation, to become even as gods: and he fell. The whole Adamic race inherits by nature *that way of thinking*. And here is Christ, who before incarnation was "in the form of God." It was to Him no unlawful thing to be equal with God for He was God, and therefore it was impossible for Him to be higher than He was. Before Him were only the two alternatives, of staying exactly where and as He was, or of coming in incarnation upon a downward path that would not stop short of the death of the cross. *His way of thinking was to come down and humble Himself.*

Adam's way of thinking has filled the earth with sin and strife, and there remains with us each the tendency to think as Adam, inasmuch as the flesh is still within us. Christ's way of thinking is life and peace, and having

His nature, His Spirit, we have the capacity to think as He thinks. We infinitely prefer Christ to Adam. The contemplation of His mind fills us with adoration and worship. Let us then think as He thinks. With our present imperfections of understanding we might even then not see exactly eye to eye about everything but the element of *dissension* would be eliminated from our differences.

The third chapter is the chapter of *the heavenly mind*. The Christ, who in His downward path of humiliation is so excellent an Example to us, is glorified on high as an excellent Object before us, and the knowledge of Himself as in that glory is the thing to impart a heavenly direction and character to our lives and energy and decision on our way. Paul's first sight of the heavenly Christ on the road to Damascus led him to discard all his natural advantages as worthless (verse 7), and now writing long years after, with an enlarged experience of "the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus" his Lord, coupled with suffering and loss for His sake, he more than ratifies his early decision (verse 8). He had but one desire—to reach Him in His resurrection glory even if it meant martyrdom to do so (verses 10, 11). He calls upon us all to follow him in this (verses 15, 16). If we are "thus minded" with him we, as well as Euodias and Syntyche, will find it more possible to be "of the same mind in the Lord."

The fourth chapter is the chapter of *the contented mind*. Paul himself in a Roman prison is no more disposed to grumble than when he first made the acquaintance of the Philippians and sang praises in their local jail. He had learned in whatsoever state he was to be content; but then he practised what he presses on the Philippians.

In verse 6 of this chapter he bids them to unburden their minds of care by freely making known their requests to God, with thanksgiving. This would keep or garrison their minds with peace. Then having unloaded their minds of care he bids them fill their minds up to the brim with all that is true, honest, just, pure, lovely and of good report, of virtue and of praise. "Think," he says, "on these things." One thing further remains, "Those

things . . . do" (verse 9). Let all those lovely things that fill our minds work out into action and practice, and "the God of peace shall be with you"—and with us. Dissension dies in the presence of *the God of peace*.

The choicest believers and the choicest assemblies have all too often been overcome by dissension. Let us therefore pay diligent heed to the remedy.

## "DEEP PLACES."

(INGLIS FLEMING.)

"In His hand are the deep places of the earth : the heights of the hills are His also."—Psalm 95. 4.

THIS Psalm calls upon the godly to join in Jehovah's praise, because He is great in majesty and glory—a great God and a great King above all gods.

Depths and heights, sea and dry land, all are His. Thus His people Israel are called upon to worship and bow down before the Lord their Maker, for He is their God and they are the people of His pasture, the sheep of His hand. They are to rejoice that all He is, in His supreme majesty and glory, is on their behalf. "The deep places of the earth are in His hand" (verse 4). And they His sheep are cared for by His hand as well. Greatness and guidance are with Him, and He is on the part of His people.

And shall not we, in these difficult times, comfort our hearts with these thoughts to-day? All events are controlled by Him. Everything is under His sway. He does as He pleases in "all deep places" as in all others (Ps. 135. 6).

And many are the "deep places of the earth" which His loved ones know, and happy shall we be if we remember that these are all and always in His hand.

In "the heights of the hills" we rejoice—the blessedness which is ours "in the heavenlies, in Christ" (Eph. 1. 3). All the wealth of the Risen Christ—the true Boaz, He shares with us His own, and we cannot rejoice too greatly in our possessions.

But can we rejoice in the "deep places of the earth" also?

"We boast in hope of the glory of God"; can we add, "we boast in tribulations also" (Rom. 5. 3)?

The glory is in His hand—"the heights of the hills" and the way to it (sometimes through "deep places") is in His hand as well. The heights and the depths alike are ruled by Him.

And is it not so, we may ask ourselves, that we learn Him in the depths

as we could not in the heights? We make discoveries of His tenderness and compassion and love in our sorrows here which we could not do in our singing there.

So it was in the days of His flesh (and He is the same to-day as of yore), the death of Lazarus and the broken hearts of his sisters, brought out that which a marriage feast never could have done. "Jesus wept." The words telling of our Lord's deep sympathy then, have comforted His loved ones ever since. His heart of profound feeling told itself out then, as at no other time. The strength of His hand was to be displayed soon, but the sympathy of His heart revealed itself at once, for He ever felt in His spirit the afflictions He dismissed by His power. His heart and His hand were in unison for the good of His own.

Yes, the "deep places" are in His hand, and if His loved ones are in those deep places, His heart beats for them while His hand upholds them there. He may not lift them out of the depths immediately, but He will be with them there, bidding them as in days of old, "Be of good cheer," as He adds, "It is I. Be not afraid."

He valued the love of the little handful of His own at Bethany, and they knew and valued His. In His love they hid themselves, as their message showed, "Lord, he whom Thou lovest is sick." And we read, "Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus." He loved them all, yes; but He loved each individually. Why, then, did He not hasten to them in their "deep place?" Why did He abide "two days still in the same place where He was?" Could they understand this delay? Not at first but afterward they knew right well. It was "For the glory of God, that the Son of God

might be glorified," and it was for their good in that they would know Him henceforth as they could not have done otherwise. Had He been at Bethany He could have saved Lazarus from death, but His heart of love and His hand of power would not have been disclosed so fully.

And do we sometimes wonder that He does not intervene when we call upon Him to-day? When we cry to Him out of our "deep places"?

It may be that we have been tempted to question His love. But His love took Him to Calvary for us, and it is the same love that takes us to the deep places that we may know that love in richer measure.

And before long we shall see the Why? and the Wherefore? of all. Then we shall understand how "dragons and all deeps" are made to praise Him, as truly as are the "heavens of heavens" (Ps. 148. 4, 7). Then shall we join in the great Hallelujah chorus of eternal praise to Him who has done, is doing, and will do all things well. But while we wait for that day of glory, we, who know Him, may sing:

"My spirit on Thy care,  
Blest Saviour I recline;  
Thou wilt not leave me in despair,  
For Thou art Love divine.

"In Thee I place my trust,  
On Thee I calmly rest;  
I know Thee good, I know Thee just,  
And count Thy choice the best.

"Let good or ill betide,  
All must be good for me;  
Secure of having Thee in all,  
Of having all in Thee."

And we may add:

"In the deep places, Lord,  
I learn Thy love below,  
As all the heights of joy above  
Could never make me know."

## ON OPEN-AIR PREACHING.

*A Letter from Toronto to the Editor of "Scripture Truth."*

KNOWING your great interest in the gospel, I am writing this letter, if perchance, God may use it to stir up a greater interest in preaching "the Gospel of God" in the open air. It is about forty-five years ago that I preached from Harry Moorehouse's Bible carriage from the greatest text in the Bible, John 3, 16, and have had great encouragement all these years from open-air testimony to the power of the gospel, so by the grace of God I keep on.

Spring is here, and the call to get out again in the open comes afresh to us, to tell out the glad tidings of God concerning Christ. Our opportunities to witness for a rejected Christ will soon be over—this may be our last summer before we hear the Shout. I feel that there is a great need for the prayer of Psalm 85, 6, for a widespread revival of "open-air" gospel preaching, and it will be a sure and healthy sign if Christians are awakened to the need of this essential Apostolic form of aggressive work.

All about us we are surrounded with the three great realities of *Sin, Sorrow and Death*. Open-air preaching was never more needed in the face of that which is "Another gospel," with its shallow thoughts of Sin, Atonement and Judgment. Shallow thoughts of Sin will give them shallow thoughts of the Atonement, and shallow thoughts of the Atonement will result in shallow thoughts of hell—all hang together in perfect harmony of truth. I can say after forty-six summers in the open air—at no time, and in no place, is open-air preaching out of season. It has a message for all classes of people—open-air preaching is indicative of the glorious freeness of the gospel—which needs to be offered to all, in the Person of Christ who was sent by the Father to be the Saviour of the world.

Open-air preaching has a distinguished history of no common-place interest—was not the Lord Himself the great open-

air preacher, also the Apostle of the Gentiles—Paul? How greatly we are indebted to the Wesleys and Whitfield—may God raise up more.

*Whitfield said* : "The alarm is—there is no alarm. The horror is that there is no horror."

*Also in his diary* are these words : "When shall I begin to begin, Lord, to live for Thee?" Does it not make us feel that we want to lay down our heads in shame?

If the people are to be reached with the glad tidings of God, this is the most direct, effective way of conveying to them the way of life. It is well known that the main part of the population, even in favoured countries, are absolutely outside from so-called public worship. At the same time my experience has been, the main part are not to be regarded as opposed to the gospel—*they are rather indifferent*. May God by the Divine Spirit raise up thousands of men filled with the love of God for souls, and the awful thought that they are "without God and without Christ," and if not saved, will be lost for ever and for ever; that there is a real Christ as Saviour for every sinner out of hell, and hell for every sinner out of Christ, who is the only Panacea for all human ills; that in Christ, God is reconciling the world unto Himself.

The old atheism of Bradlaugh, Ingersoll and Voltaire is largely dead. Men cannot live on negatives—God "hath set eternity" in the heart—and only He can fill that eternity.

But the world lies in the power of the evil one, and is headed by Satan, and under the coming Antichrist, the new atheism will—for a time—succeed wonderfully; for in the place of the discarded true God and His Christ, it will set the man up in whom Satan shall have his full manifestation, one whom the Lord shall

consume with the spirit of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. *May God awaken us to our responsibilities in the matter in view of the speedy coming of Christ, and to gird our loins and open wide our mouths.*

*The Lord is coming.* We are not looking for death and judgment; we are looking for the Lord Himself; we have a perfect Saviour who has done a perfect work and given us a perfect salvation; we are all personally responsible to the personal Lord and Master, and He said, "That repentance and remission of sins

should be preached in His name among all nations."

I believe where we are lacking is prayer. We need to be like the saints in Acts, bowed in prayer for power to go out to the people.

The weakness of our day is easily explained, but we want to be encouraged. May we be found amongst those who came "to the help of the Lord against the mighty." May we take our orders from the top; if so, we are bound to be right.

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#### *A Further Letter from Lincolnshire.*

"[F the prophet had bid thee do some great thing wouldest thou not have done it?" Great things have a glamour that fires the imagination, or perhaps rather, arouse the interest of the indolent and fascinate the attention of the careless.

The stately tree is only noticed after years of silent growth, the monumental buildings that adorn our cities are looked upon with pride; but the silent sturdy growth of the sapling, the labours of the architect in his quiet office, while of supreme importance, are rarely remembered.

How the golden harvests are boasted of in prose and verse, while the sower's work is taken for granted and scarcely recalled.

Our blessed Lord was ever content to labour in the unseen and out of the way places; He sent His disciples into the villages as well as into the cities, into the by-ways as well as into the highways, He sent others to reap that on which they bestowed no labour. To-day he who would serve the Lord thus should be content to reverse the process, he should go out bearing the precious seed and be content to leave the garnering of the sheaves to the Lord of the harvest.

To-day there are fields awaiting the arrival of the man with the seed basket, not in the far-off lands, but in places not far removed from large centres of industrial life.

There is scope, and many and varied opportunities open in the country side to any who are strong in body and stout of heart to vary and counteract the fatigues of the daily routine of their secular labours in going out into the remoter parts of their own neighbourhood with a bundle of gospel tracts. Many of our youth plead their need of physical recreation as an excuse for indulging in tennis, football and cricket; here is an opportunity to serve the Lord and at the same time enjoy exhilarating exercise in the open air. Many are the opportunities to speak for the Master, both individually and publicly on the village green.

But for him who has the leisure to serve more continuously there are "fresh fields and pastures new" in many parts of the old country. For example, there have sprung up large villages and small towns in S.E. Yorks, almost as they did in Klondike and S. Africa during the gold rushes in those parts; areas that a few years ago were devoted solely to agriculture are now teeming with thousands of people. There are unknown possibilities in these regions for those whose hearts are kindled by the Holy Spirit. There is little and often no provision whatever for the spiritual needs of these thousands, the picture palace and the public house seem to be the only places where the people can gather together. Often there is no parish church! There is little in the way of convenience or comfort. It

would be service hard as the foreign field. The warmer summer days are at hand, days when it is more pleasant to be outside than inside, and when such labours are less arduous than in the cold and wet months of winter.

Open-air preaching, tract distribution, cottage meetings, wayside talks, and tent work are some of the varied ways in which these starving multitudes may have their most pressing needs met.

May the Lord graciously stir up some to devote a little, or much, of their leisure and time to this service.

There may be some brethren who might reply, "I am both willing and able to do my bit of this work, but there is one difficulty, I have not the means to undertake the task, I have all I can do to plod along in my little sphere, my heart is good enough but my means are too limited."

This is speaking naturally a difficulty, but who commands the ravens to be fed? Who feeds His own servants with bread and flesh day by day when every other means are dry? Who sends a soldier to fight in the battle without equipping him for the fray?

If He send, He will supply the need according to His riches in Christ Jesus. He will incline the hearts of those who stay at home to minister to those in the field.

He will enlarge their outlook, they too will look on the bare fields and think of the sowers, or of the tender springing plant. He will enlarge their hearts so that they will embrace those of whom they know nothing, as well as those in their own locality. There may have been an inclination on the part of some to minister to one or more servants, to one or two districts, whereas their privilege is to embrace the whole field and the whole of the labourers. This apparent forgetfulness may be the result of lack of knowledge of those who are thus labouring, it cannot be from lack of interest in their work. All are co-workers unto the kingdom of God; there are those first and foremost in the fight, there is also the commissariat department to which those not actively engaged should and must contribute if they cherish the Lord's commendation, "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

## WATCHMAN, WHAT OF THE NIGHT? (JAMES GREEN.)

### Notes on the Prophetic Outlook. No. 4.

*The Last Words of Jacob.—Gen. 49.*

"WATCHMAN, what of the night?"

Truly it has lasted long, and from hearts oppressed by the ever-deepening gloom, the cry is wrung forth with increasing urgency, "Watchman, what of the night?" (Isa. 21. 11, 12). Listen, from the deep silence which "Dumah" represents a voice breaks upon the prophet's ear: "The morning cometh and also the night." In the prophecies we have already considered, we have seen the indications of a morn-

ing without clouds, when to those "that fear My Name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings," saith the Lord of Hosts (Mal. 4. 2), and a night of speechless woe for this God-forgetting, Christ-rejecting world. No prophet of the Old Testament, however, was permitted to see the secret which is revealed in the New, that the darkest hour before the dawn would see the shining of the Morning Star, the coming of the Lord to take

His Church to Himself in order that she may be kept "from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world" (Rev. 3. 10).

The next prophecy to which we will turn shows very vividly the night and the morning as they passed before the inward vision of the dying patriarch some 400 years before Moses was hushed to rest in the embrace of God on Pisgah's lonely height. "Gather yourselves together and hear, ye sons of Jacob, and hearken unto Israel your father." "That I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days." It is the night of Jacob's trouble concerning which his soul is agitated, but beyond this he sees the coming of One who shall be as the dew to Israel, and as showers of blessing in a thirsty land.

All readers of the Bible must have noticed that in the various lists of the twelve tribes, the names are not given in the same order, nor can we doubt that in this there is divine arrangement. The key is found in Gen. 30., where the meaning of each name is carefully given. By applying this we may discover in each case the moral value which underlies the history of the people. Our present study is a good example. There are three sections: (1) The children of Leah, Israel viewed according to nature. (2) The children of the bondmaids, Israel seen under the bondage of the law. (3) The sons of Rachel, Israel finally seen in the liberty of grace.

1. Ver. 3, 4. *Reuben* = see a son. He is representative of the day when the nation went after God in the wilderness (cf. Hosea 11. 1). Then "Israel was holiness to the Lord" (Jer. 2. 2, 3). This corresponds with what we have seen in Deut. 32. 10. It shows the period of strength, dignity and power, but only of the natural man and, alas, how soon corrupted! It is Israel singing the song of salvation from Egypt,

confident in its power to keep all that Jehovah shall command, but unstable as water. At the first test they are found lusting after evil things and debasing themselves with an idol (1 Cor. 10. 6, 7). Such is the flesh, man at his best estate is altogether vanity, he proves that he cannot excel, and the chief place passes from him. The result is manifest in the next two names.

2, 3. Ver 5-7. *Simeon* = hearing. *Levi* = joined. These are considered together, for as soon as the flesh discovers its weakness, it seeks to compensate for this by confederation, but the consequence is division and scattering. The two names are prophetic of the state of Israel under the judges (cf. Judges 1. 3 and 5. 15, 16). Confederacy always produces violence and scattering, and to such God will not unite His honour nor vouchsafe the secret of His presence. The history of Israel bears solemn witness to this, as their future will also (cf. Isa. 28. 15: 8. 9, 12). Simeon became the weakest of the tribes (Num. 26. 14). Moses omitted them from his blessing (Deut. 33.), and in the assignment of the land they were mingled amongst the tribe of Judah (Josh. 19. 1-9). Levi likewise was scattered in Israel, but in their case grace transformed the curse into a blessing, prophetic of the day when scattered Jacob shall be named "The priests of the Lord, the ministers of our God" (Isa. 61. 6); but this leads on to—

4. Ver. 8-12. *Judah* = praise. Jewish as well as Christian commentators agree that this remarkable prophecy refers to the Messiah, seen typically in the victories of David and the reign of Solomon. That was Judah's brightest day when their hand was supreme over their enemies and Judah was elevated to be the royal tribe (Ps. 78. 68). But the glory of this soon faded, the youth-

ful vigour passed and there came the stooping, the crouching, and the lying down of old age. Whence shall the reviving be? The vision of Jacob looks on and he sees One who is the root of David, the true Lion of the tribe of Judah, but first He would come as Shiloh=peace, and it was in this character the angels heralded His advent. Two things would infallibly mark His presence. (1) The setting aside of royal dignity in Judah, which took place A.D. 6, when a Roman procurator was appointed instead of a king. (2) That the Jews should no longer have a lawgiver able to enforce the law, and this they themselves confessed to Pilate (John 18. 31). But the nation had no place for "Shiloh," and His rejection and death postponed the day when to Him the gathering of the nations shall be. Meanwhile, the ass and the foal, speaking of the royalty He showed them when on that eventful day He rode into Jerusalem (Matt. 21. 5), are bound to the vine, that shall yet "blossom and bud and fill the face of the world with fruit" (Isa. 27. 6: 5. 7). Before this can be, judgment must do its work, and before He can speak peace, His act, His strange act must be brought to pass, and His garments be as one that treadeth in the winefat (Isa. 63. 1-6; Rev. 19. 13).

5. Ver. 13. *Zebulon*=dwelling, prophecies of how the people meanwhile, having rejected Shiloh, would seek rest by dwelling in the world of commerce, seeking the acquirement of wealth in the midst of the Gentiles.

6. Ver. 14, 15. *Issachar*=reward. In result they are found between two burdens, the guilt of Messiah's death and the oppression of the Gentiles, yielding themselves to tribute for the sake of rest. Long has the Jew been the people of the wandering foot and weary breast, they refused Him who

said, "Take My yoke," and they have had to submit to the yoke of men. Verily their reward has been given them. Happy day when it shall be said to them, "Comfort ye, comfort ye, My people." But a darker hour must intervene ere this and we next see Israel in their low estate.

7. Ver. 16-18. *Dan*=judging. The name suggests that the nation will obtain a measure of self-government which will be a relief from their long-borne burden, but this will only be a prelude to the day of their deepest sorrow. Isa. 18 is the parallel to this verse, where the scattered nation is seen restored by a naval power to their land, while Jehovah looks on in silence. Apparently a day of flourishing prosperity is about to ensue, but instead there is a cutting down, followed by a day of grief and desperate sorrow (Isa. 17. 11). It has been long thought that from the tribe of Dan, the anti-christ will arise; the serpent and adder are certainly typical of the power of satanic evil (cf. 2 Thess. 2. 9). Idolatry was introduced into the tribes by Danites (Judges 18.), and the name Dan is significantly omitted from the lists in 1 Chron. 2 to 10 and Rev. 7. It is the darkest hour of the night, and the burdened heart of the patriarch voices the cry of the faithful few who will be found in those days when iniquity will have come to the full. "I have waited for Thy salvation, O Lord." Then shall the judgment of God fall upon him who assumed to be judge.

8. Ver. 19. *Gad*=a troop. Now the morning begins to break, and those that were overcome are victorious. There is a play on the name in the verse indicative of triumph: "Gad, troops shall troop against him, but he shall troop at the last." None wait for God in vain, and in

9. Ver. 20, *Asher*=happy, there is

abundance, and royal dainties in which the King shall find pleasure.

10. Ver. 21. *Naphtali = wrestling.* The conflict is over and the wrestler free. Now the song of praise bursts forth, but it swells around the pierced feet of the true Joseph, the One who was separated from His brethren.

11. Ver. 22-26. *Joseph = adding.* They shall look upon Him whom they pierced and their lost Messiah shall be added to them in mercy and blessing which will not be limited to Israel; but will extend over the wall to the whole world, the utmost bound of the everlasting hills. The cross and resurrection are the prelude to this, and in result the crown is upon the head of Him whom His brethren despised.

12. *Benjamin = son of my right hand,* closes this remarkable prophecy which bears upon its face the divine stamp. Surely none but the Spirit of God could have moved Jacob to say such words 1700 years B.C. The victory is perpetual, the morning triumphant, no night of reverse shall dim its glory, yet all of grace, and so a parenthesis is inserted describing the natural condition of Benjamin, "ravening as a wolf" (cf. Judges 19.-21.). Surely Israel, like ourselves, will owe all to Him who poured out His soul unto death, in order that He might divide the spoil with the strong whose iniquities He has borne (Isa. 53. 11, 12).

(To be continued.)

## THE TRAVAIL OF HIS SOUL.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

IN the ancient Jewish Scriptures the Book of Ruth formed part of the Book of Judges. The events therein recorded took place during the period in which the Judges lived, and Ruth's life and devotion form a pleasing contrast to the sad apostasy and corruption that marked the end of these sad times.

Ruth is a true pattern of undivided devotion to a well-beloved object, it is this that makes her story so delightful to us all.

The love she bore to Naomi, which could only have been the result of Naomi's love to her, delivered her from every entanglement in her native Moab-idols; people, friends were all superseded by this new affection, she wanted nothing else. To lodge and die with Naomi was better in her eyes than to dwell and live with any other, indeed, she would not consider that there might

be an alternative. Choice in the matter had ceased, beside Naomi there was nothing. No other attitude of heart can be right in any one of us toward our Lord Jesus Christ, He is our great Deliverer. Sin's domination, Satan's malignant designs, the wrath to come, from all these He has set us free, and devotion to the Deliverer should follow, and this He desires. He would bind us to Himself by the strong yet tender fetters of His love and dwell in our affections.

But we must consider this story briefly, and probe this mystery of Ruth's love to Naomi, for the elder woman does not seem to have had anything with which to recompense her, as she herself declares in verses 11-13 of chapter 1. She was a poor and sorrowing widow, and certainly Ruth did not follow her for gain. If we were giving a strict interpretation

of the story we should say that Naomi set forth in picture the Jewish nation, wandering through exile, sorrow and travail to final victory and joy; but in our application of it we want to take up certain traits and steps in Naomi's life to illustrate the sorrow of our Lord Jesus and its resultant joy. She went into a far-away land and there tasted the bitterness of death, insomuch that she had to cry: "Call me not Naomi (which means 'pleasant'), but Mara (which means 'bitterness')." But in the midst of the sorrow through which she passed, she must have displayed something of the sweetness of which her name spoke, for only in this way can we account for Ruth's devotion to her.

Sweetness and bitterness met in Naomi, but if we would see these things in all their perfection and intensity we must turn to Jesus. His name is sweet (the sweetest our ears have ever heard), and He is altogether pleasant to those whose eyes have been opened by the grace of God.

He was so when here on earth; He is just the same upon the throne to-day; but we could never have known the sweetness that abides in Him if He had not trodden the path of bitterness and sorrow. He was the Man of Tears, the Man of the broken heart (Ps. 69); but the grief of that wonderful life of sweetest devotion to God, and love to men, was but the preliminary to the awful sorrow that He endured on the cross, when He took the bitter cup of sin's judgment from the hand of God. It was then that the waterfloods rolled over Him, and every sorrow found its centre in His blessed heart. Calvary spelt "Mara" for Jesus; but the intensity of that bitterness only disclosed the sweetness of that marvellous love which no power could check or sorrow overwhelm. Yes, His is an

unmeasured love; stronger than death—more lasting than the ages—unutterably sweet.

It was to Naomi in her sorrow that Ruth clung, and for the love of her who had passed through "Mara" she said: "Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me" (Ruth i. 16-17).

When she made this memorable decision she knew nothing of Boaz (type of Christ in His present position of power), nor of the place of favour and exaltation that awaited her. The love of Naomi controlled her and she was satisfied (be it noted) not to dwell and to live, but to "lodge" and to "die" with Naomi. She embraced the path of strangership for the compensation she found in the pleasantness of Naomi's company.

How true are the words:

"'Tis the treasure we've found in His love,  
Which has made us now pilgrims below."

Nothing else will: the thought of coming glories will not, in itself, separate us from the world. The attractions of the "world to come" (and its attractions are indeed great) will not of themselves draw our hearts out of "this present evil world." His love alone—the love displayed at Calvary—can do this: and so the path of discipleship is invariably connected with the cross. It was this that controlled Paul the Apostle, for he said, "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

God grant that just as the portion that Ruth found in Naomi delivered her from Moab forever, and bound her up with the interests of the one whose love controlled her, so may the preciousness of Jesus, who endured the cross and despised the shame, constrain us to wholehearted devotion to Himself.

Ruth lost nothing by cleaving to Naomi, for as a result of it, "Her hap was to light on a part of the field belonging to Boaz" (Ruth 2. 3); and he was a man of tender heart, for he spake kindly to Ruth and comforted her (verse 13). But not only so: he was a mighty man of wealth, and the field over which he had power was altogether sufficient to satisfy her need.

If we consider Naomi's sorrow as illustrating the deep and sore travail through which the Lord Himself passed, the wealth of Boaz will speak to us of His present greatness and power. He has been highly exalted, all things have been put into His hand, and now He finds great delight in dispensing the blessings of God to those who are poor and needy.

Boaz would not have said, "Go not to glean in another field," unless he had known that his field was sufficient for Ruth; nor would the Lord have said, "My grace is sufficient for thee" if its fulness could not meet our every need. Are there steep places in the path of discipleship, and do trials beset the feet of the pilgrim? The grace of the Lord is far greater than all, and those who tread that path prove the blessedness of it, for He has said that they "shall receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting" (Luke 18. 30).

So Ruth gleaned in the fields of Boaz as long as gleaning was needful, and she found that he cared for her in every way, so that she was not only

satisfied herself but had something to spare.

The whole story is of the deepest interest and full of instruction; but we must now pass on to the end of the book.

It is remarkable that at the end of the story Naomi is again the prominent person; not now in bitterness and sorrow, but reaping the pleasant fruits of her travail.

She had lost Elimelech and her sons in the land of Moab, but she had gained Ruth who was better to her than seven sons (Ruth 4. 15), and in this we have a figure of what the Lord has lost and gained by His death.

He came to His own people Israel, but they rejected Him, and for the time being He lost the kingdom and nation; He was cut off out of the land of the living. But if He lost Israel for awhile, He gained the Church; and no tongue can tell what the preciousness of the Church is to Him.

It is the "pearl of great price" for which He sold all that He had, and for which He went down into the deep sea of death, when the midnight darkness of God's judgment rested upon the face of it.

"Down beneath those sunless waters  
He from heaven has passed:  
There He found His heart's desire,  
Found His pearl at last.  
All He had His heart has given  
For this gem unpriced—  
This the tale of love unfathomed,  
This the love of Christ."

The Church as the Lamb's wife will be His eternal companion, for the time is not far distant when there shall sound "as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of many thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let

us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him : for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready " (Rev. 19. 6, 7).

Then in that glorious consummation the Lord shall see of His soul's deep travail and be satisfied : but even now, whilst He is rejected from the earth, the Church is His consolation and joy.

Is it not strange that some who belong to His Church (every blood-bought believer is a member of it) should seek the smiles of the world that rejected Him, instead of seeking to fill the high privilege of giving joy to His heart? No higher privilege will be ours for ever : No greater loss could befall us, as Christians, than the loss of it.

It is this which the devil seeks to mar and spoil, and for this he plies his wiles, and spreads his snares, and the true overcomer is the one, who, cleaving to the Lord alone, is glad to lose all for Himself.

The women of Bethlehem gathered round Naomi to felicitate her upon the joy that was hers, and they say : " There is a son born unto Naomi " (Ruth 4. 17).

They do not say born to Boaz or to Ruth ; but to Naomi, for the child would never have been but for the sore " Mara " in the distant land.

And the women gave this child, which they counted as Naomi's son, a name and " they called his name Obed," the meaning of which is " worshipping God." " And Naomi took the child and laid it in her bosom and became nurse unto it " (Ruth 4. 16). The child was greatly beloved by her, for it was the fruit of Ruth, who loved her (Ruth 4. 15).

Here is set forth another result for

the Lord Jesus. He came forth from the Father because the Father sought worshippers (John 4. 23). And for this He suffered and died. And in this respect His death has not been in vain, for by that death He has brought a countless host to God, all ransomed by His precious blood. These can worship God in spirit and in truth, for they know His love as it has been declared in the death of Christ.

Who can tell the joy that fills the heart of the Lord as He presents the worship of those who love Him to God the Father? Such worship, rendered from hearts filled by the love of God, is very precious to Jesus, for it is the fruit of the hearts and lips of those who love Him and whom He loves.

Ruth and Obed were followed by Jesse and David : and David as the King typified the coming glory of Christ.

The Lord is still rejected by this world, but the time of His return is at hand ; the crown of universal dominion shall encircle His once thorn-pierced brow, and as great David's greater Son He shall sway the sceptre from the river unto the ends of the earth. Then shall Israel own Him as the Son of God and their King, and the groanings of a sin-blighted earth will be hushed, and everything that hath breath will break forth into singing, and every note of every song will be in praise of the King.

How deep will be the joy of His heart when He looks abroad upon a creation which has been made to smile by the light of His countenance, and when men delivered from the thralldom of Satan's power, shall rejoice in the knowledge of God. But the foundation of all the gladness which will mantle the earth in the day of His kingly glory is His sorrow and death.

All who love Him earnestly desire this day of glory, and will rejoice in the blessed fact that He shall be exalted and adored in the very world in which He was despised and put to shame. But it is the same love which disclosed its sweetness amid the shame and grief of Calvary's "Mara" that will constrain them to serve Him untiringly, follow Him devotedly, and love Him now with fervent and undivided heart. This is the pathway of the over-comer.

Is it our desire to tread this path? Then let us hold it fast, for He hath said: "Behold I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast that no man take thy crown. *Him that overcometh* will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, and I will write upon him my new name. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches" (Rev. 3. 11-13).

## Consecration.

YOU ask about consecration, what it really means. It simply means "the hands filled." What do we mean when we say that a mother's hands are full of her baby? Simply that it engrosses her. Not her time and labour only, but all her thoughts, her hands are full of it, because it fills her heart. Is it so in regard to Christ with you? If you are consecrated to Him and His service that is what it means. Does that mean an act that calls for some tremendous effort, or some supreme sacrifice that will leave you with a sense of loss? Surely not. If you talked to that mother of the great sacrifice she is making in caring for

her child so devotedly, she would be astonished; that side of things never entered her head. Love has made her a glad slave—that is the secret.

There are mothers who will spend an hour in the nursery and amuse themselves with the children and then leave them to the care of others, and seek their chief pleasures elsewhere, and there are Christians who will interest themselves for one hour or one day a week in Christ and His things; but be not you like them. Let the love of Christ constrain you, and your consecration will be a joy to Him and a blessing to many.

## Abiding in Christ.

Abiding in Christ, what does it secure? Peace, perfect peace; rest, constant rest; answers to all our prayers; victory over all our foes; pure, holy living; ever-increasing fruitfulness. All, all these, are the glad outcome of abiding in Christ.

Wishes, cares, anxieties prepare the heart for prayer, but are not prayer until they are converted into direct address, supplication and cry to God.

The promises are not given to our wants, but to our petitions.

It is but a little while, and He will appear to answer all enigmas and to wipe away all tears. I would not wish then to be one of those who had no tears to be wiped away.

## THE BRIGHT SHINING OF A CANDLE.

(J. I. MAWSON.)

*"The light of the body is the eye : therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light ; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness. . . . If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, AS WHEN THE BRIGHT SHINING OF A CANDLE DOTH GIVE THEE LIGHT."*—Luke II. 34-36.

WHAT sort of an eye have you got ?

I ask you to consider the question well and face it fairly. It is certainly plain from these solemn words of the Lord that a very great deal depends upon the answer to the question ; everything in fact. It is plain also that there are two sorts of eye, and not three : first the single eye, which means a good eye that can bear the light, or an evil eye, an eye that shrinks from the light, that cannot bear it. When David said, "Search me, O God, and know my heart : try me, and know my thoughts : and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psa. 139. 23, 24), he spoke as a man who had a single eye, that did not shrink from the light ; when those scribes and pharisees went one by one from the presence of the Lord, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last (John 8.), they showed how men act who have the evil eye, the eye that cannot endure the light.

Now let us consider this matter, being assured that the whole secret of free and vigorous Christian living lies in it. The light is not something that we possess in ourselves, it does not exist in the eye. The eye is the organ that admits the light from without, and it must be a good and sound eye that does not shrink from the light if the light is to be of any use to us. The thing of first importance is the light, the candle, of which the previous verse speaks ; the light and the eye go together, we must not divorce the one from the other, for the Lord has joined

them together, and what the Lord Jesus has joined together let no man put asunder. First the light and then the eye. He said, "*No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, neither under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light.*" The candle is first lighted, then everything depends upon the eye, whether it can bear the light of it or not. What is the light ? No, we will not put it that way for we want to make an appeal to the heart as well as the conscience. We ask, WHO IS THE LIGHT ? for it is a Person. The Light, the Candle that has been lighted for us by God's own hand is the Lord Himself, our Saviour. It is Himself of whom He spoke in the parable. "I am the light of the world," said He, on another occasion. "He is the bright shining of a candle that doth give thee light," and since He has come every man is tested by Him. It is made manifest by His coming into the world whether our eye is good or evil.

This is a great theme and we must pursue it, for light is good. How those great men of Old Testament times longed for it ! When Moses cried, "Show me Thy glory," he was yearning for the light, and when David prayed "O send out Thy light and Thy truth : let them lead me ; let them bring me unto Thy holy hill, and to Thy tabernacles. Then will I go to the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy" —he was praying for the light, but I do not suppose that he knew how his

prayer would be answered, or that God's light and truth would come forth in the person of God's beloved Son, but so it was, for He was the true Light that coming into the world shineth for every man (John 1. 9, N.T.), and He is the truth for all those whose eye admits the light.

But let us work back a little further in our Scripture, that we may understand it better, and miss nothing of its solemn meaning to us. It was an evil generation to which the Lord came and in which the light shone (verse 29), its eye could not endure the light, it did not perceive that He was the light, so it asked for a sign. The light was shining, yet it asked for light, for that is what a sign meant, something that would make plain to them who the Lord was, and leave them in no doubt about it. It was as though a man came into a room at midnight in which a candle shone brightly and declared that he must have a sign, some definite proof that it was a candle. But why were they like that? The light that shone made their evil eye to smart and they did not like it, they wanted something that would make them comfortable in their sins, something that would suit themselves and not God; their way not His, their will not His. So they rejected the light that shone so brightly and showed them how evil they were, and just so far as that disposition lurks in the heart of any of us and we yield to it, so far have we the evil eye, an eye that does not want the light.

The Lord quotes the cases of the men of Nineve and the Queen of Sheba as condemning that generation. Jonas carried light—a partial glimmer it was—to the great, pagan city of Nineve. That light shone in the dense darkness of their idolatry and sin, and lo, they admitted it to their hearts.

They had the single or good eye; the light exposed their corruption and sin, they acknowledged it, and repented of it at the preaching of Jonas. They were honest with God and He was gracious with them. He never turned His face away from a man who bowed before Him in true self-judgment, in repentance. But no man ever did that who had not a sense in his soul that there is forgiveness with God that He may be feared. The light that exposes the sin, reveals the God who can pardon it. But in the men of Nineve we have the negative side of things, we see in them what the light delivered them from; in the Queen of the South we have the positive side. She came out of the darkness of her native land to the great light that shone in Israel, and no selfishness, no national pride kept her from owning the light that was there in Solomon's wisdom, her eye admitted it and the light illuminated her; every hard question that troubled her vanished as she listened to Solomon, and she was filled with wonder and worship to God, as the story in 1 Kings 10. shows. And I may remark, by the way, that those who have the single eye and admit the light are ever wondering, the light is so marvellous, and the things that they see in it are so great that they must wonder, and while they wonder they grow and worship.

But a greater light than ever shone in Nineve or Jerusalem is shining now, for a greater than Jonas and Solomon has come, even the Lord Himself. He is the light. Have we seen Him? Do we love Him? He is the great test. Have our eyes admitted the light, and has it searched us and illuminated us, until our whole bodies are full of light, having no part dark?

There are two sides to this wonderful illumination, at least so it seems to

me. There is the measure of our blessing in it, and there is the character of our practical living. God's purpose is that the last should be consistent with the first, nothing but this could suit Him. Alas, that we should so often be satisfied with less than this! As to the first, the true light is now shining; happy indeed are all those who have the eye that does not shrink from it. Of old a great light shone at Sinai, but Israel could not bear it, it exposed what they were and condemned them. It showed what God's just demands were, but they neither could meet those demands nor did they desire to do so. Hence we read that Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of it. The light made their eye smart, they could not endure it; the end of it was condemnation, and Moses, who represented it to them, and in whose face the light of it shone, had to put a veil over his face. All this we learn from 2 Corinthians 3. But a greater light is shining in the face of Jesus. God in the fulness of His nature and character is revealed there. The light that will fill the universe of bliss, so that there will be no part dark within the limitless bounds of it, shines now in Jesus' face. Can we look into His face with unveiled face? Yes, for, wonderful fact, that light shines not for our condemnation but for our salvation. The rays of light that shine from Him are life-giving, not death-dealing, and if we look we live, and into our hearts the light shines to give the knowledge of God, and "We have this treasure in earthen vessels." We have the light of life and walk no more in darkness; and what a treasure this is!

The light condemns what we are as men in the flesh and brings us to true self-judgment, that Christ may be everything to us—wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.

We see this illustrated for us in men of olden times. It was when Job had seen the Lord, when he said, "Now mine eye seeth Thee," that he cast his own righteousness in the dust and said, "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42.). And Daniel also beheld the glory of the Lord in a vision, and said, "I saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me; for my comeliness was turned into corruption" (Daniel 10.). But these men had the single eye, they did not refuse the light, they let it search them and show them what they were and the end was blessing for them both; like the men of Nineve they owned the truth as to themselves, and the light that showed them themselves also showed them that God was greater than their sin and corruption and was a God of blessing who had a great care for them.

This self-judgment there must be; "I know that in me, that is in my flesh good does not dwell" (Rom. 7., N.T.) is the soul's confession when the eye admits the light, but we may also behold the glory of the Lord and discover that the righteousness that we do not possess in ourselves is in Christ for us, and is ministered to us from the glory into which He has gone, and that we become the righteousness of God in Him, for He was made sin for us with this end in view. Those who have admitted the light, and been searched by it, have ceased from the weary and useless struggle to be what they feel they ought to be, they have given up the disappointing search for goodness in the rubbish of their own lives and they have turned the eye to Christ. They have changed ashes for beauty and mourning for the oil of gladness. They have had the ashes and the mourning of repentance and self-judgment, for the light has

shown them what they are, and they have been honest with God about it, but they have also seen the glory of the Lord who is greater than Solomon, and in Him their need is met, by Him their hearts are filled.

So the light reveals the blessing and the measure of it, but what then? Why, it must become also the measure of our practical living. We are glad to have seen with the eye of faith the great salvation that is in Christ for us, and the perfect righteousness that is ours in Him, but God would have us consistent with that in our lives and work, and for this we must admit the light. How often we would cling to our own way, how often we would like to hide something of self in our bosoms, some secret ambition, some hope that in some future and favourable time we might attain to something that our hearts have desired and which we feel the light condemns now. We cannot be comfortable in the light when such is the case, and we need the warning, "Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness." God must have reality, He would have

us to be honest with Him at all times and about everything, and we are that as Christ is our standard. If I have an eye for my own gratification and pleasure it will not bear the light and is so far evil, for that is self, and no man can serve two masters. The light exposes self and selfishness and shows us Christ instead, and when we are right and the eye is single, the test is, not is this right or that, but is it Christ. What a wonderful thing it must be to have the whole body full of light, having no part dark, all clear and open and honest before God, and so a conscience void of offence before men. It was so with Paul when he said, "For me to live is Christ." Then the bright shining of the Candle gave him light, and so it may be with us, and if so ours will be the path of the just that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. God grant that we may so love the light and rejoice in it that we may ever say, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

## FOR HIS BODY'S SAKE.

*From a Letter.*

"THERE was just about a score of Christian folk gathered together to hear the word, mostly old, poor and apparently careworn. As I looked round on them the question occurred to me, Is it worth while to come so far to speak to so few? It was instantly answered. They are all precious to Christ. He loves them and cares for them. Yes, that was a decisive answer—no labour or sacrifice could be too great when Christ's loved ones were in question. To Saul the persecutor He said, 'Why persecutest thou Me?' and it was just such as these that He then referred to. They

were Himself, members of His body. How wonderfully that great truth burned itself into the soul of the astonished Saul we know, for afterwards he wrote: 'I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory,' and again, 'I rejoice in my sufferings . . . for His body's sake.'

Such thoughts gave me a new zest in the ministry of the word that evening, and as those faces brightened as they listened to the word, and as they expressed their thanks when it was over, a joy filled my heart that no earthly honour could have yielded."

## NOTES ON ROMANS.

(EDWARD CROSS.)

**ROMANS** re-establishes our relationship with God—Hebrews gives us approach to Him. Man has broken away from all the restraint of relationship with God.

CHAP. 1. 18–32. *Natural* relationships are corrupted in unrighteousness, folly, lust.

CHAP. 2. 1–16. *Mentally* he is only hardened by philosophy, which diverts him from *self*-judgment, and recognition of the moral principles which are the basis of all moral government in view of the day when not outward things and mental questions but the secrets of the heart shall be judged.

CHAP. 2. 17–29. *Religiously* he is practically a mere blasphemer, dishonouring God by the very doctrines in which he boasts his superiority over the blind and foolish whom he would instruct.

CHAP. 3. 1–20. And the Jew, with all the advantages of which he boasts, is condemned by the very Scriptures of which he boasts.

Then all moral relationship between God and man is broken, and the world—without exception—is a vast derelict, having openly renounced God (Chap. 3. 9–19) and abandoned itself to violence and evil.

CHAP. 3. 21–31. It lies with God now to take the initiative and restore the relationships which sin had broken, and put man in his proper place with Him in righteousness.

He has the right of redemption and to act according to His own heart in grace (verses 24 and 25). He has provided a meeting-place where the blood is sprinkled, to secure His righteousness and the justification of the believer.

CHAP. 4. But for that very reason

man's only way to reach this blessing is through faith. He had no part in the provision of it; he can now but appropriate it as provided for him. Abraham illustrates this great fact, the parent of all blessing for man; while David introduces another fact, that he was also a sinner and a great one.

Faith alone, and not the law, could make the promise sure; but faith in God can surmount all difficulty, even deadness; the working of death itself is not a matter of consideration when the power of God is in question—faith gives inward power, and we give glory to God.

CHAP. 5. 1–11. Now, then, we have thus far the restoration of right relations with God, as regards:

Verses 1, 2—ourselves, mentally.

Verses 3–10—the wilderness journey,

Verse 11—God Himself.

This is all through Jesus Christ—“through faith of Jesus Christ” (3. 22)—and carries the eye to Him alone: it is objective.

But while this is *by Jesus Christ* for faith, there must be also a life springing from Jesus Christ—the last Adam—so that the believer should *himself* enter into this sphere of renewed relationship with God.

CHAP. 5. 12–21. Disobedience, sin and death have reigned through Adam, and the law—like the bursting of high-pressure steam—by its repression, only aggravated the evil; that now grace might reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. Peace, grace, hope, love (5. 1–11) is the renewed order of relationship *into* which we are introduced by the gospel: *obedience* is the relationship *in* which we move and live therein on the way to

eternal life in the light of which we already are.

CHAP. 6. But as obedience and life is the normal relationship of the servants of God to Him, this implies, in the figure of baptism, release from the binding relationship of sin as master, and by the practical acceptance of *death with Jesus Christ* freedom from the domination of sin, that we should become servants to God—being fruitful in holiness on the pathway to eternal life.

This point of *obedience* is THE GREAT POINT in Romans. It is the rock on which Adam's relationship with God first foundered and on which now it is re-established by *Jesus Christ for GOD* and *in us* by His Spirit. It is not new creation—a new order of creation—as in Ephesians when speaking of the Church and her relations to *Christ*, but of *man* in his natural creature relationship to *God*, tested by obedience, by a law which he transgressed (Hos. 6. 7; Rom. 4. 15), and therefore Romans is the establishment by grace of the *Kingdom of God* (chap. 14. 17) and the introduction of a new life by the Spirit to live, move and act therein. Hence Jesus Christ heads the epistle as our Lord, Son of David for the Kingdom and Son of God for life (chap. 1. 3, 4; cf. Luke 1. 31-35).

CHAP. 7. But, then, the same death that clears us from the rule of sin frees us from the law which professed to restrain sin—i.e., from the law as a *restraining* power, not as *directive*, in which the new man—the Spirit—finds its delight. Love is the fulfilment of the law, and love is the life of the Spirit (chap. 13.; 8. 4). The flesh even in the renewed man cannot yield to the law—it is only provoked to lust by it. The *restraint* of law is irksome to it. The *object* proposed in the law, love, is essentially contrary to it. A man in

that state is not in right relationship with God, and if he is renewed in the spirit of his mind and still undelivered, he is only the more wretched, until he finds deliverance in Jesus Christ by the Spirit.

CHAP. 8. That delivered state, now in right relationship with God, is hence set forth.

Verses 1-10. First we have the spirit of life and deliverance now morally as to our actual state, and (verse 11) on to resurrection, when we shall be wholly delivered in bodies quickened and raised again in glory.

Verses 12-15. So that by the Spirit we have power over the body to do the will of God and walk like Jesus (Luke 4. 1-14) as the true sons of God, in the SPIRIT of adoption now, till we have full sonship by-and-by (verse 23), "the redemption of our *body*."

Verses 16-17. While the *Spirit itself* can fully own us as the children of God now, with all the future attached thereto, He does not say we are *sons*, for that in its fulness is future (Heb. 2. 10), though we have the *Spirit of sonship*. But He does say we are even now fully *children* of God. Cf. 1 John 3. 1, 2: "What love . . . that we should be called *children* (not *sons*) of God (N.T.). Now we are *children*, and it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him." How perfect is the Scripture!

Verses 18-27. But all this we have now in the Spirit as earnest, in view of glory—in the day of the manifestation of the *sons* of God. We shall be *sons then*; and the creature waits for that display—we as creatures shall be the firstfruits of creation, and all creation will be promoted in our promotion. The bondage of corruption that has held in its grasp the lords

of it, in losing its grasp of man will lose its hold on the creature of which he is the highest type. It is in this hope we are saved: in this hope we wait with *patience*, and while waiting the Spirit helps our infirmities and intercedes for us oftentimes with groanings that have no intelligible utterance.

The sigh, the groan, are known to Him,  
He'll take them up to God;  
He'll charge our spirit with them first,  
And then discharge the load.

Verses 28-39. But this only dis-

proves the charge we had laid against God and shows how all things really work for GOOD to them that love Him, who have been called to glory with Christ. It but proves the love that gave Him—the love that brought Him down to die, the love that continues, and that never will forsake nor forego.

The love of God which is in Christ  
Jesus our Lord!

Praise Him all you can. Hallelujah!

## GOD'S WAYS WITH US.

THE path of each believer is just the kindest and best that love and wisdom could devise.

I every day see more and more how God's glory is to be found only in simple obedience.

Love makes drudgery divine; the question is not, what **MUST** I do, but what **MAY** I do.

So admirably has He interwoven His glory, and our happiness, that while our happiness constitutes His glory, His glory constitutes our happiness.

Did I not think my Teacher as faithful as He is infallible, there is no book I should so fear to handle as the Book of God.

There is something sweet in being pruned by a wounded hand.

Withered must be every gourd, torn away every prop; everything of which we would say, this same shall comfort me.

If often, while girded with sackcloth, mourning has been turned into dancing, what shall it be when the mourners in Zion shall put off sackcloth and be girded with gladness.

Do you desire a map of the way to your Father's house? Take Psalm 23. It presents you with the picture of the good Shepherd with His sheep. Faith

believes all to be goodness and mercy. When we cannot see, we walk by faith.

He has not suffered you to float smoothly down the stream of time, but by large and rough billows has dashed you on the promises.

We must find God to be our all in the midst of all, if we would find Him sufficient when possessed of nothing.

Anything *with* Thy smile. Anything *but* Thy frown.

Our wants are fathomless, but our help is infinite. None but God can tell the uttermost our God can do.

Till tried, we know not how little faith we have. Are we ready to say, I could have borne anything but this? Then let us remember that the greatest compliment God can pay us, is to heat the furnace to the utmost.

Jesus came that we might have life. He spake that our joy might be full.

God has said all that is possible to raise our expectations to the highest. Surely it is not like Him to put us off with a trifle.

He has spoken to me so sweetly in His word that I have been forced to say—He is enough.

Whatever is, whatever has been, whatever shall be to you—is well.

# MONTHLY BIBLE READING.

## The Gospel of John.

Brief notes on this golden Gospel will appear monthly for the help of the babes in God's family. They know the Father (1 John 2. 13), and consequently desire to know more of His beloved Son in whom He delights. His glory fills this Gospel, and it is to the study of it from this point of view that we invite our young readers.—EDITOR.

“**IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD.**” Before time began the One who bears this title was there, and He, **THE WORD, WAS WITH GOD** then. Before the first creatorial word broke the silence of eternity, He was the companion, the equal and the delight of the eternal God (Prov. 8. 30). This could only be because He, **THE WORD, WAS GOD**. Faith encounters no difficulty here, for it accepts and rejoices in God's revelation of Himself as Father, Son and Holy Ghost. But it is not the Father, nor yet the Holy Ghost, that is introduced to us here, but the Son, and He not yet as the Son, but as the Word. This is a divine and eternal title, and it belongs to Him whom we know as **JESUS**, our Saviour, and this, of course, makes us eager to know what the title means. It means that whenever, and howsoever, and to whomsoever God has spoken and revealed Himself, He has done it by Him who is the Word; it means more than that—even that all that has been revealed is in Him who has told it out, and that it was there before it was told out.

At the opening of the Gospel we are brought face to face with the glory of this blessed One who is eternally and personally God. It is interesting and delightful to see that at the end of the Gospel (chapter 20, for chapter 21. is a beautiful postscript to the Gospel), Jesus is confessed to be Lord and God by one of His disciples, and we are sure that the whole company of his brethren bowed down in silent acquiescence as Thomas gave utterance to the glorious

truth that had broken into his dull soul. At the beginning of the Gospel the truth of the Lord's Person is declared, at the end of the Gospel the truth is believed and confessed, and the Gospel has been written and given to us that we too might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing we might have life through His Name (chap. 20. 29).

**ALL THINGS WERE MADE BY HIM.** He was the originator, the designer and the maker of the vast universe and every creature within it, **FOR WITHOUT HIM WAS NOT ANYTHING MADE THAT WAS MADE.** How wonderfully these simple yet great statements clear the air for us. We have no need to waste our time and weary our brains in the vain search for some missing link to establish some groundless hypothesis that those who would banish the Creator from His creation have put forth, we begin with the truth that the Word has made all things, that He upholds all things, and will eventually make all things serve His glory. How wonderful must be that wisdom that planned the infinite variety that even we can see in creation, and how great the power that has bound every part of it together and holds it all together in a harmonious universe.

We shall see Him in other relationships in this Gospel, as, for instance, in relationship to the Father as His only-begotten Son, and in relationship to us as our Saviour, Shepherd and Leader. Many of His glories will pass before us that will stir our hearts and make us

glad that we know Him, but we begin with His power and divinity. He has created all things, and He must be supreme over all His creation, and able also to control every creature and force within it, whether they have remained in subjection to Him or have broken their fealty and now fight against Him, and He must eventually make the whole universe serve His will and purpose in creating it. What confidence this should give us! What rest of heart and quietness of spirit! We are to learn how tenderly He loves us, that He is the One who when on earth wept when those whom He loved were in sorrow, and His heart is the same to-day as then, but He who loves us is not a feeble lover, daunted by difficulties and afraid of foes. He is God the Creator; as to power, almighty; as to wisdom, infinite; as to being, eternal.

**IN HIM WAS LIFE, AND THE LIFE WAS THE LIGHT OF MEN.**

His power and wisdom have been demonstrated by His works of old, but there is more than this for us to learn: in Him was life, and this could not be said of any creature. He has given life to His creatures, natural life, and He will give eternal life to as many as obey Him, but only of God could it be said, "In Him was life, and this life was the light of men." Darkness is ignorance of God, and if men are to have any knowledge of God it must all come through the Word. This Gospel shows us how that life which is in Him was manifested, and gives us the light that can dispel all darkness. Yet there never was any reason, except on man's side, why he should have been in darkness. For the Creator and Life-giver had made the universe throb with life, and it spoke to men though their ears were deaf to its voice, and it showed the great works of God though

their eyes were blind and would not see. The Psalmist speaks of creation in this way: "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge" (Psalm 19. 1, 2). Some were affected by these great works, as Abraham, Job and David, but the majority refused to hearken to their voice, for they did not desire to retain God in their thoughts (Rom. 1. 19-21).

Creation ought to have illuminated the minds of men, for it bears testimony to them of the power and the divinity of the Creator, but because of what they were it failed in this, and something more was necessary. Thank God, that which creation could not impart the Creator can. In Him was life! This is what He is in Himself, not what He has done as Creator, but Himself, the source of life and light and blessing to His creatures. To Him alone we must look now.

There came a man from God whose name was John, and he came to bear witness of the Light. He came to say the Light is coming. Just as the moon shines in the darkness, bearing witness to the sun, so John was a burning and a shining light in the night. The moon has no light in itself, it is only as it catches the light of the sun that it can reflect it, and so shed it upon a dark earth; and so it was with John. His soul was enlightened by the glory of the One who coming after him was preferred before him, because He was before him, and when He came John was content to disappear. "He must increase, I must decrease," he said, just as the moon fades from sight when the sun breaks in his glory on the earth.

John was not the Light, though a faithful witness to it. **THAT WAS THE TRUE LIGHT WHICH LIGHT-ETH EVERY MAN THAT COMETH**

INTO THE WORLD. This does not mean that every man has been enlightened, but the Light shines upon all. Alas! it does not shine into the hearts of all, for they won't let it in. The statement should read, "The true Light was that which, coming into the world, lightens [or is light to] every man." The Light is the Word, but now He is not creating, but shining for the blessing of His creation. He came into it for that purpose. Yet, though He was in the world, and that not for judgment but for blessing, men neither perceived it, nor desired to. "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." How dense must the moral and spiritual darkness be in which the devil holds the world! How complete must be the alienation from the life of God in which men are by nature! Such a statement as this reveals it all to us. The world did not know its Creator when He came into it. The elements owned Him, for the winds and the waves obeyed His command, and the fish of the sea knew His voice. It was men, made in the image and likeness of God, that did not recognize Him and did not obey Him; and, worse still, His own, that favoured nation to whom God had spoken in the law and by the prophets, who boasted that they were God's people, they received Him not when He came to them. They loved the darkness and not the light, because their deeds were evil. The Creator was a rejected stranger in His own world, and not rejected only but hated.

There could be no other light but the true Light, and if the true Light shone in vain, if men loved the darkness and spurned this Light, there was none other to come, and what then? Must the whole race of men sink under the

darkness in which they lived in this life into the outer darkness of the lake of fire? Well, if God's patience had been exhausted by the wickedness of men, Yes; but because it was not, No. A new energy was put forth, an energy mightier than the darkness and death that held men in thrall. Not only did the Light come into the world, the Son to reveal the Father, but the Holy Spirit took up His work in connection with that coming, that the eyes of men might be opened to see and appreciate the Light. So we read, "BUT AS MANY AS RECEIVED HIM, TO THEM GAVE HE POWER TO BECOME THE SONS OF GOD, EVEN TO THEM THAT BELIEVE IN HIS NAME: WHICH WERE BORN, NOT OF BLOOD, NOR OF THE WILL OF THE FLESH, NOR OF THE WILL OF MAN, BUT OF GOD."

What inconceivable energy there must have been in that word, "Let there be light." The darkness of ages fled before it, but we see a greater, a more remarkable energy put forth here. It is active now not to bring about a world or worlds in which the power of God is displayed, but A FAMILY in which His love can find its joy. His purpose was to have children, only such could satisfy His heart: those who should be morally like Him, able to appreciate His love and respond to it. The universe would have been nothing to Him apart from this. It was created for the Son of God and for them who were to be His companions, His brethren; and before He put forth His power to give it being His delights were with them, the sons of men (Proverbs 8.). And here we find them: out of a scene of darkness and death they come, not by man's power, not because they were of high birth, not because they had learned wisdom in the school of men, but because THEY WERE BORN OF GOD.

# THE UNCHANGING CHRIST.

(W. BRAMWELL DICK.)

Hebrews 1. 10-12 ; 13. 8.

(Notes of an Address.)

WE need not stop to discuss the much-debated question as to the authorship of the epistle. We may be quite sure that if God had intended us to know by which hand the epistle to the Hebrews was written He would have told us. I think, however, we can understand why the name of the writer is not given. The epistle, as has been often noticed, commences unlike other epistles. In other epistles we have the name of the writer, and of the company to whom the letter is addressed, we have Christian salutations, and so forth. In the epistle to the Hebrews these things are conspicuous by their absence, and we can see one very strong reason for that, that is, that the Apostle of this epistle is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. That we learn from the first verse of chapter three, where we are called upon to "consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." In this epistle every person and every thing has to give place to Christ, and God is speaking in *Him*, the Son.

The epistle occupies an altogether unique place among the epistles. We have not got in it the great truth of the righteousness of God as unfolded in the epistle to the Romans ; nor the truth as to the body of Christ as presented to us in the first epistle to the Corinthians ; nor the grand fact of justification by faith as set forth in the epistle to the Galatians ; nor the precious truth of the great mystery with regard to Christ and His church, as brought before us in the epistle to the Ephesians ; nor is there set before us the practical exhortations with regard to Christian life which we have in the epistle to the

Philippians ; nor of the truth as to the Headship of the Christ which the epistle to the Colossians so beautifully brings before us. We have not here the coming and kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, except as it is incidentally alluded to, as we have it in the epistles to the Thessalonians ; nor have we got the very salutary exhortations as to order in the house of God as brought before us in the epistles to Timothy. So that we can see that, as I said already, the epistle does occupy an altogether unique place.

Someone may say, " Well, if we have not got all these things set before us in the other epistles, what have we got ? " So far as the subject of the epistle is concerned it may be summed up in one word—it is CHRIST. " But is Christ not the subject of the epistles to the Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, and all these other epistles ? " Yes. Christ is the theme and subject of the whole of the Scriptures, from the first chapter of Genesis to the twenty-second chapter of the Book of the Revelation. And when we read our Bibles, wherever we are reading, let us look for Christ there, and we shall find Him. But while it is true that Christ is the theme of the epistles that we have named, in the epistle to the Hebrews in a peculiar way we have brought before us from start to finish, the greatness, the glory, the majesty, the dignity that attaches to the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. That is why I commenced to-day by reading a portion in the first chapter and a portion in the last chapter. We read just now from chapter 1. a quotation from Psalm 102., which is one of the most remarkable of all the

Psalms. The Psalms are all remarkable. And there again, if I may digress for a moment, let me say to my dear Christian friends, when you read them, do not read them in the first instance to find your own experience there. I know we are very fond of doing this because we find so much there that answers to our own experience, and therefore we derive great comfort and encouragement from the Psalms. Well, do not let me deprive you of that, and do not suppose that I am suggesting that you should not go to the Psalms in order to find that. But what I said, and what I venture to repeat is, do not go to find that in the first instance. Read them, and all other portions of the Holy Scriptures, to find Christ there. What we find in the Psalms supplies that which we do not find in the New Testament. In the Gospels is the Holy Ghost given account of the life, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. We hear what He said, we witness what He did, we follow Him where He walked; and as we do so, we are constrained to sing:—

“Wherever we follow Thee, Lord,  
Admiring, adoring, we see  
That love which was stronger than death,  
Flow out without limit, and free.”

But there is something that the Psalms supply that the Gospels do not give us, and that is we learn there what the Lord Jesus passed through in His spirit in His pathway through this world, and in those terrible hours of suffering on the cross at Calvary. I need not tell anybody here that we have only to read such Psalms as the 22nd, 69th, 88th and others, to get an idea of what the Lord Jesus suffered in His spirit when He was bearing on the cross the judgment of God that we deserved; but in the 102nd Psalm we get what the Lord Jesus passed through in His spirit as a man down here in this world. We find Him looking forward,

looking on to the day when Israel, who had then rejected Him, would come to their rightful place, when they would once more be publicly known as the favoured people of God, when Zion would again be the centre of everything; and then between Himself and that day the cross loomed up before Him; and as He thought of Himself being cut off in the midst of His days, as He thought of Himself not as the acknowledged, accepted Messiah of Israel, but as the suffering Victim upon the cross, it almost seems (I say it reverently) as if that cross for the moment overshadowed everything else, for we hear Him say, “He weakened my strength in the way; He shortened my days. I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days.” Then, just then, He was saluted by Jehovah in the words that we read, quoted in our first chapter, as Jehovah said to Him,

“Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands:

They shall perish; BUT THOU REMAINEST;”

notwithstanding the fact of the cross, notwithstanding the great fact that He was to die rejected by the Jews.

“THOU REMAINEST; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment;

And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed:” (Now observe), “but THOU ART THE SAME.”

Now I read that twice because I want to emphasize it, and call your special attention to it. “THE SAME” in that verse is one of the names of God. Let us make careful note of that, “THOU ART THE SAME.” He might in other words have said,

“**THOU ART GOD.**” But it is God in that particular character as **THE UNCHANGING** and the **UNCHANGABLE ONE**. “**THOU ART THE SAME.**” Therefore at the very outset of the epistle, in this very first chapter, we have brought before us the deity, the greatness, the majesty, the glory of this all-glorious Person. Then we pass through the intervening twelve chapters of the epistle, of which we shall have more to say presently, and we come to the close of it, and after His varied glories the Holy Spirit of God sums the whole thing up in chapter thirteen and verse eight, and says,

“**JESUS CHRIST is THE SAME yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.**”

Jesus Christ is the Unchanging and the Unchangeable One, because He is God the Son, in all the greatness and glory that attaches to God. Jesus Christ is God, the Unchanging, the Unchangeable God, yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.

The epistle was directly addressed to those who before their conversion were Jews, and they would be able to appreciate it in a way that perhaps you and I have more difficulty in doing. He brings before them all those persons and things to which they were as Jews devotedly attached, and which formed a prominent part of the Jewish economy. He allows them to view them just for a moment, then he presents in contrast to them Christ. And all those persons and all those things, notwithstanding the great place that they had in the old economy, pass out, and one Person and one Person only remains; and that one Person is Jesus Christ, and

“**JESUS CHRIST is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.**”

Just let me remark here that four times over in the epistle the Lord

Jesus Christ is set before us as being at the right hand of God: in the first chapter because of the perfection of **HIS PERSON**; in the eighth chapter because of perfection of **HIS PRIESTHOOD**; in the tenth chapter because of the perfection of **HIS PROPITIATION**; in the twelfth chapter because of the perfection of **HIS PATHWAY** as a Man down here in this world.

There is another thing to notice and that is this. In the first three instances I have cited He is spoken of as having set Himself down at the right hand of God. I need not remark that one who was nothing more than man could never have set himself down at the right hand of God. That is an absolute impossibility. The right hand of God could only be occupied by the Person Who is God the Son, and the wonder of Christianity, the mystery of the Person of Christ, is this, that He Who is God the Son has set Himself down at the right hand of the Majesty on High, and He sits there as a Man. Very God! Very Man! Whilst in the first three instances He is spoken of as having set Himself there because of Who He is, in the twelfth chapter He is spoken of as having been set down there. That I take it is God's answer to His pathway of faith and devotedness to Himself and perfect fidelity to His will as a man down here.

Now, I want to run over the epistle, and to show you how Christ is set forth as eclipsing everybody and everything else. You will observe in chapters one and two that that which is prominently brought before us is **ANGELS**. For example, in the first chapter and the fourth verse we read of Christ “being made so much better than the angels.” One of the characteristic words of the epistle to the Hebrews is “better than.” Everything that belongs to the new order of things, everything that belongs

to the new dispensation, everything that pertains to Christ is better. Christ is better than the angels, we have got a better covenant, a better sacrifice, a better hope. You will find over and over again as you read this epistle that everything is better than that which went before. A companion word to it is "more excellent." Whilst there were excellent things under the old economy, Christ and all that pertains to Christ is "more excellent" than all that has gone before. In chapters one and two angels are brought prominently before us. To the Jewish mind angels occupied a very, very important place, and that was quite right. Angels always had occupied an important place in the ways of God. They had been, in a certain sense, God's executors, God's messengers, God's servants. And wherever you turn in the Old Testament you will find that angels are prominent. We read in the book of Job with regard to creation that when the world was created the morning stars sang for joy. We turn to the 68th Psalm, and find that when the law was given on Mount Sinai, the Lord came with thousands of His angels. We find that at the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ, when the angel came to announce it to the shepherds, he was immediately followed by a multitude of the heavenly host. The angels were prominent in the pathway of the Lord Jesus Christ; they came and ministered to Him after His temptation. But angels must give way to Christ for He was made so much better than they. Not simply that He was made better, not simply that He was made much better, but as if the Spirit of God wants to write it deeply upon our minds, "He was made SO MUCH BETTER than the angels."

In the second chapter we find in the fifth verse: "For unto the angels hath

He not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak." There we get the first indication in this epistle that angels are superseded by Christ. A striking answer, just let me say in passing, to those who in this day—and they form a somewhat numerous body, I am sorry to say—would have us believe that Christ is only a sort of super-angel; that is, He may be greater than all the other angels, but after all He is neither more nor less than an angel. But He created the angels, "By Him were all things created that are in heaven and that are upon earth, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by Him and for Him." And therefore we find, in the first instance, those who occupied the first place in the mind of a Jew perhaps are brought upon the scene, and the Spirit of God gives us full view of their greatness, their usefulness, and of their place in the ways of God. But Christ steps upon the scene and angels pass off, they are eclipsed by Christ. One Person, and one Person only, remains for our faith and affections, and that Person is Christ, and

"JESUS CHRIST is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

Chapter three speaks of Moses. Next to angels, and when we come down to earth, the most prominent person in the mind of a Jew was Moses. And we can understand it; it was only right it should be so. But whilst the Holy Spirit of God gives great credit to Moses, He speaks of Moses in the second verse as one who "was faithful in all his house"; having said that, He brings Christ before us, and says, "This Man." Who is this Man? He Who is God the Son, He Who became man, He Who is the brightness of God's glory and the express image of His Person, and the One Who upholds

all things by the word of His power, and became man. "This Man." He is counted "worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house."

And in the sixth verse, "Christ is Son over His own house." Moses was a faithful servant in the house, but in the first instance Christ is the Builder of the house, and in the second instance Christ is the Son over His house. And, therefore, Moses comes on the scene for one moment and passes, but Christ remains, and

"JESUS CHRIST is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

We pass on to the fourth chapter, and there Joshua is brought before us. Joshua was the one who succeeded Moses and led Israel into the land, and, therefore, they attached great importance to and bestowed great honour upon Joshua. But he did not give them rest, and, great as Joshua was, he must also pass away, and Christ, and only Christ remain, and

"JESUS CHRIST is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

We come on to the fifth chapter, and we have Aaron brought before us in the beginning of the chapter. And so far as the priesthood was concerned Aaron undoubtedly occupied the premier position in the thoughts of the Jew. But the great subject really, the great object of the epistle, is to bring before us the greatness of Christ as Priest in His varied characters; and, therefore, Aaron passes off the scene and the Lord Jesus Christ alone remains to our wondering and admiring gaze, and

"JESUS CHRIST is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

In the end of chapter five and in chapters six and seven we have Melchisedec brought before us. Parenthetically Abraham is mentioned.

Abraham was the one whom the Jews claimed as their father. He was the one to whom the Jews looked up, and whose memory they revered. Abraham passes off the scene. Then we have Melchisedec, this wonderful, I was going to say mystical character, a very wonderful man who is brought before us in the book of Genesis, and is alluded to in the book of Psalms, and on whose action the Holy Spirit builds such a beautiful structure in these three chapters, he who was "made like unto the Son of God." I have no doubt he was the object of the veneration of those to whom the epistle is in the main addressed. But great as was Melchisedec, he must give place to Christ. Melchisedec passes off the scene and there remains Jesus Christ, and

"JESUS CHRIST is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

We come to the eighth chapter, and there we have the old covenant brought before us; not called an old covenant in the Old Testament, but the last verse of our chapter tells us that the very fact there is a new covenant means that there was an old. That old covenant is brought before us; that old covenant which was dear to the heart of the Jew even although the Jew was utterly unable to answer to it and meet the mind of God as expressed in it. The old covenant is brought before us and then there is that of which our chapter speaks as the better covenant, the new covenant, and not only the covenant but He Who is the Mediator of that new covenant, and that is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. So that once again our attention is focussed upon Christ. The old covenant and all that attaches to it passes away, Christ and Christ alone remains; and

"JESUS CHRIST is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

In the ninth chapter we have the sanctuary brought before us, the tabernacle that was made with hands. And we have in the early part of the chapter that very beautiful description by the Holy Spirit of what that sanctuary was like. We are almost sorry sometimes, at any rate I am, that in the fifth verse the writer says, "of which we cannot now speak particularly." I sometimes wish that he had had time and had been disposed to speak particularly about it. But the Holy Spirit has given us all He sees necessary for us; and if He brings before us the tabernacle as it was ordained by God, the tabernacle as it was set up according to the instructions of God, it is only to bring out the great antitype of it and to show Christ in His own blessed Person as the Sanctuary of His people to-day. There was that in the tabernacle that appealed to the eyes of those who beheld it, there was that which was very gorgeous and very beautiful. But the tabernacle passes off the scene and there is One Who appeals to our eye and to our heart because of the beauty of His Person, One Who supersedes the tabernacle and everything connected with it. Once again our thoughts are centred upon Jesus Christ, and

"JESUS CHRIST is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

We come to the tenth chapter, and there we have the priesthood again brought before us; we have that which obtained under the old order, we have the work of the priests, the unending character of that work; might I venture to say it, the unsatisfactory nature of that work, because their work was never done, and all the sacrifices that they offered could never put away sin. But in the twelfth verse our attention is again called to "this Man"; this Man Who is none

other than God the Son, this Man Who being God became man in order that He might make this "one sacrifice for sins," and having done so, He has, because of the infinite perfection of His work, as well as because of Who He is in His own glorious Person, set Himself down at the right hand of God. So that our eyes are carried upward and at the right hand of God we are called upon to behold Him, THIS MAN, JESUS CHRIST, and

"JESUS CHRIST is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

In chapter eleven we have that wonderful galaxy of men who lived in faith and who died in faith, men who were here for God. The names of some of them are mentioned, and then after that, we have grouped those nameless men and women who lived in faith and died in faith. At the beginning of chapter twelve we find that these men, great as they were, wonderful as they were, devoted to God as they were, their very lives a pleasure to God, have all to pass off the scene; and the Spirit of God, so to speak, says, "You have not to be occupied with those men, you have not to set them as your examples"; but "let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking,"—not to Abel, nor to Enoch, nor to Noah, nor to Abraham, nor to any of the noted men whose names are mentioned in that wonderful roll of honour—"Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking off unto Jesus, the author and finisher of faith; 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." Jesus fills the throne of God. Jesus is set forth to fill the heart of His people and

"JESUS CHRIST is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

We come to the close of chapter twelve, and it almost seems as if in the closing verses of this chapter the inspired writer sums up all that has gone before in the epistle. In the eighteenth verse He tells them what they are not come to, and in the succeeding verses, from verse eighteen down to verse twenty-one, we find that which obtained under the Jewish economy, a system of law, a system that was established by God, a system which in its day was according to God. The writer says you have not come to that, to mount Sinai; but in the twenty-second verse he says, "Ye are come." Observe: "Ye are not come to mount Sinai," but "Ye are come unto mount Zion." Mount Sinai spoke of the law; mount Zion speaks of grace. Mount Sinai spoke of that which only struck terror to the heart; mount Zion speaks of that which sets forth the character and the heart and the grace of God. But I want you to connect two sentences in these verses which sum up this portion of the chapter. In the beginning of verse twenty-two we read "Ye are come." Now note two words in the beginning of verse twenty-four, and there see the summary of the whole thing. "Ye are come—to Jesus." "But ye are come to Jesus." We remember when we were converted, don't we? Yes, you say We shall never forget that. We remember when we realized the judgment of God was hanging over us and there was a yawning hell in front of us, and we wanted to know how to escape it; when we felt the burden of our sin

and we were groaning under it, then

"We heard the voice of Jesus say,  
Come unto Me and rest,  
Lay down, thou weary one, lay down  
Thy head upon My breast.  
We came to Jesus as we were—  
Weary, and worn, and sad;  
We found in Him a resting place,  
And He has made us glad."  
Hallelujah!

We did not think then so much about the Deliverer, we thought more about the deliverance. We were not thinking so much about the Saviour, we were thinking about the salvation. We were not thinking about who and what He is, we were thinking of what He had done for us. Now says the Spirit of God, "I have passed before you the greatness, the majesty, the glory, and the work of Him who has done so much for you; of Him to whom you came in your sin, in your guilt and in your need." And ye are come to Jesus, consider Him now, and

"JESUS CHRIST is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

My brethren, what do you think of Him? "What think ye of Christ?" Why, you say, "He is all-glorious." He is. "He is the altogether lovely." He is. "He is the chiefest among ten thousand." He is. He is the One who fills God's heart, He is the One who fills God's throne, He is the One who in a day near at hand is going to fill the universe of bliss with His presence and with His glory, and that One is your Saviour and mine, and

"JESUS CHRIST is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

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"As becometh Saints" (Eph. 5. 3).

"As becometh saints." Beautiful expression! It gives in one touch the deportment, behaviour, and rule of the Christian life, as something suited to the character of saints. It applies to everything we do and say in our home and conversation. All must be "as becometh saints."

## THE FOURFOLD "NO MORE" OF HEBREWS 10.

(INGLIS FLEMING.)

THE early part of the tenth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews brings before us three glorious subjects :

A Glorious Person.

A glorious work.

A glorious result.

The glorious person is none other than the Son of God. The One by whom God made the worlds ; the One who upholds everything by His Word ; the One to whom all judgment is committed ; the One who will fold up as a worn-out garment all created things ; the One in whom God has made Himself known, He being the brightness of God's glory, and the exact image of His person ; He has come.

In the volume of the book it was written of Him, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God." None other than One who was Himself God could undertake to do all God's will, none but He could make atonement, none but He could obtain eternal redemption for us and bring a people to God in righteousness. Thus it was that He, being Himself God, became man in order to carry out all the pleasure of God. No angel or archangel was glorious enough for this, no priest or prophet under the law could avail. Only the Son of God could accomplish atonement and glorify God about the awful question of sin.

The law of Moses had shadowed the coming of Christ. In an indistinct way it had showed that He was yet to appear. Every sacrifice and offering was a signpost on the road of the centuries, and, so to speak, on each one was written :—

"TO CALVARY."

They told of the glorious work that the glorious Person was to perform.

But none of these sacrifices or offerings could put sins away ; none had any real value for this ; their importance was in being types foreshadowing the death of Christ—they pictured that which He was yet to effect.

So it was that they were offered again and again, and never could give a perfect conscience to the one who brought them. It was not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins ; and thus, year after year, on the day of atonement there was a remembrance of sins made by the offerings which Aaron was ordered to present.

But Christ, the Son of God, having offered Himself without spot to God, and having offered one sacrifice for sins, the work is accomplished, the redemption is completed, the atonement is made. Thus His own blessed words on the cross were, "IT IS FINISHED" ; and now He is risen, His empty grave echoes back those words, and they are re-echoed from the throne in glory where He sits exalted. His cross, His grave, His throne tell the story, "IT IS FINISHED." He will never suffer again, for His sufferings avail perfectly. They are all-sufficient and sufficient for all. No more offering for sins is necessary and no more offering for sins is possible. No more offering for sins is necessary, because of the one offering of that all-glorious Person having entirely and eternally satisfied the righteous claims of the throne of the thrice Holy God. No more offering for sins is possible, for such an offering would cast a slight and a slur upon the sufficiency of the work of the Son of God.

Now we can speak of there being  
**"NO MORE REMEMBRANCE OF  
 SINS"**

on God's part against anyone who believes the gospel message concerning His Son. And this is the witness of the Holy Spirit to us who believe concerning the glorious result of the work of Christ.

*God has had remembrance of sins.* When the Lord was on the cross, all our sins were remembered in judgment. As the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah says, in the sixth verse, "The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all." At Calvary our sins came into view and were dealt with in the judgment which fell upon our Saviour.

The Lord Jesus suffered there for us, and as we hear His cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" we can answer and say, "For me, Lord Jesus, Thou wast forsaken, for my sins Thou wast judged. Thou wast wounded for my transgressions, bruised for my iniquities, the chastisement of my peace was upon Thee, and with Thy stripes I am healed."

But as we have seen, His work is finished, the cup of judgment has been drained, and God is now righteous in remembering our sins no more.

Think well of this statement, dear believer: "Because the blood of Christ is ever before the eye of God, therefore my sins are ever behind His back. They are gone from His sight and gone from His memory for ever." **NO MORE** will God remember our guilt; He has forgiven our many sins on the ground of that one offering of His Son made once for all, and He will never refer to them for the judgment of them again. Here is the glorious result flowing from the glorious work of the glorious Person. And we who believe enjoy the glorious result, though we

could have no part whatever in the glorious work. So there are two clear proofs that our sins are gone. One is the place Christ has taken at the right hand of God, and the other is the written word which the Holy Spirit has penned, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more."

But not only is there no more remembrance of sins on God's part, there is

**"NO MORE CONSCIENCE OF  
 SINS"**

on the believer's part. This is the thought of God for all His own in this glad gospel day.

The conscience is according to the sacrifice. An imperfect sacrifice under the law gave an imperfect conscience. The perfect sacrifice of Christ gives the perfect conscience to the Christian. That is, it enables the Christian to be before God without any fear of judgment, for his conscience is purged by the blood of Christ, purged "from dead works" from all endeavours to make out a righteousness of his own, and he is set free, henceforth, "to serve the living God."

An illustration has been used and may help some. We may suppose a great blackboard in the presence of God, and upon it, **ALL** our many sins are written—this is God's memory or account of our sins. And we may suppose a small slate within our breast, and upon this **SOME** of our sins are written—this is our memory or conscience of our sins. The work of Christ clears the great blackboard, and clears the small slate as well. It clears God's memory, and it clears our conscience too. God knew all our sins, and we knew some of them, but the one offering of Christ enables God righteously to remember our sins no more and to have us near Himself, and the same

offering enables us to be before God without fear of judgment, with joy in Himself as we see all the greatness of His grace toward us.

But solemn indeed is the position of anyone who has professed to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and then has turned back to Judaism, or Buddhism, or Mahometanism. Alas! instances are not rare in our day where such apostasy has taken place.

Thus the apostle warns them that such a course as this could only end in sorest punishment. If Christ and His finished work were turned from, there remained

“NO MORE SACRIFICE FOR  
SINS.”

After the one sacrifice of Christ the Son of God no other sacrifice was possible. A soul definitely giving up Christ is left without the possibility of salvation. There is no other Saviour, and nothing but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indigna-

tion which shall devour the adversaries is before the apostate.

It shows that that person is an adversary of God, for that which God values he slight, and that which God establishes for man's blessing he sets aside as nothing worth.

Thus we see that—

There is no more offering for sins on Christ's part.

There is no more remembrance of sins against the believer on God's part.

There is no more conscience of sins on the Christian's part as he enters into God's thought of Christ's work.

There is no more sacrifice for sins on the Christ-rejector's part, but he is left exposed to the sure judgment of God.

The believer rejoicing in the glorious result of the work of Christ can enter into the holiest, with boldness, by the blood of Jesus, and pour out his heart in glad praise and adoration, as a happy worshipper within the veil.

## The Great Servant.

IT is well known that Mark's Gospel is the Gospel of the Great Servant—Jesus, the Son of God—and it is a happy and necessary thing that those who serve God should study Him as their pattern and Master, whose disciples they must be if they are to serve well and truly.

Notice, then, that it is only Mark who tells us that when the Lord called the children to Him, “*He took them up in His arms and blessed them*” (chapter 10. 16). Again, when He set a little child in the midst, from this Gospel alone we learn that “*He took him in His arms*” (chapter 9. 36). Mark only tells us that when He healed Simon's wife's mother, “*He took her by the hand and lifted her up*” (chapter 1. 31). And in this Gospel only do we

read that, “*He took the blind man by the hand*” (chapter 8. 32). And in regard to the child who had the dumb spirit, it is noticed that, “*Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up*” (chapter 9. 27). Compare these incidents as given in other Gospels and the perfection of Scripture will be seen; but more than that, the perfection of the true Servant will fill the heart with delight. With what tenderness He came into actual contact with weakness and need! It was not power only that was manifested, for a word would have been enough for that, it was love—the love that was behind all the power and service. Would that ever be forgotten by those who felt it? We are to learn of Him, and we can only learn of Him as we are with Him (see chapter 3. 14).

## WATCHMAN, WHAT OF THE NIGHT? (JAMES GREEN.)

## Notes on the Prophetic Outlook. No. 5.

*The Song of Moses.—Deut. 32.*

THE night of darkness has indeed fallen upon God's ancient people, but there shall be a morning, when all their present sorrowful condition so vividly portrayed in Lev. 26. shall be ended. Surely none can read this chapter without being impressed by the accuracy of the prophetic word written 3400 years ago, which has been and continues to be fulfilled in the history of the Jews. Nevertheless there is a deeper sorrow and a darker hour yet to come for that nation beloved for the fathers' sakes. We shall see how this has likewise been foretold in the last words of Moses, and still earlier by Jacob, and view at the same time the bright anticipation of the morning which cheered their hearts.

Last words are always of special interest, much more so when spoken at the close of the pilgrimage of a devoted servant of God. Such indeed was Moses, a man upon whose unknown tomb the epitaph "Faithful in all His house, as a servant" has been inscribed by the Holy Spirit (Heb. 3. 5). His last work was the writing of the law, but he wrote under the shadow of a great sorrow, for the law was but a ministry of death and condemnation to the people he loved. His only solace was that he knew that there were secret things, as yet unrevealed, sealed up amongst God's treasures. Long had he known the ways of the children of Israel in the wilderness, and now his prophetic vision sees that they would be unchanged in the goodly land into which Joshua was about to lead them. His words are so similar to those of the great apostle of the

Gentiles as he bids farewell to the saints in Asia (Acts 20. 29-31). "While I am yet alive with you this day, ye have been rebellious against the Lord, and how much more after my death" (Deut. 31. 27). Then in view of the "latter days" and the evil that would befall them, Moses indites the song recorded in chap. 32., adding the blessing in chap. 33.

The song relates the history of the people, showing the place they had in the mind of God, from the dividing of the nations after the flood until the day when Israel shall be the centre of blessing for all peoples. Sad indeed is the story and heavy is the heart of the seer, yet he sings, for through the darkness of the night there shines the light of a glory, which is no mere poetic fancy or cunningly devised fable, but a purpose which has behind it the unchangeable will of God. Five times he speaks of God as "The Rock" and rejoices that His work is perfect and all His ways judgment. Here is certainly cause for singing, for however sorrowful the corruption and folly of the people may be, the seer knows that God will not fail to accomplish all that is in His mind. This is the lesson which the history of Israel and also of the Church is designed to teach. Here is a theme worthy of the contemplation of all intelligences in heaven or earth. Here is refreshment in the arid waste of human failure which is as the dew and the small rain upon the tender herb.

Hark! as the magnificent strain opens:—

Ver. 1. The call is to the heavens and the earth. The audience of things

unseen and seen is summoned to listen to the sublime statement of the Name and greatness of God, by which all His purposes are secured.

Ver. 2-4. God is faithful, He does not change. "Justice and judgment are the habitation of Thy throne, mercy and truth shall go before Thy face" (Psa. 89. 14). How beautifully the name and greatness of God (verse 3) are supported on the one side by grace (verse 2) and on the other by righteousness (verse 4).

Ver. 5, 6. Greatly is the prophet surprised at the folly of Israel in turning from such an One to whom they owed everything.

Ver. 7. They were to remember what God had done for them in the past, and listen to the witness of the fathers to whom the promises were made, and indeed—

Ver. 8. Go farther back still, and consider the plan of the Most High, which in the coming day will be realized, for it is God's millennial title that is here announced. The sons of Adam after the flood were disposed on the earth according to the number of the children of Israel when as yet they were unborn. God, who knew that He would make them as the sand by the seashore in multitude, appointed their position accordingly, and gave to each nation its place in relation thereto. A glance at the map will show that Canaan is geographically placed in the centre of the land surface of the globe, and that all the great waterways of communication converge towards it.

Ver. 9. But further, Jehovah has a purpose in this for His own glory and pleasure, and this is found in His people, even though they be as Jacob. Through them He will take possession of the inheritance of the earth (cf. Isa. 2. 3). The New Testament reveals a

still greater purpose which has no place in the song of Moses, viz., that in Christ and the church, the wealth of the glory of the inheritance of all things in the heavens shall be brought to God.

Ver. 10. Redeemed from Egypt, it was in the wilderness that the children of Israel were formed into a nation, and for forty years Jehovah compassed them round and defended them against every enemy. He instructed them with laws which are so excellent, that all civilized nations have based their political institutions upon them. As men are careful to preserve their eyesight from injury, so God was deeply concerned for the nation that was so precious to Him.

Ver. 11. As the watchfulness of the eagle over her young, such was the tender care with which Jehovah carried Israel by Divine power.

Ver. 12. They had no help from any other quarter, God alone was sufficient for them. In the presence of this, how foolish was their subsequent idolatry.

Ver. 13, 14. Now the vision of Moses is forward, and he uses the future tense (Heb.), "He will make him ride." He sees that goodly mountain and Lebanon, which his feet might not tread, its ample abundance and prosperity, and then in contrast with all this favour to the people, he sees—

Ver. 15. Their grievous departure from God which would bring them to ruin.

Ver. 15. The record of how this took place is found in the book of Judges.

Ver. 16-19. In these verses Moses describes prophetically that which we read as history, in 1 Sam. to the end of 2 Chron.

Ver. 20, 21. Then the night deepens and the seer views the hiding of

Jehovah's face from the nation. It is the Lo-ammi period (Hosea 1.). No notice is here taken of the restoration of a remnant of Judah or the coming of Messiah in grace, such as we see in Isa. 1. The vision of Moses is fixed upon the latter days. To Paul was told the secret of the present calling of the Gentiles, the people that will be used to provoke Israel to jealousy, when they discover that during the period of their unbelief, the church has been formed and taken to glory. This was unrevealed to Moses, but clearly the quotation in Rom. 10. 19 and the following chapter indicates that it is here that the prophecy must be cut in a straight line.

Ver. 22. Leaps forward to the end, the time of Jacob's trouble, in which tribulation shall not only be upon the Jew, but the whole earth will come under the consuming fire of God's judgment.

Ver. 23-25. With sorrowful heart the Lawgiver dwells upon the sufferings of the nation from the arrows of the Almighty, which will fall upon young and old alike.

Ver. 26, 27. But it is not to be a full end, there shall be no boasting either on the part of the Gentile or Satan that the remembrance of Israel has been made to cease, for then the word of God would have failed and the reproach remain that God had not kept the promise He made to Abraham.

Ver. 28-30. Nothing but their own folly in forsaking the counsel of Jehovah and rejecting His Sent One could bring such depths of sorrow upon them (cf. Micah 5. 1-3).

Ver. 31-33. But if God chastens His own people it is evident that the moral state of the Gentile will not escape, nor shall any refuge protect them from the wrath of God.

Ver. 34. Indicates that ere this can take place, there was a secret which would be revealed, at that time sealed amongst the treasures of God, and hidden from the ages and generations (Ephes. 3. 5-9). Then when the day of grace has accomplished its purpose—

Ver. 35. The day of vengeance will ensue. For this reason Our Lord closed the book in the synagogue at Nazareth at "the acceptable year of the Lord" (Isa. 61. 2), leaving "the day of vengeance of our God" for a future time (Luke 4. 17-19).

Ver. 36-38. Then the helpless condition of the nation is manifest, and they are brought to acknowledge that the spirit of idolatry which will have returned with sevenfold intensity, can afford them no protection.

Ver. 39. Then shall Jehovah show that He is ever the Same. The three pronouns, "I, I, He" are a Divine title, God's assertion of Himself. Death and life are in His hands. The verse indicates the national resurrection of Israel, their healing by the "Comfort ye, Comfort ye" of God (Isa. 40. 1), and the unsparing judgment which will fall upon the world from which they shall not escape.

Verse 40. God is God, whose long silence will end at last, and most surely will He fulfil the oath with which His promises have been sealed.

Ver. 41, 42. The coming of the Judge. 2 Thess. 1. 6-9, 2. 8; Rev. 19. 15-21, give the New Testament parallel to these verses.

Ver. 43. Is the day of His people and land, a blessing in the midst of the nations. This verse is quoted (Rom. 15. 10) to show the largeness of the heart of God who has ever had in view the joy of all mankind when Israel shall once more be established, a witness to His mercy and for the glory of Christ.

We have thus in Isa. 1. and Deut. 32., written 700 years previously, a double confirmation of the prophetic outline, which must surely convince every reader that these men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. MOSES could only see fulfilled as far as verse 12 of his song, the wilderness and its lessons. Isaiah saw the history as far as verse 19, cf. Isa. 1. 4. We see

things that have taken place as far as verse 34 (cf. Rom. 3. 9-19 with verses 32, 33 and Ephes. 3. with verse 34) waiting for the secret moment when this matchless interval of grace that has lasted 1900 years shall end, and then shall the course of the prophecy, held in suspension so long, once more be resumed.

(To be continued.)

## That we might be Rich.

HOW rich the Lord has made us in Himself. He has given to us the wealth of His own heart's love, and that is infinite, inexhaustible, eternal, and that love secures for us exceeding abundantly above all we are able to ask or think. Let us dwell upon our unbounded wealth in Christ and the shine will be taken out of everything else. We need bread, it is a necessity to us in this life, but we do not live by bread alone, the wealth of all God's

word has come to us in Christ, and is that a necessity? Yes, but what a luxury also; it endures unto eternal life. Our human hearts yearn for the love of those we love, and the Lord does not deny this to us; nay, He gives it to us freely, but that cannot satisfy. Rich as it may make us, there is a lack until the wealth of divine love pours into our hearts, then our cup runs over. "He that drinketh of this water shall never thirst."

## From Some Old Letters.

You have much to ask for me, and how blessed would my necessities be to you, could they keep you but a moment longer in communion with the Friend of sinners.

Blessed be His name, it is part of His way with us to visit us with the rod, little as we may be worthy of it.

An *act* of love may be very kind but there is no security for the future, but when the *disposition* is love, unchanging love, all must be loving, for He is love.

We have no idea of His longings to bless.

The hottest of all furnaces in which He tries faith, is that heated with our own sins.

Do you ever pray for me? I pray for you. It is so pleasant and so profitable to talk to the Lord about our friends; we send them sweet messages of love by a faithful messenger; we do not know its sweetness till we try it; it is time well spent to talk to Him of them.

We know the end of the Lord; He is very pitiful and of tender mercy. Let us trust Him without an explanation.

# THE DEAD THAT DIE IN THE LORD. (J. T. MAWSON.)

“Precious in the sight of THE LORD is the death of His saints” (Psa. 116. 5).

“And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are THE DEAD which die in the Lord from henceforth : Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them” (Rev. 14. 13).

“Blessed are THEY THAT MOURN : for they shall be comforted” (Matt. 5. 4).

## THE LORD'S PORTION IN THE DEATH OF HIS SAINTS.

I AM going to link these three Scriptures together into a golden chain and give it to you for your comfort in this dark hour. Put the Lord first even in your sorrow. Freely own that He had a prior claim upon the one you loved so well. Acknowledge that He had the right to take her to Himself, and have her exclusively for Himself since He had bought her with His own blood. It will simplify matters for you and greatly ease your grief if you begin with this. It was a great shock to you when you found for the first time in your life that there was no response to the cry of your heart from her who was so dear to you. The ears were deaf to your words, the lips mute, and the form unmoved by your entreaty, but remember that that which is so great a grief to you was precious in the sight of the Lord. It was blessed for Him to have her in His own presence. He had loaned her to you for awhile, and left her in this lower world that the will of God might be accomplished in her life, and He had waited long for the hour when He would receive her to Himself, and when that hour came at last it was blessed for Him. You loved her greatly and *her life* was precious to you, but He loved her more and *her death* was precious to Him. If you can tell how much He loved her then you can tell how precious in His sight her falling asleep was. Your love, sincere as it is, is human and faltering and it can be told in human speech, His love is divine and eternal and how shall it be told? It spoke in

the sufferings of the cross. His blood shed for us there is the measure of His love, and love so amazing as His had the supreme right to the one you now miss so much. To own this will be a relief to you.

I want you to think of this word. “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of *His saints*.” The word “saints” in this verse is a beautiful word. It means more than simply those who are set apart for God, though it includes all such; it means those who are characterized by *piety*, *grace* and *goodness*. Such, indeed, was your loved one, as I know right well. You loved her because she was lovable, but what made her what she was as wife, mother, sister and friend? Was it not first of all and most of all the grace of the Lord within her? You appreciated this, yet you could not *fully* appreciate all that she was in these beautiful Christian traits, but the Lord could and He did, and when His work in her was completed, what could He do but receive her into His own presence? and her death was precious in His sight. She was like a flower that He had carefully watched and cultivated in His garden, she was fragrant to you, but, O, how fragrant to Him! And now He has taken her as He had a right to do.

In another Scripture, such as she was are spoken of as His jewels. “They are Mine,” He says. You are glad that she was His, are you not? How bitter her death would have been for you if you had not known this; but now for her and for you—

“Death has no sting  
Since Jesus died.”

He rejoices over her now. She has come safely through all the vicissitudes of life, through all its trials and temptations! What a triumph this is for Him! How many times the devil had tried to snatch her from His hand we do not know, but this we know, that his every effort failed, as they must all fail in regard to you and to all who belong to Christ. The devil is baffled and beaten and the Lord is triumphant and glad. If you look at things from this standpoint you will see how precious to the Lord was the hour of her death. He has her safely home with Himself in heavenly glory, herself His prize and the fruit of His soul's deep travail, when He suffered for her upon the cross.

#### THE PORTION OF THE DEAD.

But if the Lord's portion in her death is so blessed, what of hers? Only God's word can tell us this infallibly, and yet there is another witness that we cannot ignore, and that is the general experience of saints themselves. It is certain that the nearer they have come to their departure from this world the less they have feared death, and the deeper has been their peace and the fuller their joy. They have borne witness to the fact that as this life and earthly things receded from them their rest of heart increased until it became too deep, too blessed to be described, and if they found this outside heaven's gates, what must they have found when they passed inside! This is no delusion, the witnesses are too many and too reliable for us to have any question as to it.

But we are not dependent for our knowledge of the blessedness of those who sleep in Jesus upon earthly voices, not even the voices of the dying but triumphant saints whom we loved so well; it is A VOICE FROM HEAVEN that speaks here, and what it says is

recorded for us in the infallible Word of God. A voice from heaven where the dead in Christ have gone has declared that those that die in the Lord are blessed. And to this the Spirit adds His testimony, and says, "Yea, **THEY REST** from their labours." Think of the portion of the one for whom you are mourning. She is at rest with her Saviour, with the One who said, I will give you rest, and who never fails to fulfil His word. Could any companionship compare with that? Could any earthly joy equal the joy that is hers in the presence of her Lord? It was *good* for her to be here enjoying those natural relationships which are ordained of God, and your special care for her, and finding in Christian fellowship pleasure that the world does not give, but it is better to be with Christ, *far better* (Phil. 1. 23). It will be a comfort to you to dwell upon this. You considered her wishes and happiness when she was with you and laboured for her comfort, and she valued your care and love, but she needs these no longer. She has no need of any kind now, all the burdens and disabilities of this life that called for your care are over for ever, she rests from her labours, she is absent from the body and present with the Lord (2 Cor. 5.).

We are not told more than this and we do not need to be told more; we know that in this life it is the companionship of those we love that really makes up life and yields the greatest joy—possessions, pleasures, pursuits, don't touch or fill the heart, they do not satisfy, only love does this. And the one whom you loved most is now with the One whom she loves best and who loves her more than ever you could. She is with Christ, and her joy is full. She loved Him because He first loved her and He became more

to her than any earthly relation or friend. Because of the supremacy of His love He had the supreme right to her; she owned His right when she gladly went to Him as a bride goes to her marriage, or as a weary traveller passes into his home. He is blessed in having her, and she is blessed in being with Him. Be comforted and rejoice in the thought of her blessedness and joy.

### THE PORTION OF THOSE WHO MOURN.

You will admit that it must be blessed for the Lord to have His redeemed people at home, and that it must be blessed for them to be there with Him, for as in the new earth there will be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, nor any more pain, and all tears will be wiped from all eyes, so must it be now in the presence of the Lord. You have no doubt as to all this, but what of yourself? You have sorrow and tears enough, you have been left lonely and desolate; and what a desolator death is! You hear the words of your friends, and they are sympathetic words, and are spoken for your consolation, but how cold the warmest of them seem to be. You feel that they do not understand what this means to you. There is a certain comfort in their words but they do not go far enough. There is a depth within you that they cannot reach, and your sorrow lies in that unreachable depth; there is a secret chamber within your heart that the most intimate of your friends cannot enter, and it is in that very chamber that this sorrow of yours has taken up its abode. Can there be any blessedness for you? Yes, for the Lord Himself has said, "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." And He will make good His own word, even to you. Your sorrow has made more room for Him in your

life than ever there has been before; it has made you feel your need of Him as you never felt it before. He has never been far away from you. He is at your side now. He is waiting for you to admit Him into that secret chamber where your grief holds its sway. He would enter there that He might fill it with His own peace, the peace of His presence. He is the great Comforter, and He is this because He fully understands. Nobody else does. Your heart knows its own bitterness, and there are times when your best friends seem complete strangers to you, so little do they understand you and enter into your feelings, but it is not so with Him. He knows you through and through, He understands, and because He understands and knows all you are passing through, He can sympathize.

Think of broken-hearted Mary. She brought her sorrow to the feet of the Lord as He waited for her outside the town of Bethany. "If Thou hadst been here," she cried, "my brother had not died." Then she looked up into His face through her tears, and lo, **JESUS WEPT.** Was not she at that moment most blessedly comforted? She had known that He loved her before, but she had never known that He loved her like that. His tears were more eloquent than words, and she found that His sympathy was greater than her sorrow. He did not speak to her, but He kept close by her side, and you may be sure that it was true of her, then and there, "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted."

And why has that incident been given to us in the Gospel that unfolds for us the glory of the Son of God? For your sake. What He was for Mary, He is for you. You may realize that He who is the mighty God feels for you, that He enters into your grief, that He knows the aching in your

stricken heart, and the silence in your bereaved home, and not only the silence of it but the shadow that has crept into every room of it, and that knowing all He desires to fill up your heart with His own comfort. He will not remove the sorrow as He did in Mary's case, but He will give you something greater than it—His own friendship and sympathy. He offers you the full knowledge of a love that death itself cannot spoil—His own love. He can make that love so real to you that you will discover that you can do without everybody and everything but Himself. Yes, neither father, mother, sister, brother, friend, husband, wife, houses, lands, are indispensable to us, they have their place in our natural lives, and their place is a God-given blessed place while it lasts, but He is our life

and will be our life for ever ; He is our joy unspeakable and full of glory: Without them we may live, but without Him we cannot.

But, finally, we shall live with them, for we are to be "caught up TOGETHER WITH THEM . . ." so shall we ever be WITH THE LORD" (1 Thess. 4. 17).

You will please Him if you trust Him wholly, and as you trust Him and lean upon Him, you will be blessed in your sorrow, as no worldling ever was in his greatest joy, and you will have your part in this threefold blessedness:—

The blessedness of the Lord in the possession of the saints.

The blessedness of the dead that die in the Lord.

The blessedness of those that mourn.

## THE LORD'S PRISONERS.

"The Lord heareth the poor, and despiseth not His prisoners."—Psalm 69. 33.

ARE you shut off from intercourse with your brethren, an invalid perhaps, a veritable prisoner of the Lord, and unable to enjoy the gatherings of God's children as once you did? Do you feel neglected sometimes, almost forgotten by your brethren, scarcely ever visited by them? Well, be sure of this—the Lord knows where you live. I should like to quote to you a paragraph from a booklet by the late C. H. Mackintosh: "Christ has His eye—an eye beaming with intense interest and love—upon every town, every village, every street, every house in which His Word has been received. The assurance of this is most comforting to every one who has indeed received the Word of the Lord. Were we called upon to prove, from Scripture, the truth of our assertion, we should do so by the following quotation: 'And there was a certain disciple named Ananias, and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold,

I am here, Lord. And the Lord said unto him, Arise and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth' (Acts 9. 10, 11). Can aught be more touching than to hear the Lord of glory giving, with such minuteness, the address of His newly found sheep? He gives the street, the number, so to speak, and the very occupation at the moment. His gracious eye takes in everything connected with each one of those for whom He gave His precious life." Now you are one of His, and it may be that His servants have not been as quick of hearing as Ananias was, but the Lord Himself does not forget you, and the Scripture says, The Lord despiseth not His prisoners. He will not leave you comfortless, He will come to you (John 14. 18). "If any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him and he with Me."

# THE LIBERTY OF GRACE.

(H. J. VINE.)

“*No longer I . . . but sin*” (Rom. 7. 17-20).

WHAT a great relief it is, and what a lift it gives us when we realize that we are the subjects of the grace of God, that we are “justified freely by His grace”—saved by it—and freed consequently from the dominion of sin, for we are “not under law but under grace” (Rom. 6. 14, 15), and grace reigns (5. 21)! We need a right appreciation of God’s grace to walk before Him in holy, happy liberty, and to serve Him in freedom from the intrusion of self, and this His grace would give us. The dictionary does not state the full truth concerning the grace of God when it tells us that grace is *unmerited favour*. It is that, but it is more, for His grace justifies the sinner who believes though he merited the opposite!—though he *merited judgment!* What did Paul deserve when he was “a blasphemer and a persecutor, and an insolent, overbearing man” (1 Tim. 1. 13)? . . . Yet he became a devoted servant of God, and could say, “For me to live is Christ!” He discloses the secret, and yet it is no secret—“By the grace of God I am what I am!” And what did we deserve, my reader, you and I? Yet God has justified us, saved us, and would fill us with all joy and peace in believing.

Paul tells us, however, that grace was not bestowed upon him in vain, and he did not set aside the grace of God by seeking righteousness on the principle of law, i.e., by his own merit or works. He had learned what it was to be under law by bitter experience with new and holy desires, which were his as a result of his being born again, but which he was powerless to fulfil. The law of sin which was in his members brought him into captivity during

the period of struggle, for he had not then learnt what it was to be set free in Christ Jesus, risen from among the dead. In that wretched experience, however, grace taught him how to distinguish himself from *sin* which dwelt in him and which he now hated; this is a great advance and relief to a sincere soul. Then the next step was to connect himself with the new desires (which resulted from “newness of spirit”) to seek deliverance through Christ Jesus, so that he might do what he now desired, and not the sin which he hated. Healthy and valuable was this painful lesson; and the transition could only thus be experimentally his. He could then say, “*It is no more I . . . but sin*” (Rom. 7. 17, 20). He does not exactly say, “*Not I,*” as elsewhere, but, “*No more I*” or “*No longer I,*” for it was “*I*” before the change took place. Afterwards he could say, “The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made ME FREE from the law of sin and death” (8. 2). Why made free?

As under grace we are set free—having got freedom from sin in Christ Jesus (who has died to sin once and now lives to God), so that liberty to yield ourselves to His service is ours, and fruit unto holiness is the sure result, as sure as the end which is eternal life in all its fulness—God’s gift to us in Christ Jesus! Grace not only gives us freedom, however, but enables us to pursue the path which is pleasing to God, giving the needed help, encouragement, cheer and strength all along our journey right on to the end: “that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

# A PATTERN MINISTRY.

(F. B. HOLE.)

(Notes of an Address, South Norwood, S.E.)

ACTS 20. 19-27.

THE apostle was inspired of God in thus reviewing his ministry in the midst of those elders of Ephesus who were gathered around him. He was reviewing the pattern ministry that he had exercised as a free man; free, I mean, to move about at the Lord's dictation. He knew full well that soon his period of free service was coming to an end. His ministry was not a perfect ministry. Only the Lord Jesus exercised a perfect ministry. But it was a pattern ministry, for he was a man of like passions to ourselves, and only in the power and grace and support of the Spirit of God could he have done what he did.

Now every word in this remarkable review of the apostle is full of meaning. May I just go over with you the verses which give the *spirit* in which the apostle was serving, and then the verses which give us the *subjects* of his ministry.

First of all, as to his spirit. Verse 18: "You know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons." The first thing that marked him was the most extraordinary constancy. He could say, "You have found me from the first minute to be altogether what I was all through and all the time." Oh, how terribly condemned are we moderns in the presence of that! We go forward by fits and starts. How sweet we are in one direction, and how sour and bitter in another direction. It was not so with the apostle Paul. What he was he was everywhere and all the time. It was not a kind of surface veneer. He was what he was from the centre to the circumference.

Then he says, "Serving the Lord," not exactly, serving the saints. The

Lord was before him, not serving humanity. If we serve according to this pattern we keep the Lord as the sole Object of our service, and we serve "with all humility"—not of behaviour, for a man may be only a hypocrite, humble on the exterior, but not that in mind. "Serving the Lord with all humility of mind."

The great mark of this pattern servant was a humble mind. He did not enter amongst the people of God with great parade and much flourish of trumpets. He did not come to advertise himself and to impress everybody with what a big man he was. He was unostentatious, quiet, with no pretension about him.

Further, he served "with many tears." Those tears were the expression of very deep and genuine soul travail and exercise, and if there were more of that spirit to-day it would be good. "Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews." A pattern ministry does not mean that it is one leading from success to success, and a continual round of triumph. There were all kinds of trials, temptations and obstacles. He was "cast down but not forsaken," for the Lord stood with him. We must not imagine because of the easy circumstances that surround us that Christian service is a kind of triumphal procession of large meetings and enthusiastic throngs. The pattern minister—this servant of Christ—was continually running into what appeared to be gigantic obstacles. He had all kinds of testings and trials; those very testings proved the spiritual stuff of which he was made. If you

hear that somebody is serving and getting into innumerable difficulties, you need not always shake the head and say he is no good. He may be good in extraordinary measure.

Then he tells us, "Testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greek repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." The Jew would highly resent that message. He would say it was obvious that the Greek should be told to repent, but to come and tell them, the people of God, to repent was very objectionable. But Paul testified calmly and straightly in both directions what was the truth of God.

"Now," he has to add, "the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me." There was more trouble for the pattern servant, but he says, "None of these things move me." He was a man of extraordinary stability and faith. "Neither count I my life dear unto myself." Here was a man devoted unto death for the name and the service of the Lord. We know very little of it. The brethren in Jerusalem said in chapter 15. of Barnabas and Paul: "Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of the Lord Jesus." If you turn to another translation you will find an even more striking rendering: "Men that have yielded up their lives for the name of the Lord Jesus." There was no hazard about it at all. They had not an even chance. It was a foregone conclusion. They were men that would go into the breach and lay down their lives. In that spirit the apostle speaks here. He does not count his life dear that he might finish his course and the ministry he had received of the Lord Jesus. I think we might well say, when we review the life of this pattern servant: "No wonder that the work of God prospered

in his hand. No wonder he could say that in a circuit from Jerusalem round to Illyricum he had fully preached the gospel of Christ."

Of what did he speak? Let me allude to this for a few moments. He testified of "the gospel of the grace of God." First and foremost the gospel, and the gospel of God's grace. As to that we have all heard much that is very profitable, and therefore I shall not enlarge upon it on this occasion.

He goes on to say, "Ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more." Did you notice the rather smaller circle, for here is something that is preached amongst those that are converted. The apostle went amongst those who had believed the gospel of the grace of God and who had in truth been converted, and among them he preached the kingdom of God. Now someone may ask, "What does that exactly mean?" It does not mean that Paul went about preaching the millennium or giving prophetic addresses, expounding the day which is surely coming when this earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. It does mean that wherever he went among the people of God he was enforcing kindly, gently and lovingly on the consciences of the saints *the divine authority*. He was saying in effect, "You have believed the gospel. You are now enrolled amongst the people of God. As such you are subject to Christ and subject to the Word of God. You are brought into the kingdom, that God's authority as expressed in His Word may be dominant in your heart and life." He expounds the gospel in the Epistle to the Romans, but he does not finish without giving us chapters 12. to 15., which are sometimes "taken as read," and hence skipped over, instead

of being diligently read, pondered and obeyed.

I have a feeling that of recent years we have been sadly defective, in not fully preaching the kingdom of God. Perhaps some of you would be rather angry if I were to try to do so. It is very easy to acquiesce in the spirit of the age, and to do what everybody is doing, but that is not what should govern us as Christians. We are brought under divine authority. Does the Word of God absolutely command the obedience of my heart and life? That is the kingdom of God, and everywhere the apostle went preaching the kingdom of God. May God give us grace to preach the kingdom more.

Now notice, in verse 24 he says, he preached the gospel of the grace of God; in verse 25, the kingdom of God, and in verse 27 he says: "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." He says in effect, "You have got all this blessing. The gospel has brought you into this favoured place of nearness and relationship. The divine authority is established in your hearts. You are under the sway of God. You obey His word. But remember all that God has done He has done with certain great counsels or purposes in His mind." He has actually made those purposes known to us. They are not yet brought to fruition. They are not yet carried into effect as they will be in the ages to come, but they are made known to us that we may live our whole earthly lives in the light of what God purposed from before the foundation of the world.

Have you ever asked yourself why the apostle says here, "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God"? We might say, "Why, Paul, using that word 'shun' would make us believe there was a kind

of reluctance in your mind to speak about these things." Paul would have said: "Yes, there is. Nothing will bring me into more difficulty than expounding faithfully the whole counsel of God."

Why was this? Well, for one reason, it was just this faithful declaration of God's counsel concerning the bringing in of the Gentiles to church position and privileges that raised the furious hostility of the Jews and led to his imprisonment. Then again, there is nothing that really, after all, makes such demands on the hearts and consciences of God's people as the understanding of God's purposes. You cannot possibly with a sincere heart and conscience get any understanding of those great things God has purposed for His saints without finding yourself in this world responsible to walk according to the principles of another world. You cannot possibly entertain these wondrous revelations without being made uneasy if you walk in such a way as to flatly contradict them. The truth always makes demands upon us to walk in this world as men who have heavenly hopes and destiny.

Well, God help us to keep these things in view. We need the gospel. We need the truth of the Kingdom, and we need the counsel of God. When first we begin to entertain these things it is like eating the little book of which we read in Ezekiel and Revelation. It is in our mouth as sweet as honey. It is very inspiring and very delightful at first taste, but when you come to see the practical workings of it there is a bitterness about it. It makes demands. It gets at the conscience.

After all, *that is what we want.* We want a little bit of the word of God that gets at our conscience, pulls us up, and positively alters our lives.

## FAITH.

**G**OD and faith go together. Faith is the response in man to the revelation God has made of Himself, righteousness is the result, we are justified when we believe in God.

To believe means to adhere to, to rely upon. Trust is an Old Testament word and is used in the New Testament in the sense of hope—we hope to do this or that.

Faith sees God and not difficulties. It counts upon God to come in to meet the situation.

Faith looks outside of every visible thing. Adam was influenced by what he saw. Moses endured because he saw Him that is invisible.

Faith causes a man to take a new course, because he ceases to walk by sight.

Faith causes inward exercise, for it is the renunciation of self.

Faith makes a man active, there is the work of faith.

Faith is sight, but it is not only the eye of the soul but the hand, it grasps and holds tight what God offers.

Faith rejoices in what it sees ; when I enjoy a landscape I do not think of my sight, though I am thankful for it, so when I behold the glory that God presents to my faith I am not thinking of my faith but of God.

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## THINGS TO AVOID.

**W**E must never weaken the sense of individual responsibility to the Lord. Rules and regulations can never take the place of this.

Interference with a servant's individual responsibility to the Lord is, in essence, persecution. It was this that lighted the fires at Smithfield. It is well to beware of it, and give it no place, for it has no place in true piety or in the faith once committed to the saints.

Let us refrain from throwing grit into the wheels of fellowship. What

is grit? Our own particular notions. If a man goes on with God for himself and credits his brethren with at least as much faithfulness as himself he will be a help ; if he does otherwise he will be a hindrance, no matter what his pretensions are.

A man of strong principles—or, ought we to say opinions?—may become a great menace to the peace of God's people if he lacks grace, and if two men of this sort unite to enforce a principle they may be like a pair of Samson's foxes with a flaming brand between them in the wheat fields.

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## TEMPTATION.

**I**F you would be superior to every temptation see that your heart is engrossed with Christ ; a divided heart is a continual cause of inconsistency, an unsatisfied heart will carry you into many questionable places and things.

Don't be alarmed if you find that Satan is endeavouring to ensnare you or to buffet you. He is sure to do one or the other if you are bent upon following Christ. It is when you are

settling down in the world that he will let you alone, then you may be thoroughly alarmed.

Don't let the fact that you have failed discourage you ; of course you are disappointed, and that because you were expecting to do good in your own strength ; but the Lord knew all about you beforehand, and He is the same, full of grace ; turn afresh to Him, trust in Him, and distrust yourself.

## MONTHLY BIBLE READING. No. 2.

## The Gospel of John. Ch. 1. 14-28.

Brief notes on this golden Gospel will appear monthly for the help of the babes in God's family. They know the Father (1 John 2. 13), and consequently desire to know more of His beloved Son in whom He delights. His glory fills this Gospel, and it is to the study of it from this point of view that we invite our young readers.—EDITOR.

AND THE WORD BECAME FLESH (N.T.). What great statements there are in this chapter; they break upon us with an abruptness that would startle us if we had not become so familiar with them. Our prayer is that the Holy Spirit may give to us a fuller entrance into their meaning. We will put two of them together. "In the beginning was the Word . . . and the Word was made flesh." The first sentence carries us back into Eternity, the second brings Him who was eternal into Time. First we have what the Word was, then what He became, and this opens up a new chapter in God's relations with men that must issue in eternal blessing to them. It was the Word Himself, the Creator, that became Man. We have got used to this fact, it is an article of our faith, but we should pray earnestly that the immensity of it might possess us. It was not an *angel* that became flesh, but the Word, *and the Word was God*. He did not assume human form merely, as in Old Testament days when He appeared to Abraham, but He became an actual Man and dwelt among men. He took our very nature, which in Him was sinless and holy; and this we must press, Jesus was just as holy in His manhood when He lived among men as He was in His eternal Godhead on the throne.

Here we have the mystery of godliness, which is very great, it transcends all human conception, and because of this we must keep to the words of Scripture in speaking of it. Many a fierce battle has been fought in the history of the church over this truth,

and creeds have been formulated in the hope of defining and fixing the faith of men as to it, and these have become in turn the subject of conflict; but we require neither creed nor formula, we will be satisfied with the words of the Holy Ghost, *the Word became flesh*. He became a man and will remain a Man for ever; only in this way could He reach us, only by becoming one of us could He communicate the thoughts that filled the heart and the mind of God towards us.

We do not explain the mystery of the incarnation because we cannot, but we rejoice in the fact that God has come near to us in this way, not to condemn but to save, not to make us afraid by the splendour of His majesty but to win our hearts by His grace.

But in the course of this amazing declaration of the coming of the Word into manhood there are two interruptions. Two witnesses speak out as to who He was who became a Man and dwelt among men, and at the mouth of two witnesses every word shall be established. First, the writer of the Gospel breaks into the middle of a sentence, and exclaims, "*and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father*," and then when the sentence is finished, the Baptist's testimony is introduced before the truth as to the results of the incarnation of the Word is allowed to flow on as a veritable river of life. What is the reason of these interruptions? The answer is not difficult to give. The Eternal Word became flesh and dwelt among men, not coldly distant from them, but one of themselves, eating

and drinking with them with a freedom that angered the Pharisees; and so meek and lowly was He, so without self-assertion or insistence on His own rights that men despised Him. He was nothing to them but a man, a Nazarene, a carpenter, and to some of them, so blind were they, He was mad and had a devil. Those that sat in the gate spoke against Him; and He was the song of the drunkard; so we learn from one verse in Ps. 69. Those that sat in the gate were the rulers, the great men of the city, honoured and respected, and the drunkards were the rabble, the riff-raff, the degraded. Society from its highest grade to its lowest dregs took advantage of His meekness and grace and treated Him with hatred and disdain. They did not recognize the greatness of the Person who dwelt among them full of grace. This was their blindness and sin. It is also the blindness and sin of the present day, for the denial of the Godhead glory of our Lord Jesus Christ is the great lie of Modernism, and it is the canker that lurks in most, if not all, the religious cults that have sprung into being in these strange times. To be wrong as to this is to be fundamentally and hopelessly wrong about everything. It is admitted that He was a man, but it requires no faith to admit that; those who hated Him most admitted that, some acknowledge that He was a good man and so honour Him with the lip, but the Bible truth as to His Person is rejected as an exploded myth. Thus are men blinded by the god of this world, and thus is the only Saviour rejected.

These two interruptions occur, to meet this very opposition to the truth. It would seem as though the Holy Spirit would allow no interval to elapse between the statement of the fact of the incarnation of the Word and the declaration of the unchanged glory of

His Person, so there breaks in this exclamation from the Evangelist. The testimony surely is that in becoming Man He did not surrender what He was before. His circumstances were changed and His condition. He who was in the form of God was now in the form of a servant, He who was the Creator had become a man, in the full sense of that word as God Himself would define it, but He was still the Word, and He is confessed by the disciples as the Son. His relationship with the Father remained as it ever was in those Timeless ages before the worlds were made. In His humiliation, yes, down to the deepest depths of it, He was still the only-begotten with the Father, and the disciples were permitted to contemplate His glory in this relationship that they might bear witness to it.

It was not an earthly glory but a heavenly that these disciples saw; it was not a human glory such as Solomon possessed, for it had never rested upon a man before, it was a divine glory, and the Man upon whom it rested was a unique and heavenly Man. The distinction that rested upon Jesus was that He was the all-sufficient Object of the supreme delight and love of the Father, and that He lived and found fulness of joy in what the Father was, for He was the Son. He was enough for the Father and the Father was enough for Him. This had always been so, for He said to the Father, "Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world" (chap. 17. 24), but John is not talking here about what was in eternity, but that which they had seen in time and here upon earth. No angel could claim this divine and heavenly distinction, it belonged to One alone, and He a Man dwelling among them. Then comes the testimony of the Baptist; he did not speak of the glory of the Son's relationship with the

Father, but of the fact that He was before him. He said, "*This was He of whom I speak, He that cometh after me was preferred before me: for He was before me.*" There would have been no sense in John's testimony if the Lord had not been more than man, for John was born before Jesus, but as his mother, Elizabeth, recognized in Mary the mother of her Lord (Luke 1.), so John now recognizes the Lord Himself and bears witness to His Deity. He was before John, before Abraham, the great I AM (chap. 8).

Omitting these two interruptions then the word reads, "*And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, FULL OF GRACE AND TRUTH. And of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.*" "He dwelt among us." The thought here is, He tabernacled among us. He came to stay for a while, He was as a stranger passing through the world, for He came from God and went to God (chap. 13.). But in that wonderful journey He was FULL OF GRACE AND TRUTH. Grace belongs to the New Testament, it came into the world when Jesus came, He was full of it and its fulness was brought to men in Him. It is God's favour to men, and it is infinite and unlimited. God could not have shown His favour to men in a more complete and perfect way than by the coming of His only-begotten Son into the world; this was the best and the greatest that He could do. No other than the Son could tell the love that filled the Father's heart; He came to do this, and that love in its wonderful activities on the behalf of men is the grace of which our verse speaks. It

brought Jesus down to men where they were and as they were, and looked for no merit in them, only need; they needed Him, that was enough. It brought Him from the highest height of God's glory down to the deepest depth of that need, that He might remove it for ever by the knowledge of God. That fulness of grace was really the fulness of the Godhead working untiringly for the blessing of men, and it dwelt in Jesus.

How altogether suitable to the needs of men was Jesus. In other Gospels we see that He was equal to all their sicknesses and distresses, and it is beautiful to contemplate Him always accessible, always placing Himself at their disposal; but in John's Gospel there is something more and deeper. It is John's work to show us how He dealt, not so much with the burdens that were on men, but with the ignorance that was in them.

His mercy and power could heal every disease and deliver all who were oppressed from the devil's power, and lift every burden that was on them; but the grace that was in Him could meet and remove the darkness and crookedness that was in them. It was greater than all their sin.

"*And of His fulness have all we received, and GRACE UPON GRACE.*" The needs of men, our needs, are greater than any human language can describe, but this fulness is greater than our need, and it pours itself out now for us, as it did upon those disciples, in wave upon wave, just as the sea rolls in upon the shore. It goes beyond all our need, and will, until we are filled into all the fulness of God.

And He was full of truth also; He was the truth. The law was true, but it was not the truth. It did not reveal what God is, nor did it fully expose what man was, nor the world nor

Satan ; it served its purpose, and has been superseded by grace and truth which came in Jesus Christ and abide in Him. He was the test of everything. What God is, and what man is, has all been shown by His coming, and that coming has not made demands upon men that they cannot meet, but has brought the unsought, unmerited, and inexhaustible favour of God to men to put and keep them right with God for ever.

But God could not have been revealed by anyone less than God, hence we are brought back to the truth of the Person of our Lord. "*No man hath seen God at any time ; the only-begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.*" It is the Father who is declared, and that by the Son, and

the whole wealth of divine love is in that declaration. The Father's bosom was ever the Son's dwelling place ; the love that filled it was His own eternal portion and joy, but He has come forth to make it known, and in making it known to share it with others. All human thought is surpassed by this grace that has come to us ; it has not come to bless us at a distance from its source, and leave us in the distance ; it will not rest until we are brought right home to the heart from whence it all flowed, the heart of the Father. This is the character of the love that is revealed in Jesus. That love could not rest were the redeemed not with Him fully blest. For that love gives not as the world, but shares all it possesses with its loved co-heirs.

## SPIRITUAL PROGRESS.

IF you would mature spiritually you must learn, and learning is very real work, it will cost you something. I do not believe that anyone matures brilliantly who does not learn sufferingly. *Easily got, easily gone*, was never so corroborated as in divine things. Let us not shirk suffering if we would graduate in God's school.

What wonderful disclosures of Himself the Lord would give us if we were ready for them, but for these we need the contrite spirit and subjection to His word ; these we acquire in the school of God.

We make good progress when we discover that Christ is so necessary to us that we cannot live without Him. Then we learn quickly that we are united to Him. There is a bond of affection between Him and me that nothing can sever, either in time or eternity. What restfulness of heart that gives. When this is known not as a doctrine but as a living reality, Himself and His things become the supreme things, the heart is fully engaged to know them, that is the way of true progress.

## ALONE WITH THE LORD.

SOLITUDE is of the deepest importance, because it is then that the soul renews its acquaintance with Him who only has entrance into our most solitary retreats. When we are thoroughly alone for Himself He delights to be our visitor. A sleepless night may be a priceless blessing

because of this. It is a good thing to habituate oneself to sit before the Lord. It may appear to be wasted time to some, yet it is only as we do this that we are prepared for service to Him, such service at least as will meet with His special approval.

# WATCHMAN, WHAT OF THE NIGHT? (JAMES GREEN.)

## Notes on the Prophetic Outlook. No. 6.

### *The Prophecy of Balaam.*—Numbers 23. 24.

IN the three prophecies previously considered, we have seen the forecasting of the history of Israel, and the dark night of sorrow through which they must pass before the Sun of Righteousness shall rise upon them with healing in His wings. In the Scripture now before us it is the Gentile who comes more prominently into view, but we shall see also the unchangeable place which Israel has in God's purpose. This is revealed by the attempts on the part of two wicked men, Balak King of Moab, and Balaam the soothsayer, to curse the people of God. The complete failure of this dark design shows very clearly the sovereign efficacy of the calling of God and His ability to work all things after the counsel of His own will, making even the wrath of man to praise Him.

The circumstances of Balaam's journey are well known, we shall now be occupied with the words he uttered when under the constraint of God he found himself unable to use the enchantments he desired. The prophecy is in four parts, the last of which is again divided into four, and it is spoken from three positions. The first is spoken upon the heights of Baal, symbolic of Satanic power. From this spot only a fourth part of the people could be seen, chap. 23. 10, 13; the latter verse should read, "Thou seest but the extremity of them and dost not see them all." The second prophecy is from the top of Pisgah, in the field of Zophim = the watcher. From thence a full view of the camp could be obtained. Then lastly a still nearer view was afforded

from the top of Peor that looked towards Jeshimon = the wilderness. From this place the third and fourth prophecies were delivered, and probably the evil counsel given by Balaam to Balak which brought about the moral downfall of Israel. Cf. Num. 25. 18; Rev. 2. 14 and Num. 31. 16.

The four utterances of Balaam are distinctly called parables. Seven times the word occurs, emphatically indicating that something corresponding is to be looked for in the latter days (chap. 24. 14). There is indeed a foreshadowing of the trinity of evil that will finally be arrayed against Israel with the avowed object of turning aside the purpose of God respecting them (Psa. 83. 2-4). The working of Satan is seen in the divination which Balaam sought; the last world power in Balak King of Moab; and the false prophet is evident in Balaam—the three representing the Dragon, the Beast and the Antichrist of Rev. 13. 1, 2, 11, 12. The prophecy does not, as that of Moses and Jacob, describe the history of Israel, but shows how God will counteract the final Satanic effort to destroy the people of His purpose.

The first parable, chap. 23. 7-10, shows Israel as a separated people, and that God is for them according to His purpose, for the calling of God is without change of mind on His part (Rom. 11. 29).

The second parable, ch. 23. 18-24, shows that those whom God calls He also justifies, and that no power of evil can avail to reverse His word.

The third parable, chap. 24. 3-9,

shows that as a justified people they are also accepted in the beauty that God has put upon them.

The fourth parable, chap. 15-24, shows that such a people must be victorious, and that this will be evidenced when Christ the Star of Jacob shall arise and take the Sceptre of Israel to the confusion of their adversaries.

Called, justified, accepted, and in the Christian's case more than conquerors, such is the ground of the apostle's challenge in Rom. 8. 30-37.

The first parable shows how impossible it is for any curse to rest on those around whom Jehovah casts His sheltering protection. The people may be poor and failing as Jacob, but they are God's Israel. Eight times the names Jacob and Israel are used together. The judgment of God in reference to justification is altogether different from His action in respect of moral condition. In the former God sees the object of His choice according to His own work which is indeed in Christ; in the latter He does not tolerate the evil of the flesh which is in them, Num. 25. 1-5. These two things must never be confounded, otherwise peace with God can never be enjoyed in our own case, nor can the future blessing of Israel be understood.

Ch. 23. God's standing miracle in the world is, that for 3,500 years Israel has been distinct amongst the nations, abiding still, whilst mightier empires have crumbled into mere history. True they are despised and scattered now, yet they still preserve their distinctness, and the dust of Jacob shall yet arise and his end shall be glorious. Poor Balaam, he would, like many another, wish for such an end, heaven and blessing beyond death, but he was by no means prepared to live a life for God on earth.

In the second parable, how small is man when set in contrast with God. EL, the expression of absolute Deity, God in His essential Being, is used eight times in the prophecy. Compared with this name, Balak = "the waster" is but a son of Zippor = "a sparrow," God does not alter His word as a man does. "He has not seen iniquity in Jacob." It is the truth of justification which has for its foundation the work of the cross, seen in type in the brazen serpent (chap. 21. 8, 9; cf. John 3. 14, 15). In the light of this God can justify the people, although what they were and what they would be was fully known to Him who was their Justifier (Isa. 48. 8-11). We have further the distinguishing mark of the people of God, that He the victorious King is in their midst, the God who brought them out of Egypt by blood and His own right arm. All is of God's own work, and in the appointed time Jacob, the supplanter, and Israel, the prince, shall be the witness of what God hath wrought.

The third parable is the oracle of the man with the opened eyes. He sees not with human vision but with that of the Almighty. Still abiding in their tents, but with the beauty of God resting upon them, arranged in Divine Order he compares them to valleys for fruitfulness, as gardens in which God delights, as aloes for fragrance, as cedars for excellence, as rivers for the constant flow and extension which the Spirit gives. How excellent in loveliness are the saints when we see them with God's eyes as they are to Him in Christ. Here in the prophecy the coming day is anticipated when Israel's King shall be victorious over all that Agag the King of Amalek stands for, the will of the flesh and all its results. The language of chap. 24. 9 connects the prophecy

with the blessing of Jacob (Gen. 49. 9) and the promise to Abraham (Gen. 12. 3). All is fulfilled in Christ, the seed of Abraham, the Lion of the tribe of Judah.

The fourth utterance of Balaam is connected with the Millennial name of God "The most High," and in pathetic words he speaks of that day of glory in which he will have no part (ch. 14. 17). The Star and the Sceptre connect Bethlehem and the Throne, the Son begotten in time, and the King upon the Holy hill of Zion. But as in the second Psalm, He is victorious over every enemy, so here Edom and Moab and Seir are given into the hand of Israel, and all the sons of tumult (Sheth) are laid low. Thus early in Scripture we have the prophetic intimation that God will do a work of judgment in the latter days, so terrific as to cause the seer to exclaim, "Alas! who shall live when God doeth this"—words which find their echo in the last of the prophets (Mal. 3. 2). All the great actors in the closing scenes of this world's sad story are here represented: Moab, the proud, overbearing spirit of the world; Edom, the world's hatred of Israel whose prosperity they covet; Amalek, the Gentile world in its fleshly hostility; the naval power of the Western world, Kittim; which will be thrown against the military

power of the East, Asshur; it is the great gathering of the nations which will seek to overflow Israel, Eber, and whose doom is given in Psa. 83. Nor will the Kenite who represents the vain security of those who are only in outward connection with God's people escape. The Kenites were a people associated with Israel and claimed a relationship with them, for they were the children of the father-in-law of Moses, but had no inheritance in the land. They are symbolic of those who, though not open enemies like Amalek, are nevertheless the children of the flesh. But an outward friendship with the people of God will not avail against His judgment. Kenite means "a nester" and Kain = "a nest" was their city, verse 22, marg. A nest in the Rock, however, is a poor substitute for being built on it as a foundation.

The prophecy of Balaam is the earliest indication in Scripture of the breaking of the Western Gentile power, which having conquered the power of the East, will be the final oppressor of the Hebrew nation, and will perish for ever.

We shall find this given in more detail in our next study, which will be in the book of Daniel the prophet.

*(To be continued.)*

## GOD OUR FATHER.

EVERY believer must hold fast the precious truth that the family of God is one, and that the hearts of the children of God must never move in a narrower circle than the heart of the Father Himself. While joyfully remembering that all who are dear to the Father must also be dear to us, we must at the same time not forget that the Father Himself must have the first place in our affections, and

that true love for His children can only flow out when we are in obedience to His Word.

The Father's will must be my only law. The honour of God is concerned in it, and my own happiness, and the happiness of all the children of God is dependent upon it. All His children are so linked up together that they must be affected consciously or unconsciously by one another's conduct.

## JUDGE NOT.

THE truth has been given to us to feed our souls and enlarge our hearts and build up our brethren; some people use it as a foot rule with which to measure them.

One of the surest signs of self-satisfaction and spiritual pride and decline is the judging of others.

It is generally those who have grown the least that spend the most time measuring others, like the Corinthians who set about to measure Paul. How ludicrous and yet how pathetic the sight of those spiritual dwarfs attempting to measure that giant.

We had better leave all the measuring of others to the Lord. He will do

it without partiality or prejudice. We are always biased in our own favour or that of our particular circle.

It is astonishing how big and important we feel when we are measuring and judging others; it is equally astonishing how small we feel when we are conscious of being measured by the Lord.

Happy shall we be if we heed the Lord's words and take the beam out of our own eyes before we begin to take the mote out of the eyes of others.

If we judge ourselves, esteem our brethren better than ourselves and pray for them, we shall please the Lord.

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## A NEW COMMANDMENT.

THE Lord's words must be considered if they are to be understood. To a careless reader they mean nothing at all, and the one who is too hasty in the endeavour to carry them out will fail. Take this word, for instance, than which none can be of greater importance. "*A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; AS I HAVE LOVED YOU, that ye also love one another*" (John 13. 34).

How shall we begin to obey that commandment? By thinking of one another, and setting earnestly to work to show our love? Certainly not, we

shall make a miserable failure of it if we do. How then? Well, we must set the standard before us. We must find out how He has loved us, for how are we going to love others as He has loved us unless we know how He has loved us? And this will take some thought and consideration.

"To begin well is more than half the battle," is a common saying, in this matter it is the whole secret of success. The one who is most sensible of being loved by the Lord will love others the most. It can't be done by trying, it is the love of Christ that constraineth us.

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## Following.

*If any man serve Me, let him follow Me* (John 12. 26). Service then is not doing a great spectacular deed, but following the Master. You may do a great deal and be a half-hearted Christian; only the whole-hearted follow, for it is the heart that sets the feet in motion.

"*If any man will come after Me let him deny himself and take up his cross daily.*" "Daily" is the test. A man might do it heroically once, and be applauded for it, but to be *daily* denying oneself, and nobody taking any notice of it, that is the test. Christ must be everything to us to enable us to do that.

# THE HEAVENLY RACE. Hebrews 12. G. J. STEWART.)

**THE** blessed Person of **JESUS**—a name so frequently used alone of our Lord in this epistle, a fact to be greatly noted—is the great theme of the epistle. It is Jesus we see crowned with glory and beauty (2. 9). Jesus, who is Apostle and High Priest of our confession (3. 1). Jesus, made High Priest for ever after Melchisedec's order (6. 20; 7. 21). The blood of Jesus opens the Holy places for us (10. 19). Here we look away from all else to Jesus who has finished the race (12. 2). Jesus is the Mediator of the New Covenant (12. 24). Jesus who suffered without the gate (13. 12). Eight times this Name is used alone, without any other title. This is His Name as Man, and shows the necessity of the Manhood of our Lord to the subject matter of the epistle.

The endurance of faith is prominent in the first passage of this chapter, occurring no less than four times in the first seven verses, showing again that it is in this way we shall find faith called into exercise to-day.

Let us also therefore—

**RUN WITH ENDURANCE THE RACE THAT LIES BEFORE US.**

The path of faith is looked at as a race here, the word (Agona, used only here in the epistle) is translated fight, conflict, elsewhere; the goal is glory, the Object Jesus. Let us run not as uncertainly, so fight not as one that beateth the air. Prizes are for all in this race, there is no blank; we have both object and incentive here. The prospect in this race looks right through death to Jesus; and while "It were a well spent journey, though seven deaths lay between," we may be ushered at any moment into the presence of His glory without passing through death at all. But if it should

come upon us it can come but once and then only as shorn of all its horrors, and deprived of its sting by the death of Jesus, so that we die only to death. Still it must be remembered that we look not for death, but for the coming One, who in yet a very little while shall come and will not tarry.

The great cloud of witnesses surrounding us, refers to those in the previous chapter who witnessed to the power of faith. The only sense of the word witness (martyr) in the original being that of those who bore witness to anything, even at the cost of their lives. There is by the grace of God a great cloud of these witnesses to the truth, whose steps we are to follow so that our names may be added to the completed list of this glorious scroll of faith in the coming day. If the word for "cloud surrounding us," suggests the thought of spectators in the theatre of old, which cannot be the true sense here, though it may be behind it in contrast, then the spectators (theatres) are such as have fought the fight and run the race themselves, and are all the more keen as observers of the way we run or fight.

Every weight must be laid aside if we would run well in this race. Weights are things not wrong in themselves, but such as would retard the racer; who if he enters into the spirit of the position he is in and values the Object, Christ, will carry nothing that hinders his reaching the goal and prize. Alas! how many are weighted here. All pomp and pride; all majesty and sublimity of present things—for the word (Ongkos, only used here) means all these—must be sacrificed to the Object, more glorious than them all. It is surely to be counted greater riches than all the treasures of this world;

but alas! this does not suit those who value such things, to whom they cling as with a hook.

But more than this, it must be remembered that sin easily entangles us, and weights may run complacently into sin. Sin stands round about us\* and easily attaches itself to us like a garment, entangling us in the race. Good it is to know that One tabernacles over us, to protect us also. One who is solicitous that we should be delivered from this easily besetting sin, enabling us to put it away from us and to fall into the arms of the mercy which embraceth us on every side. This will make us also glory in infirmities that the power of Christ may tabernacle over us. All these things must be persistently refused as hindering running. Perhaps each man's running is known as of old, where it is stated, The running is like unto the running of Ahimaaz the son of Zadok; and indeed it must be that He who knows us through and through, knows also how we run.

Run we, therefore—

#### LOOKING OFF UNTO JESUS.

This word (Aphorontes) signifies the looking away from other things and fixing the eye exclusively upon the object. Here, then, we are to look away from everything else, whether the things not yet put under Him, or the witnesses of the previous chapter, and fix the eye upon Jesus, the Leader and Completer of faith, the glorious Object who is to control our pathway. We may get encouragement from the separate acts of faith of others, but we get endurance or stay only by fixing the eye steadily on Jesus who ran the whole race without failure or breakdown. When thinking of others, it is impossible not to think of the failures

connected with the very acts mentioned, but Jesus commenced the course of faith and ran right through to the end triumphantly; for the joy set before Him, He endured the cross, despising the shame.

Anticipative joy rendered Him superior to the pains of crucifixion, obliterating the shame of it all, so that He rejoiced amid all the circumstances that surrounded Him. "Lo, I come, in the roll of the book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will, O My God," shows both the object and the spirit in which Jesus performed that which He came to do. The joy was the prospect of seeing God's will accomplished and the whole universe filled with His blessing and praise (see verses 22-24), though a more immediate object filled His heart also, that of seeing a praising people now in the midst of the confusion, who by faith enter into the holy places with heart and voice at liberty to speak freely to Him in praise. It is not alone the thought of having the church as the bride with Him in glory—this is but part of it, though the chief part.

For Him the race is already run, and unlike the witnesses in the previous chapter He has entered into the possession of the promises, which have all been fulfilled (yea and amen) in Him who is seated on the right hand of the throne of God, to the glory of God by us. In Him they are ours, to avail ourselves of them by faith and the Spirit's power, that in the joy of it all we may give thanks to His Name.

This is the fourth time this session of our Lord at God's right hand is mentioned (though referred to at other times). As the Son, who made purgation for sins (1. 3). The perfected Son, High Priest, Minister of the Sanctuary ready to offer gifts (8. 1-3). As having done with sacrifice for sins for ever

\* (En peristatos—used only here.)

(10. 12). As Jesus, who having run the race has taken His seat on the throne of God. Occupied with Him there, we can but view Him in all these aspects, and may well look away from everything within and around us, to Himself.

For consider well Him who endured such contradiction against Himself, lest ye be weary and faint in your minds (v. 3). This word (Analogizo) means to weigh so as to judge its value as against other things. What is anyone else in comparison with Him? What endurance like His? Not only the cross and shame in itself, but all the gainsaying of sinners in detail that led up to it. All were opposed to Him at the last: Satan, man, His own friends and disciples, and finally, because of our sins, God's judgment was upon Him and God's face hidden from Him. Yet with the most intense sense of all the degradation, was there no weariness, but endurance; no fainting in mind, but submission to the will of God and continual renewal of strength.

Christ's temptations were all from without, all from the enemy. There was no weight arising from desire of anything contrary to God's will; that will was what He had come to do, and this He continually pursued even to the end, and though He had as Man to cry, "If it be possible, let this cup pass," He added immediately, "Not My will but Thine be done!" Further, the thought that any sin could pounce upon Him who hid God's word in His heart that He might not sin against Him, is blasphemy.

Now the Hebrews up to the then present moment had endured much opposition of the same character and from the same source as that from which Christ's came, and though some may have even been slain, he reminds those to whom he wrote:—

## YE HAVE NOT RESISTED UNTO BLOOD STRIVING AGAINST SIN.

Here is, again, a reference to Gethsemane, the word being "agonizing against" sin. Jesus, being in an agony, sweat, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground. The more awful Calvary is also in view; the thorny crown, the nails, showed resistance unto blood; while the spear thrust proved in blood and water the death of Him, whose life blood was thus shed.

They had not come to this, though they had endured much; others in chapter 11. had done so, including perhaps some from among themselves, and at any time they might be called upon to pass through death for His sake. Endurance must have its perfect work that they may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing, even to the end. Jesus was complete and perfect in all the will of God and was heard from the horn of the unicorn.

God, on the other hand, is above all things, so that He can use even the troubles which come upon His people for His sake, to discipline them and to teach them lessons not to be otherwise learnt by them. This is the wonder working of our God, who makes the very enemy to accomplish His purposes in and for those who love Him; and this above all His dealings is the object before Him. Creator He is, but the stability of the universe is with Him as nothing in comparison with the spiritual progress of the souls of His own. This can be understood when the fact is considered that He called the universe into existence that He might secure a people for Himself who should be for ever with and like Christ His Son. This being borne in mind will help to keep the loins girded and the heart filled with desire to endure to the end.

# WHO WILL BE TAKEN WHEN THE LORD COMES ?

To the Editor of "Scripture Truth."

DEAR MR. EDITOR,—There seems to be a considerable amount of confusion of thought as to whether when the Lord comes for His saints all believers who are then alive will be taken, or only those who have been faithful to Him, and who are watching for His return. A goodly number of estimable Christians who have essayed to write or to speak on this subject seem to favour the idea of what has come to be known as "A partial rapture," and this has produced perplexity in the minds of many.

One or two questions naturally occur when considering this.

1. Who would dare to say that he or she has been faithful ?

2. Is there a Christian who *every moment* is watching for that which may happen at any instant ?

3. Does not this idea make our going to heaven depend upon our faithfulness or watchfulness, and thus detract from the infinite value of Christ's finished work ?

There is yet another way of looking at it. Every believer from the day of Pentecost down to the coming of the Lord will form the Body of Christ. Can we think of Christ taking part of His Body when He comes, and leaving part behind ?

Further, the Church is also the Bride of Christ. Could He, would He, take part of His bride and leave part behind ? To ask these questions is—to it seems to me—to answer them.

Did not some of us sing with great joy in the days of yore the old-fashioned stanza :—

"And this I shall find, for such is His mind,  
He'll not be in glory and leave me behind."

We turn, however, to that which in every case must be the final court of appeal—the Word of God. A single sentence in 1 Corinthians 15. 23 appears

to settle the matter : "THEY THAT ARE CHRIST'S AT HIS COMING."

How did we become Christ's ? By coming to Him, by resting upon His finished work, and by trusting in the cleansing virtue of His precious blood. Do we cease to be Christ's if we are not faithful or if we are not watching for His return ? Every intelligent believer answers emphatically, "No." If that be so, if we *are* Christ's, if nothing can alter that, and if "they that are Christ's at His coming" will be taken, then obviously He *will* take all that are His.

There are true believers who know nothing about it, because, alas ! they do not read the Bible for themselves, and unfortunately they are content to sit and listen to men who themselves are not Christ's, and who therefore have no interest in His coming. It may be that throughout the world, thousands of soul were converted last night ; if He comes to-day will He leave them because they had been only a few hours saved, had not heard of His return, and therefore were not watching ? The Thessalonian believers were waiting for His return to take up His kingdom and reign, but they evidently knew nothing about His coming for His own until He graciously sent the special communication through His servant Paul (1 Thess 4. 13-18) ; if He had come before they received that message, would *they* have been left ?

I labour this point to show that in whatever way we look at it, it is dishonouring to Christ and to His Word to speak of "a partial rapture." Just let me say that the expression "They that are Christ's" in the Scripture to which I have referred, includes not only believers of this period but His people of every dispensation.

It may be argued by some : "That puts a premium upon unfaithfulness, lack of watchfulness, and careless living.

We can go and do just as we please, and it will be all right in the end."

The answer to that is: Is what we have stated in accordance with the teaching of the Word of God? If it is, we may be quite sure the sacred volume nowhere sanctions the things mentioned. Nay! If we know that He *is* coming for us, and if we realize that He may be here at any moment, we cannot, we will not, we dare not be indifferent; not because we fear the consequences, but because we have tasted His love for us and we love Him; we know how eagerly He looks forward to that moment, and with what "exceeding joy" He will welcome us, and that makes "our hearts beat high," and keeps us on the tiptoe of expectation of hearing His voice,

seeing His face, and being for ever with Himself.

I thought, Mr. Editor, you might be willing to open your columns for some of your esteemed contributors to tell us what they have learned on this subject; for readers who may have difficulties to express them, and that later you might sum up for the benefit of us all. We can each individually say, can we not? as we look for His return:—

"He and I in that bright glory,  
One deep joy shall share:  
Mine, to be for ever with Him;  
His, that I am there."

I am,

Yours in His service "till He come,"  
W. BRAMWELL DICK.

June, 1927.

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

### The Baptism with the Holy Ghost.

I am sending you a sermon, cut out of the "Christian Herald." The reading of this sermon has left me in confusion. To speak plainly, I have not had the experience spoken of by our brother. I have been converted for about 17 years and love the Lord. I thought perhaps that in next month's issue of "Scripture Truth" you could make some observations or comments on this subject or sermon. My contention has always been that no one is converted without the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Do you say so? Would you not say that previous to this experience described by — he was still in darkness, he was not converted? I will be glad of your help.—W. L.

THE gifted preacher whose sermon you send us confounds things that differ. We think you will see this if you carefully study the passages of Scripture that speak of *the baptism with the Holy Ghost*. You will find in every case, we believe, that it has reference to what is collective or corporate, and not to what is *individual*. It was done once for all, and is not repeated in this dispensation. Acts 10. may seem to contradict this, but we think we can show that it does not. In Acts 1. 5, the text that the preacher uses, the Lord was evidently addressing all His disciples, as a *company* that was to be His witness on earth. His promise was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, as we learn from chapter 2. The Holy Ghost came upon them as a *Company*. It is true that He indwelt them each individually and filled and empowered them for service, but the

chief feature was that they became then and there a unity, bearing witness to Him. In chapter 10. we have the account of the salvation of the first company of Gentiles, and Peter quotes the Lord's words spoken in chapter 1. in connection with this (Acts 11. 16), but the reason for this is plain to us when we see that for the one body of Christ, Gentiles were necessary as well as Jews, as I Corinthians 4. 13 tells us, "*For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.*" By the baptism with the Holy Ghost the one body of Christ was formed on earth, a vessel of witness for Him during His absence from the earth, and that one body abides to this day, and the baptism with the Holy Ghost will not be repeated. It does not need to be. The term is not used again

in Scripture, though the presence of the Holy Ghost in the believer is spoken of many times.

Ephesians 1. 13, 14 teaches that it is consequent upon our believing the gospel of our salvation that the Holy Spirit seals us, and He does this by indwelling us. The gospel of our salvation is "that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15. 3, 4). It is not by an act of surrender or of consecration that we receive the Holy Ghost, but as a result of living faith in the gospel of which Christ is the theme. This is true of all believers.

All Scripture teaches this. "This I would learn of you," said Paul to the Galatians. "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" That is, the hearing of the gospel by faith. Now we have only to read the epistle to learn that the Galatians were not at all a consecrated or devoted church. To the Corinthians, the same apostle wrote, "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?" (1 Cor. 6. 19). We know that the Corinthians were a very carnal people. Yet because they had believed the gospel, the Holy Ghost dwelt within their bodies, sealing them as the property of Christ. It is plain, then, that every believer, in the true Bible sense of the word, has the Holy Ghost dwelling within him, and for any such to be waiting for or praying for a baptism with the Holy Ghost only shows an ignorance of the truth. How, then, shall we account for the experience of the preacher of this sermon? He may not previously have given any thought to the great fact that the Spirit has already come and indwells all believers—there are many Christians in practical ignorance of this; or it may be that realizing the futility of all his own efforts at service on which he had hither-

to relied, he cast himself wholly on the Lord, and discovered that there was another power, the power of the Spirit that dwelt in him—the only true power for God on the earth to-day, and being emptied of his own fancied power gave the Spirit the opportunity of using him. We should not say that up to that time he was an unconverted man.

A lot of Christians are looking for a sensational experience that will make them notable amongst their brethren, and unfortunately such sermons as this is encourages this expectation. You have no need to be one of these, and you have no reason to regret that such an experience has not been yours. Believe the word that shows clearly that if you have believed the gospel the Spirit already dwells within you. He dwells in you that Christ and not self may be first in your thoughts and affections and ways. You may be and should be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5. 18), for this is not something special, it is normal Christian life, and it will show itself in praise and thanksgiving, in your being melodious to God and helpful to your brethren, and it will make you fulfil the relationships of life for God's glory. You have but to read the whole passage to see this.

It is possible to grieve the Holy Spirit and, of course, there can be no spiritual power in our lives if the Spirit is grieved. When we are conscious of this condition of soul, confession and contrition are necessary, and a turning away from the evil.

Often the Spirit has little opportunity of filling hearts of Christians with the joy that the knowledge of Christ should give, because they are so selfish, so worldly; but if we yield ourselves to God and our bodies a living sacrifice to Him, the Spirit will be unhindered in His blessed work within us, and will not fail to fill us with all peace and joy in believing. He will also use us in that line of service for which the Lord has fitted us.

## Lantern Slides in Gospel Work.

Please answer the following in "Scripture Truth." Is it casting a stumbling block before worldly people to use lantern slides for lecture purposes in a Gospel Hall?—NEW YORK.

**M**UCH would depend upon the sort of slides used and the people for whose benefit they are used. Work in the slums of a great city may call for different methods to those used in what we might call more ordinary work. In such work lantern slides might be a help in instructing children and ignorant people in Bible history.

But each servant of the Lord ought to be fully persuaded in his own mind as to the methods he uses. If he stoops to methods that lower the dignity of the gospel and that would be such as would grieve the Holy Spirit, then he will stumble those he desires to help. We ought to remember that we are to preach the gospel in the Name of the Lord—"in

My Name" He said, in Luke 24. That means that we do it as His representatives, and, consequently, we ought to do it as He would do it were He here Himself. It was His way to choose common objects to present great truths. He is our pattern for all service, and we ought to learn of Him in this respect, and if we do there will be a simplicity and yet a dignity about our service, and it will be suitable to the sort of people amongst whom we are called to serve. We shall certainly cut out of it all that would be offensive to Him.

The Lord prosper you greatly in your special work, and may you ever remember that it is the gospel that is God's power unto salvation.

## "No man hath seen God."

Will you kindly explain 1 John 4. 12. "No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us." Are we to see Christ only? What then of 1 Cor. 15. 28; and John 14. 9?—BRISTOL.

**G**OD in His essential being is invisible to the eyes of His creatures (1 Tim. 1. 17). He dwells in light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen or can see (1 Tim. 6. 16). This will always remain true, and yet the deepest need of the human heart, its craving too, when awakened by divine grace is to see God, not to see Him as one might for a moment behold a beautiful landscape with the outward eye, but to discern and understand Him in His nature and ways. It was ever God's desire to meet this deep need of our hearts, and He has done this by declaring Himself in the person of His only-begotten Son who dwells in His bosom. In Him we learn that which is of far more importance than outward shape, we learn what He is, so that John 14. 9 becomes true to us, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." The word really means to discern. What patience, gentleness, grace, mercy, love, and everything that is morally beautiful shone out in Jesus. Yes, but it was the FATHER whom He was declaring in all those ways and words of beauty and

perfection. We see that with the eyes of the heart. So that just as the atmosphere about the earth makes it possible for us to see the glory of the sun, and we should not see it without it, so the incarnation, and the death also of our Lord, for we must not leave that out, enable us to see and rejoice in what God is.

1 John 4. 12 repeats what John 1. 18 says as to no man having seen God, but it does not say of us that we declare Him, only the Son could do that, but it does say that He dwelleth in us. We ought to be conscious of the fact that God dwells in our fellow-believers, and love them because of this. God's love in us, when it is developed and has unhindered liberty, will show itself in our love one for another, and consequently, in a world of darkness that rejected the Son of God who came to make Him known, we shall be witnesses to what God is.

1 Cor. 15. 28 means that God as He has been revealed to us will fill all things; He will be supreme as the object of worship and in all as the power for worship and joy.

# THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB.

(J. I. MAWSON.)

(Report of an Address.)

"The marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints" (Rev. 19. 7, 8).

A WOMAN, arrayed in purple and scarlet, called in the plain language of Scripture "the great whore"; and the Lamb's wife clothed in fine linen, clean and white—these two we see in these latter chapters of the Revelation; and they stand out in startling contrast the one to the other, both as to their character and destiny. Chapters 17. and 18. describe for us the magnificence, the power, the far-reaching influence, the horrible corruption and terrible doom of the former. Chapter 19. shows us the purity and blessedness of the latter, her destiny is the glory of the Lamb. The former, whose names are given to us in capital letters in our Bible, is "*Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth.*" IT IS ROME. She professes to be the true church, the faithful spouse of the Lamb, but she is false, and denies in principle and practice His Name, character and word; she will become, as shown in these chapters, utterly apostate, and shall fall under the overwhelming and righteous judgments of God.

This mystery, described in its two-fold character of the great whore and Babylon, is not Popery stripped of its temporal power as we know it yet working insidiously but ceaselessly to undermine and destroy what is known as the Protestant faith, but popery triumphant. In the time described in these chapters it will have gathered into its magnificent but corrupt unity the whole profession of Christianity, and will have brought into complete subjugation the Western nations. It

will not only have enslaved the consciences of men religiously, but will also have control over their politics. *The woman rides the beast.* The kings that she will dominate will hate her for her arrogance, and will eventually destroy her and so fulfil the will of God, but for a while she will hold an undisputed sway over them all. This is all plainly taught in chap. 17.

Rome is working for this universal supremacy now, but she cannot achieve it while the true church is here; the presence of the Holy Ghost in the church, and the restraining hand of God prevent it. But at the coming of the Lord, as given in 1 Thess. 4., the true church, which is the one body of Christ, and which is to be the wife of the Lamb, will be caught up to heaven, then the hindrance will be removed out of the way and apostate Rome will speedily reach the goal of her ambition. The true church, that which the Lord spoke of in Matthew 16. as "My church," is not a great organization, held together by human power and wisdom, but is made up of all who have in sincerity owned Jesus as their Lord and Saviour, all such have a vital link with Him as the Son of God, and are not Christians by profession only. They are united in one body to Christ, who is their Head in heaven. This is a unity that is of God, and it will abide for ever; the other is a unity that is of the devil and it will perish in the depths of perdition. But Rome is making rapid progress towards its desired end, showing that we are in "the last days." The growing love of ritual and popish practices in the English and other

state churches are an evidence of this, and of the power and influence that it already wields. O Christians, let us be fully awake to the situation. There are two great unities in Christendom, and they are growing to their completion. The Spirit of God is the power in one, and the spirit of evil works in the other. We must be wholeheartedly in that which is of God and separate from that which is corrupt and of the devil. *"Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing"* (2 Cor. 6. 1). *"Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues"* (Rev. 18. 4).

Chapter 19. opens with the adoration of the host in heaven; they rejoice and praise God that He has judged the false and corrupt church which instead of being a witness for Christ in the earth, and so the channel of blessing to it, has corrupted it with its own terrible corruption. "True and righteous are His judgments," they say, as they turn from beholding the destruction of the evil thing, to rejoice in that which is eternally good. They celebrate the supremacy of the Lord God omnipotent, and if He reigneth none can thwart His eternal purposes. These have as their centre Christ and His church—the Lamb and His wife. Yes, before the worlds were made it was in the heart of God that His beloved Son should have a bride; and in this chapter the hour has arrived, and all heaven rejoices with a great joy. *"I heard," says John, "as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings."* *"Let us be glad," say they, "and rejoice . . . for the marriage of the Lamb is come and His wife hath made herself ready."* It is the joy of God that fills every heart and rolls in its wonderful melody to the utmost

bounds of heaven. The Father rejoices, for the hour has come for the consummation of His purpose for the joy of His Son; the Son rejoices, for the hour has come in which He will see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied; the Holy Ghost rejoices that His work is completed, and that the Bridegroom is satisfied with the bride that He has brought to Him. And cannot we who love the Saviour rejoice also in anticipation of His joy, which we shall surely share, for we are part of that which is to be His wife.

If we are to understand God's purposes we cannot neglect any part of God's Word. The Holy Scriptures are not fragmentary, but one complete whole, so we read, "No Scripture is of private interpretation." That means no Scripture stands alone, each part of it has its connection with every other part. So we find that the beginning of Genesis connects with the end of Revelation. This purpose that was in the heart of God for the joy of His beloved Son was first expressed at the creation of man. He was made in the image and after the likeness of God and set in dominion over this lower creation, and the acuteness of his mind was proved in that when God brought the animals to him he was able to give each a name that described its character. But he had a heart as well as a mind, for God Himself has a heart as well as a mind, and none of the animals nor all the power that was given to Adam could satisfy his heart. Hence God said, "It is not good for man to be alone, I will make a helpmeet for him." With that in view God cast him into a deep sleep, and took a rib from him, and with it He built a woman, and when Adam awoke, he said, "This is now bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh." She was part of himself, and she satisfied his heart.

The New Testament tells us that

Adam was a figure of Him that was to come, of Christ. He is to have universal dominion, and in that place of glory and power He is to have a helpmeet who shall be more to Him than it all, for she shall satisfy His heart. But He had first to go into the deep sleep of death. It was this that was foreshadowed in Adam's sleep. And as a result of His death He has secured for Himself His church, so we read, "*Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it ; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish*" (Eph. 5. 25-27).

Let no one think that it is mere fancy that connects the beginning of the Bible in this way with the end of it ; the Bible itself does it, for Eve's marriage to Adam is introduced as an illustration of Christ and the church in Eph. 5., where it is said, "*This is a great mystery ; but I speak concerning Christ and the church.*"

Take special notice of the fact that it is *the Marriage of the Lamb*. In this Book of the Revelation the Lord bears many great titles. In chap. 5. He is the Lion of the Tribe of Judah ; in chap. 12. He is the Man-child that shall rule the nations with a rod of iron ; in chap. 16. He is the King of kings ; in chap. 22. He is Alpha and Omega ; great and varied are His glories, upon His head are many crowns, but when the Marriage comes it is not by any of these titles that He is known, but as the Lamb. The joy of the marriage day is linked up with the sorrows of Calvary. It is the One who bowed His head beneath the judgment of God in death who is to see of the travail of His soul, and receive to Himself His church, a glorious church, not having

spot or wrinkle or any such thing. The Lamb was the sacrifice. He became sacrificially what we were actually, for He was made sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him, and the sorrow through which He passed then is to have a full answer of joy in the day that is to come.

This great event will take place in heaven, for it the church must be there complete, and perfect, and so it shall be, for "*The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trumpet 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.*" Not one blood-bought saint will be missing from that glorified company, and all will be there not because of their faithfulness, but because of the value of the blood of Christ ; they will be there accepted in Him, the Beloved.

"AND HIS WIFE HATH MADE HERSELF READY." She does not make herself fit or ready for heaven ; her fitness for that spotless home of eternal love is Christ Himself, for He "*is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.*" But she makes herself ready for the marriage ; and that by being clothed in fine linen, clean and white, which is the righteousnesses of the saints. The word should be in the plural, it is righteousnesses, not righteousness. Christ alone is our righteousness, but being made righteous in Him, the saints of God are able to produce good works on earth, and these are the fine linen, clean and white, that shall be the marriage robe of the wife of the Lamb on that great day. In Eastern lands, I suppose, the bride is presented to the bridegroom in the garments her own fingers have wrought. It shall be

so with the wife of the Lamb, for to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white. But how and where can this material be produced? Suppose a prince wishes to appear at some great state occasion in a garment designed and made by himself, but when he looks round for the material that will suit his design, he finds nothing that satisfies him, nor any loom upon which it can be woven. What must he do? He must invent a loom that can produce the material, and then when his cloth is ready he can fashion it as he will for his own satisfaction and the praise of his genius. So it is, God determined, when He purposed that the Lamb should have a bride, the very sort of garment she should wear; it was to be of fine linen, clean and white, but where on earth, among men, could it be found? In Old Testament days God gave men the opportunity of bringing it forth; and He gave them the law, a perfect loom upon which to do it. But they miserably failed in their efforts, and after centuries of patience with them, God had to say, "ALL YOUR RIGHTEOUSNESSES ARE AS FILTHY RAGS." "They that are in the flesh cannot please God."

Then was God's intention to fail? No. If I may use my illustration—He has brought into being a new loom capable of producing that which he desires. The Lord Jesus came into the world to do the will of God. He lived a life of complete obedience to God, and near the end of it He took three of His disciples into the holy mount and there He was transfigured before them, "*and His raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow: so as no fuller on earth could white them*" (Mark 9. 3). This was an unearthly, heavenly whiteness, emblematic of the life of righteousness He had lived on earth. And

God said, I am going to reproduce that life in My saints; and so we read, "FOR WE ARE HIS WORKMANSHIP, CREATED IN CHRIST JESUS UNTO GOOD WORKS, WHICH GOD HATH BEFORE ORDAINED THAT WE SHOULD WALK IN THEM" (Eph. 2. 10). I want that statement to be understood by us all, for upon it I am hanging the whole of this part of my address. God has a loom now that can do it, and you Christians, young or old, are part of it. Upon that loom He is producing fine linen, clean and white, He is reproducing in His people now the graces that shone in all their perfection in Jesus. The life of Jesus is being manifested in their mortal flesh (2 Cor. 4. 10).

We all know how textiles are produced. There is the loom, the weaver, and the raw material. As a matter of fact the raw material goes through a series of processes before it reaches the loom, but there it is at last, and as the weaver works the warp and weft into the loom, the loom works out the finished article. And that is what we get in Philippians 2. 12, 13. "WORK OUT YOUR OWN SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING; FOR IT IS GOD THAT WORKETH IN YOU, BOTH THE WILLING AND THE DOING OF HIS GOOD PLEASURE." God is the great weaver, we are the loom, and as He works *in* we must work *out* the fine linen, clean and white. He is, He must be, deeply interested in our lives and ways with the marriage of the Lamb in view.

But what is this fine linen? Says one, "I should like to serve the Lord Jesus, but I cannot stand upon the platform and preach to multitudes, or do any great work for Him; I am ignorant and poor, and my life is lived in obscurity." Do not think that this fine linen is preaching or doing some

spectacular service; many a man preaches to large congregations and produces nothing but filthy rags, for self is the end and aim of his efforts. But there is a poor woman who loves the Saviour, and she is producing fine linen in abundance. Happy in His love she starts her arduous day with a song of praise and thanksgiving to God—that is a bit of fine linen. When spoken to harshly she answers with meekness, and overcomes evil with good—that is another bit of fine linen. You need not be great and famous for this, if you can be patient and forbearing when you are not treated well, and if you can FORGIVE—Ah, that is difficult, is it not? He spoke ill of you. She was so spiteful. And you have already been kind and forgiving. Your patience is exhausted, and you can't forgive again! Can't you? You who have been forgiven so much! Yes, grace can enable you to do it, and if you do, it will be fine linen, clean and white, for that is what Jesus did: when He was reviled, He reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not, and when His foes did their worst, He prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance—all these are fine linen, clean and white, and not one thread of it will ever be lost. God Himself will preserve it, it is imperishable. You may not have thought when you did that kind act for Jesus' sake that it would live for ever, but it will; and that word of cheer and comfort spoken to a tried and sorrowing saint will never be forgotten, nor will that effort to win a soul for the Saviour. All these things will go to make up the marriage garment. Every Christian has the privilege of contributing to it, then how important it is that we should be

walking in lowliness of mind and obedience to God that His gracious work may go on in us and through us. He has left us in the world for this, may we not forget it. Do not say that this is beyond you. Think again of my text. You are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus with this end in view. Is that true? Thank God, it is, if you are saved by His grace. Then you have been fitted by Him to produce this fine linen. Do not doubt that, but place yourself without reserve in His hands, and it shall be done.

This garment of fine linen, clean and white, will be a wonderful triumph for God. He will be able to show in that day the reality of His work in His saints. He will be able to show that in spite of the world, the flesh and the devil, that beset His saints on earth and conspire to make them false to their Lord, they have brought forth these righteousnesses. So will the devil be defeated and the accusations that are brought against the saints be silenced. How wonderful it is, that in this filthy place, a world reeking with moral putrefaction, this work is going on, and that we may have our part in it. We have but to keep near to our Lord and His love will constrain us to be very diligent in this matter.

After the marriage the Lord will come forth as King of kings and Lord of lords, but when He does His saints will come with Him in this same raiment (ver. 14). They will share His triumph and glory and live and reign with Him a thousand years (chap. 20.).

We have one last view of the church in chap. 21. The first eight verses of that chapter describe the eternal state of things in which nothing will change, and there we see the Holy City coming down from God out of

heaven as a bride adorned for her husband. When kingdoms and governments have served their purpose and ceased to be, and God shall dwell with men and rest in His love, the church will still abide as Christ's own possession. It is described "as a bride adorned for her husband," and that means she will be for Him for ever, and only for Him. Are we not thrilled at the thought that the day is coming when we shall be altogether and exclusively for Him, without a rival.

Now we sing sadly—

"O Lord, alas, what weakness  
Within myself I find,  
No infant's changing pleasure  
Is like my wandering mind."

But it will not be so then. All fickleness will be over, and Christ will be for ever the sole and supreme object of our hearts. The bride of the Lamb will receive into her heart His love in its infinite fulness, and she will respond to it without any reserve. — Wonderful prospect!

## THE CRY OF NEED AND ITS ANSWER.

OUT of the depths, O Lord, I cried to Thee—

Out of the depths of sin and misery—

My woe is great, I sink beneath the wave;  
Come to me, Lord, stretch out Thine hand to save.

*I sank in depths, that thou shalt never see—  
I bore the wrath, My child, bore it for thee.*

Out of the depths of sickness and of pain  
I cried to Thee, and did not cry in vain;  
The cry was weak, a groan, a sigh, a tear,  
But not too low for Thee, my Lord, to hear.

*Weakness and pain have all been felt by Me:  
I know thy need, and I am near to thee.*

Out of the depths—O depths, so dark and deep,  
When dear ones, loved so well, were put to sleep:  
Oh, take me, Lord, leave me not here alone—  
I cried with tears and sighs and piteous moan!

*Thou'rt not alone, My child, for I am near,  
I share with thee thy grief, thy sigh, thy tear.*

Out of the depths of weary toil and care,  
I cried to Thee, for *Thou* the same didst bear:  
The load is heavy, and the way is long—  
In this strange land, how can I sing the song?  
Yes, I shall sing, for *Thou* dost bid me rest  
My aching head upon *Thy* gentle breast.

O height of love, O depths, dark sea of woe,  
None but Thyself those depths will ever know—  
For all alone in that dark gloomy sea  
Thou didst descend and bear the wrath for me,  
For me, that I might dwell with Thee above.  
O matchless grace, O blessed, wondrous love!

M. W.

## PERFECT PEACE.

(E. D. FIDLEY.)

**T**HOU *will keep him in PERFECT PEACE whose mind is stayed on Thee*" (Isa. 26. 3). How gracious it is that the blessed Lord, in His loving consideration for His saints who pass through periods of great trial, gives them to enjoy such a sweet sense of peace. It is at such times our thoughts are directed to Him and His circumstances of trial and we remember His words: "*My peace I give unto you*" (John 14. 27). Are not these words the more affecting to us when we consider that He was on the way to the cross there to endure such unspeakable suffering and to lay down His precious life for us? But yet in view of it, His soul was perfectly composed, He could say: "**MY PEACE**"—and now He has passed that same peace on

to us for the comfort and sustaining of our souls when enduring seasons of trial. Blessed Saviour, He has gone all the way before us and He knoweth our frame—knows all that we need on the way "Home," and if He allows those whom He loves to suffer trial, surely it is that our hearts may be drawn out more after Him, that we may endure the trial with Him, accepting it as His way of bringing us into moral conformity with Himself. It will not be long before we see His blessed face, and then—

"How will our eyes to see His face delight,  
Whose love has cheered us through the  
darksome night;  
How will our ears drink in His well-known  
voice,  
Whose faintest whisper makes our heart  
rejoice."

## ACCEPTED IN THE BELOVED.

"*He hath made us accepted in the Beloved*" (Ephes. 1. 6).

**A**RE you satisfied to know that God has forgiven your sins, according to the riches of His grace? That does not satisfy Him, He has great thoughts of love towards you, and His will is that you should enter into them and they into you. It is true that your sins are forgiven, in Christ you have redemption through His blood; the ground is cleared, but that is not all, you stand in all the excellence and acceptableness of the One who is at God's right hand—the Beloved. He

was your substitute when He bore the judgment of God on the cross. He is your acceptance now in the very glory of God. Thus we have the magnificence of God's grace displayed. In the scene of your alienation from God and your degradation and sin you are not only cleared, and made fit for heaven, but you stand in the acceptance of the glorified Man. This carries us beyond all our own thoughts, but it is the truth of God, and the Holy Spirit has been given to us that we might enjoy it.

## The Coming of the Lord.

**T**H**E** Christian who is not looking for the coming of the Lord—who says in his heart my Lord delayeth His coming—is sure to be worldly or selfish. To be expecting the Lord detaches the heart from the world.

If you leave out the truth of the coming of the Lord Jesus you miss one of the chief powers for holiness that God hath given us. Everyone that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself even as He is pure (1 John 3. 3).

# “PREACHING AND SHEWING.”

(L. R.)

## Luke 8.

IN these two pregnant words St. Luke characterizes the ministry of the Lord. He tells us, too, who were His companions—the twelve whom He had called and ordained to be with Him, and certain women who had been healed by Him of evil spirits and infirmities who ministered unto Him of their substance.

But what preaching, beloved! unique, necessarily so, in the annals of preaching. Prophets of old had preached, but never had such preaching as this been heard before—the glad tidings of the kingdom of God, the rule of love instead of law, told forth by Him who could say of Himself, “the kingdom of God is among you.” Before this kingdom could be inaugurated He, the Great Sower, must go forth weeping, go forth even unto death, that the good seed of the word might be sown in hearts. “And the dropping of the seed here and there was to expose the character of the soil.” I quote from one long since with the Lord. “The first character is the highway, where the devil prevails; the second is the rock, where nature prevails; the third is the thorny ground where the world prevails, and the fourth is the good ground where the Holy Ghost prevails.”

“And when He had said these things, He cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear” (ver. 8).

Oh! to be good ground hearers of such preaching, bringing forth fruit a hundredfold.

From ver. 22 we are allowed to gaze on the Lord “shewing.” Winds and waves obey Him, demons own His power, disease flees at His word, and death, dread enemy of mankind, makes haste to give up his prey.

Do you not love to note the intimate touches in this wonderful chapter?

He sleeps, and they who might have slept with Him, because He had said, “Let us go over unto the other side,” are full of fear, but He stills the storm and then He stills their fear, and only asks them, “Where is your faith?”

The demoniac felt His power and, freed from the terrible bondage which had held him captive, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind, his heart drawn by bands of love to his Deliverer, he prays that he may be with Him. “But Jesus sent him away, saying, Return to thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done unto thee.” St. Mark, in recounting the story, tells us that Jesus said to him, “Go home to thy friends and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee.” It was this man whom He had lifted by His power from the depths of inconceivable degradation that the Lord puts in the same blessed path as His own and sends him back to the place that had refused Him, there to go preaching and shewing.

“What would not one give for such a mind as that! To have found a home in His presence, and yet if it be His blessed will to go to the ends of the earth in drudging service.”

The sorrowful woman who touched Him would fain have slipped away unseen and unknown, but He would have her know Him, He would speak that sweet word “Daughter” in her ear. “He said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace” (ver. 48). There should be no stint in His giving, He would put her in the place of relationship; to Him should she un-

burden all the secrets of her heart so that never again should she know a misgiving. How blessed thus to be engaged with Him!

Lastly, the story of the little maid brings out the utter callousness of the human heart, "They laughed Him to scorn," and His tenderness who took her by the hand and called, saying, "Maid, arise!" commanding that something should be given her to eat.

What a thought of comfort, beloved! Death owns Him Lord. We know Him who has annulled him that had the power of death, and should we pass that way into His presence He will gently bid us sleep in Him, without alarm, without fear.

When we meditate upon His *preaching* we are constrained to say, "Never man spake like this man," but His ways

## FAITH.

FAITH has three characteristics.

The first which is outward is, that it obliges you to take a new course. Secondly, it is always accompanied by exercise of heart—that is inward. If you lose it for a moment you are like a bird with a broken wing, you are worse off than if you had never had it. The third characteristic is, you do a work, that is the "work of faith with power." There is always exercise with faith. Take the case of Abraham, the "father of the faithful." He believed God, he saw the stars; and God said to him, "So shall thy seed be." "He believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness." Paul quotes that (Rom. 4.) and says he was justified by faith. Forty years after, as James states, the work of faith came. God told him to go and with his own hands put out the light, cut off the one whom he had received from God. His faith said, "God told me that this son of mine was to be

of love in SHEWING should bow our hearts in awe and adoration.

To-day, this busy day, in which our lot is cast, there is much preaching, for which we would thank God, but what about shewing? Have we learned anything of that touch of His hand? Anything of His ways of lowly grace, ever giving *Himself* to the necessity that came to Him? The greatest preacher would own, how far off and faltering his preaching, and he who lives nearest to His Lord would know best that in shewing he is immeasurably behind; nevertheless we pray, "Blessed Lord, hear our humble cry, and teach us Thyself how to follow Thee—

"Preaching and Shewing."

The mention of Thy Name shall bow  
Our hearts to worship Thee,  
The Chiefest of ten thousand Thou  
Whose love has set us free.

the parent of all; He tells me now I am to put him to death. *I will!* I have faith in Him." Anyone who understands faith can understand what an exercise that was. He was cast upon God who was able to raise him from the dead, and from whence he received him in figure.

It is the exercise of faith that forms you. One remarkable characteristic of it is it never grows old; how could it? Its springs are in God and does He fail in strength? Caleb could say, "I am as strong this day as I was forty years ago." You can ascertain how far you have walked in faith. The measure of your strength is the straight you have passed through with God, and the faith remains. You proved what God could be to you in a great trial when you trusted Him. That was a great gain, that was divine formation in you, that can never be lost.

# THE COMPOSITE PRAYER BOOK.

(A. J. PULLOCK.)

WHAT concerns a section of the church of God is rightly the concern of all Christians. Not that we believe the church of God lends itself to sectional expression. The Scriptures say, "There is *one* body and *one* spirit, even as ye are called in *one* hope of your calling" (Eph. 4. 4). And the Apostle Paul sternly rebuked the idea of sectional expression, when he indignantly demanded, "Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" (1 Cor. 1. 13).

Now there are two tendencies to-day threatening the church of God—Modernism and Ritualism. Oftentimes the advocates of the one are strongly opposed to the advocates of the other. Sometimes they work hand in hand.

It is so seen in the Composite Prayer Book of the Church of England. A brief article on the subject may be helpful.

The Church of England holds within its communion two sections with very decided views—the Evangelicals and the Anglo-Catholics. The former stress conversion, believe in the inspiration of the Scriptures, and are sound on the fundamental doctrines of the Christian Faith. They are seriously alarmed at the prospect of the Composite Prayer Book being authorized by Parliament and by the King, as Head of the Church of England. Many are prepared, to our knowledge, to sever their connection with the Church of England if such a calamity come to pass. To many it will entail great anguish of heart, to others the surrender of stipend and emoluments. All honour to such faithful men and women.

With such the Composite Prayer Book goes far, too far, pandering to Modernism on the one hand, to Rome on the other.

With Anglo-Catholics the book does not suit them, for it does not, from their standpoint, go far enough. It may yet fall between these two stools.

For years, ever since the Oxford Movement began, about a century ago, there has been proceeding the double attack on the church of God of Modernism and Ritualism.

Let us see how the new Prayer Book is helping on all this.

In the Prayer Book the Decalogue is given in a shortened form—six out of the ten being so treated. We draw attention to two of the cases only. In the fourth commandment the new Prayer Book omits the verse which speaks of God in six days making heaven and earth and all that in them is. Why this omission? Does it not look as if it is intended to enable evolutionists to attend the church service without being reminded that God is the Creator of all things, according to Gen. 1.?

In the fifth commandment the special blessing promised to those who honour father and mother is left out. Is this not a truckling to the spirit of the age, when we are travelling more rapidly than people think to the day when "disobedient to parents . . . without natural affection" (2 Tim. 3. 2, 3) will become even more alarmingly widespread than it is even to-day? Is not the shortening of the Ten Commandments calculated to take away the respect for Scripture that should be inculcated?

In the Baptismal Service reference to Noah and the ark and to Moses and the passage of the Red Sea are removed, whilst in the marriage service reference to Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah no longer appear. Why is this? Modernism to-day frankly disavows the miraculous, whilst

marriage is largely treated as a matter of convenience, and old-fashioned ideas of the headship of the husband and the duty of husband and wife to each other are openly derided. Does not the new Prayer Book pander to the spirit of the age, whilst its omission of the reference to Adam and Eve only strengthens what we have said as to evolutionary ideas, making it desirable that God's story of man's creation should be suppressed? Is not the Modernistic taint of the new Prayer Book clearly seen?

Then, farther on, sixteen Sundays in the year alternative first lessons may be read from the Apocryphal Books. To put man's writings on a par, in this way, with God's word, is a weakening of the authority of Scripture.

Moreover, this brings us to the second part of our allegations, viz., Ritualism which really spells Romanism. It is known that the Church of Rome includes the Apocrypha in the Douay Bible, which she authorizes, but does not encourage its lay members to read.

Some time ago Christians were made very uneasy on hearing of prominent members of the Church of England meeting prominent men of the Romish church with the approval and knowledge of the Archbishop of Canterbury at Malines, Belgium, to discuss the differences between the Church of England and the Church of Rome, evidently with a desire to find a way to bridge over these differences.

In short, the new Prayer Book will do much to undo the glorious work of the Reformation. We will adduce four examples.

1. It permits a clergyman to use the vestments of the Romish priest offering the sacrifice of the mass.

2. In a short form of devotion which

may be used immediately before the service of the Holy Communion, Psalm 43. is mainly quoted. In verse 4 we read, "Then will I go unto the ALTAR of God," and this is so skilfully quoted that being Scripture how can any right-minded Christian object to its use, and yet it is so placed as to make it easy to introduce the Romish idea of the sacrificing altar of the mass, and, doubtless, it will be so used.

3. In the new book an anthem is introduced to be sung and to be immediately followed by the prayer of consecration in the Holy Communion service. The words of the anthem are, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna to the Highest." Again, the service is arranged, so that the Ritualistically-minded clergyman can treat these words as indicating that Christ is about to descend at his bidding to the altar, when the wafer is taught to be changed into the real body of Christ, and it will practically for all purposes make it easy for the introduction of the celebration of the mass, which is idolatry and a denial of the finished work of Christ.

4. Lastly, we draw attention to the Reservation of the Holy Sacrament. Every Roman Catholic knows what this means. In Roman Catholic churches the reserved Host, as they call it, is indicated by a red light burning before the box in which the consecrated wafer is placed, believed by devout Catholics to be the very body of the Lord, and the object of adoration.

Surely, all true Christians will refuse to countenance it. God will support them surely in the stand they may make. May God give them courage and the knowledge that their fellow-believers, who are not members of the Church of England, are in earnest prayer for them in this trying juncture in their lives.

## WATCHMAN, WHAT OF THE NIGHT? (JAMES GREEN)

## Notes on the Prophetic Outlook. No. 7.

*The Times of the Gentiles.*—Dan. 2.

WE have next to seek the instruction which the word of God affords, as to the period during which Israel is "The tail" and the Gentile "The head" in the order of the nations (Deut. 28, 13, 44). It is called in Luke 21. 24 "the Times of the Gentiles." This long period in human history was revealed to Nebuchadnezzar in his dream of the great image. It commenced in the first year of his reign, 606 B.C. (Jer. 25. 1-11), and comprising the four world empires of Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome, will end with their complete destruction at the revelation of the kingdom of Our Lord Jesus Christ. A second symbol of the same period is given in Dan. 4. in the great tree which presents Nebuchadnezzar as the representative of the Gentile rulers, until they learn to acknowledge that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men.

A third symbol, four wild beasts rising from the sea, is given in Dan. 7.

A fourth representation of horses will be found in Zechariah, chaps. 1. and 6., and still a fifth of four horns and four carpenters, in Zech. 1. 18-21.

The 1st shows the earthly glory which is brought to nothing.

The 2nd, the human pride which is abased.

The 3rd, the moral condition of the empires in forgetfulness of God.

The 4th, the governing hand of God who controls all.

The 5th, the empires in relation to Israel, and the agents prepared for their destruction.

The early chapters of Daniel are prophetic of the moral characteristics

of "The Times of the Gentiles": chap. 3., Idolatry; chap. 4., Pride; chap. 5., Blasphemy; chap. 6., Usurpation of divine rights.

Nebuchadnezzar had attained to the sovereignty of the mighty empire of Babylon, Assyria had fallen beneath the power of his father, and he himself had inflicted a crushing defeat upon the armies of the Egyptian King at Carchemish. So that these two ancient foes of Israel were for the time removed from the face of the political world and in their place was to stand a fourfold dominion. The revelation of this is recorded in Dan. 2. The king lies upon his bed, and as he dreams behold a form excellent and terrible is before him. His gaze is fascinated with the splendour of the vision. He sees the decreasing value of the materials of which the image is composed, gold, silver, brass, iron, clay, and his military instinct discerns their increasing strength, ending in weakness and sudden destruction. The vision fades and is gone. Surging thoughts sweep through his brain, and in his waking moments he is unable to recall that which he has seen. Vain was human skill and wisdom to solve the problem, for it was ordered of God that the lips of His prophet in answer to his prayer, should reveal to the king the thoughts of his head upon his bed. Thus the whole matter evidently bore the divine impress. It is upon the lower part of the image, the feet and toes, part of iron and part of clay, that the interest is chiefly concentrated, "What shall be in the latter days," verse 28. The head of gold, Babylon, has passed; the silver, the Medo-Persian, has had its day; the brass, the short-lived

empire of Greece under Alexander, and the longer divided state of the same under his successors, has fallen under the power of the iron, Rome; and this latter having broken into fragments, the iron still continues to the present day mingled with clay (the seed of men, verse 43), until it shall be revived in a ten kingdom form, under its last head. There is perhaps nothing more wonderful in the Scriptures than this divine forecast of these four world empires which have extended over twenty-five centuries. Four, and no more, until the stone cut out without hands shall fall and grind to powder the Gentile powers which exalt themselves against God, and great voices in heaven shall proclaim, "The world kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ is come, and He shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. 11. 15; cf. Dan. 2. 34, 35, 44, 45, and Psa. 2.).

Until that day shall come, such was to be the Gentile dominion which would occupy the prophetic earth (that is, the sphere with which prophecy is more immediately concerned), and which has been marked by greater political activity than any other portion of the globe, from the days of Nebuchadnezzar until the present time. It extends northwards as far as the Rhine and Danube rivers and the Black and Caspian Seas; eastwards as far as the River Indus; southwards, it includes Egypt and the N. African coast; and westward is bounded by the Atlantic. The world outside of this to the north, Scripture designates as Gog and Magog; to the east, the kings of the east; to the south, Ethiopia; and westward, the isles of the sea.

The number of years comprising "The Times of the Gentiles" is not revealed in Scripture, although many have tried to define the duration, and that in face of Our Lord's very definite

statement that the day and hour of His coming neither man nor angel knows, and further that it was not a part of His mission to tell that which was reserved in the secret counsel of the Godhead (Mark 13. 32, 33). So in answer to the question of the disciples on the Mount of Ascension, He told them that, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power" (Acts 1. 7). This should be sufficient to check any attempt to interpret passages which refer to "times" in a way which Scripture does not warrant, and which amounts to saying that the Lord's coming is delayed until a certain year. Another result of so doing is that "The blessed Hope" of the church is lost, and her heavenly blessing is confused with the earthly portion of Israel. In view, however, of the prominence given by some to the question of "Times," let us consider the matter more closely.

The principal Scriptures adduced are Lev. 26. 18, 21, 24, 28, and Dan. 4. 16, 23, 25, 32. On the assumption that 7 times, reckoning a day for a year,  $7 \times 360$  equals 2520 years, a theory has been built that this is the duration of the Gentile domination. This idea will not bear investigation. It is not denied that there are prophetic "times" in Scripture, but these are the equivalents of literal years, as may be seen by comparing Rev. 11. 2, 3 and 12. 14 with Dan. 7. 25 and 12. 7, in all of which the same period is referred to. A time, in prophecy, is 360 days, but nowhere does it stand for 360 years. Ezek. 4. 5, 6 is sometimes quoted in support, but there is not a word about "times" in the passage, the statement being that the days during which the prophet was to lie on his left and right sides, represented the years of the iniquity of Israel and Judah, 390 and 40 years, a day for

a year, but this is no warrant for reckoning thus in other places where it is not so stated. A little arithmetic, using the common dates, will demonstrate the fallacy, 2520—606 B.C. (the captivity year) equals 1914, the year of the Great War, but certainly not the end of the Times of the Gentiles.

The date is 35 years previous to 1914 if years of 360 days are reckoned.

In Lev. 26. it is not even literal years that are referred to but an increasing intensity of punishment undefined as to duration; verse 18 says "Seven times more," verse 21 adds "Seven times more," verse 24 further adds "Yet seven times," and verse 28 again "Seven times," evidently successive. So that on the above theory  $360 \times 7$  equals 2520, and this  $\times 4$  equals 10080 years, an impossible number. Turning now to Dan. 4. The seven times which marked Nebuchadnezzar's madness is admitted by one of the leading advocates of the year-day theory, to be the only clue to the appointed duration of the period. But it is the whole tree which the king saw which represented the period in question, and in the first place it grew and was great and strong, affording shelter to beast and fowl, and was a sight for all the ends of the earth. Fair leaves, much fruit, supply for all, is a vivid picture indeed of the prosperity and glory of Gentile rule, and no time limit is attached to this. Then at

the end there is a period of seven times or years in which the tree is cut down, symbolic of the close of Gentile dominion, when in pride of heart man has exalted himself to the place of God, and been given over in consequence by heaven to a place of degradation no better than the beasts of the earth. It can hardly be said with truth that as yet the Gentile nations as a whole have cast off the recognition of God as Sovereign Ruler, although signs are not wanting that the hour is drawing near when this last folly will be consummated. Then, like a bolt from the blue, the sentence shall fall from heaven as it did upon Nebuchadnezzar, "The kingdom is departed from thee . . . until thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whosoever He will." How pregnant with meaning is the comparison of this with 1 Thess. 5. 3, "When they shall say peace and safety, then sudden destruction." The error of the year-day system lies in not recognizing that in the Times of the Gentiles a parenthesis has been inserted unrecognized in the Old Testament, viz., the church period. It is this that has extended the period to its present length. We shall see how necessary it is to observe this for the understanding of "the seventy weeks" (Dan. 9.) which will be our next study.

*(To be continued.)*

## GOD OUR TEACHER.

WHO can teach like God? But if we are to learn of Him we must be near Him. Sharp lessons we may learn of our own perversity at a distance, the bit and bridle may be used to keep us out of false and pernicious ways, and how wonderful the mercy in it all; but if we are to learn what God Himself is, we must be near Him, and His tuition is individual and personal, all Scripture shows this. Never did a

heart learn of Him without trusting Him; to know Him is to trust Him, and the better He is known the more fully He is trusted. In no other way than by this personal tuition can we understand and rejoice in the good, perfect and acceptable will of God. We learn that it is not against us but for us, while it is against everything that could be against us, and what confidence this gives us in Him!

## MONTHLY BIBLE READING. No. 3.

## The Gospel of John. Ch. 1. 19-34.

Brief notes on this golden Gospel will appear monthly for the help of the babes in God's family. They know the Father (1 John 2. 13), and consequently desire to know more of His beloved Son in whom He delights. His glory fills this Gospel, and it is to the study of it from this point of view that we invite our young readers.—EDITOR.

The preaching of John caused a great stir in the land, insomuch that priests and Levites came from Jerusalem to enquire as to who he could be. But he was a faithful witness and would not be diverted from his mission by the patronage of these great and influential men. He had come to speak of Christ, to prepare the people for their Lord and he refused to talk of himself. Notice his negative answers to their enquiries. "I am not," said he, and again, "I am not." Blessed and faithful servant he was who could so keep himself out of his discourse, that his Lord might be everything in it. But these religionists from Jerusalem could not understand this self-effacement, it was so different from every principle and motive in their scheme of things, and with evident impatience they make a further demand of him. Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. WHAT SAYEST THOU OF THYSELF? Being thus urged, he answered, "*I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, MAKE STRAIGHT THE WAY OF THE LORD, as said the prophet Esaias.*"

What a startling declaration was this! How it ought to have thrilled those Jews who heard it, for John was quoting from Isaiah 40., and in that chapter the glory of Jehovah is unfolded for the comfort of His people Israel. It is a wonderful chapter. Let us all read it before we proceed any further with these notes, so that we may see who it was to whom these people were to be introduced if they were only ready for it. In it the

tenderness of the Lord is disclosed, for He would "gather the lambs in His arms and carry His lambs in His bosom," and His greatness is told out, for "He hath measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and meted out the heavens with a span." Let us consider Him well. His hand for creation, but His bosom for His lambs, and there they may rest in everlasting safety and untroubled peace. And Jesus is the one of whom the prophet spoke, or rather it is Jesus who is speaking on this wonderful chapter. He is Lord and He is God. With what eagerness these priestly delegates from the Pharisees in Jerusalem ought to have returned to those who sent them, for what a message was given them to carry. The man about whom they had enquired was none other than the forerunner of the Lord. His Master's footsteps were already sounding behind him, the day had come of which so many of their prophets had spoken; Jehovah, their God, their Deliverer, their Shepherd, was on the threshold! What would they do? Alas, the announcement moved them not at all. They were a generation without faith. They could not even see behind John's message, and they continued to ask him concerning himself, so different from the disciples of John, two days later, who left him for Jesus. They were ritualists, greatly concerned about the outward form of baptism, and the authority for its performance, but they had neither ears nor hearts for the word of God which John voiced in their midst. How John must have marvelled at their stupidity! This

seems to break out in his answer to them. *"I baptize you with water : BUT THERE STANDETH ONE AMONG YOU, WHOM YE KNOW NOT. He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose."*

Did they look about them to see who He could be who was even then amongst them who was so much greater than John, of whom they were enquiring? Probably not, but we rejoice in John's witness to our Lord and Saviour. If He were only man, then John would surely have been worthy to be His servant no matter how great a man He might have been, but He was God who had come into the midst of His people bringing glad tidings. How wonderful to find Him in this same Gospel washing the feet of His disciples. Yes, the One whose shoe's latchet John, than whom none greater was born of women, was not worthy to unloose, girded Himself with a towel and washed the feet of His disciples. But John's witness to the living Messiah among them was unavailing, and he has nothing more to say to them on that line. *The next day* opens with another testimony.

In this Gospel the testimony of the Baptist is entirely to the glory of Christ. In Matthew's and Luke's Gospels we are told what he said about the multitudes that, ever ready for a new sensation, flocked to hear him. He did not spare them for he was no flatterer of men, but a prophet indeed. But all that side of his service is omitted in John's account of it; what he had to say of Christ is all that is given to us here, and this is both beautiful and fitting. Our thoughts are to be concentrated in the opening of the Gospel upon Christ Himself.

John had borne witness as to the pre-existence of the Lord (verse 15); and

to the fact that He was Jehovah in Covenant relationship with Israel, ready to fulfil all His words to them according to Isaiah 40. (verse 23). But this witness was in vain, as far as the nation was concerned, and a new testimony is introduced, more marvellous, if that were possible, than any that had gone before. "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, **BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD WHICH TAKETH AWAY THE SIN OF THE WORLD.**" The outlook is no longer Israel merely, it is world-wide.

We shall do well to mark the fact that in this Gospel in which God is revealed in the fulness of His love, the Lamb of God appears in the beginning of it. It surely teaches us that if God was to be known in blessing to men, and if the world was to be put in right relations with Him, the Lamb for a Sacrifice was a necessity; this lies at the basis of everything. And here now was that sacrifice, the Lamb of God's own providing; He is the taker-away of the sin of the world. It is not sins that are in question here—though every sinner may find in the sacrifice of the Lamb of God his sins removed for ever—but it is sin, the terrible principle of opposition to the will of God that has brought in all the confusion and ruin, and from which all sins break forth. This is to be taken away completely and for ever, and in its place everlasting righteousness is to be established and the universe filled with the love and the glory of God.

The One who will do this thing is the Subject here. How great He must be! If a man claimed to be able to take away the sin of a town, or the sin of a street in that town, or the sin of one house in that street, or even the sin of one person in that house, we should say, he is mad, it cannot be done. But here is One who is to take away **THE**

**SIN OF THE WORLD!** We ought not to have any doubt as to who He must be, He is the Word, the Creator, the only-begotten Son, He alone could be the Lamb of God.

Let us have clear thoughts as to what the sacrifice of Christ means in the Scriptures. The word is commonly used for the surrender of something or someone for the good of another—an extreme case of this kind would be when one lost his life in rescuing a friend from danger; or it is used when one suffers or gives up something, perhaps his own life for the truth's sake, as many martyrs have done. Often these meanings of the word are all that is understood as being involved in the death of the Lamb of God by the superficial religious thought of the day. But there is much more than that. The Lamb of God was Himself the Sacrifice. "Through the Eternal Spirit He offered Himself without spot to God" (Heb. 9. 14). "He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (Heb. 9. 26). "This Man, after He had offered

one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God" (Heb. 10. 12). We cannot separate the sacrifice of Christ from the sin that made it a necessity; when He suffered on the tree, it was the penalty of sin that He bore—the righteous judgment of God that we deserved. He was the holy victim upon the altar; not only did God's love give Him, but God's judgment fell upon Him when He was made sin for us, and the sacrifice was not completed until His blood was poured forth. That blood is the basis of all blessing, it makes expiation for sin, by it our sins are purged, and apart from it there is no remission. "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. 5. 7), and in Him "we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace" (Eph. 1. 7). We must keep in mind the true meaning of His sacrifice when we "Behold the Lamb of God." It is one of the fundamentals of our faith, and apart from the sacrificial death of Christ there is no salvation for any man.

## CHRIST AND HIS MEMBERS.

**CHRIST** is exalted in heaven, but His body is upon earth to be descriptive of Him here. The Holy Spirit dwells in each member of that body to this end. Now just as Christ was morally superior to every adverse influence when He was here, so now should His members be, and as in Him every heavenly grace shone out, so

now should these graces be seen in His members, for the body is for the expression of what is in the Head. This is a truth that we need to ponder well; if we do we shall see the blessedness of it and desire to be in the reality of it, and then the Holy Ghost will help us. We may ever count upon His support and power.

**I** PRAY for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given Me; for they are Thine.

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

"Great High Priest whose prayers are music  
In the Father's ears,  
I shall know their glorious answer  
Through eternal years.

Even now, O Lord, I know it,  
Made by love Divine,  
ONE WITH THEE, henceforth, for ever,  
THEREFORE ONE WITH THINE."

# THE UNANSWERED QUESTION!

(H. J. VINE.)

“ While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, *What think ye of Christ? whose Son is He?* They say unto Him, *The Son of David.* He saith unto them, *How then doth David in Spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on My right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call Him Lord, how is He his son? And no man was able to answer Him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask Him any more questions.—* Matt. 22. 41-46.

THE soul which has experienced the personal love of our Lord Jesus Christ delights to linger near Him and to drink in His own words which are a well-spring of life. Such an one has learnt about the completed work of Christ upon the cross, and that His precious blood shed there has cleansed him from every sin. Peace with God is his, and he is justified by faith! Furthermore he knows that sin itself has been put away by the atoning sacrifice of his Saviour, and has been made meet for the bright home of the Father where Jesus has gone!

What more can he desire until he is actually taken to be with Him? There is one thing he desires, and that is to behold the beauty of the Lord in the nearness given to him, and in faith to receive the life-giving words (like Mary did of yore) which the holy lips of our Lord poured forth so graciously. Jesus is known as the Son of God who loved him and gave Himself for him. In truth he gladly says, “Thou hast the words of eternal life!” The Father has said, “Hear ye Him,” and it brings present peace and blessing to do so. Interruptions and grevous embarrassments may be experienced in a groaning and sinful world like this, but, thank God, it is to the One who loves us with a divine and everlasting love to whom our redeemed souls instinctively turn, and this becomes increasingly true as we prove His grace and grow in the surpassingly excellent knowledge of Himself.

## CONCERNING THE CHRIST.

They were His own words which propounded the unanswered question at the head of this paper, and it is recorded, “From that day forth” those who had till then arraigned Him asked Him no more questions (Matt. 22. 46). Various important enquiries had been made, but the greatest of all was that raised by our Saviour. It was THE question of all questions, for it was concerning HIMSELF—concerning *the Messiah*, which being interpreted is *the Christ*. Involved in this is the establishment of all promised blessedness and the vast range of earthly, heavenly, universal glory, for the good pleasure of our God and Father. By definite prophecy and inspired type the Spirit of God had clearly pointed on in the sacred Scriptures to the rich glories which should surround Him, and since His work of redeeming love has been finished through the sufferings of the cross, and since His bodily resurrection and His ascension to the throne on high, the Holy Spirit has made known the very mystery of God’s will, to centre up “all things in *the Christ*, the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth” (Ephes. 1. 10). Men could give no answer to His own question in regard to Himself, and no wonder.

Before He ascended to the Father, He told His own that the Spirit would be sent to them, and He would on the one hand expose the sinful state of an unbelieving world and on the other

glorify the Son of God, showing His things and the Father's things to our rejoicing hearts. When our souls are in true freedom before Him therefore, this is what He delights to do, and the Lord Himself, like His words of divine import, becomes livingly real to us.

Those who gathered to question the Lord Jesus, at the time we have referred to, were connected with the place of Jehovah's Name. To them the question which silenced all questions was put. They had previously asked Jesus by what *authority* He did what He did, but, being answered, they "held a council how they might ensnare Him in speaking," and they sent out their disciples along with the Herodians. These raised the serious matter of giving "*tribute to Cæsar.*" His answer sent them back full of wonder. The Sadducees then enquired concerning *marriage and the resurrection* only to be proved ignorant of both "the Scriptures and the power of God." The Pharisees therefore "having heard that He had put the Sadducees to silence," gathered together, and "one of them, a lawyer, demanded, tempting Him, and saying, Teacher, which is *the great commandment in the law?*" The answer regarding love to God and love to our neighbour called forth the admission, "Well, Master, Thou hast said the truth!" Their questions had all been met perfectly by the Lord: first, concerning divine authority; second, concerning political authority and tribute; third, regarding marriage and the resurrection; fourth, as to the Law's great commandment; and now Jesus Himself raises the question of all questions. We will quote it in full from the valued New Translation of late J. N. Darby: "What think ye concerning the Christ? Whose Son is He? They say to Him David's. He

says to them, How then does David in spirit call Him Lord, saying, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit on My right hand until I put Thine enemies under Thy feet? IF THEREFORE DAVID CALL HIM LORD, HOW IS HE HIS SON? And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor did any one dare from that day to question Him any more."

"THE MAN CHRIST JESUS." 11

Remaining in darkness till this very day, they are strangers to the redemption which is in Christ, therefore this great and grave question remains unanswered by them; with the veil of unbelief upon their hearts—not having seen the glory of the Lord—not having received the Holy Spirit which Christ gives to those who trust in Him—long and profound has been their silence as to whose Son "THE CHRIST" truly is! This, however, may not be said of those who are redeemed by His precious blood, for to them the Spirit has come and to them He has made it known.

At first the Lord's words appear to set aside the fact that the Christ is David's Son, yet it may be clearly seen that this is not so. Deeper and higher and greater thoughts are intended to be awakened by the question concerning His personal glory. The New Testament beautifully opens by showing us His generation, beginning with "Son of David" and "Son of Abraham." Ten times in Matthew is He designated "Son of David," though in the first chapter He is named Jesus or Jehovah-Saviour, also Emmanuel, or God with us, but that does not set aside the other. If He be David's Lord He is His Son too, if He be the Root of David He is likewise His Offspring (Rev. 22. 16). The foundation teaching of the gospel of God is given in Romans 1. 3: "Concerning His Son [come of David's seed according to flesh, marked out Son

of God in power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of (the) dead] Jesus Christ our Lord" (N.T.). Nor must the word of the apostle to the young servant of the Lord be overlooked, for amidst the trials of faithful service on His behalf he is to "remember Jesus Christ raised from among the dead, of the seed of David," according to my gospel (2 Tim. 2. 8). The sure mercies promised of God are secured in David's line by the One who is both his Son and his Lord.

The Spirit of God discloses Him as Man, as Lord, yea, and as "God with us." If, as we have seen, He is shown to be Son of Abraham as well as Son of David in Matthew 1. 1, He is also traced right back to the first man in Luke 3. 38, being "of Seth, of Adam, of God." This was essential if in man's place He was to "taste death," "sufferings," "the suffering of death," and deliver the children of God from bondage, bringing them along with Himself as the "many sons to glory." Therefore the full answer (according to the counsels of God) to the question, "WHAT IS MAN?" is found in the words "We see Jesus . . . crowned with glory and honour" (Heb. 2. 6, 9), for, as the Son of Man, He is exalted, and all things are placed under His feet, though not yet seen publicly. When here on earth it was shown that He was truly Man. We are told that God never wearies, but He was weary at the well side!—that God never slumbers or sleeps, but He slept on a pillow in the boat! He hungered, He thirsted, His soul was troubled, He was "the Man of sorrows," He groaned in spirit, His sweat was as blood, He poured out His soul unto death, expecting to see the fruit of the travail of His soul, for His soul was made an offering for sin (Isa. 53. 10-12). In the Virgin's womb He had been "conceived," and He was

"born" of Mary. She "brought forth her first-born Son." He was the "child born." "He was in subjection" to Joseph and Mary, and "Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and men" (Luke 2. 7, 51-52). To the Jews He said He was "A MAN" who had spoken the truth to them (John 8. 40)! Yet the same One said (verse 58), "*Before Abraham was, I AM!*" Little surprise therefore overtakes us when the royal, evangelical prophet, Isaiah, by the Spirit spells out His five-fold "NAME": "Wonderful—Counsellor—Mighty God—Father of Eternity—Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9. 6)! And, be it carefully noted, this One is to sit upon "the throne of David," for He was the Child born, the Son given, of that regal line as promised.

Even upon the cross one of the thieves owned Him as Lord and spake of His kingdom. And, though He laid down His life, having cried, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" yet He could not be holden of death, He arose in the power of an endless life! But we must guard against the error, common to many, that actual, physical resurrection did not take place, for, it was when He was a real risen Man, He said to His own, "Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit has not flesh and bones as ye see Me having" (Luke 24. 29). Yes, we must hold fast to the fact that He is truly Man still, though His precious blood has been poured out to secure our eternal redemption. On the other hand, true homage was rendered when He showed the actual wounds still visible in His body, and Thomas said, "My Lord and my God" (John 20. 28); and yet He is nevertheless Man to-day in His place of exaltation at God's right hand, even as it is written,

"God is one, and the Mediator of God and men one, THE MAN CHRIST JESUS" (1 Tim. 2. 5, N.T.).

We must remember, however, when speaking of *man*, the expression is used by the Holy Spirit in various connections. Truly the race of man as known on earth began with Adam first—"the first man Adam." Angels were created spirits—"He maketh His angels spirits," yet they are spoken of as *men* in Acts 1. 10 and elsewhere. We read too of "the *man* Gabriel," who was an angel (Dan. 9. 21). Again, we are told, "GOD is a Spirit," He is "the invisible GOD"; but in Genesis 18. it is said, JEHOVAH appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre! Three *men* stood near him, whom Abraham addressed as ADONNAY (plural, Lords: it is ADON in Psalm 110. 1). The three "*men*" ate what Abraham and Sarah provided for them. Afterwards they rose up and looked toward Sodom (Gen. 18. 8, 16). Later, two of them, called "the two *angels*," came to Sodom at even (Gen. 19. 1), and "JEHOVAH" went away when He had ended speaking to Abraham (Gen. 18. 33). Now although the Scriptures cited show that the term "*man*" is variously used, it should again be carefully observed that "*the Christ*" is "of Adam, of God" (Luke 3. 38)—of the woman's seed (Gen. 3. 15)—of Abraham (Matt. 1. 1)—of "David His father" (Luke 1. 32), whose throne He is to have—of Mary, the Virgin (Matt. 1. 33). Of that line He took part in flesh and blood (Heb. 2. 14), taking hold of the seed of Abraham, not of angels (verse 16), but was truly Man. And, as we have seen, He is still Man in exaltation and glory to-day; therefore, as our High Priest, become higher than the heavens, He is able to sympathize with our infirmities, for He first passed through sufferings

on earth Himself, and was tempted in like manner as ourselves, sin apart; moreover this great fact gives the ring of gladness to the gospel of God's grace as it sounds joyfully forth, "Be it known . . . through THIS MAN is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins!" (Acts 13. 38). The resounding music in the glad tidings proclaimed by Paul is, as recorded in this chapter, of David's seed the Saviour has come, not having seen corruption, He has been raised from among the dead; the faithful mercies of David are consequently given of God, being made sure by the death and resurrection of Jesus, fulfilling God's Word spoken through David, "Thou wilt not suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption" (verse 35), this One is God's Son (verse 33).

#### DAVID'S LORD.

This prepares us to further consider our Saviour's own question, "If therefore David call Him LORD (see Psa. 110. 1), how is He his SON?" We have seen how the Holy Spirit abundantly shows Him to be truly David's Son, but much more also. In a special way to-day, when those who are called out of the world by the gospel are granted the privileges and intimacies connected with Christ's assembly and God's children, we are guided by the Spirit to behold the personal glory and beauty of the Son of God. Peter confessed Him to be "the Christ, *the Son of the living God.*" Paul proclaimed Him in the gospel of God which called us "into the fellowship of *His Son* Jesus Christ our Lord." Gifts are given from the ascended Christ in view of our coming to "the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of *the Son of God.*" But it is in what has been given to us through John that the rich lustre of the truth shines forth, answering, as we shall see, the unanswered

question—"THE CHRIST, WHOSE SON IS HE?" There we are told the object of the signs (which were specially chosen and recorded in John's Gospel) was "that ye may believe that Jesus is THE CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD" (John 20. 31), adding—thanks be to God—"and that believing ye might have life in His Name." It was when the Jews said of Him to Pilate, "He made Himself *Son of God*," having heard that word, "he was the rather afraid, and went into the prætorium again and says to Jesus, whence art Thou?"

To lay stress on the words of the Lord recorded in the first three Gospels concerning Psalm 110. 1, and upon the importance divinely given to them, we will point out what is said in each as to the truth of their inspiration. (1) Matthew 22. 43; (2) Mark 12. 36; (3) Luke 20. 42.

1. "David in spirit calls Him (*the Christ*) Lord."

2. "David himself said (speaking in the Holy Spirit) the Lord said to my Lord."

3. "David himself says in the book of Psalms," etc.

These words, coming to us with our Lord's own authority, emphasize in a striking manner the great facts of divine inspiration and give enlightenment as to the manner of it. First, we see that David spake *in spirit* concerning the dignity of the Christ. Second, that David actually uttered the saying *in or by the Holy Spirit*. Third, that the whole *book of Psalms* is, by inference, put on the same level of inspiration, and that *David himself* used those wonderful words as to "the Christ," showing that the instrument (inspired in the Spirit to so speak of Him) was "*himself*" then conscious of the glorious fact which he pronounced.

These verities ought to awaken serious thoughts and heart-searchings in those who question divine inspiration.

For ourselves, rejoicing in the truth of it, and gladly acknowledging the object of it—to point us to the Christ Himself in all the inspired writings (see Luke 24. 27-44)—we would unreservedly allow the Spirit (who dwells in the redeemed and who gave us the Scriptures) to lead us to behold more and more of the Saviour's grace and glory, to guide us into that which centres in the One who is "The Way, and the Truth, and the Life." Avoiding questionable definitions, mere theological terminology and ecclesiastical argumentations or dogmatism, we desire to grow in grace and in the knowledge of Our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be everlasting glory. Amen. One of old said, "Surely I count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my LORD."

#### "TRUE GOD."

Does the Holy Spirit carry our thoughts back to the beginning when all things received being? At once, in John 1. 1, He stays our minds upon One who was there when that beginning took place—"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Does the Spirit of God give us to see the sinfulness of sin and the hopelessness of the world, again He rest our gaze upon the Word, who was God, become flesh, tabernacling amongst us (verse 14). We wonder at this miracle of miracles! We could not define or analyse ourselves, much less the workings of divine power in David's Lord, opening blind eyes, unstopping deaf ears, loosening dumb tongues, healing all manner of sicknesses, raising the dead, calming the raging of the winds and the waves!

We may find peace and joy in believing. Near to Himself, in the grace and love of the Spirit, we may so learn of Him and His words that the heart must find relief in praise and worship in His presence; but who could be so unwise as to think he is wise enough to define this surpassing miracle—the Creator Word become flesh? Who could be audacious enough to confound himself by attempting it? Who could so lean to his own understanding as to prove himself thus to be a fool in his pride? To gaze into the ark brought divine displeasure (1 Sam. 6. 19). What must the infinite Creator think of the finite creature who assays to comprehend and then define the magnificent mystery of this most wonderful of all miracles? It is wonderful in our eyes! He is wonderful in working! One part of His five-fold Name already quoted is “Wonderful!” We praise the love and beauty of it all! To our faith it is both gracious and reasonable, for we clearly see all plainly proven by what was said and done by Him by His words and His works! We see every day the unmistakable proof of human life in men’s speakings and actings, yet who can tell us what life itself really is save the One who is “the Originator of life”? (Acts 3. 15, N.T.). “In Him was life, and the life was the light of men”; yet it is said concerning Himself as “THE SON,” in all the profound depths of His own infinite and personal glory, “No man knoweth THE SON, but the Father” (Matt. 11. 27). Much is known, and much more may be known in the Holy Spirit’s power, for He is here to lead us into all truth, but this which is said as to “THE SON” and “THE FATHER” remains alone in solitary and incontrovertible sufficiency, causing thereby the hearts of lowly believers to rejoice greatly that such an One is fully comprehended by the Father Himself,

now revealed by the Son as our Father and our God.

It was the Creator Word, the Logos, who became flesh, yet the world knew Him not. Apart from new birth and the gift of the Spirit, the creature knew not the world’s Creator. His divine glory was not apprehended. Even John Baptist, it is twice said, “knew him not” (John 1. 31, 33) till he saw the Spirit as a dove descending and abiding on Him. Then he said, “This is the Son of God!” John told the Jews, “In the midst of you stands, whom ye do not know (verse 26). Yet “those who contemplated His glory, saw “a glory as of an only-begotten with a father” (verse 14). John Baptist (come on earth six months before Jesus) said again, “A MAN comes after me,” but who, in regard to honour and dignity, “takes a place before me,” because, as to His eternal existence, “He was before me” (see verses 15 and 30, N.T.). We may understand and rejoice in what is said as to His exalted place, but who shall attempt to explain that a “MAN”—the Word become flesh—who came ‘after’ John was also “before” him? Yet we know this to be a divinely revealed fact.

Moreover, the unanswered question, to which we have referred, is not only answered in the truth made known, as we have seen, but still more! Even Nathanael said to Jesus, “Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God, Thou art the king of Israel” (verse 49). This went beyond what is said in verse 41, “We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, THE CHRIST,” for, like John, Nathanael owns Him to be “THE SON OF GOD.” If the King of Israel be the Christ, David’s Son, we may easily grasp that, being the Son of God, He is also David’s LORD.

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

### “God the Son.”

In “Scripture Truth” July issue, in the paper “The Unchanging Christ,” by W. Bramwell Dick, the expression “God the Son” is used several times. Is this Scriptural? If so, will you tell me where to find it; if it is not, would it not be better to refrain from using it?—**ROTHERHAM.**

**T**HE exact expression is not in Scripture, but the truth that the title expresses most certainly is, and it is used to meet the widespread denial of the Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ. Many say He is the Son of God, but add, and so are we, who will not confess that He is God in His essential Being. But this the Scriptures distinctly teach us, and those who accept without question the truth of Scripture acknowledge that such titles as “the Son,” and “the only-begotten

Son” and “Son of God,” are titles that belong to Him as being “over all, God blessed for ever” (Rom. 9. 5). “God the Father” is a title commonly used of the Father; it is not found in Scripture, though we have what comes very near to it, “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” In the same way the title “God the Son” is used, for Scripture speaks of Him as both the Son and God. He is the Son in the Godhead.

### The Holy Spirit of God.

Do we receive three different Spirits—“The Spirit of God” (Rom. 8. 9), the “Spirit of Christ,” (Rom. 8. 9), and the “Holy Spirit of promise” (Eph. 1. 13)?—**BURMA.**

**N**O; when we believe the gospel of our salvation we are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, and “there is ONE SPIRIT” (Eph. 4. 4). But the Spirit indwells us in more than one character, and has to do with the varied relationships and blessings into which His indwelling brings us. So in the passages quoted, “*They that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.*” If the SPIRIT OF GOD dwells in you, of course you can please God. But the Spirit of God is also the SPIRIT OF CHRIST and unites us to Christ who is the head of a new race that delights to please God, in contrast to Adam’s race that only disobeys Him. Only those who have the Spirit are thus united to Christ and so are of Him, as once in their unregenerate days they were of Adam and not of Christ (see Romans 5. 12–21). Sealed by the Holy Spirit means that we are God’s property set

apart for Him, and the fact of the Spirit being the HOLY SPIRIT is emphasized in this case, for we are to be wholly for the One to whom we belong; we are to be “holy and without blame, before God in love.” So we are warned not to grieve the *Holy Spirit of God* by our conduct (Eph. 4. 30).

The Spirit has other titles. He is the Earnest of our inheritance—the pledge to us of coming glory. He is the Comforter (John 14. 16, 26; 15. 26; 16. 7). He is also the Spirit of Truth, so spoken of by the Lord in these same Scriptures. There is no divine truth apart from Him, nor can anyone know the things of God apart from His illumination and teaching (1 Cor. 2). But He is an unction from the Holy One and the Anointing, another title, and having Him, we are independent of the teaching of men, we may know all things (1 John 2. 20, 27).

### A Pillow to rest on.

“**WHEREFORE** in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto his brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people” (Heb. 2. 17).

“For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted” (Heb. 2. 18).

# THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

## A Sunday Evening Address.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

“ *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* ” (Cor. 8. 9).

THIS gem of Scripture cannot strictly be called a gospel text, for it was written to those who were already saved, and forms part of an exhortation to them not to be mean and niggardly in their giving, but to give cheerfully and liberally as those ought who have been enriched by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Nevertheless it is full of gospel, for it is full of Christ, and the gospel of God is concerning Him, so that I am glad to have it as my text.

I will ask you first to take notice of the confidence that rings triumphantly in the opening words of it. “ *Ye know,*” says the apostle. And is not this worth something in a world in which men can be sure of nothing except that they must die some day? This is not the first time that such language is used in this epistle. In chapter 5. we read, “ *We know* that if this earthly house of our tabernacle were dissolved we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” Only the gospel can give this confidence; such language as this belongs only to the family of God; it can only be learnt by *His* children, for it is only taught by the Holy Ghost. The agnostic cannot use such words. He may laugh at faith and be proud of his ignorance when in health and buoyed up by the shams of this life, and yet the cry of the soul of the agnostic for light cannot be altogether silenced. Hear what one of them has written :

“ Is there beyond the silent night  
 An endless day?  
 Is death a door that leads to light?  
 WE CANNOT SAY.  
 The tongueless secret locked in fate,  
 WE DO NOT KNOW,  
 We hope and wait.”

Yet when brought face to face with death this same eloquent atheist was compelled to abandon the “ *don't know* ” mood, and own that he was sure of something, but it was only of darkness and disaster. Speaking at the graveside of his own brother, he said, “ *Whether in mid-seas or among the breakers of the farther shore, a wreck must mark at last the end of each and all. Every life, no matter if its every hour is rich with love and every moment jewelled with a joy, will at its close become a tragedy as sad and deep and dark as can be woven of the warp and woof of mystery and death.*” How differently can the Christian look into the future. I had a friend in Australia who had served the Lord for fifty years, and he was dying. A stroke of paralysis had robbed him of the power of speech. His Christian family was gathered at his bedside, and one of them, longing for a farewell word from the dearly loved father, asked, “ *Have you not something to say to us, father?* ” He heard the earnest question and his eyes expressed his desire to answer it, but his lips could not frame the words. But some years before he had learnt the deaf-mute's alphabet in order to preach the gospel to an afflicted neighbour, and now this knowledge came to his aid, and he spelt out upon his fingers one word—G-L-O-R-Y; and in five minutes he was there. There was no tragedy there, no wreck. He sailed into harbour triumphantly, more than a conqueror through Him that loved him.

But my text speaks not of the future but of the present—it tells us of a present possession. “ *Ye know the*

grace of our Lord Jesus Christ." We are not waiting for this, we know it now, and notice how the Saviour is described—He is OUR Lord Jesus Christ. Thus can the believer speak of Him, and no power can rob us of His grace, no change can separate us from Him—

"Jesus, my soul from Thee,  
No power can sever :  
Saviour Thou art to me,  
Now and for ever."

And here stands out in contrast the Christian's possession to those of which the man of the world boasts. He talks about his home, his wife, his family, business, money. Your money, your business, sir ! But whose may these be to-morrow ? If they are yours, hold them. Let no thief rob you, let no reverse beggar you. And your home ! If it is yours, guard it well, keep all sorrow out of it ; and as for death ! Well, death has entered many a home as happy as yours. Yes, entered though the doors were locked and barred against him, and having entered he had his way in spite of doctor's learning and nurse's skill. Some day he will enter your home, and though you stand up and challenge his right to be there, he will not heed you ; and you will discover that the tenure of your possession was a short one, and that your loved treasures were but loaned to you for a while, and that death had a claim that could not be denied when his turn came. And what of yourself ? Think of the day when death will claim not yours but you. Ah, how poor you will be then if Christless !

But how do we know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ ? His wisdom and power are plainly written in creation—

"All worlds His glorious power confess,  
His wisdom all His works express."

But here it is not power or wisdom—these could never have won the hearts of sinful men—it is grace ; and we know His grace by the fact that He became poor for our sakes. Mark well what the Scripture says. He was rich and He became poor. A Christadelphian in conversation with me denied the eternal deity of our Lord Jesus Christ ; he argued that He began His existence in the manger at Bethlehem. My answer was this text. If what the Christadelphian professed to believe was the truth, then our Lord never was rich before He was poor, and our text is a lie. There was none poorer than He on that day when He was born in David's city, for a manger was His cradle and His shelter a stable ! And why ? Because His virgin mother could not pay for a room in the inn when the time for His birth had come, so poor was she. There was no room in that inn, I know, but if Mary could have paid more than people more fortunate in that respect than she had paid, would not the inn-keeper have made profit for himself out of consideration for her need, and driven somebody else into the stable ? But it was not to be. The Son of God must come into the world in the direst poverty, an outcast from His birth. Yet He was rich before He became poor. And if any ask how that could be, the one and only answer is, He was God before He became man ; if His Deity is taken out of the verse it is robbed of all its meaning. The Christadelphian was deceived, he had believed a lie. Our Saviour is the eternal God, He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich.

Who can tell how rich He was ? Creature thought, no matter how high it soars, is here confounded. We know that the universe proceeded from Him,

for "all things were made by Him and without Him was not anything made that was made." (John 1.). The Russellites teach that He was the first of all creatures to be created, wrongly interpreting the Scripture which speaks of Him as the "First-born of every creature" (Col. 1.)—if so, then He must have created Himself—which is utterly absurd, for that same Scripture continues, "For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist" (Col. 1. 16, 17). He is the Creator and not a creature, though He became a Man and was poor for the sake of His creatures, He was never less than their Creator. What infinite resources and power and wisdom were His, the greatest Spirit among the principalities and powers in the heavens, and the minutest insect that functions for an hour and dies, were created by Him, and each has its place in the universe according to the design of the Creator. But more than this, He was the Only-begotten Son in the bosom of the Father. He could speak of the love that the Father bore Him before the foundations of the world were laid, and of the glory that He had with the Father before time began. How rich He was, yet He became poor for our sakes. For your sake, burdened, anxious sinner! Does not this thought overwhelm us, and fill our hearts with gratitude and praise, not for the sake of angels, or for sinless creatures who had never dreamt of defying His will, but for us who had sinned and were saturated with sin! He who spake, and the worlds were made, He, who upholds the universe and controls every force within it; even "fire and hail, snow and vapour, and stormy

wind fulfilling His word." He became poor for us, who slighted and hated Him.

"Unfathomable wonder,  
And mystery divine;  
The voice that speaks in thunder  
Says, 'Sinner, I am thine.'"

This is grace, indeed! Unmerited favour! It is the love and mercy of God *shown* out to those who only deserved His wrath.

I pass by the poverty that He must have known in the humble home of a village carpenter, only remarking that He who was to preach the gospel to the poor must Himself know in His own experience the hardships and trials that the poor have to endure. Yes, He suffered these hardships and He does not, He cannot forget. He grew up amid circumstances of poverty, He lived, a poor man, without a resting place for His head, He suffered hunger, thirst and weariness. He was no mere philanthropist or patron of the poor, paying sympathetic visits to their mean dwellings, and when weary of the sordid surroundings retiring to the comforts of a lordly home. No, He was one of the poor Himself, He shared their struggles, their sorrows, their woes. He was the Man of sorrows. And it was for our sakes. And He who was poor, is now the poor man's Friend. I proclaim Him as the Friend of the sinful and the poor. O, if men understood this, they would turn from their false friends, whose vain words and empty promises can only fill them with discontent, and deceive and disappoint them, and they would find a Friend in Jesus. Weary, burdened, broken-hearted men and women He calls you to-day. O, hear His blessed voice, "Come unto Me and I will give you rest." Did ever agitator or politician talk to you like that?

But it was not until He hung upon

the Cross that He reached the depth of poverty. He was there for our transgressions, delivered for our offences, suffering for our sins. For our sakes He endured that cross. "It was for sinners Jesus died." No riches, no blessing, could ever have reached us if He had not suffered there; we should have been bankrupt sinners for ever, unforgiven and lost, if Jesus had not died.

We have the forgiveness of sins through His blood. God will remember no more the sins and iniquities of all who believe, because Jesus died and paid in death the price that cancels them for ever. How wonderful is the proclamation of sin's forgiveness through His Name, but there is more than this; that would have been a priceless boon if it had stood alone; but there is more, we are enriched; the unsearchable riches of Christ are opened up for us by the gospel. Who can tell the value to us of the Holy Spirit who is given unto us? Who can measure

our possessions as heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ Jesus? How shall we explain what it is to be accepted in Him the Beloved? The very fulness of God is revealed for our joy, and the love of Christ that passeth knowledge. Yes, beggars from the dung hill are set among princes, those of low degree are exalted and the hungry are filled with good things, but it is because He, who was rich, became poor for our sakes.

He is no longer poor, for He rose again from the grave. Jesus lives! God hath made this same Jesus both Lord and Christ, and in this we can rejoice. If we know Him as our Saviour, we love Him, and rejoice in His exaltation, but that which draws the sweetest praise from ransomed hearts is not the exaltation of the present or the glory of the future, but the sorrow of the past; for us He became poor. This will be the subject of our wonder and worship for ever.

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## CHRIST AND CIRCUMSTANCES.

THE gospels were written, after the Holy Ghost came down from heaven, to set forth what Christ was upon earth: a Man according to God's pleasure from the very lowest point, a Babe in the manger, upon the mount of glory, and from thence on to the cross. One thing stands out in that lowly, obedient, and dependent life. He had a Father in heaven. He had not a penny in His possession, but He had a Father in heaven, and He was here doing the Father's will, sent of Him, and that made Him superior to all the distressful circumstances He was in. He slept in the storm, He was in divine tranquillity and superiority. He

never altered circumstances for Himself. Christ on earth declares the Father in heaven. He shows how He can make you superior to every circumstance here. The Lord Himself walked in divine superiority to every circumstance in which He was found. "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." The more we are in faith the less does God alter our circumstances. *He alters us by the power of His grace.* Have you so learnt Christ as the One who can maintain you by the Holy Ghost in the like circumstances in which He was Himself?

## THINGS TO REMEMBER.

ONE great evidence of abiding in Christ is quietness of spirit. If my confidence is in Him and I know Him to be greater than every adverse power, I shall not be afraid. If the portion of my heart is in Him, I am lifted above a world of disappointments and losses and know that what is mine can never be taken from me. If my hopes are in Him, I am no more anxious, for the future is sure. It is a great spiritual help to come into contact with a Christian who abides in Christ, for he brings quietness and rest into the disturbing circumstances of life. And this is possible to us all.

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JACOB saw in his vision a ladder that reached up to God upon which the angels ascended and descended in their ministry to such as he was. There is something greater to-day, and if our eyes are opened we shall see it. It is this: The way has been opened up for us through the blood of Jesus into the very presence of God, and we may approach to Him in love and worship and intercession, that is the ascent, and we may descend again freighted with heavenly grace and blessing for men below. Are we making use of this golden ladder? Moses did when he passed between God and Israel and Israel and God; the disciples did when others took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus. We may, for Hebrews 13. 15, 16 may be fulfilled every day in our lives.

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NO service in itself is small,  
 None great, though earth it fill;  
 But that is small that seeks its own,  
 And great that does God's will.

Then hold my hand, most gracious Lord;  
 Guide all my goings still;  
 And let this be my life's one aim,  
*To hear and do Thy will.*

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"WHILE we look . . . at the things that are not seen," said a dying saint to me. What he saw was most attractive, and he longed to be with Christ where they are. So we must lift up our eyes to those unseen realities above the sun and to Him who is there, "Looking off unto Jesus." He is our goal and there is our destiny. With Christ as our object above us and the Holy Ghost as the power within us, we can press on in our race to the glory, superior to the forces that would retard our progress, and unattracted by the lure of temporal things.

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NONE of God's children are born dumb, for "behold he prayeth," and "straightway he preached Christ . . . that He is the Son of God," were the first and certain proofs that Saul of Tarsus had become a child of God, and he is the pattern Christian. We may test the vigour of our spiritual health by the way we exercise ourselves in these two forms of speech.

# THE GLORIES OF THE MOUNT.

(HAMILTON SMITH.)

Luke 9. 28-35.

**FOLLOWING** the Lord in His perfect path we are led, in Luke 9., into two scenes of surpassing interest. One scene unfolds itself on the Mount of Transfiguration; the other is enacted in the Plains of Galilee. On the Mount we find ourselves in company with Christ in the midst of heavenly things, learning the secrets of the Father's heart. In the Plain we have Christ in company with us amid the sorrows of earth, there to learn the secrets of our hearts in the presence of the grace of His heart.

For the good and prosperity of our souls we do well to linger awhile in both these scenes. The Mount, however, must precede the Plain. Our hearts must be assured of our part in the glories of the Mount before we can face the sorrows of the Plain.

Let us then for awhile turn aside from man, and his small world, and, as it were, ascend the Mount, seeking in spirit to breathe its holy atmosphere and delight our souls in its varied glories.

We are not left to our own spiritual discernment to interpret the scene on the Mount, for we have the inspired account of one who was present. Referring to the time when he and others were with Christ on "the holy mount," Peter can say "we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased" (2 Peter I. 16-18). Thus Peter plainly tells us that the holy Mount gives us a foretaste of the glories

and the joys that we shall share at the coming, or "presence," of the Lord. For long He has been absent, but when at last He is present and we in His presence, we shall see His majesty. We who have seen the shame and dishonour heaped upon Him by man, shall see with great delight the "honour and glory" that He will receive from the Father. In company with Christ we shall be ushered into the Father's presence and hear the Father's voice telling us of His delight in His beloved Son.

The holy Mount gives us a foretaste of these coming glories. Here, indeed, we partake of the fatness of God's house, and drink of the river of His pleasures.

Entering upon this scene of blessedness we are at once encountered with a holy mystery. For all this eternal weight of glory is introduced with a *praying Man*. "It came to pass . . . He took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. And *as He prayed*, the fashion of His countenance was altered." The sorrows of earth can be traced back to the disobedience and independence of one man. The glories of the world to come commence with the obedience and dependence of one Man. The coming glories of heaven centre round a *praying Man* on earth.

Then, as with great delight we gaze upon the Lord in prayer, we are permitted to see the *praying Man* changed into the *glorified Man*. "His countenance was altered, and His raiment was white and glistening." When man became independent of God, he ceased to glorify God and became the dishonoured man (Rom. I. 21-32): here is One who became the dependent Man,

glorified God, and He Himself is glorified. On earth we see the glory of man which, Peter reminds us, is as the flower of the field, for it "falleth away"; but on the Mount we get with Peter a passing vision of a glory that will never pass away. We see "His majesty" and His glory.

But the Mount has further blessed disclosures, for it tells us not only that we shall see His glory, but *we shall share His glory*. We shall not only be delighted beholders, but privileged partakers. And so we read "there talked with Him two men." To be spectators of a scene of unparalleled glory would not satisfy the heart's deep longings. Again to have part in a glory from which Christ was absent, would not be enough. Such, however, the grace that leads to glory, that we shall *behold* the glory, and *share* the glory, and share it *with Him*.

Furthermore the Mount tells us another blessed fact, that we shall not only be with Him but shall also be *like Him*; and so we read not only that Moses and Elias appeared, but they "appeared *in glory*." We shall not only see the glory and share the glory, but we shall be suited to the glory. Moses has done with his wilderness staff; Elias has laid aside his prophet's mantle. The days of their humiliation have for ever passed away and they appear in glory. Not only are they with Christ, but they are like Christ, and they are suited to be with Christ, because they are like Christ. On earth it does not yet appear what we shall be, but on the Mount we get a glimpse of what we shall be when He appears. We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. (1 John 3. 2.)

Nor is this all, for the Mount discloses another secret. Not only shall we share the glory and be suited to the glory, but we shall be *at home in the*

*glory*. For we read of Moses and Elias that they "talked with Him." This speaks of the holy, happy intercourse of saints in glory. Had it been written merely that He talked with them, we might judge that they would have been delighted but silent listeners. If, however, they can talk with Him, all distance and reserve are gone. The disciples had indeed held sweet intercourse with Christ on earth, howbeit, at times with a measure of restraint, but in glory there will be holy, happy intercourse with the Lord without a trace of reserve.

Further, we not only see that in glory there will be free and happy communion, but we learn the great theme of heaven's intercourse. They "spake of His decease which He should accomplish." Immediately before, as directly after the scene on the Mount, the Lord refers to His death (verses 22, 24), but we read "they understood not" (verse 45). In the Plain they are dull of hearing; on the Mount there is divine intelligence in the mind of heaven and the heart of Jesus. There Moses and Elias commune with Christ about that which fills His heart. They lose sight of the enmity of men; they no longer think of the death of Christ as brought about by wicked hands, but rather of "His decease which *He should accomplish*." Man's part in that great transaction calls aloud for judgment upon the world. What He did sends the glad tidings to earth's remotest bounds. Moreover they see that His death would be accomplished "*at Jerusalem*." How passing strange to a Jew. In the very place from whence the Messiah is going to reign, and where He will receive a throne and a crown, that there He should accomplish His death, and receive a cross and a grave. But on the Mount such wonders are spoken of without astonishment. There

all is clear. The glory of the kingdom must be established in righteousness. To meet the righteous claims of God He must accomplish His decease. The sufferings must come before the glory. Righteousness must be met in the death of Christ at Jerusalem, if the grace of God is to flow out world wide "beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24. 47).

Moses had given the law, but none knew better than Moses how utterly the nation had failed under the law. Elias had been raised up to recall backsliding Israel to Jehovah, only to prove their hopeless condition. Christ Himself had come, full of grace and truth, only to be utterly rejected. Moses, Elias, and above all Christ Himself, are the witnesses of the nations' guilt and the deep necessity for the sufferings of Christ if they are to reach the glories of the Kingdom. No longer does Moses call the people "rebels"; no longer does Elias charge the children of Israel with having forsaken the covenant, thrown down the altars, and slain the prophets. They look beyond the nation and the wickedness of men; they see Christ, the death that He shall accomplish, and the glories that are on beyond. They indeed looked on to the glory through the death of Christ, we shall look back from the glory to the decease which He accomplished? It was their theme on the Mount, it will be our song in the glory of which the Mount was but a blessed earnest.

Finally, in this great scene we are carried into a glory that exceeds the glory of the Kingdom, for we are led into the Father's house. "There came a cloud and overshadowed them." They were surrounded and covered by the cloud. These Jewish disciples would well understand the significance of the cloud telling them of the Shekinah glory that of old filled the dwelling place of God and spoke of the

presence of God. In the days of their wilderness journey the cloud was over Israel, but they never entered the cloud. Here on the Mount, on the ground of the death of Christ that He was about to accomplish, and in company with a glorified Christ, these disciples enter into the Father's house. And in the Father's house they hear the Father's voice, and the Father's voice declares the Father's heart. They hear the Father saying, "This is My beloved Son, hear him." As one has said, "the Father does not say, This is the Son whom you ought to adore and admire, but He tells us His own thoughts about Him." "This is My beloved Son." It is not simply that we are reminded that Christ is our Beloved, as the bride in the Song of Songs can say, "My Beloved is mine, and I am His," but we hear the Father saying, "This is My Beloved." Beloved indeed because of His own intrinsic excellence, but "Beloved" also because of the decease He was about to accomplish. "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again." We have just learned that the heart of the Son is occupied with the obedience of love to the Father in going into death, and now we learn that the Father's heart is delighting in the Son. Here, then, it is our privilege to have fellowship with divine Persons; to have fellowship with the Son in His thoughts of perfect obedience to the Father's will, and have fellowship with the Father in His delight in the Son.

What a portion and prospect is thus opened to the believer by the death of Christ which He should accomplish at Jerusalem, and the glory of Christ that would follow, a prospect that gives us to enter the Father's house, to hear the Father's voice, and discloses to us the Father's heart!

Again we say what a scene is this

which brings us into touch with things which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him"! Truly a foretaste of the universe of bliss where man will be brought into dependence upon God, in a scene of glory, with Christ and like Christ. There to be at home with Christ, speak of all that is in His heart, and learn the secrets of the Father's heart.

Small, indeed, may be the measure in which we taste the blessedness of such a scene. Like the disciples the heaviness of earth clings to us and the

infirmities of the body hamper us, so that we see but little into the heart of these heavenly mysteries. Yet for our comfort we read, "When they were awake they saw His glory." Nor will it be otherwise with ourselves, for, says the apostle, "Awake thou that sleepest . . . and Christ shall shine upon thee." And in His light we shall see light; we shall see the coming glories, we shall look beyond the shadows on the valley and see the sunlight on the hills, but above all we shall see "the King in His beauty," the One who is "the chiefest among ten thousand," and "altogether lovely."

*"The Sorrows of the Plain" to follow.*

## THE LAND I LOVE.

(J. G. BELLETT.)

MY heart is onward bounding,  
 Home to the land I love;  
 Its distant vales and fountains  
 My wishful passions move.  
 Fain would my thirsty spirit  
 Its living freshness breathe,  
 And wearied soul find resting  
 Its hallowed shades beneath.

No soil of nature's evil,  
 No touch of man's rude hand  
 Shall e'er disturb around us  
 That bright and blissful land.  
 The charms that woo the senses  
 Shall be as bright as fair  
 For all, while breathing round us  
 Shall tell of Jesus there.

What light, when all its beaming  
 Shall own Him as the Sun!  
 What music, when its breathing  
 Shall bear His name along!  
 No pause, no change of pleasure,  
 No cloud to dim our view,  
 The draught that lulls our thirsting  
 Shall wake our thirst anew.

# "ENSAMPLES TO ALL THAT BELIEVE."

(Read 1 Thess. 1.)

(SAMUEL LEVERMORE.)

*"These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also."*—  
Acts 17. 1.

"[IN GOD THE FATHER" says v. 1.

This local assembly was precipitated by an iconoclastic ministry into the bosom of God. Happy revolution which effects such a result!

"NOT IN WORD ONLY." *"Our gospel came not unto you in word only but in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance."* The world is down-side up, as every individual sinner is. Holy Ghost work turns it upside-down. One's heart thrills at the dramatic entrance of those Spirit-filled men into "The Orthodox City" as it was called.

*"Not in word only."* The Holy Ghost in the Word. It is exactly what we lack to-day. The "incorruptible seed which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Pet. 1. 23). "It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life" (John vi. 63).

Not in word *only*. Here is where men have made one of the gravest errors. Outside testimony from men of very different character and views, yet all agreeing in a practical ignoring of the great cause, is worthy of notice.

*Dr. Paley* says, "A Jewish peasant changed the religion of the world, without force, power or support." No! no! Doctor: not a Jewish peasant, but a glorified Christ, not without force, but by the might of the Omnipotent Spirit.

*Renan*, in his *Lives of the Apostles*, says, "Ten years after the death of Jesus, His religion had already acquired in the capital of Assyria a name in the Greek and Roman tongues. Christi-

anity speaks Greek and is finally launched into that great vortex of the Greek and Roman worlds, whence it can never depart." But where is the Holy Ghost in all this? Even

*Guizot*, French Statesman, Philosopher, Theologian and Historian, says, "Christianity conquered by the Word alone, and conquered only souls." But

*Paul*—inspired of God—cries, "Not in word only" (1 Thess. 1. 5). Thousands of very sincere Christians are making the same fatal error to-day. It is written of three persons in the Old Testament that the Spirit "clothed Himself" with them. Likewise in this most popular city of Macedonia (next only to Constantinople in European Turkey) the Holy Spirit clothed Himself with the Word. Therefore the gospel came not to those pagans in "word only." It was iconoclastic and revolutionary from a moral and spiritual standpoint.

Alas! to-day most people are satisfied if the preacher is "clear"—"scriptural"—"simple"—"winning," etc., etc., but you may have all these and yet have death in the pot. Like an ornate mausoleum—glorious sculpture—classic inscriptions—tropical flowers without, and a rotting body within.

Bright, brief, and brotherly meetings, a charming speaker, delightful singing, but no Holy Ghost. Everybody pleased with himself and no one convicted of sin and seeking mercy. No, no. This bright church at Thessalonica was not born in such an atmosphere. "Not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance."

This church was a *great Second Advent church*. Only about six months old when Paul wrote his first letter, which was speedily followed by the second, it is a standing protest against those who say that the glorious doctrines of our Lord's coming "for" the church (the burden of the first letter, and His great epiphany, i.e., His coming "with" the church, the subject matter of the second) is only for "mature" believers. Truly our thoughts are not God's thoughts.

This church was also A TRINAL CHURCH. It is full of triplets. It has pleased the Holy Spirit to employ this vehicle of triplicity to enforce the precious truths He is bringing before us.

Firstly then, ITS THREEFOLD AUTHORSHIP. What a trio! Paul, Silvanus and Timotheus! And what preaching! 2 Cor. i. 16-24 exposes the very secret spring of it. Listen: verse 17, no *lightness*, no *fleshwork*; 18, no *speculation*, no *uncertainty*. No "ifs" or "buts." No *mays* or *mights*. No *yea* and *nay*. They were not preaching a man whose very wisest plans might fail; whose doings must of necessity have an element of uncertainty about them, but, as verse 19 says, "The Son of God whom we preached among you was not yea and nay, but in Him was yea." Then 20, "For all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen to the glory of God by us." Here all is positive. Nothing hangs upon fallen man; all hangs upon the Son of God. Alleluia! What a gospel!

Secondly, notice ITS THREEFOLD CALL (9, 10). *Turning—Serving—Waiting*. Salvation — Occupation — Expectation. Salvation *from* Him—Occupation *for* Him—Expectation of being *with* Him.

Paul never had to apologize for this

church. He avers that he would recognize them in the Day of Christ. That they would be his crown of rejoicing at the Bema (the judgment seat of Christ). This is indeed Holy Ghost work. "What God doeth it is for ever." In connection with the "waiting," have you observed the precious *heart quality* of the last verse? Here surely the blessed Spirit is touching one of the sweetest chords upon His well-loved ten-stringed instrument. "And to wait." Yes, but for whom? Antichrist? No. The beast? No. The tribulation? No—but "His Son"—"The Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." Precious words! How they stir the heart! "Whom He raised from the dead," here is victory. But draw closer yet, O my soul, to catch this sweet whisper of the Spirit. "Even Jesus." Oh, the unspeakable passion of it!

"Sweetest note in seraph song—  
Sweetest Name on mortal tongue—  
Sweetest carol ever sung—  
Jesus! Jesus! Jesus!"

But sweeter and yet sweeter. Louder and still louder grows the chorus, as we think of Him as the One "which delivered us from the wrath to come." Nothing surprises us after this.

Let us now consider, thirdly, ITS THREEFOLD SUBJECTIVE EXPERIENCE: "Faith," "Hope," and "Love." Your "*Work*" of *faith*. Theirs was the faith of God's elect which is always a *working* faith. There is a *workless* faith and there is a *faithless* work, but neither of these is the fruit of the Spirit. *Balaam's* was a *faithless* work, and *King Agrippa's* a *workless* faith. Both alike of the flesh. Only an *in-wrought* faith can be *out-wrought* (Phil. 2. 12).

"LABOUR OF LOVE." As the faith is heart-faith, so also is the labour.

When the heart keeps His words, His words keep the heart.

"I cannot work my soul to save,  
For that the Lord hath done,  
But I can work like any slave  
For love of God's dear Son."

It is really the *fatigue* of love—Divine, not *soulish* love. Not simulated. Not like wax flowers or leaves on an artificial tree, but the product of the Spirit, embodying the Hebrew idea of *sassion*, and the Greek idea of *benevolence*. The real *Charisma* of God. Not a *wordy* love but a *deedy* love; a love that breaks forth in deeds of kindness. Love that tires itself. Love that knows all about its (sometimes) unworthy objects and loves them still. Both of these—the *faith* and the *love*—are incomplete without the patience of hope.

"PATIENCE OF HOPE." Anything made to stand upon three legs cannot stand upon two, still less upon one. The bridge of faith rests upon three supports, i.e., *Atonement*, *Inter-*

*cession* and *Advent*, the *parousia*. Their *turning* was proved by their *Serving*, and their serving by their *waiting*. The Exodus was not all. "Let My people go that they may *serve Me*." Here we have the law of triple reference (Exod. 8. 1; 9. 1; 10. 3). Not serving, however, without *waiting*, which always engenders self-occupation as we have it in that instructive Bethany scene (Luke 10.). *Serving* without *sitting*. Waiting for *events*—any *event* that is not our precious Lord's *descent* is abnormal, and results in *unsteadiness*, for it is a removing of one of the three supports of the bridge of faith. May the Lord give each of us a *working* faith, for a *working* faith is a *growing* faith. Paul, filled with holy joy in sending his second letter to them says, "We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly." The Lord give each of us this threefold subjective experience. Amen.

## THE CERTAINTY OF THE TRUTH.

THE child of God receives the word as Christ gives it. Reliance on the word of God is the only sure ground. Do you want to be certain? *God has said it*. Is not that enough? If we require proof to confirm the word of God we want something more sure and more true than God. If God cannot speak so as to claim authority without another to accredit what He says, there is no such thing as faith.

To a spiritually intelligent mind, the word of God carries an authority beyond all cavils.

The only thing that endures for ever is "the Word of the Lord." The wisdom of the world is against it—human reason is against it; but it is the only thing worth waiting upon diligently. Don't reason about the

things of God, but appeal to His Word, there you are on safe ground.

When the Spirit of God brings home the truth to the heart and conscience there is no uncertainty about it.

When the truth is held in communion with God it separates us to Himself. Truth is to bear fruit in our lives, and if there is no fruit there is no truth.

Infidelity may do to amuse and deceive the mind while the spring of life flows, but when it begins to ebb and dry up, what can it do then?

The truth of God grows ever more precious; it strengthens and nourishes the soul, for it abides for ever, and reveals our Lord Jesus to us and attaches us to Him, who is the source and power of all good.

## "MY LORD AND MY GOD."

(A. J. ATKINS.)

WE need always to bear in mind that nothing is revealed to us in God's Word *merely* for the sake of information. Unless God's truth is to become with us but a traditional creed and dogma, it must be held by the soul, through the power of the Holy Ghost, in communion with Him whose truth it is, and in living relation to Him—the Son of God—who is the Subject and Object, the "A" and the "Z" of all God's thoughts?<sup>1</sup> While, then, we trust that our meditations now on this theme—"The glory of the Lord"—may deepen divinely-given convictions as to His glorious Person, may they serve, also, to attach our hearts more to Himself, for He sets store upon our thoughts of Himself.<sup>2</sup> As another has beautifully written:—

"Lord, I desire to trace Thee more  
Than e'er mine eye has done before;  
Each passage of Thy life to be  
A link between my soul and Thee!"

We will seek to trace from the pages of the Gospels some of His glory. In every sense it is true that *Christ authenticates Himself* to the soul; He is His own credential. As another has written: "It seems to me that in (the) acts and words of our Lord the whole Christian faith finds at once its statement, its authority and its claim on our consciences and minds. Let men only be induced to listen thoughtfully to Him, as He speaks from the cross, and from His resurrection and ascension, and the allegiance of their hearts will be won" (Wace).

Let us think, then, of the Lord Jesus first, not in the great crises of His wondrous pathway, but as it were in the *tout ensemble* of His walk and ways, and words—His "conversation," when here below amongst us. How absolutely different is He from all before or since! Let us ponder the marvellous blending of moral qualities that were

found in Him: His gracious dignity and His unaffected lowliness; when occasion demanded the sternness of His indignation; at all times His gentleness, His patience, His adaptability (if thus we may speak); His matchless wisdom and yet His profound simplicity; His majestic authority, His divine reserve; His utter abandonment to one purpose—the will and purpose of God; and His absolute sinlessness—unchallenged even by His enemies. Have we not an assemblage of "graces" which betoken nothing less than the presence of "a life *Divine* below"?

There were times, indeed, when the "Godhead glory shone through the human veil," and who He was could not be hid. Did it not shine forth in His first recorded words—"Wist ye not that *I must be about My Father's business?*"<sup>3</sup> What concealed majesty is there in His words to Satan in the wilderness: "*Get thee behind Me, Satan!*"<sup>4</sup> especially if we compare this manner of address to that recorded of the archangel himself.<sup>5</sup> On the mount of transfiguration, in the sight of a favoured few, even His very raiment became suffused with the outshining of the glory of Deity—"shone like the sun."<sup>6</sup> Such occasions, however, were exceptional. For it was not "in the form of God"—"God's manifested Being" (Moule), but "in fashion as a man" and in "the form of a servant" that He was found here;<sup>7</sup> only let us remember and tenaciously maintain that His "emptying Himself" was not of His *essential* glory, but its manifested possession; He never ceased to be who He was by reason of what He became. Blessed Lord Jesus! it is the grace which brought *Thee* low which commands our hearts and draws forth their worship and affection to Thyself!

Remembering that He appeared to others, even to His disciples, as a way-faring man, partaking with them in all that belongs properly to human estate (sin and its effects do not belong thus), and living a true human life, how amazing were His *claims*!<sup>1</sup> He claimed authority to forgive sins, which confessedly none can do but God only, and proved on the spot the validity of the claim.<sup>8</sup> He claimed to be Lord of the Sabbath—Israel's most sacred and divine institution and the sign of the covenant between Jehovah and Israel, and to act accordingly;<sup>9</sup> His person is greater than the temple,<sup>10</sup> greater than Solomon<sup>11</sup> and Abraham.<sup>12</sup> His history in its totality and its detail is a fulfilment of prophecy,<sup>13</sup> and in His mission is at once "fulfilled" and superseded the law.<sup>14</sup> To believe on Him is to work the works of God.<sup>15</sup> He is the standard of action, and deeds done to His own are done to Him and will either acquit or condemn the doer;<sup>16</sup> to receive or reject Him is to receive or reject God,<sup>17</sup> to be ashamed of Him or His words is to suffer awful loss.<sup>18</sup> To seek issues with Him is to be ground to powder,<sup>19</sup> and a beatitude is upon those who find no occasion of stumbling in Him,<sup>20</sup> and another for any who are wrongfully treated for His name's sake.<sup>21</sup> He is the Divider of men,<sup>22</sup> for whom He is the only way to the Father.<sup>23</sup> He offers Himself as the giver of rest to the weary,<sup>24</sup> and life to the dead,<sup>25</sup> and a mighty point of attraction for all.<sup>26</sup> He is the final and complete Revealer and Revelation of God.<sup>27</sup> His life would be given a ransom for many,<sup>28</sup> and His blood would be shed for the remission of sins,<sup>29</sup> and be the seal and attestation of the New Covenant.<sup>30</sup> His flesh would be for the life of the world.<sup>31</sup> At a future day He would come in heavenly glory,<sup>32</sup> when He should sit upon His throne—then would be the

"regeneration"—the setting of things right.<sup>33</sup> To His day have the ages looked forward.<sup>34</sup> Such were some of His claims.

What were the *titles* He assumed? In the presence of the Sanhedrin, and in response to His solemn adjuration, He declared Himself to be "*the Christ*"<sup>35</sup>—Israel's great Messiah; and the "*Son of the blessed*."<sup>36</sup> He accepted acclamation as the *Messianic King*.<sup>37</sup> By the evil spirits if not by men, He was recognized as "*the Holy One of God*."<sup>38</sup> He declared that His Being as *the Son* is inscrutable to all but the Father.<sup>39</sup> The honour due to Him as the Son is "even as" that due to the Father Himself,<sup>40</sup> and the awful issues of resurrection and judgment are His alone by divine commission.<sup>41</sup> All power, He declared, was His in heaven and earth.<sup>42</sup> Absolute absence of sin was His.<sup>43</sup> And yet, withal, He was the meek and lowly in heart; and we feel instinctively there is in this no inconsistency, such as we should feel if the greatest saint or archangel were to make even one of the least of these assertions. Is not this, though we be so familiar with it, one of the most astounding marvels of it all? Surely we may well say with the saints of earlier days: "If not God—not good." The titles He assumed and declared of Himself are in themselves sufficient witness of who it was that was there. If there was one title of God in the Old Testament—and we need ever to remember that the witness of our Lord's earthly life was to people whose minds had been formed by the Old Testament and could appreciate the force of references to it—which to a Jew connoted the idea of *absolute Deity*, it is that revealed in a critical hour to Moses: "I AM THAT I AM," or in shorter form, "I AM."<sup>44</sup> At a crucial moment, in the presence of His bitter foes, and

with a definiteness and precision which left no doubt in their minds of His meaning, does the Lord take to Himself this self-existent Deity: "Before Abraham was—I AM."<sup>45</sup> At the beginning of this notable chapter He writes on the ground *with His finger*. Did He not by this eloquent symbol show Himself to be the great Jehovah, the very writer of Sinai's law? At the close, in the words just quoted, He takes the place of the divine Being who commissioned Moses and who worked the wonders of Egypt and the wilderness. On ten other occasions, as recorded in the Gospel of John, does He use this form of expression: "I am . . ."<sup>46</sup>

How one and another in the gospel narrative are obliged to witness to the power of His *words*. In the synagogue at Nazareth they marvelled at the words of grace that proceeded from His mouth;<sup>47</sup> at a later date when the curious crowds had dwindled and many had left Him, Peter on behalf of the twelve takes up the story: "Lord, to whom shall we go, Thou hast the words of eternal life";<sup>48</sup> and later still the officers from the Pharisees were obliged to return to those that sent them and report: "Never man spake like this man!"<sup>49</sup> And as His glory shines thus before us in the words we have noted that fell from His lips, can we do else but bow before Him now, and say with one who passed from devotion to doubt, and from doubt to faith, and from that faith to worship: "My Lord and my God!"<sup>50</sup>

His *acts*—who can speak of these? Mighty works of power they were, the "powers of the world to come," but, let us note, never mere displays of power. The combined economy of power and beneficence of intention of these works abundantly attest their divine character, as they mark them off from all imitations such as imagina-

tion has depicted. There was a *moral* meaning and import to His miracles; they *revealed God* come down in grace. How pregnant with significance is the fact that He who had come to be the Servant of wretched man's need, and in this service the bright and living exhibition of God's goodness, never, save once,<sup>51</sup> wrought a miracle for Himself either for provision for His needs or protection from His enemies. Twice was He tempted thus: in the wilderness by Satan<sup>52</sup> and on the cross by the chief priests,<sup>53</sup> each time at a critical moment; but He did not do so. And this was *God!*<sup>1</sup> The divine *economy, unselfishness, and beneficence* of these works, and, we may add, their *publicity*—for never were they done in a corner—were the outward and visible signs of God's presence; that indeed "*God was in Christ* reconciling the world to Himself."<sup>54</sup> His entire life was a miracle. His incarnation with which it commenced, and His death with which, in a sense, it concluded, were voluntary acts.<sup>55</sup> Thus the beginning and the ending of this wondrous life witness to us whose life it was, for both birth and death with all of Adam's race are acts beyond the individual's volition,\* and expressive of the weakness of nature; but though in unutterable grace He came into true human infancy and into the dust of death for us men and for our redemption—these acts but speak forth the majesty of His Person.

The *elements* obeyed His will, and showed themselves His creatures. Twice He walked on the water;<sup>56</sup> and once He turned it into wine.<sup>57</sup> Gravitation—the laws of things *physical* are His, for it was by His own power He ascended to heaven from Olivet's mount.<sup>58</sup> When necessity demanded

\*We are not speaking of suicide.

He could vanish from sight.<sup>59</sup> The *vegetable* world, too, was His, and yielded its tribute to His glory. At His word the fig tree withered,<sup>60</sup> and in His hands a few loaves fed a multitude.<sup>61</sup> The *fish* of the sea also were His, and on three occasions were witnesses of His power and grace.<sup>62</sup> Disease—blindness, deafness, paralysis, hæmorrhage, fever, leprosy, amongst others, a sword wound too—could not resist His touch or word. And death itself, in three recorded instances, had to yield up its prey.<sup>63</sup> Surely it is not without significance that in the first case death had only just taken place; in the second the body was on the way to burial, and in the third had lain in the grave long enough for corruption to have set in. The persons raised had to die again; the death sentence upon the race was only for them temporarily reprieved, but in His own case, He could not be holden of death, and when He burst its bands and rose in triumph it was “in the power of an endless

life.”<sup>64</sup> By resurrection it is, and particularly His own, that we see the divine attestation of His glory, for thereby He was “declared” (“decisively proved”) the Son of God with power.”<sup>65</sup>

Think of the marvel of His promised presence, universal in *place*—“Where,” i.e., wherever;<sup>66</sup> and in *time*—“always,” i.e., *all the days* till the completion of the age.<sup>67</sup> When we remember that the Holy Ghost is His gift to us as well as the Father’s;<sup>68</sup> that His name is the warrant of prayer and the pledge of its answer;<sup>69</sup> that if as Christians we live it is “by,” that is, on account of, by reason of Him;<sup>70</sup> that equally with God the Father He is the Object of the faith, and love, and hope of His people,<sup>71</sup> we are constrained to exclaim, “Thou art indeed, O Lord, the Son of the living God, God manifest in flesh, and we give Thee without reserve the worship, the adoration and the devotion of our hearts!”

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| <p><sup>1</sup> Rev. 22. 13.<br/> <sup>2</sup> Matt. 16. 15.<br/> <sup>3</sup> Luke 2. 49.<br/> <sup>4</sup> Luke 4. 8.<br/> <sup>5</sup> Jude 9.<br/> <sup>6</sup> Matt. 17. 2.<br/> <sup>7</sup> Phil. 2. 6-8.<br/> <sup>8</sup> Mark 2. 5-12.<br/> <sup>9</sup> Mark 2. 27-8.<br/> <sup>10</sup> Matt. 12. 6.<br/> <sup>11</sup> Matt. 12. 42.<br/> <sup>12</sup> John 8. 53-56.<br/> <sup>13</sup> Matt. 8. 17; 12. 17; 21. 4; 27. 9, etc.<br/> <sup>14</sup> Matt. 5. 17.<br/> <sup>15</sup> John 6. 28-9.<br/> <sup>16</sup> Matt. 10. 15; 25. 35-46.<br/> <sup>17</sup> Mark 9. 37; Matt. 10. 40.<br/> <sup>18</sup> Mark 8. 38.<br/> <sup>19</sup> Matt. 21. 44.<br/> <sup>20</sup> Matt. 11. 6, R.V.<br/> <sup>21</sup> Matt. 5. 11.<br/> <sup>22</sup> Matt. 12. 30; 10. 34.<br/> <sup>23</sup> John 14. 6.<br/> <sup>24</sup> Matt. 11. 28.<br/> <sup>25</sup> John 3. 16, etc.</p> | <p><sup>26</sup> John 12. 32.<br/> <sup>27</sup> John 1. 18.<br/> <sup>28</sup> Matt. 20. 28.<br/> <sup>29</sup> Matt. 26. 28.<br/> <sup>30</sup> Do.<br/> <sup>31</sup> John 6. 51.<br/> <sup>32</sup> Luke 9. 26.<br/> <sup>33</sup> Matt. 19. 28.<br/> <sup>34</sup> Luke 10. 24; John 8. 56.<br/> <sup>35</sup> Mark 14. 61-2.<br/> <sup>36</sup> Do.<br/> <sup>37</sup> Luke 18. 39.<br/> <sup>38</sup> Mark 1. 24.<br/> <sup>39</sup> Matt. 11. 27.<br/> <sup>40</sup> John 5. 23.<br/> <sup>41</sup> John 5. 27-29.<br/> <sup>42</sup> Matt. 28. 18.<br/> <sup>43</sup> John 8. 46.<br/> <sup>44</sup> Exodus 3. 14.<br/> <sup>45</sup> John 8. 58.<br/> <sup>46</sup> John 4. 26; 6. 35; 8. 12; 10. 7; 10. 11; 11. 25; 13. 13; 14. 6; 15. 1; 18. 5.<br/> <sup>47</sup> Luke 4. 22.<br/> <sup>48</sup> John 6. 68.<br/> <sup>49</sup> John 7. 46.</p> | <p><sup>50</sup> John 20. 29.<br/> <sup>51</sup> Matt. 17. 27.<br/> <sup>52</sup> Matt. 4. 3.<br/> <sup>53</sup> Matt. 27. 41-2.<br/> <sup>54</sup> 2 Cor. 5. 19.<br/> <sup>55</sup> John 18. 37; 10. 18.<br/> <sup>56</sup> Matt. 14. 25.<br/> <sup>57</sup> John 2.<br/> <sup>58</sup> John 20. 17.<br/> <sup>59</sup> Luke 4. 30.<br/> <sup>60</sup> Matt. 21. 19.<br/> <sup>61</sup> Matt. 14. 13-21.<br/> <sup>62</sup> Luke 5. 6; Matt. 17. 27; John 21. 6.<br/> <sup>63</sup> Luke 7. 11-18; Luke 8. 49-56; John 12.<br/> <sup>64</sup> Heb. 7. 16; Rom. 6. 9.<br/> <sup>65</sup> Rom. 1. 4.<br/> <sup>66</sup> Matt. 18. 20.<br/> <sup>67</sup> Matt. 28. 20.<br/> <sup>68</sup> John 15. 26; 16. 7.<br/> <sup>69</sup> John 14. 13, etc.<br/> <sup>70</sup> John 6. 57.<br/> <sup>71</sup> John 14. 1, 23.</p> |
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# CLEAVE TO THE LORD.

## A Word to Young Believers.

**CLEAVE** to the Lord with purpose of heart. Depend on Him. There is power in Christ; there is sufficiency in Christ for all He would have you do or be. Some are allowed a long season of joy on first believing. But God knows our hearts, and how soon we begin to depend on our joy, and not on Christ. *He is our object—* not the joy.

Sin no longer remains *on* you, but the flesh is *in* you to the end: the old stock will put forth its buds, which must be nipped off as they appear. No fruit can come of it. It is the new nature that bears fruit *unto God*. But though the flesh is in you, do not be thinking of this, but *think of Christ*.

As you grow in the knowledge of Christ, a joy comes, deeper than the first joy. I have known Christ more or less between thirty and forty years, and I can truly say I have ten thousand times more joy in Him now than I had at first. It is a deeper, calmer joy. The water rushing down a hill is beautiful to look at, and makes most noise; but you will find the water in the plain deeper, calmer, more fit for general use.

A distracted heart is the bane of Christians. When we have got something that is not Christ, we are away from the source of strength. When your soul is *filled* with Christ, you have no heart or eye for the trash of this world. If Christ is dwelling in your heart by faith, it will not be a question with you, "What harm is there in this and that?" but rather, "Am I doing this for Christ?" "Can Christ go along with me in this?"

Do not let the world come in and distract your thoughts. I speak especially to young Christians. They who are older have had more experience in it, and know more what it is worth:

but it all lies shining before you, endeavouring to attract you. Its smiles are deceitful, still it smiles. It makes promises which it cannot keep; still it makes them. Your hearts are too big for the world: it cannot fill them. They are too little for Christ: He fills heaven, He will fill you to overflowing.

"Cleave to the Lord with *purpose of heart*." He knew how treacherous the heart is, and how soon it would put anything in *His* place. You will have indeed to learn what is your own heart. Abide with God and you will learn it with Him, and with His grace. If you do not, you will have with bitter sorrow to learn it with the devil, through his successful temptation.

But God is faithful. If you have been getting away from Him, and other things have come in, and formed a crust, as it were, over your hearts, you will not at once get back the joy. God will have you deal with this crust, and get rid of it. Remember Christ bought you with His own blood, that you should be His, not the world's.

Do not let Satan get between you and God's grace. However careless you may have been, however far you may have got away from Him, count on His love. It is His joy to see you back again. Look at the sin with horror, but never wrong Him by distrusting His love. Mistrust not His work, mistrust not His love. He has loved you, and will love you to the end.

Talk much with Jesus. Never be content without being able to walk and talk with Christ as with a dear friend. Be not satisfied with anything short of close intercourse of soul with Him who has loved you and washed you from your sins in His own blood.—J. N. D.

## WATCHMAN, WHAT OF THE NIGHT?

Notes on the Prophetic Outlook. No. 8.

(JAMES GREEN.)

*The Seventy Weeks.*—Dan. 9.

THE foretelling of coming events has always exercised a fascination over the human mind, and indeed, one of the objects that God has in view in unveiling the future is to call the attention of men to the fact that He is speaking to them. Prophecy affords the strongest evidence that the Scriptures have proceeded from a supernatural source, because it is plain that if that which is future is revealed therein, it must be of God. It is contrary to all human experience that any man can forecast events, with the accuracy found in the Scriptures, not only for the next day but for centuries in advance.

The prophecies of Daniel which are engaging our attention are so striking in this respect, that it is small wonder that those who desire to exclude the Divine Author, have tried to show that the book was written after the events had taken place. It would be easy to prove from evidence the fallacy of such an idea, but it must also be remembered that apart from the Spirit of God there can be no true understanding of the scope and bearing of any prophecy. Such came not in old time by the will of man, and cannot be interpreted by intellectual powers. Again there is a danger that the mind charmed by the fact of such a revelation may form a theory, and then seek the support of texts apart from their context for that which has been preconceived. This produces the various conflicting interpretations which have caused many to turn from the study of prophecy with feelings of disappointment. We are about to consider the remarkable prophecy given in Dan. 9; let us seek to read it with

something of the feeling which filled the soul of the prophet, listening as he must have done with careful attention to the words of the heavenly messenger, and with the consciousness that we need the teaching of the Holy Spirit to understand as well as to be morally affected by the communication.

The circumstances of the prophecy were these: Daniel was living in the first year of the combined empire of the Medes and Persians, answering to the silver breast and arms of the image which he had described to Nebuchadnezzar in his dream sixty-six years before. He had lived to see the first part of that dream fulfilled. The empire of Babylon, the head of gold, had passed away with the death of the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, the blasphemous Belshazzar, chap. 5., and Daniel is now in high office, the first of the three presidents appointed by Darius the Mede who is co-rex with Cyrus, 538 B.C.

The 9th chapter opens with the aged servant of God reading the book of Jeremiah the prophet. With what feelings of conviction that he had to do with a God who cannot lie, must he have read the words in Jer. 25. 11-14 and chap. 29. 10, 11. Conviction on the one hand that God had fulfilled His word, for as he turned the scroll he read the words (chap. 27. 7) that "all nations should serve Nebuchadnezzar and his son, and his son's son until the very time of his land come, and then many nations and great kings should serve themselves of him." Daniel had lived through these three reigns and had seen the sentence of judgment fulfilled. On the other hand, what hope must have filled his breast as he read on further, chap. 29. 10, "After

seventy years I will visit you and perform my good word towards you in causing you to return to this place" (Jerusalem). Note the effect that the word of God produced in Daniel. Immediately he is on his knees, praying and supplicating and making his confession to God with fasting and sackcloth. Put this magazine down, beloved reader, and read with care the prayer of Daniel, chap. 9. 4-19, then let us ask if it is not because this attitude of prayer and confession is lacking on our part, that the prophetic word seems to produce so little true separation to God, in those who are attracted by its marvellous predictions. Swiftly the answer came to Daniel, the man greatly beloved, concerning the city for which he made his prayer, verses 16, 18, 19, 20. Once indeed he had mentioned the sanctuary, and within two years he would witness the return of his people to rebuild the temple at the decree of Cyrus (Ezra 1. 1-14), but many years had yet to elapse before Jerusalem would be once more constituted a city by the rebuilding of its wall. It was concerning this latter and the coming of Messiah, that Daniel was to receive knowledge and understanding. It was the time of of the evening sacrifice when the angel Gabriel laid his hand upon the sorrowing prophet whose windows were open towards Jerusalem. How significant was the hour, God had not forgotten His word, that the burnt-offering should burn all night until the morning (Lev. 6. 9), typical of the great sacrifice which secures the final blessing of Israel. Seventy weeks or sevens said the angel are separated from the course of time for the accomplishment of six things, verse 24. Daniel had been reading in Jeremiah of years, and the seventy sevens are not weeks of days but of years. They cover therefore a period of  $70 \times 7 = 490$  years; at the

end of which time the six things named will come upon Daniel's people, Israel, and Daniel's holy city, Jerusalem. While it is true that the cross is the foundation of these matters, it is not of that peerless work that the angel speaks, but of the superstructure resting upon it.

1. "*To finish the transgression.*" The word translated finish has the force of "to stop," as in Hag. 1. 10, "stay." The great transgression of Israel has been idolatry, and although since the captivity their house has been swept of this, yet the unclean spirit will once more return with seven others more wicked, and the end will be worse than the beginning (Matt. 12. 43-45). But in that day a final end will be made of this, and the very names of the idols will be no more remembered, and the unclean spirit shall pass for ever out of the land (Zech. 13. 2).

2. "*To make an end of sins.*" The long period of their sins, during which they have been "Lo-Ammi" will be concluded, Jehovah will again speak comfortably to them (Isa. 40. 1), and the blessing of the New Covenant will be written in their hearts (Jer. 31. 31-34).

3. "*To make reconciliation for iniquity.*" The passover has already been fulfilled when Christ our passover was sacrificed for us and for Israel, but this answers to the day of atonement, which was separated in Israel's sacred year from the former by seven months. This is the day of mourning when they will afflict their souls (Lev. 23. 27; Zech. 12. 10-14), and confess their sins in the language of Isa. 53. 3-6. Then shall they find a fountain for their sins and uncleanness in the death of Him whom they despised and rejected. The type of the scapegoat will then be fulfilled (Lev. 16. 20-22).

4. *To bring in the righteousness of the*

ages. That for which the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now. The victory of good over evil will be manifest, and war shall be a thing of the past. No more shall wasting, destruction and violence be found in the land, but Jerusalem will be a witness to the salvation of God and from her gates shall go forth His praise (Isa. 60. 16-22).

5. *To seal up the vision and prophet.* There will be no longer need of these for every prophecy will be accomplished. They shine as a light in a dark place, as stars in the night, but then the morning will have come and the Sun of righteousness having arisen, the faith and hope prophecy awakened in waiting hearts will be lost in the sight of the glory that shall be revealed, cf. 1 Cor. 13. 8-10.

6. *To anoint the Most Holy.* That is the Holy of Holies in the great millennial temple described in the closing chapters of Ezekiel. The same prophet had described the lingering departure of the glory (chap. 10. 3, 4 and 11. 22-24, and he had a vision of its return (chap. 43. 1-9). The presence of God will again be manifest amongst His people Israel, and the name of Jerusalem in that day shall be "Jehovah Shammah = The Lord is there" (Ezek. 48. 35). For "The Christ," "The Anointed" King and Priest, shall yet bear the glory, and sit and rule upon His throne.

This is the great end for Daniel's people and city, which will be reached when the seventy sevens of years have been fulfilled.

The angel next proceeds to bring to the notice of the prophet the manner in which this period of 490 years is reckoned. For this purpose he bids him understand that it is divided into three unequal parts (verses 25-27), viz., 7 weeks = 49 years; 62 weeks =

434 years; and 1 week = 7 years; total 490 years; and that the object of the prophecy is to reveal the Person, apart from whose presence and work the six foregoing promises could not be achieved. Clearly and definitely does Gabriel indicate the time which would elapse from the commandment to restore and build the street and wall of Jerusalem, until Messiah the Prince: Firstly, 7 weeks = 49 years, followed by 62 weeks = 434 years; total 483 years. Of the 7 years required to complete the 490 he does not as yet speak. The 49 years ended in the days of Malachi, and the close of the 434 years is marked by an event which is unique in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, and which alone answers to the title "Messiah the Prince." This event recorded by each of the Evangelists (Matt. 21. 8; Mark 11. 8; Luke 19. 35; John 12. 12) took place when He entered Jerusalem in the manner foretold by Zechariah the prophet. "Behold thy King cometh unto thee" (Zech. 9. 9).

Four hundred and eighty-three years before that eventful day, Nehemiah the cupbearer received from Artaxerxes the King, in the twentieth year of his reign, in the corresponding month Nisan, a decree to restore the ruin and build the wall of Jerusalem (Neh. 2. 1-8), B.C. 455. From that date to the year 29 A.D., when the triumphant entry took place was 455 B.C. + 29 A.D. less 1, for adding B.C. to A.D. years, and equals 483 years.

Here the prophecy pauses, the angel adding that after this period had elapsed "Messiah should be cut off." It is important to observe that the death of the Lord did not take place in the course of the weeks, but in an interval undefined in duration between the 69th and 70th weeks. This interval, the exact limit of which is known

only to God, still runs on, although there is little doubt that its close is very near at hand. When the course of the prophecy is resumed, the last week of seven years will complete the full total of 490 years.

In our next study we will consider the uncounted interval which precedes the final section.

(To be continued.)

## THE HOLY GHOST AND THE FLESH.

ONE of the first manifested results of the presence of the Holy Ghost on earth dwelling in men, was **UNSELFISHNESS**. This found its expression in temporal things (Acts 2. 44-47), and the first publicly manifested sin in the church was **SELFISHNESS**. Ananias and Sapphira lied to the Holy Ghost in seeking to gain credit for a devotedness that they did not possess. What a contrast there is between the Spirit and the flesh. "But ye are not in the flesh, but the Spirit, if so be that

the Spirit of God dwell in you" (Rom. 8. 9). And the fruit of the Spirit is **LOVE**, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. The first of this cluster of fruit is love, and it was this that showed itself in that attractive unselfishness in Acts 2. It was the *lust of the flesh* that was the undoing of Ananias and Sapphira, but, "*this I say then, walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh*" (Gal. 5. 16).

## THE SECRET OF OVERCOMING.

BE right in the sanctuary if you would be right in the market place. Be steadfast in prayer if you would be calm in affliction. Start your day's race in the presence of God if you would run well. You will meet trials well if you are much with the Lord. Could the mother of Moses have laid him in the ark on the river's brink with such confidence if she had not

first laid him upon the heart of God? Every thing depends upon God being real to us, and this each one of us must prove for himself in daily life.

We ought to be continually grateful to God that He has given to us the Holy Scriptures, wherein we can read of Him, and which encourage us to draw near to Him and to trust Him at all times.

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.

## CORRECTION.

OUR readers will have noticed an error in *Answers to Correspondents*—"God the Son," in the September issue of our Magazine. The title, "God the Father," does, of course, occur in several passages in the Epistles. We regret the error.

## THE INCARNATION OF THE SON.

We are glad to be able to publish this letter received from Mr. James Boyd. We are sure that it will be helpful to many of our readers, especially in view of the widespread denial of the full and eternal Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and also in regard to questions that have arisen as to His incarnation and full and perfect manhood.

All who love the Lord must feel how important, how vital it is that the truth should be maintained as to His holy and blessed Person, as it is revealed to us in the Scriptures, all true knowledge of God depends upon this and consequently all true spiritual growth.

“You cannot be right in the rest,  
Unless you think rightly of Him.”—EDITOR.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—I can assure you that it has always been with the greatest reluctance and timidity I have penned anything on this sacred subject, and for various reasons. First, the incarnation of the Son is beyond the ability of any human being to fathom. The sense of my own inability to touch even the border of that sphere from which we are all warned off is in itself a terrible deterrent. Second, I have a shrinking from any discussion of the person of our Lord, because of the readiness of the human mind to intrude with its faulty, ignorant and pernicious reasonings. Third, because I do not consider it a fitting subject for debate. Fourth, because I gather from Scripture, that to confess Jesus as the Son of the living God; Creator; come in flesh; dead for our offences; raised for our justification; seated on the right hand of God; Lord of all; to be confessed as such with bended knee, is sufficient for Christian intercourse. On all this the Scriptures are luminous, requiring no clearing up from us.

It may be that in seeking to maintain the truth of Christ, one may stumble over the narrow boundary between truth and error, and that without any sense that he has done so. This gives occasion for those who see the error to come in with light from the Word, not with their human reasonings on the text, but in the application of the text itself, bringing it in grace to bear upon the conscience of the one in error.

Regarding the subject we had under consideration, I entirely object to the notion that the blessed Son of God consists of two persons so distinct from one another that one can be said to know all things, and the other knowing scarcely anything more than other men. Omniscience is ascribed to one, and human limitations to the other. This unholy and conceited analysing of this mysterious Person cannot be otherwise than ruinous to the saints.

In the way in which He is presented to us in Scripture He is ever one distinct and unique personality, never is there the slightest hint of duality. Of course, He was made to know what human weakness was. He felt the pangs of hunger, but He who suffered thus could have made the stones of the desert bread. Thirst and weariness He knew for He was here in flesh and blood. In His practical life He was made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest. But He who suffered all those evils that belong to man's present condition was the living God; God and Man in eternal unity.

In Phil. 8. 6–8, it is the One who was in the form of God who descended to the death of the cross. In Ps. 102 it is the One whose strength was weakened in the way, and whose days were shortened to whom the work of creation and the change of all things is ascribed. The One who seems to despair of life is the Creator. It was the same Jesus that went back to the Father who had

come from Him. He was the living bread that had come down from heaven, which He says was His flesh to be given for the life of the world. And when they were upset by such a statement, He says: "What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where He was before." None of these statements could have been made concerning Him had He not been God, and none could have been said had He not been Man.

He was here in manhood, seen to be a Man, a Man that was called Jesus, come of a woman, born into this world. He says to Pilate: "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world"; and to the Jews who were determined to take His life: "Ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth." And in the same chapter: "Before Abraham was I am." What a glorious mingling of the divine and human. "A Man among men, yet in all that He said and did *Godhead* comes to light."

"There see the Godhead glory  
Shine thro' the human veil,  
And willing hear the story  
Of love that's come to heal.

"We cling to Thee in weakness,  
The manger and the cross;  
We gaze upon Thy meekness,  
Thro' suffering, pain, and loss."

He was a Man here before the eyes of men; Man in the whole texture of His bodily and spiritual being, but God and Man in the complex and inscrutable unity of His adorable person; as truly God as Man; nothing lacking as to Godhead, for its fulness was there; and nothing lacking as to Manhood, for perfection characterized Him in whatever way He may be viewed. How the human and divine were from the moment of the conception of this glorious Person formed in unity and mysteriously blended, so the two were not separate existences, but interwoven and combined in the most perfect oneness, no one knows but He who

could say of Him: "*The Man that is my Fellow*" (Zech. 13. 7).

I say all this to emphasize the fact that the various ways in which the perfect life of this heavenly Man is portrayed in the Gospels, shows, not the activities resulting from a dual personality, though we see the divine and the human perfectly blended, but those activities flowing forth from one spring; their overwhelming testimony carrying conviction to heart and mind, that the One from whom those actions flow is both God and Man, but in one person.

He did nothing as God only, neither did He anything as man only. It is likely to be replied that He ate, drank, rested and slept. But these things were only the accompaniments of flesh and blood, which He had taken in order that He should be able to die and redeem us to God by His blood. It might be said that He prayed, and that God does not require to pray, but in the midst of His prayers thoughts like these are sharply rebuked by "*Father, I will.*" Then He claims glory with the Father on the ground that He had glorified the Father; but what creature could claim reward from God on the ground of his faithfulness? Jesus says to His disciples: "When ye have done all these things that are commanded you; say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do." But when our Lord took the place of a servant it was His own act, and altogether voluntary: "*He took upon Himself* the form of a servant."

At the grave of Lazarus, when He saw the distress of Mary, and the Jews that had come with her, He was deeply moved in spirit, and shed tears. Perhaps it will be said that this was the expression of His human sympathies, and I do not say that it was not; but how could it be this apart

from the divine? The one could not be without the other, unless they proceeded from different sources, and there was but one source from which they could come, and that source was the heart of Jesus.

Has the living God no compassions or sympathies? Can He not be moved by the sight of human woes? The presence of Him who was sent here by the Father is a sufficient answer to that. And is not the cross of the Son the great manifestation of that love and pity with which He looked down upon a world dominated by sin and Satan? Even as to the sorrows of

His earthly and rebellious people He could say: "In all their afflictions He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them: In His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and He bare them, and carried them all the days of old" (Isa. 63. 9).

But I must bring this long letter to a conclusion. Some speak of the man Christ Jesus as a creature—some speak of His limitations as a man—this is that into which Christendom is drifting to-day; and it is really but a step toward the denial of His Godhead. May His people prayerfully watch against this snare. J. BOYD.

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

### Tribulation.

Are trials included in the word tribulation? "Tribulation worketh patience" (Romans 5.) Job learned patience, did he experience trials or tribulation? Sickness teaches us to bear patiently, but it might not be a trial, nor tribulation. Please explain.—MELBOURNE.

THE word translated tribulation in Romans 5, means pressure and affliction, and all trials in the Christian's life are certainly this, and sickness is not the least of them. It may interest and help you if we quote from Trench's "Study of Words." "We all know that in a general way," he says, "this word tribulation means affliction, sorrow, anguish; but it is quite worth our while to know *how* it means this, and to question the word a little closer. It is derived from the Latin '*tribulum*,' which was the threshing instrument or roller whereby the Roman husbandman separated the corn from the husks; and the *tribulatio* in its primary significance was the act of this separation. But some Latin writer of the Christian Church appropriated the word and image for the setting forth of a higher truth; sorrow, distress and adversity being the appointed means for the separating in men of whatever in them was light, trivial and poor from the solid and the true, their chaff from their wheat."

No figure could be more striking, and nothing could be more encouraging for

us when passing under the *tribulum* than the thought that it is all to get rid of the chaff that is in us that the wheat may remain; that it is the dealings of our faithful God with us for His own glory and our good. When we look at each trial as it comes from this standpoint, we shall not murmur and complain and grow more and more impatient, but it will work in us patience or endurance, and we shall experience the mercy and goodness of God in the trial and glory in it. It will fill us with hope as we see the end that God has in view in it all. And here seems to be the point in your question. For some, trials do not seem to work patience at all, but the reverse; the *tribulum* seems only to discover much chaff and little wheat. The reason is that the love of God is very little known by them, and His will and purpose is of very little account to them. It is sad when it is so and much peace of heart and blessing do such miss. Yet, if they are truly the children of God, He will continue His work in them unto the day of Jesus Christ, and "not the least grain shall fall upon the earth" (Amos 9. 9).

# DWELLING TOGETHER IN UNITY.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

## An Address on Psalms 133. and 45. 8.

WHEN we take up the Scriptures to read them, we are not reading the words of men, no matter how good or wise, but we are reading the words of God. That is a fact acknowledged by us as a point of doctrine, but do we appreciate the tremendous import of it? God has been pleased to express His thoughts for our guidance and our blessing, and we have those thoughts in the Bible. It is the Word of God. If it is the Word of God it carries authority; if it is the Word of God it must be absolutely and infinitely wise; if it is the Word of God it cannot be improved upon; if it is the Word of God we must take heed to it and do it. To cherish a spirit that is foreign to it or to act in a way contrary to it means to set ourselves in opposition to the revealed will of God.

Keeping these things in mind, let us consider Ps. 133. It says, "*Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!*" To whom is it good and pleasant? Surely to all those who love what is of God. But not to them only; the Psalm shows us that it is good and pleasant to God Himself. That when He looks down on this world, filled as it is with hatred and strife, there is something that is good and pleasant to Him in the midst of it, and that is unity among brethren. Let us not introduce any of our "buts" into the passage, but let us take it as it stands, and consider it as the word of God to us, then the beauty and power of it will not fail to affect us.

But who are these "brethren"? How wide is the sweep of that good word? We who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity present in this hall are included in it, surely, but it goes out wider. Let us stand in thought and listen to

Him saying, as He did to Mary, "Go unto *My* brethren." We are in such danger of that withering sectarianism that talks about *our brethren*, and that thinks along narrow lines and in limited circles, that we need constantly to turn back to His words, and to let the love with which they are vibrant thrill and enlarge our souls. He speaks of "*My brethren*," and when we understand the meaning of that word, and who they are of whom the Lord thus speaks, let us know that God says that it is good and pleasant to Him when they dwell together in unity.

### WHAT UNITY IS LIKE.

"*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.*"

This precious ointment, the holy anointing oil, is described for us in Exodus 30. If we read from the 22nd verse to the 33rd, we shall find how definite and particular were the instructions given by God to Moses regarding it. And we learn that it was to be for God's sanctuary alone. It had not to be imitated nor had any of the Israelites to have it in their houses. God reserved it for Himself and His own pleasure. He surrounded Himself with its fragrance in His own dwelling, and the reason for this was that it told forth in a type the preciousness of Christ to God as He lived His life of holy devotedness to Him on earth. From the start of His life to the close of it, it was all beautiful and fragrant: every moment of it, on all occasions, in public and in private, entirely and altogether it was perfect. His words and works that men could hear and see, and the thoughts and the feelings

behind the words and works that men could not see, yielded alike infinite delight to the Father's heart. We can understand that. We delight to know that that was so—we are assured that nothing but that could be true.

Is it possible that there could be anything like that in the world now? I want you to notice that I am asking a question, and I want you to consider the question well and weigh your answer before you give it. Is it possible that there could be anything in this world to-day fragrant to God as was the life of Jesus? Yes, thank God, it is possible. Lest you should think that I am saying something that I am not warranted in saying, I will quote the words of the Psalm again: "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 the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments."

It is evident then that the blessedness of unity amongst brethren cannot be exaggerated, and as we consider the way that God looks upon it, we shall all be ready to admit that we should each endeavour with a whole-hearted and continual diligence to avoid everything that would mar it where it does exist, and to restore it where, through folly or self-will, it has been broken. To do other than this would be to manifest a sinful indifference to that which is pleasurable to God.

#### HOW THE UNITY CAN BE MAINTAINED.

This unity can only be secured and maintained in the life of Christ expressed in us in the power of the Holy Ghost. Christ is our life, and God's thought for us is that that precious and perfect life, which was so fragrant to Him, should be reproduced in us

who are members of the body of Christ, and it is as that life expresses itself in one way in one member and another way in another that the unity of the whole goes up in fragrance to God. Col. 3. gives it to us. Read first chapter 1. 27: "To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles which is *Christ in you*, the hope of glory." Lay hold upon the words, "Christ in you." Now read the third verse of chapter 3.: "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God, and when *Christ, who is our life*,"—keep that in mind, that Christ is our life. Now look at the ninth verse:

"Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;

"And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him:

"Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.

"Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;

**"FORBEARING ONE ANOTHER, AND FORGIVING ONE ANOTHER, IF ANY MAN HAVE A QUARREL AGAINST ANY: EVEN AS CHRIST FORGAVE YOU, SO ALSO DO YE.**

"And above all these things put on charity (love), which is the bond of perfectness.

"And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called **IN ONE BODY**; and be ye thankful.

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and

hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."

These verses unfold for us the character of the new man in which Christ is all and in all. The graces of which they speak have to be put on, they are to be seen externally, but they are the result of life within. They describe for us things that came out in all their perfection in Christ, and they are now to be the adorning of those who form His body. The fragrant oil of the sanctuary was poured upon the head of Aaron, but it went even to the skirts of his garments. Christ is the Head of the body, and the fragrance of all that is delightful to God is upon Him in perfection, but the whole body must be characterized by the grace of the Head : that very fragrance must flow to the most extreme member of His body here below. It is this that these verses teach us. May we all earnestly seek to have our full part in it.

But how will this work out in practice ? Simply enough. If there is a Christian upon earth with whom you have a quarrel, forgive him, and do it at once. If there is one who tries and irritates you, show forbearance, put on with regard to him bowels of mercies, humbleness of mind, meekness, and longsuffering ; let love cover all your actions to all who are fellow-members with you of the body of which Christ is Head. Take this group of heavenly graces, make them your study daily, and determine by the grace of Christ that they shall be your standard, even though you fail, for you had better stumble aiming at the highest than walk securely on a lower plane.

It should be abundantly clear to the youngest and the least intelligent Christian that if we abounded towards all who love the Lord in these precious graces discord would be impossible, and that the blending of these things

together in the power of the Spirit would be most fragrant to God as being the reproduction of the life of Christ in His members below. And, thank God, every one of us may have a part in this. This, remember, "*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.*" **THERE IS NOTHING ON EARTH MORE FRAGRANT TO GOD THAN UNITY AMONG BRETHREN, AND SURELY WE DESIRE TO YIELD FRAGRANCE TO HIM.**

#### THE REMEDY FOR DISCORD.

But you may say : " No doubt, unity amongst brethren is most blessed and desirable, but the brethren with whom I have to do are so difficult to get on with ; they are cantankerous, self-opinionated, and unspiritual, so that I have despaired of ever being able to dwell in unity with them. In such circumstances what should I do ? "

One thing I would ask in answering such a question. Do those brethren earnestly desire to walk in the truth ? Do they love the Lord Jesus in sincerity ? If so, and if you are like-minded in purpose with them as to this, it is evident that you have grown weary in well-doing, and that you need a spiritual cordial to revive your fainting spirit, and to put fresh energy into your endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit.

Turn to Ps. 45. 8. It may be that in this verse we shall find something that will meet the need. "*All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia out of the ivory palaces where they have made thee glad.*" You will notice that in this Psalm the Lord is spoken of as being glorious and precious in the estimation of those who in grace have

been brought to know Him, and in this verse He possesses a fragrance to them that belongs to none else. Some of the ingredients that make up that fragrance are the same as those given in Exodus 30. There, as we have seen, it is what He is to God ; here it is what He is to us. But there is one ingredient here, the aloes, that is not found in Exodus 30. This arrested my attention in considering the passage, and made me search to see how this special perfume was procured. I found in an old dictionary the following account of it. **IT WAS THE INNER WOOD, OR HEART OF A TREE THAT GREW IN INDIA, EXCEEDINGLY FRAGRANT, WORTH MORE THAN ITS WEIGHT IN GOLD, AND SAID TO BE A SOVEREIGN CORDIAL FOR ALL FAINTING FITS AND NERVOUS DISORDERS.** If the learned compiler of that old dictionary had intended to give a description of the love of Christ, he could not have succeeded better.

The aloes tree had to be cleft if the fragrance of its heart was to be disclosed, and it was at Calvary, when cleft by the sword of God's judgment against sin, that the heart of Christ disclosed all the greatness of its love, and there is nothing in the universe more fragrant than that—the love of Christ, which passes knowledge. Further, His love is far more precious than gold. If the world could bring all the gold that it possesses and could place it before us, none of us who know the love of Christ would exchange that knowledge for that great price, it is more precious than gold. And it is said to be a sovereign remedy for all fainting fits. This is the answer to your need. You say your brethren are difficult to get on with ; that you have done your best to dwell in unity with them, but you have found that it is of no use. You have grown

weary in well-doing, and are suffering from a spiritual fainting fit. What is the remedy ? This is the remedy—the love of Christ. To come more under its influence and to know it better is what you need. To receive in a fuller measure into your own heart this sovereign cordial, this is the only remedy that I know of.

There seems to be a condition spiritually that answers to the very common nervous breakdown. Spiritual neurasthenia is a serious trouble, and causes much disquiet and trouble in God's family ; how irritable, how sensitive, how quick to take offence—how short of patience we often are. But there is a sovereign remedy. It is the love of Christ. How it quietens and soothes us to get near the Lord ; how it allays the fever, throws things into their proper perspective, removes fears and suspicions, invigorates and strengthens us, and makes us able to meet the things that otherwise would irritate us, enables us to meet them in the grace of Christ. When we are drawn into His company and begin to realize what His love is—that love that He bears to all His own even unto the end, we become ashamed of our selfishness, our impatience, our irritability, and our hearts warm towards even the most unlovely of our brethren. This makes us strong to serve others in their weakness, as He did when He bent at the feet of His disciples and washed their feet, though He was their Lord and Master. What love was His, and He has left us an example that we should follow in His steps.

It is in the power of His life which has become our life, and as we are maintained by the Holy Spirit in the consciousness of His love to us that we shall set ourselves with renewed purpose of heart to dwell together in unity with our brethren.

## “PREPARED UNTO EVERY GOOD WORK”

Read 2 Timothy 2. 21.

ONE hundred thousand people gathered to see the launch of the great ship, the biggest that had ever taken to the water. Thunderous cheers greeted her as she gracefully slid down to the river, and there she rode, a veritable leviathan, dwarfing every other ship in sight. The river was crowded with many kinds of craft, all pouring forth their greetings by steam hooters and whistles. But I noticed that some of them did more than whistle ; they were there for a purpose, and as they were brought into their appointed places, lines were cast out from the big ship and speedily seized by the men on the small tug-boats, and slowly they towed the vessel to her berth. Then I said within myself, “ It is not necessary to be big to be useful.”

Great things and much admired are often dependent upon the things that are small and despised. To be ready is the chief thing ; prepared unto every good work, and I prayed in my heart, “ O God, I do not ask Thee to make me great, but I do ask that I may be so near to Thee and so fit to be used, that I may not miss any service that Thou hast for me to do.”

Is anyone discouraged because they cannot do some great thing ? Do not be discouraged, but be content to do His bidding. Do His bidding faithfully, and your service will have its place in the bearing of souls to heaven, just as the work of those river tug-boats had their part in sending out the big ship that now carries thousands of passengers to other lands.

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“ *THAT good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God* ”—Romans 12. 2.

“ Kind is God’s will and sweet,  
My own I dare not ask ;  
My heaven is at His feet,  
Or at His task.”

“ *Heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ* ”—Romans 8. 17.

“ And we our great Fore-runner see  
In His own glory there ;  
Yet not ashamed—with such as we  
As First-born, all to share.  
For we, as sons through grace, are owned  
And, ‘ Abba, Father ’ cry ;  
Heirs too—so rich doth grace abound—  
Joint-heirs with Him on high.”

“ *Ye ought to say, If the Lord will* ”—James 4. 15.

“ If place I choose or place I shun,  
My soul is satisfied with none ;  
But when Thy will directs my way  
’Tis equal joy to go or stay.”

# “MORAL BANKRUPTCY” OR “SPIRITUAL WEALTH.”

(H. J. VINE.)

RELIGIOUS leaders, ecclesiastics, politicians, judges and others who are keenly interested in present conditions, all speak of the “moral bankruptcy” which is prevalent. The shipwreck is visible on all sides and the wreckage is cast up before the gaze of the observer from the troubled seas of the nations! We speak specially of the so-called Christian nations.

This must seriously discourage, as well as sadden, the hearts of all believers in the gospel who are not instructed in the Word of Truth. But those who know and value the Bible, which is the Word of God, are not discouraged. They are saddened as they see the general downgrade in regard to faith and morals, but they are not disheartened or daunted in the conflict of the faith thereby, for the Spirit of God has taught them concerning this very departure from the right ways of God.

In 2 Timothy 3. the Holy Spirit says, “*This know,*”—for it was a matter that no servant of the Lord should remain ignorant of—“in the last days perilous times shall come!” Then follows a list of the things which mark the moral bankruptcy of a degraded Christendom. In comparing this list with Romans 1. 24–32, which describes the corruptions of heathendom, we become painfully aware of the fact that some of the worst forms of sin and iniquity, which were foretold in regard to Christendom, are but a recrudescence of what obtained in darkest heathendom. Nor is this only predicted in the Word of God, but on all sides the evils are so in evidence that, as we have said, it is commonly spoken of as “moral bankruptcy,” and mostly by men who are quite unaware

that their very words do but prove the truth of the Bible.

Those who have salvation in Christ Jesus, redemption and forgiveness of sins through His blood, are taught by the Holy Spirit, who indwells them, to rejoice in our Lord Jesus Christ, not only as *Saviour* but also as *Exemplar*. The order may not be reversed! He is only known as our example after He has first saved us with an everlasting salvation! Being saved, we are free to follow Him as our Pattern and our Guide. Of such the apostle says in Ephesians, “Ye are saved by grace” (2. 5–8), and “have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus” (4. 21).

These latter words connect themselves with the passage which shows that we are blessed and enriched in what is “new” in contrast to the wretched and bankrupt state of what is “old.” For our instruction, the Spirit designates one as “the new man” and the other as “the old man” (22–24). True believers are of the one, unbelievers are of the other. The first describes what is vital and genuine, the second that which is corrupt and deceitful. Being renewed in the spirit of their minds, believers are not exactly exhorted to put on the new man, for that has taken place; so it reads, “having put on *the new man*, which according to God is created in truthful righteousness and holiness” (24, N.T.). This shows where real moral wealth is to be found. On the other hand we read in verse 22 of “having put off according to the former conversation *the old man* which corrupts itself according to the deceitful lusts” (N.T.). Here we see what marks moral degeneracy to-day as well as in the apostle’s day.

The true riches which belong to the redeemed in Christ Jesus find their exemplification in the Saviour, the Son of God, as we have said, "the truth is in Jesus"; and Colossians 3. tells us that those of the new man are "renewed into full knowledge according to the image of Him" (10, N.T.), also that "Christ is everything, and in all." Therefore being "the elect of God, holy and beloved," they are to put on in a practical way "bowels of compassion, kindness, meekness, longsuffering, forbearing one another and forgiving one another." They are told to act as Christ did, and to let the peace of Christ and the word of Christ preside and dwell richly within. There is no moral bankruptcy here, but rather moral prosperity.

Travelling in a railway carriage some while ago, a wealthy man of the world talked with an earnest believer on the Son of God. He spoke sadly of the corrupt state of society in general, and of the unhappiness of the well-to-do, especially remarking that there was something seriously wrong in conditions that produced such misery.

The child of God to whom he was talking rejoined, "One of the happiest men I have ever met, lives in a small town near by, and he earns his living by sweeping the roads. Some have spoken of him as a spiritual gentleman."

"That is interesting," remarked the other, "How is his happiness to be accounted for?"

"First of all," was the answer, "because he has found his soul's need met by his Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ! and secondly, because he has found true and lasting satisfaction in following Him closely. He is a living proof that *moral wealth is more important than material wealth.*"

A man on leaving the graveside of

a beloved saint of God, remarked to me, "That was a fine woman over whose grave you spoke to us!"

"Well," I replied, "I know she had a wonderful Saviour—God's beloved Son!"

"Yes," he answered, "and that is what made her such a fine woman!"

It is refreshing and cheering in these days of moral bankruptcy to be reminded now and again of the source of moral wealth. In the Son of God is the fulness, and the saints who are in Christ Jesus find their completeness for all in Him. Indeed Colossians 2. 3 brings both together, for there it should read "*in which*" rather than "in Him," for the Spirit is speaking of "the mystery" which is "Christ and the assembly"; so it says, "In which are hid *all the treasures* of wisdom and knowledge" (N.T.). The riches of God's grace have blessed us in Christ, and the riches of the glory are to be expressed through the saints thus blessed in Him, because Christ is in them.

Moreover it is strengthening and encouraging to us who find ourselves in these very days—foretold as "difficult days"—to find that the Bible is so fully to be relied upon that it has told us of the moral break-down before it came to pass.

Finally, we see that the very attacks of Modernism upon this Book—which has Christ as its divine Subject—are only helping on the general bankruptcy which men deplore, and this surely causes us to turn the more wholeheartedly to the Word of God, to learn by the Spirit's teaching more of the glorious and gracious Saviour, who has made the Father known, and caused us to sing,

"Happy still in God confiding;  
Fruitful, as in Christ abiding;  
Steadfast, through the Spirit's guiding:  
All must be well."

## MONTHLY BIBLE READING. No. 4.

## The Gospel of John. Ch. 1. 29-34.

IT is only in this Gospel in which the glory of the Son of God is so fully revealed that John the Baptist's testimony to Him as the Lamb of God is given. This is noteworthy, and from it we should learn at least that in considering the sacrifice that He made upon the cross we must not lose sight of who He was that made it. It was the greatness of the Person that gave efficacy and perfection to His work. He is the Passover Lamb. The Passover is prominent in this Gospel. It was at the Passover that He cleansed the Temple (chap. 2. 13). It was when the Passover was nigh that He fed the multitude (chap. 6. 4). At the third Passover in the Gospel the people sought for Him in the Temple (chap. 11. 55). And at the preparation for the fourth Passover the last solemn scenes which had their culmination in the cross were enacted. And it is in this Gospel only that the words are quoted from the Scriptures, "Not a bone of Him shall be broken." We find that this instruction was given in regard to the Passover lamb in Exod. 12. 46 and Num. 9. 12.

We remember that in Exod. 12., the Israelites had to take a lamb on the tenth day of the month and slay it on the fourteenth day. For four days it lived with them in the house that was to be sheltered from the judgment by its blood. It was before their very eyes during that period. They might consider it and talk of it and say, "This is the lamb that is to suffer for us." It is in this way that the Lamb of God is before us in this Gospel. The work of the Baptist was to call attention to Him, and we behold Him from the tenth day to the fourteenth, dwelling among us. We can trace His foot-

steps from one passover to another until the fourth is reached, and we can say, "This is the true Passover Lamb." We behold Him as He walks, without spot or blemish. He could in this Gospel challenge His enemies, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" (chap. 8. 46), and even the heartless pagan judge had to own three times over that he could find no fault in Him (chap. 18. 38; 19. 4, 6). As we behold Him we shall surely be moved to follow Him until we reach the place of sacrifice, and there wonder and worship in the presence of the love that led Him to die for such as we are.

He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and shame to the uttermost was heaped upon Him; but we do not begin here with that, but with the dignity, the glory of His Person, He is the LAMB OF GOD. God's Lamb provided by God, and for God, and coming forth from Him, and here John breaks out for the third time: "THIS IS HE of whom I said, After me cometh a Man which is preferred before me," but why should He be preferred before, or take precedence of John? "for He was before me." At each step in his testimony he maintains the truth as to the One of whom he speaks. He was before John, the Word in the beginning, the Son in the bosom of the Father, and yet "a man." None other than He could be the Lamb of God.

John had had no previous acquaintance with the Lord, and though he was according to nature His cousin, yet this did not help him to recognize Him when He appeared. He knew Him not, except by divine revelation. It was God who sent him to baptize, who told John how he would know Him: "Upon whom thou shalt see the

*Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the same is He that baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.*" And John bear record as to this. He saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode on Him. The dove is an emblem of purity and peace. The Spirit could rest upon the Lord as a Man upon earth with peace and complacency, because He was altogether pure and spotless. Thus was He distinguished from all other men, and though as truly a man as any other, yet how different from all others! A Man without sin! The second Man, the Lord from heaven! and He who, through the eternal Spirit that had come upon Him, would offer Himself without spot to God (Heb. 9. 14).

And He is the One who baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. In the three synoptic Gospels John contrasts himself with the Lord in this respect. He says, "I baptize you with water," I can bring you down into the place of death, the only right place for you because of your sinful state, "but He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost." He alone can bring you into life, and impart the Holy Spirit to be the power of the life that He gives. This He has done from the right hand of God in heaven, and thus has the faith of Christ been established on the earth in divine and heavenly power. But the cross had to precede this. First He is the Lamb of God on the cross to meet all our liabilities and for our

redemption, then raised up from the dead and exalted to the right hand of God, He baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. He brings those who have redemption through His blood into vital relationship with Himself and His Father by the gift of the Holy Ghost. But this is a divine prerogative, hence John exclaims, "*And I saw and bear record that this is the Son of God.*"

It is instructive to see that a new day begins at this point (verse 35), and two disciples who hear John speak follow Jesus, not because they were commanded to do so, but because He had become the supreme object of their hearts. Their feet could but follow Him who had taken possession of their hearts. And this beautiful result of John's testimony was prophetic of that which now is in this day of the Holy Ghost. It is His great work to take of Christ's things and show them to us, to fill hearts with His beauty so that He becomes all-sufficing. And here we have the fulness of the gospel and the effect of it. First, the Lamb of God, the sacrifice for sin upon the cross. Then that same blessed Person raised up from the dead and glorified in heaven, to give the Holy Ghost to all who believe in Him, and then Himself in that heavenly glory, the supreme object of the hearts of those whom He has redeemed—their Leader, Lord, and Centre.

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*"My Father will love him, and we will come, and make our abode with him"*  
—John 14. 23.

' Be not to me, my God,  
As one that turned aside  
To tarry for a night, and trod  
His onward path; ABIDE  
WITH ME, as light Divine  
That brings into my breast  
That peace and joy e'en now, as mine,—  
Soon my eternal rest."

# DISENTANGLEMENT.

(F. B. HOLE.)

An Address. Matthew 24. 37-41, 44-51 ; 25. 1-13.

ONE verse of the hymn we have just sung should impress us :—

“ Lord, Lord, Thy fair creation groans,  
The air, the earth, the sea,  
In unison with all our hearts,  
And calls aloud for Thee.”

When some seventy or eighty years ago the late Sir Edward Denny wrote those beautiful words he could hardly have foreseen what was coming literally in our days. No verse of a hymn came more strongly to my mind during the Great War than that one. The air, with the modern developments of aviation, the earth, with its thundering battalions and big guns, and the sea, with its deadly submarines, were all groaning under man's perversity and iniquity and strife. Sad to say, man, the chiefest of God's works, made as God's representative, is himself the worker of all the mischief. Not the dumb creatures, but man is the mischief-maker in this sad world of ours, and everybody knows it. The world, whether you look at it politically, industrially, socially, or in any other way, is in a state of hopeless tangle. Perhaps somebody here to-night may turn and say, “ Yes ; but you are a Christian. You speakers are part of the Christian church, and you cannot afford to throw stones at us, who have no pretension to Christianity, for you Christians are in the most terrible state of tangle.” That is honestly and at once admitted. Tangles are to be found on every hand. Striving does not help matters. It is like the fly when it goes blundering into the spider's web. The more it struggles the more tightly it gets caught. Its very struggles only entangle it more deeply in the thing from which it desires to be free. The world has its struggles, its plans, and its schemes, but every effort,

however well-intentioned, will only land it further into the tangle.

Now I want to speak to you of the Lord Jesus Christ and His advent as the grand solution of every problem. He is the great disentangler of all the entanglements. This Gospel of Matthew specially emphasizes that side of things. I trust you have sufficiently read your Bibles to remember that Matthew 13. is the great parable chapter, the chapter of seven parables, beginning with the parable of the sower. I want to remind you particularly of the parable of the tares and the wheat. Though the good seed was sown in the field of the world by the Lord Jesus Christ, the devil got to work and sowed darnel, a thing which in its earlier stages exactly resembles wheat, but is not wheat. In that parable we have the Lord Jesus Christ instructing us, who may be the servants of Christ in these days, that it is not our commission to put the world right. The field is the world, not the church. In the world you have this mixture. We look abroad through Christendom to-night, and we see this strange mixture on every hand. The tares are hopelessly mixed up with the wheat, and the instructions of the Master to His servants are not to attempt to sever the tares from the wheat, lest in so doing they root up the wheat. We have not the discernment necessary for the task. He shows us that what man cannot accomplish is going to be accomplished at the end of the age by God Himself, using angelic ministry.

You pass on through the parables of that chapter, and the last of the seven is the parable of the net, which gathers out fish of every kind, some perfectly good for human consumption, some

perfectly worthless. The sorting is going to take place. There are those who will sort every good fish out of the mass that the worthless may be discarded. That is disentanglement again.

Then, passing on to chapter 24. where we began to read, you have the coming of the Lord distinctly foretold, and when He comes He is going to differentiate. There will be two men in the field, and two women grinding at the mill—one shall be taken and the other left. Who can read the heart and act thus but One, the Lord Jesus Christ, at His advent? He will disentangle. He holds up before us in an ideal way the good servant, and then He presents to us the evil servant, and He tells us that the coming of the Son of Man is that which will put the evil servant and the good servant respectively in their places for ever.

We read in chapter 25. that the kingdom of heaven was likened unto ten virgins who went forth to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were wise and five of them were foolish, but nobody knew they were wise and foolish as yet. Time had to elapse before the thing was proved. They were externally alike. The difference was that some had only lamps with wicks, but the wise had oil in their vessels with their lamps. It was not the day of glass containers to lamps, where you can easily see whether you have oil or not. It was hidden. It was an inside thing that differentiated between the wise and the foolish. When there went forth a cry heralding the return of the absent bridegroom there began to be a shaking. Then agitation was written upon many faces, and then discoveries were made. The wise had oil in their vessels and the foolish had no oil. So the line of demarcation was drawn.

Someone will say, "Is not this intended to teach us the way in which the Lord will differentiate between the faithful of His people, and those who are less faithful? Is not this a picture of the devoted Christian on the one hand, and the unspiritual and worldly on the other?" My answer to that unhesitatingly is "No." My reason for so saying is the answer the Lord Himself makes to the foolish virgins in verse 12. They come afterwards, and say, "Lord, Lord, open to us." What does He say? "I used to know you, but now I have forgotten you"? "I do know you, but I am not going to own that I know you until you reform your ways, and behave rather better"? That would suit some theories, but He said, "I know you not." There is another verse that says, "The Lord knoweth them that are His," so that they represent those who are not His. There is a vast amount of mere pretension, without any corresponding reality. There are lots of people who claim the Christian name nominally, but the root of the matter is not in them. At this point, let us challenge our own hearts. Where do we stand as to this? Who is there here to-night that would say, "I am a church member, I am a deacon; I am a Sunday-school worker"? You may appeal to certain external things, but nothing that is merely external is going to stand in the presence of God. Inward reality and fidelity are the two things which the Lord Jesus is going to own when He comes again.

I did not read on, for time did not permit. When Jesus Christ comes again there is going to be a great multitude of the professing church disentangled. Let every heart in the presence of God search out for itself how it stands in reference to this. Then comes the parable of the servants, and

you find exactly the same thing in principle. In this parable, as given to us in Matthew's gospel—distinguishing it from a similar one in Luke—the servants who were real and true and faithful are all welcomed and all rewarded. The man who had five talents made other five talents, and he enters into the joy of his Lord. But there was another servant who did not know his Lord. He was under the most terrible misconception about the one whom he professed to know and serve. He was judged out of his own mouth as a wicked and slothful servant. The Lord knew how to put His hand upon the man who, though a professed servant of His, was no true servant at all.

Make no mistake about it, the coming of the Lord is going to see a complete disentanglement among the professed servants of the Lord. There are thousands of men taking the place of being ministers of Christ, and what a disentanglement is going to ensue! As the servants of Christ we must all of us face the fact that the coming of Christ is going to bring all into the light, and He is going to draw the line most definitely between that which is genuine and true, and that which is false.

The end of the chapter, that well-known passage about the Son of Man appearing in His glory with the holy angels, shows the same solemn fact. Before Him shall be gathered all nations, not the dead but the nations. When the Lord Jesus comes back in His glory and publicly appears, living nations on this earth will have to stand in His presence, and with a master hand He will divide them as a shepherd divides the sheep from the goats. He will make no mistake about it. Every man will be appointed to his own place. All will be made plain with infallible truth and justice. The tangles of earth will be untied. People say, "We

wish we could get things straightened." It will be a very serious matter. You will be put into your place, and I in mine, and all will be resolved in His presence. You notice, do you not? the ground on which the Lord Jesus is going to divide the sheep from the goats. Everything will depend on how these people have treated certain men whom He acknowledges as His brethren, who were His messengers. It will be a perfectly just ground of judgment. He says in effect, "You expressed your attitude towards Myself by the way you treated My representatives." That is a well-known principle amongst men. It certainly is a well-known Biblical principle. How can we express our gratitude towards the Lord Jesus Christ to-day? The blatant atheist may shake his poor little fist in the sky, but as a rule he vents his spleen upon the nearest Christian. That is really all that he can do. He cannot get at the great Master, so if he can find one of His humble servants he will administer a blow to him. That explains a great deal of the animosity expended against Christians to-day. They may glory in it, if it is for their Master's sake.

The Lord Jesus Christ is going to differentiate. His gospel is acting after that fashion to-day, only we await the coming of the Master Himself for the thing to be done in absolute perfection. Thank God, the crooked places are going to be made straight. The mountains of human pride are going to be brought down, and the valleys are going to be lifted up. One who can grapple with all earth's problems is coming. He will put the world right. In that hour how will you stand? You need not wait to know. You may know as you now ask your own heart, "What is my present attitude towards Christ?"

## WATCHMAN, WHAT OF THE NIGHT ?

(JAMES GREEN.)

## Notes on the Prophetic Outlook. No. 9.

*The uncounted interval.*—Luke 4. 20.

THE significance of our Lord's action in stopping in the middle of the sentence He was reading from the book of Isaiah, is of the utmost importance for the right understanding of the suspended fulfilment of the prophetic word. Confusion will necessarily exist in the minds of readers of the Old Testament unless it is clearly grasped that the course of its inspired predictions has been interrupted in order that an interval of undefined length might be inserted. There were certain indications that the fulfilment of prophecy would be delayed, such as Gen. 49. 18, Dan. 10. 1 and 12. 8, 9, but on the whole the Old Testament is silent as to the character and meaning of this interval. This is evident from the statement in Ephes. 3. 5, "Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men as it is now revealed," and also from the expression "The mystery of the Christ" (verse 4). In fact the advent of Messiah and the glory of His reign are often in such close juxtaposition that only when the key is afforded by such a reading as our Lord gave, do we perceive that a long space intervenes between the acceptable year of grace which He preached, and the day of vengeance of God, which is yet to come.

It must be remembered that under the Old Testament, God was dealing exclusively with the seed of Abraham, "Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came" (Rom. 9. 4, 5). In all this the Gentiles had no part; they were

"Without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise" (Ephes. 2. 12). Such was the relative position in the world of Jew and Gentile. The point we have reached in the prophecy of Daniel (chap. 9.) has shown that God was faithful to His promise, and also that in the appointed period of years, the prince Messiah came unto His own, and was cut off because His own people received Him not. This solemn act of rejection had been foretold in such Scriptures as Psa. 22., Isa. 53., Micah 5. 1-3, the latter passage giving the result which would follow from the smiting of the Judge of Israel. "Therefore will He give them up until she which travaileth hath brought forth." That is, until the great tribulation (known in prophecy as the travail of Israel, the time of Jacob's trouble) shall have done its work, and Israel is brought to the confession of their sin and bloodguiltiness concerning Him whom the nation abhorred (Isa. 49. 7; Zech. 11. 8). Then the remnant of His brethren (Judah) shall return unto the children of Israel, and the nation shall again be one, owned and blessed of Jehovah of Hosts.

In Deut. 29. Moses foretold the rebellion of Israel against Jehovah, on account of which they would be cast out of Canaan and the land be laid desolate. Then in chapter 30. he recited the mercies of Jehovah to His people and land in the coming day, which will be when they look upon the Sent One of God whom they have rejected (cf. Deut. 30. 11-14 and Rom. 10. 6-8). But between these two chapters there is a remarkable verse (chap. 29. 29), which shows that Moses knew that there was a secret hidden in

God, which he was not privileged to know, and it is the revelation of this which fills the uncounted interval in the prophetic word. When this is completed and the church translated to glory, then again the tabernacle of David shall be set up and the ruins built once more (Acts 15. 13-18 ; Amos 9. 11-15).

There are many prophecies which show that then there shall be abundance of blessing for the Gentiles under the reign of Israel's King, but in none of these is there any indication of such a purpose or calling of the Gentiles as is spoken of in Ephes. 3. 6. "That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs and of the same body and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel." This eternal purpose which was hidden in God, kept secret from the ages and generations, only came to light when both Jew and Gentile had consummated their hatred of God by the shameful death of His beloved Son. Justice demanded, as mere human intelligence could perceive, the miserable destruction of these wicked men (Matt. 21. 41). But instead of establishing, by such an act of judgment, the visible kingdom of which the prophets had spoken, the unmerited grace of God established it in a secret way ruled from heaven by His earth-rejected Son, whom He had commanded to sit at His right hand until He should make His enemies the footstool of His feet.

It is instructive to note that the parable of the husbandmen in Matt. 21. 33-46 is not likened to the kingdom of heaven, for it related to that which preceded the murder of the Heir, but the following one, the marriage of the King's Son, is so entitled, indicating a different calling from that which belonged to Israel. In Matt. 25. the parable of the virgins is prefaced by the words, "Then shall the kingdom of

heaven be like," and this is not said of the following parable of the talents, for this concerns that which is subsequent to the mystery condition of the kingdom. We have then in these parables the beginning and close of this interval during which the King is hidden in the heavens. The object of this secret form of the kingdom is not the conversion of the world, but in order that out of all nations, a people should be gathered to the name of the Lord, and form the church, the body of Christ.

The call of the Gentile was so unexpected and contrary to all Jewish thoughts and hopes, that nothing short of a Divine Revelation was needed in order that the Apostle Peter should respond to the divine will, and go into men uncircumcised and eat with them (Acts 10.). His own account of the matter is given in Acts 15. 7-8, and in chap. 11. he relates to his Jewish brethren the vision of the great sheet, which taught him the lesson that he was not to call any man common or unclean whom God had cleansed. The Gentile had been kept far off from the commonwealth of Israel by the law of commandments contained in the ceremonial law, but the cross had broken down this middle wall of partition, and no limitation any longer existed to the grace of God going forth to all men. Immediately Peter is found with all liberty preaching to the Gentile the "whosoever" of the gospel message. It is therefore clear that as this interval forms no part of prophecy, all attempts to define its length from prophetic times is useless and misleading. The reckoning of time has been suspended, the hands of the prophetic clock of seventy sevens (Dan. 9.) have stopped at the end of the sixty-ninth seven, leaving the seventieth seven to be yet completed.

The church which is the definite

object in this undefined period was conceived in eternity and belongs to eternity, and during its formation time is not counted, nor will it be until the great sheet is drawn up again to the place from which it came; in other words, the church translated to heaven to meet her coming Lord. In the last seven years of Dan. 9. the church will have no part, according to the Lord's promise in Rev. 3. 10, "I will keep thee from (lit. 'out of') the hour of trial which shall come upon all the world." During that period of unparalleled sorrow, the church which has been partaker of her Lord's suffering and rejection will find rest with Him, whilst upon its persecutors will come the judgment due to those that know not God and that obey not the gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thess. 1. 7, 8). From the foregoing it is evident that the church did not exist during the 69 weeks = 483 years which concerned Daniel's people and city, and therefore there is no reason to suppose that it will be on earth during the last seven. It had its commencement during the interval after the cutting off of Messiah and will be completed before that interval shall close.

A spiritual temple is now being constructed of living stones, in which spiritual sacrifices are offered to God, and worship in spirit ascends to the Father (Acts 7. 48; 1 Pet. 2. 5; John 4. 21-24), but during the course of the sixty-nine weeks a material house was acknowledged as God's temple (Acts 7. 46, 47) and will be so again during the seventieth week (Mal. 3. 1; Rev. 11.

1. 2; Thess. 2. 4; Matt. 24. 15). It has been often sought to bring the church into this latter chapter, but it evidently has no place in it. The Lord is speaking of His return as Son of Man after the great tribulation. The title Son of Man occurs eighty times in the Gospels, but it does not describe His relation to the church, for it never occurs in the twenty-one epistles except in a single reference in Heb. 2. 6.

Perhaps the strongest proof that the church will be in heaven during the great tribulation is the structure of the book of the Revelation, given in chap. 1. 19. John was to write the vision of chap. 1., "The things thou hast seen." Then the seven church epistles, "The things which are" (chaps. 2., 3.). And lastly he is called up to heaven to behold "The things which shall be after these" (chaps. 4. to 19.; cf. chap. 4. 1). Never during the events therein described is the church seen on earth, but she has her place in heaven as symbolized by the twenty-four elders.

Beloved reader, the return of your Lord for His church is imminent, will He find you watching and serving His household in loving obedience to His Word? Are you saying in response to the desire of His Spirit who indwells you, "Come, Lord Jesus"? Are you calling to your fellow-believers, "Let him that heareth say, Come"? Are you joining in one last appeal to the world you soon will leave? "Let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22. 17).

*(To be concluded.)*

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"O may Thy perfect glorious will  
Be evermore fulfilled in me,  
And make my life an ans'ring chord  
Of glad, responsive harmony."

# THE SORROWS OF THE PLAIN.

(HAMILTON SMITH.)

## Luke 9. 28-62. (Second Part).

THE Mount, with its foretaste of coming glories, is a happy place for the soul to visit ; nevertheless the Plain, with its sorrows, is our daily lot as we journey through this world. But though we have to leave the Mount and face the Plain, we are not called to leave the company of Jesus ; for we read, " When the voice was past Jesus was found alone." The vision of glory fades, the cloud is lifted, the voice is silent, but Jesus remains, and remains alone with His disciples.

Jesus had taken the disciples with Him into the Mount, now the disciples will have Jesus with them in the Plain. They face the Plain with the secret of the Mount in their hearts : a secret that in those days they will keep close, for they tell no man of the things which they had seen. The glories they had looked upon, the place they had entered, and the voice they had heard, are beyond the capacity and desires of the natural mind. However, the day will come when Peter will no longer keep these things close, but will tell those who have received like precious faith, of the Majesty of the Lord, of the excellent glory, and of the Father's voice. Peter's disclosure will also speak of the abiding impression made upon the souls of the disciples by their visit to the Mount. Henceforth the lowly Jesus that they follow, is One whom they have seen in power and glory, and though their pilgrim path may at times be dark, it is lit up with the light of the glory to which it leads. For ourselves, too, what a difference it makes if we have seen the King in His beauty, and take our journey through the sorrows of the Plain in the light of the Christ of the Mount.

Thus the disciples and ourselves are prepared to face the Plain and its sorrows. Coming down from the hill, they meet " much people," an only child under the power of the devil, and faithless disciples (verses 37-41). They are face to face with a needy *world*, the power of the *devil*, and the unbelief of the *flesh*.

These sorrows of the Plain find their expression in the pitiful case of the man who beseeches the Lord to look upon his only son. The father's heart racked with distress, his son's body torn by the devil, the crowd unconcerned, and the disciples of the Lord helpless ! What a picture is this of the world in which we are ! A needy but callous world around us, the devil against us, and the flesh within us. Though like the disciples we have the Lord in all His grace with us, and the Lord with His coming glory before us. It is as if He said, " I have shown you on the Mount the glory to which I will bring you ; I will now show you in the Plain the grace that can keep you every step of the journey on the way to the glory."

If, however, we are to learn the exceeding grace of His heart, we must also learn the evil of our hearts. We must discover our weakness to lean on His strength, our need to draw upon His grace. Hence it is that the Lord discovers to the disciples, and to ourselves, the true character of the flesh (verses 41-45) ; the different forms of selfishness that it assumes (verses 46-56) ; and lastly, the different ways in which we may be hindered by nature (verses 57-62).

First we have the exposure of the flesh in its *unbelief* (verses 40-41). In the presence of the failure of the

disciples to cast out the demon, the Lord has to say, "O unbelieving and perverted generation, how long shall I be with you and suffer you?" (verse 41, N. Trans.). Desperate need was there in the case of the child possessed with the demon; grace was there to meet the need in the Person of Jesus; the professed disciples of the Lord were there, but, alas, the world looks to them in vain. They are helpless by reason of the unbelief of the flesh that renders them incapable of using the power of the Lord at their disposal, and the perversity of the flesh that could not profit by all the marvellous manifestations of His power and grace.

In one brief sentence the Lord indicates the serious result of the unbelief of His professed disciples. He asks, "How long shall I be with you and suffer you?" Words implying that the period of the Lord's presence in grace was drawing to its close; and that the end would be brought about, not by the evil of the world nor the terrible power of Satan, but because those who professed His Name were unable to use the grace and power that Christ had brought into the world. The Lord does not say, "O needy world, how long shall I be with you?" for it was the need of the world that brought Him into it, but He asks of unbelieving disciples, "How long shall I be with you and suffer you?" Solemn consideration for ourselves, for it is not otherwise in this the day of grace. It is the failure of that which professes the Name of Christ upon the earth that will bring the dispensation to a close; as we read, "Toward thee (professing Christendom) goodness, if thou continue in His goodness; otherwise *thou also shall be cut off*" (Rom. 11. 22). The dispensation was opened by the power and goodness of God, and will be closed by the incapacity of those

who have professed the Name of Christ to use His power and grace.

However, for our comfort, be it noted that the failure of those who profess the Name of Christ only serves to bring to light the unfailing resources of Christ for those who have faith in Himself. Very blessedly this comes to light in this fine scene. Having spoken of our faithlessness and perversity, the Lord immediately adds, "Bring thy son hither." The first portion of the verse exposes our hearts, the latter part reveals His heart. It is as if He said, "However much you fail, you will find in Me an unfailing resource, so that whatever you find in your hearts, and whatever your needs, come to Me, bring them all to Me." The dispensation was drawing to a close, yet as long as the Lord was present, His grace and power were available for all that brought their needs to Him. So to-day, again, the dispensation fast hastens to its close, the shadows lengthen and the darkness deepens, but as one has truly said, "As long as Christ's grace is at work, if there is only one saint on the earth and everything else failed around, he would find the power of Christ ready to be exercised on his behalf." How comforting then is the truth that underlies these words of the Lord, "Bring thy son hither." May it be our happy portion to profit by them in bringing our needs, our sorrows, our difficulties, and our exercises to Christ. And yet the fact of bringing our exercise to Christ may at times make the difficulties appear greater. As in the case before us, for as in answer to the Lord's word they bring the child, we read, "the devil threw him down and tare him." Nothing so enrages the devil as a saint turning to the Lord in prayer. It may become the occasion of a fresh and violent outburst of the devil's opposi-

tion which accentuates the very trouble we desire to have removed, but in the end only magnifies the grace and power that acts for our relief.

But, alas, the display of the grace and power of the Lord becomes a fresh occasion for the exposure of the unbelief of the human heart, for we read, "they were all amazed at the mighty power of God," and again, "they wondered every one at all things which Jesus did." How humbling was this amazement and wonder. How far man must have departed from God if he shows no amazement at the power of the devil, but is amazed when God puts forth His power. Seeing that God was present in the Person of Jesus, the amazing thing would be if He did not act in power. We might well be amazed at the power of the devil and the powerlessness of the disciples, but only unbelief could wonder at the mighty power of God.

Thus the Lord has exposed to us the unbelief of the flesh. Then, having acted in power in casting out the demon, the Lord takes occasion to warn us of another form of flesh—the *pride of the flesh*—which would seek to take occasion by the display of power to exalt itself (verses 43, 44). This display of power might lead to the thought that Christ is in honour in this world, forgetting that He is rejected of men. The Lord checks this thought by saying to the disciples, "Let these sayings sink down into your ears; for the Son of Man shall be delivered into the hands of men." The disciples were looking for a kingdom in power, the Lord had before Him crucifixion in weakness. Theirs was the mind to exalt themselves in Kingdom, glory and power. His was the lowly mind to humble Himself even to death. They were looking for the display of power before men; He for rejection by men.

The Kingdom in power will come, as the scene on the Mount surely tells us, but it is reached through the rejection by men and the suffering of the cross.

Moreover, behind the pride of the flesh there is *the ignorance of the flesh*; as we read, "they understood not" (verse 45). How little are the words of the Lord even yet understood by many devoted Christians. How much of the effort put forth by Christians is to make some appeal to man by the display of outward power—the power of imposing buildings, the power of music, the power of eloquence, the power of scholarship. How little are we prepared to accept the cross and the rejection of Christ, and take the outside place of reproach and weakness, in company with the poor, and weak, and despised of this world.

Further, behind the ignorance of the flesh there is *the distrust of the flesh*. Not only were the disciples ignorant, but we read, "they feared to ask Him." They lacked the confidence in Christ that would have led them to express their difficulties to Christ. Alas, we are often like Peter, in the Upper Room, not near enough to the Lord to tell Him all our difficulties. If, like John, we were resting in His love, how easy it would be to take to Him all our hard questions.

Thus in this short passage we have the flesh exposed in its unbelief, pride, ignorance, and distrust. The disciples were faithless as to the power and grace of Christ, ignorant of the mind of Christ, and lacking confidence in the heart of Christ. Nevertheless, for our comfort, we see that if Christ uses the sorrows of the Plain to expose our hearts it is only that He may reveal the grace of His heart. If He exposes our evil it is in the presence of a grace that meets it all.

(To be continued.)

## CHASTENING.

(G. J. STEWART.)

## Hebrews 12.

## MY SON, DESPISE NOT THOU THE CHILD-TRAINING OF THE LORD.

This is one of two ways in which nature looks at the afflictions which the Lord allows His people to pass through. It belittles them; they are the common lot of all men and are not worth thinking about. Ah! Not so. For the believer they are from the Lord and bearers of blessing if but received from His hand. Nothing is common to a believer; the very food he eats, though partaken of at a table in common with unbelievers, is sanctified to his use by the Word of God and prayer. Nothing, therefore, may be despised of all God's dealings with men, who has numbered the very hairs of their heads. There may be purging as the Father purges the branches of the Vine that they may bring forth more fruit. Or judging, for acting contrary to God's ways in the things of the Lord as with the Corinthians, but this is all turned into chastening that they may not be condemned with the world. Or there may be, as here, the turning of the very persecutions that beset the testimony into preventive discipline, to save them from drawing back and drifting again into that from which they came out. The Lord who knows all about us may watch our course for years, till it is proved that nothing else but this which has come upon us will prevent us from taking our own course; or from falling into some error in doctrine as to the blessed Person of our Lord Jesus Christ, whom Satan is ever busy maligning.

Moreover, this child-training is not only for present help and deliverance, but that they may more preparedly take the place of sons in a future day,

being by the very trials fitted for the niche prepared for each one. Many a hard lesson they may be called upon to learn, the utility of which cannot now be seen and from which they would fain be spared; but He knows the way He takes and they may well gird their loins to walk with Him.

Then again, nature may look upon these things from the other extreme, and we are warned against this in the same verse:—

## NOR FAINT WHEN THOU ART REBUKED OF HIM.

Rebuke here (elengko) supposes fault in the one dealt with. "Tell him his fault" (Matt. 18. 15) is the same word. But in whatever way God speaks, it is in love and for good. One may be more ready to faint when one knows one has been to blame, as the inclination is then to look at it as Cain did, and say—My punishment is greater than I can bear; but this does not become a believer, for there is never any wrath in God's dealings with him.

"For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth" (verse 6). All is proof of love, sons must have the training suited to the family; even scourging if need be, whether on account of fault or to prevent them from falling into that which would be unsuitable as His children. Here, again, we are reminded that the Lord Jesus was actually scourged, though for none of these things, but that He might be able to sympathize with His own when in a like position. It is sorry reading, "Then took they Jesus and scourged Him," these sinners against their own souls! How much the pathway of the Lord in all its details is here before the Spirit, in view,

too, of the fact of His having reached the goal. Blessed indeed it is to have the assurance of reaching this same goal, with all the consolation of His sympathy in the way, who has trodden the path before us.

Though it is more difficult to see His hand accomplishing His purpose in our spirits, behind the hand of men who hate both Himself and us, yet our God makes even these things to act as child-training for His beloved ones. Hence the assurance—"It is for chastening ye are enduring. God conducts Himself toward you as toward sons, for who is the son whom the father chastens not?" (verse 7). It is not wrath, which never mingles with His dealings with His sons. All the judgment was borne by Him who ever did God's will. Mark this! The very pains God takes with us in putting us through all this child-training, may assure our souls of the truth of the relationship. To be without that of which all sons are partakers (*metokoi*)—and how willingly mere nature would be without chastening—would be a proof that we are not sons but bastards (*nothos*, only here) whose claims to sonship are spurious. Even Christ Himself partook of this character of child-training; though He, too, bare our judgment.

It is remarkable that this word "partakers" should be used again in this connection. It is the fifth and last time, and shows the range of that in which we are said to be companions with Him; from the anointing with the oil of gladness as His companions in glory, to chastening at the Lord's hand by the troubles that come upon Christianity, where again we are His companions.

Moreover, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us and we did them reverence (see verses 9, 10). All

was imperfect under mere human discretion and transitory, being but for a few days. It was in contrast also in every part to that which we now enjoy. The Father of spirits, not the flesh, now trains us as children for our profit, not arbitrarily, nor for the time only, but for eternity. Life is in it and it is in order to our receiving (*metalabein*) of His holiness.

His holiness (*hagiotetos*, occurs only here)! It is the quality of holiness in itself as in God, who loves righteousness and hates sin, not so much the working it out in effect, which is sanctification. How much more shall we be subject to Him whose object in dealing with our spirits is to produce this holiness in us here, that we may live the life communicated to us. Though all else be not yet in subjection, we may well subject ourselves to Him and in that happy position enjoy communion with Him about the things that come as chastening. We know Him who chastens as Father (though it is very general here), and He deals with us as with sons, and says, If I be a Father where is My reverence?

"Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous but grievous" (verse 11). But faith triumphs over even this through exercise; and this third way of accepting it makes it:—

#### YIELD THE PEACEABLE FRUIT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Faith reaches God's end in it all and is at peace. Thrown into exercise the soul cries in its grief—Lord, why is this? In what way that I know not have my ways been contrary to Thee? From what dost Thou withhold me? Thus God's hand in any unknown way produces spiritual exercise for faith. In chapter 5. 14 we had the exercise of full-grown men to discern both good and evil; here it is to learn God's mind

in that chastening which seemeth not joyous, but very grievous.

Spiritual exercise changes all nature's ways and is the only means of reaching peace in chastening. It braces the spirit also for further conflict and continues to yield fruit to the end. Good it is to have our pride humbled by having to submit to that which is contrary to our will, which may be in manifestation even in that which we

suppose to be God's mind for us. God comes in to thwart us in such cases and He is magnified by it in the exercised mind; God is righteous and we are at peace. He secures the profit to those who submit to the trial, but it is lost by rebellion and resentment. Christ is King of peace based upon righteousness; so peace the fruit of righteousness can only be enjoyed by us in bowing to His will in all things, who only has a right to do according to His own will.

## The Father's Desire.

"*Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit*"—John 15. 8.

WE often think of the words of the Lord Jesus, when facing all the shame and suffering of Calvary: "*The cup that My Father hath given Me, and shall I not drink it?*" (John 18). Whatever Peter and the other disciples thought about those strange happenings, no doubt or question arose in the mind of Him who always did the things that pleased His Father. There was no panic in Him, no wish that things might be otherwise, He accepted all from the Father's hand. In that we see His perfection, and see also that He has left us an example that we should walk in His steps.

What a difference it makes to us when we can take things from the same Father's hand—for let us not forget that the Lord Jesus said, "My Father and your Father." We may look behind the pressure and see the Father's hand, and behind the Father's hand is the Father's heart. He orders things for us according to His own wisdom and love. These things have often been said, but it is safe to be reminded of them lest we be weary in tribulation and grow restless and fretful.

What is in our hearts to say is said so much better than we could say it in some affecting verses by J. N. D., that we will simply quote them and leave the matter there.

- "A holy Father's constant care  
Keeps watch, with an unwearying eye,  
To see what fruits His children bear,  
Fruits that may suit their calling high.
- "Takes knowledge of our state—  
What dims communion with His love—  
Might check our growth—or separate  
Our hearts from what's revealed above.
- "Oh, wondrous love! that ne'er forgets  
The objects of its tender care;  
May chasten still, while sin besets,  
To warn and guard them where they are.
- "But ne'er forgets; but feeds them still  
With tokens of His tender love;  
Will keep till, freed from every ill,  
They find their rest with Him above."

Yes, nothing could exceed in its greatness and wonder, the Father's love, His care for His children, His training of them for His own glory and their eternal good. All must be perfect on His side.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### Who will be taken when the Lord comes?

THE truth of the Lord's coming was revealed to the saints at Corinth. (1st) As to those who had "fallen asleep," and (2nd) As to those believers who would be alive on the earth at the coming of the Lord.

What was ministered to the Corinthian believers is also for "all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours" (1 Cor. 1. 2).

In 1 Cor. 15. 20-28, we are taught—amongst other things—that as by man came death, by man also resurrection of those that are dead.

The Man, Christ Jesus, is the first-fruits of resurrection and He stands pre-eminent in the resurrection sphere. The expression "firstfruits" means that the harvest of resurrection is to follow, and this harvest will be made up of "those that are His"—all who have believed the gospel, "that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures" (1 Cor. 15. 3, 4).

These are His by redemption through His blood (Ephes. 1. 7; Col. 1. 14), and they are to be redeemed by power at His coming. Here we are not left to mere speculation, but are upon the sure ground of revelation. "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (verse 52).

This change is limited to those "who are Christ's at His coming" (verse 23), and in no way applies to unbelievers, either dead or alive. Other scriptures deal with the serious question as to what shall take place with them, but our inquiry for the moment is restricted to those who will be taken when the Lord comes.

We are taken a step forward by the Word of the Lord in 1 Thess. 4. 13-18, where we learn that the *meeting place* is "in the air," and so shall we be "for ever with the Lord."

That our faith and hope might have strong confirmation we have also the words of the Lord Jesus Christ to His disciples, "I will come again, and receive unto Myself: that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14. 2, 3).

In the Scriptures we have quoted there are no limiting or qualifying expressions whatever to indicate that some believers might possibly be left behind at His coming; but, on the contrary, there is a direct and simple setting forth of the truth of the Lord's coming in redeeming power for all His people. Instead of this truth leading to carelessness of walk, it would have exactly the opposite effect. It would fill us with "giving thanks to God" (1 Cor. 15. 57); enable us to "comfort each other" (1 Thess. 4. 18); strengthen our faith in the blessed Lord (John 14.).

John 1, chapter 3, verses 1 to 3, are exceedingly important in this connection. We know a great love which has placed us in the family of God, we are children of God *now*, and this, wonderful as it is, is not the whole truth, "it doth not yet appear *what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.*" Again, there are no limiting expressions giving any warrant to "a partial rapture," but clearly the entire family, babes, young men and fathers, are included in the "we" of verse 2.

The more intimate fellowship we have with the One who is coming for us, the more will our hearts delight in the blessedness of this truth and its moral purifying effect will be seen in our walk and ways here, for "*every man that hath this hope in Him (Christ) purifieth himself, even as He (Christ) is pure*" (verse 3).

“Hope.” therefore, connects with what Christ will do when He is manifested and not at all with our measure of faithfulness, but the present moral effect of the “hope” is exceedingly powerful in keeping the believer from associations and practices which are unsuitable to Him.

We are thus led to earnestly desire to be found in such circumstances and associations when He does come as would give us “confidence in His presence,” merit His approval, and leave no sense of shame before Him “at His coming.”

HUDSON BROOK.

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

### The Place of Women in the Church.

“Will you define the woman's calling and duty. Is it Scriptural for her to speak in the church or pray or teach? This is specially wanted for information of our brethren here.”—PERSIA.

WE are not left to our own opinions as to this question. Holy Scripture could not speak on it more emphatically than it does, or with greater clearness. “*Let your women KEEP SILENCE in the churches : for it is not permitted unto them to speak . . . for it is a shame for women to speak in the church*” (1 Cor. 14. 34, 35). “*Let the women learn IN SILENCE with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence*” (1 Tim. 2. 11, 12). We have heard objectors say, “That was merely Paul's opinion,” but he says, “If any man think himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are THE COMMANDMENTS OF THE LORD” (1 Cor. 14. 37). Again, it is objected that at Corinth the women caused confusion in the assemblies by continual chattering and it was this that was forbidden, and not orderly speaking. But the Scripture says that they are to “KEEP SILENCE,” and this was not only written to the Corinthian assembly, but also to Timothy, and was instruction as to behaviour in the house of God.

If we accept Scripture as God's Word, and consequently as having all authority, and being all-sufficient for our guidance, as it claims to be, these commands will close all discussion as to this question. Explanations may be necessary as to what is meant by “the churches” in which the women have to be silent; and enquiry as to what is the character and

sphere of women's service; but neither explanation nor enquiry must make the Word of God of none effect; if they are according to the Word they won't, for it does not contradict itself.

Let no one think that these commands of the Lord put women in a place of inferiority to the man; subjection does not mean inferiority, it is simply God's wisely devised order in creation that is not set aside by the gospel. “*Adam was first formed, and then Eve*” (1 Tim. 2. 13). Man was given the precedence, and was made by God to be the leader or head of the woman. God put the man and the woman in their respective places and relationships, they were not left to choose for themselves. Evolution, which has so thoroughly permeated modern religious thought, will deny this, but the theories of evolution are the imaginations of minds darkened by unbelief, and it is one of the most serious phases of the revolt against God and the Revelation that He has given to men. But while “*the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man, neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man*”—and consequently her place is one of subjection; yet equality is maintained by the fact that “as the woman is of the man” (she was taken out of him at her creation) “so is the man also by the woman (she gives birth to him) BUT ALL THINGS ARE OF GOD” (1 Cor. 11. 7–12). While creation (Gen. 3.), and the law (Num. 30. 3–13), and the Gospel

(1 Tim. 2.), give to women the place of dependence and subjection, her equality with man is maintained—"They twain shall be one flesh." It is only by the false religions of the world and where men have utterly departed from God and revolted against the order, that she is degraded and thrust into the inferior place. The Gospel, when it is received, changes this, and none ought to be more thankful for it than women, and none ought to be more ready to obey the Word which contains it.

It is in the churches or assemblies that women have to be silent. The assemblies are the gatherings together of the saints of God according to His Word, for the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11.), or for edification, prayer and praise (1 Cor. 14.). In these assemblies there is one Lord (1 Cor. 12.), who is the Head of His body, and He is there to administer; and there His rights ought to be acknowledged and upheld; the Holy Ghost is there also to give understanding and to guide in all that is done for the glory of God and the edification of His saints. In such gatherings the men may take part in subjection to the Lord, but the women must be silent, and so subject to the same Lord. Then in no public assembly where men are should the woman take the place of teacher or exercise authority. If she does she has got out of her place and is disobedient to the Word of God. Nature itself teaches that a meek and quiet and retiring spirit is most becoming in the woman, and the Gospel confirms nature in this.

The fact that 1 Cor. 11. 1-16 gives instruction as to the covering of the head when women pray or prophesy, seems to some to be a difficulty, but it is helpful to see that it is not until that question is disposed of that the Apostle speaks of their *coming together in assembly* (verse 17). It may be, and probably was the case, that women gathered together in their houses and there prayed and prophesied, but wherever it was, it was not to be done in the assemblies. The eleventh chapter says, "Cover your head if you do it." The fourteenth says, "Don't do it

at all in the assemblies." But the Apostle realized that there would be contentions about the matter. Hence he says, "If any man seem to be contentious we have no such custom, neither the churches of God" (chapter 11. 16).

The woman's place is pre-eminently the home; what an influence she may exercise there, and who can measure the results of faithfulness to the Lord in her own sphere. But there are many women unmarried and without homes, what of these? 1 Cor. 7. speaks of them, "The unmarried woman careth for the things that belong to the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and spirit" (verse 34). But whether married or unmarried, the woman has her own place in the Lord's service and no man can do her work. Phebe was probably unmarried and she stands first in the list of those whom Paul commands (Rom. 16.). She was a servant of the church, and succourer of many and of Paul also. Priscilla was a married woman who with her husband Aquila had been his helpers in Christ Jesus and had laid down their own necks for his life, and not only he, but all the churches of the Gentiles gave thanks to them (verse 4), and she has the precedence in this, for she is named first. Mary also bestowed much labour upon the Apostle and his helpers (verse 6). Then there were women who laboured with him in the gospel (Phil. 4. 3). All these references show that the door of service is wide open to women in whose hearts the desire to serve the Lord has been awakened, and that all such are to be helped and honoured if they serve in obedience to the Word.

*In the assemblies*, the first thought is ministry to the Lord (Acts 13. 2), and in this the men are to be active, they may be said to be the mouth and the intelligence, but the women may be the heart none the less, and nobody can be more active than the heart will allow him to be. The unseen and silent members of the body are by no means the least important. Mary of Bethany poured her spikenard upon the feet of the Lord in silent adoration, while the men talked and criticized.

# THE TIME HAS COME.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

"Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord"—2 Timothy 1. 8.

MY appeal is specially and definitely to the young disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ. I am not in this minimizing the importance of those who are older in the faith; a great responsibility rests upon them and theirs is a great privilege. As they increase in the knowledge of God, they give stability to practical Christian fellowship and testimony, but they must be watchful lest they lose their spiritual vigour and zeal for Christ. If they fail in this they will not help but hinder those who are coming after them, and nothing could be more serious than that in these perilous times in which the whole truth of God is being challenged. But my appeal is to the young Christians; to them I say, Rally to the banner of our Lord and be not ashamed of His testimony.

Consider the position, the time has "*come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears, and they shall turn away their ears from the truth* AND SHALL BE TURNED TO FABLES" (2 Tim. 4. 3, 4). God only could have given to Paul that prophetic vision that enabled him to describe so graphically and without mistake what these last days would be like. In this farewell letter to young Timothy, his son in the faith, he tells us all about it. It is a God-inspired letter, as all Scripture is God-inspired; read it and it will keep you from being dismayed and discouraged, for if God foresaw the condition into which Christendom would fall, He has not been taken by surprise by it, nor need you be surprised. To be forewarned is to be forearmed, and God, who foresaw it all, has instructed you how to act in the midst of it. He has given to you the Spirit, not of cowardice,

but of love, and power, and of a sound mind; and all the grace that you require is in Christ Jesus for you, so that you need not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord Jesus Christ. Christian, be enthusiastic for Christ, and the faith that is His.

Your choice lies between the testimony of our Lord and fables. The testimony of our Lord is not popular and the fables are. They are labelled "scientific discoveries," they are propounded by university professors and preached by bishops, and they please the people who love pleasure more than they love God, but they are fables nevertheless—God-dishonouring, soul-damning fables. While they puff up the fleshly mind they save no souls, but your souls have been saved and blessed and made free and glad by the testimony of the Lord; by that testimony you must stand, and in standing by it suffer ridicule if needs be, and be looked down upon as being ignorant and behind the times. You will be told that on the other side are the wise and the mighty and the noble, and that on the side of the testimony are the nobodies. Be it so, that is just what we should expect as we read such a passage as 1 Cor. 1. 26-31. But one thing is certain, one man with God is better than ten thousand without Him, and God will ever be with the testimony of the Lord. Be the one man if necessary.

The perilous times have arrived, and the faith once delivered to the saints is being assaulted and opposed by many evils. There is "organized religion," the mere form of godliness in which the power that convicts men of sin and brings them with repentance to the feet of the great Redeemer, and changes their lives, is denied;

leaders of religious thought are turning away from the testimony of the Lord and offering the sacraments instead of the living Lord and Christ as the means of life and blessing, and are drifting back into popish superstitions; and others, drunk with the wine of modernism, have made an unholy alliance with "science falsely so called," and are casting aside the Word of God as an obsolete thing and overthrowing the faith of some. Formalism, Ritualism, Rationalism—these be the gods of an apostatizing Christendom, but they are as false as Baal and Ashtaroth and Chemosh, the gods of the Canaanites! "O Timothy," wrote Paul the aged, in view of these days, "keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: which some professing have erred from the faith"—1 Tim. 6. 20.

But God, who "in the beginning created the heavens and the earth" as Genesis tells us, still reserves to Himself thousands who have not bowed the knee to these modern gods and whose lips have not kissed them, you through the infinite grace of God are among these, and the obligation that is laid upon you is not to be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord. The time has come when you must be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and turn away from those who have turned away from the truth, for the command is clear, "Let every one that names the name of the Lord withdraw from iniquity" (N.T.). It is at once your responsibility and privilege to stand for and to preach the word, to be instant in season and out of season.

What is the testimony of our Lord? It is the word of the Lord to men at any given time. The first of which we have any record was given through Enoch, the seventh from Adam, who

prophesied saying, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints to execute judgment," and in that first testimony we have proof enough that evolution is a fable. If man had struggled up through the ages, overcoming the most extraordinary difficulties and rising superior to a baffling environment, until at the last he emerged from an ape ancestry into a noble manhood, why should he be judged? Surely instead of judgment the Almighty might well and righteously congratulate him upon his achievement, and encourage him to still greater efforts. But if, on the other hand, he was created in the image and after the likeness of God, and if he has fallen from his high estate; if he is a degenerate Adam instead of a glorified ape; if he was made a moral being with responsibilities towards his Creator, and if he has broken down in those responsibilities and set at naught the will of God and pleased himself, how just it is that he should be called to account and that judgment should await him. "As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. 14. 11). But how great is the mercy of God that warns men of the certainty of judgment before it comes, and calls upon them to repent in view of it. I repeat that the fact of coming judgment exposes the biological doctrine of evolution to be not the truth but a profane and vain imagination of man's mind. It is not the testimony of the Lord.

It may be objected, You are quoting from Genesis, and Genesis is now held by "all scholars" to be unauthentic, and these stories of Enoch and others are legendary, or at the best allegorical. I am not quoting from Genesis at all,

but from Jude, a short Epistle written at least 3,000 years after the translation of Enoch to heaven; but Jude corroborates Genesis. If Enoch did not live and walk with God as Genesis tells us, then he did not prophesy as *Jude* tells us; nor did he please God before he was translated, as the author of *Hebrews* tells us; nor did he beget Mathusala, as *Luke* tells us. If these three New Testament writers are untrustworthy on one point, we cannot accept them as reliable upon any point; their writings and Genesis stand or fall together, and those who try to hold on to the New Testament and yet discard Genesis in their haste to compromise with these so-called scientific discoveries, and to appear progressive in the eyes of their fellows and congregations, are, to say the least, very inconsistent men.

The testimony that Enoch gave from the Lord has not been cancelled, the judgment of which he spoke will surely come, but it has been postponed, for God is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance; and in the meanwhile the testimony of the Lord is going out to men. It comes from the God who cannot lie, and it tells us what He is; it is a testimony of grace, yet it does not hide the fact of judgment to come. When we come to this testimony we are not dealing with theories, speculations, hypotheses, but with facts, and these facts are three:

1. Christ has been here.
2. He is no longer here.
3. He is coming back again.

John says, "*We know that the Son of God has come . . . this is the true God and eternal life*" (1 John 5. 20); and again, "*Every spirit which confesseth Jesus Christ come in flesh is of God*" (chap. 4. 2, N.T.); and again,

"*Herein 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 Son of God has come, and His coming was the manifestation of God's love to men. He did not come as a Judge, but God was in Christ, "reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their transgressions unto them" (2 Cor. 5. 19). He was announced at His birth as a Saviour by heavenly heralds. How did men treat Him when He came? They ought to have hastened to the manger where He was cradled, as the shepherds did, they ought to have brought their worship and their gifts to Him as the wise men from the East did, but they did not. All Jerusalem was troubled at the news of His birth, yet He did not turn back. He had come as the pledge of God's love to men. He was the Father's sent One and the light of the world. He came to shew and to tell that "God is love."

But how did He come? Matthew tells us, "*She (Mary) shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.*" In many divinity schools it is taught that this is unscientific, and a physical impossibility. It is one of three great things in our Christian faith that are challenged. It is said that—

CREATION according to Genesis 1. *is impossible.*

INCARNATION according to Matt. 1. *is impossible.*

RESURRECTION according to 1. Cor. 15. *is impossible.*

Impossible with men, yes, but not with God! and GOD is the answer to this three-fold challenge.

"IN THE BEGINNING GOD CREATED" (Genesis 1. 1) is enough for faith when CREATION is in question.

"A BODY HAST THOU PREPARED ME" (Heb. 10. 5) is enough for faith when INCARNATION is in question.

"GOD GIVETH IT A BODY AS IT PLEASETH HIM" (1 Cor. 15. 38) is enough for faith when RESURRECTION is in question. Men want to get rid of God, it is that that lies behind the denial of these great miracles. In their eyes there is nothing greater than man, and so they oppose themselves to everything outside his range and powers. But in these things God shews Himself to be supreme, He acts as God, and when evil forces arise and combine to thwart His purposes He deals with them in infinite wisdom and power; no enemy—neither sin, nor death, nor the devil—can frustrate His will, He is victorious in Christ Jesus over them all.

But when Christ came He was not wanted. There was no room for Him in man's scheme of things. There was room for Cæsar in his Imperial purple, tyrant though he was; there was room for Herod and Pilate, for priests and publicans, for scribes and sinners; there was room for Barabbas, but no room for Jesus. He was despised and rejected of men. Not rejected only—a man may be rejected because of his proposals and yet respected for his personal qualities—but Jesus was despised, and rejected because He was despised. Men despise that which they think beneath them, something contemptible, despicable—such was Jesus in their eyes. They could not endure perfect goodness, they would not

have the Son of God, and with wicked hands they crucified and slew Him.

If the cross of Christ revealed that "God is love"—and it did, for "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us"—it also exposed the heart of man. The cross of Christ was the proof that there is not a chord in man's heart that will respond even to God's tenderest touch. The cross was man's defiant answer to the most blessed advance that God could make to him. The best that God could do only laid bare the incorrigibility of man's nature, and put beyond all controversy for ever the fact that he MUST BE BORN AGAIN. The princes of this world crucified the Lord of glory and they acted for the race, they shewed that men loved darkness rather than light and preferred Satan to God, even though God is love.

How wonderful it is that that same cross shews us how God can be a just God and yet a Saviour, who will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. If you hold fast to this you may be charged with holding "dry-as-dust" and "out-of-date" theology. But is it dry-as-dust theology? It is the most glorious testimony that ever sounded on mortal ears—"There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the Man, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." Is this testimony out of date? Nay, this is the due time in which it must be made known. A multitude of dying saints have been filled with triumph in the very face of death because they believed it, and were persuaded that nothing could separate them from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. But they could have known nothing about it if the Son of God had not come.

**CHRIST IS NO LONGER HERE.**

He is the Stone that the builders rejected, nevertheless He has become the Head of the corner; this is the Lord's doings and it is marvellous in our eyes. God has intervened for His own glory and raised Him from the dead. This was the dominant note in Peter's gospel in Pentecostal times; it rings triumphantly in Paul's gospel. God has given His answer to man's foul act. He has justified His Son whom men condemned, and Christ risen and exalted is God's new beginning, the beginning of the creation of God. We must stand either with the world that crucified Him or with God who has glorified Him. God has bound us up with Christ in glory by the Holy Spirit whom He has given to us, and by so doing has separated us from the world. God's purpose of blessing for men far exceeds anything that they can imagine for themselves, but this purpose is in Christ Jesus our Lord; not in the first man but the Second, for the first man was made of dust and to dust he goes, but the second man is out of heaven (1 Cor. 15. 47, N.T.) and in Him God gives to all who believe life and incorruptibility and an inheritance, "incorruptible, and undefiled, and unfading, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Peter 1. 4, N.T.). "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4. 12).

**HE IS COMING BACK AGAIN.**

"The Lord saith unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool" (Ps. 110. 1; Acts 2. 34, 35; Heb. 1. 13). The rights that were refused Him when He came in grace, will be secured for Him by the power of God when He comes in glory, "and at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in

heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2. 10, 11). The testimony of our Lord is incomplete if we leave out this. The hopes of the saints of God were always centred in Christ and His coming to establish righteousness in the earth. Of this Enoch spoke; the vision of this rejoiced the heart of Abraham; it was part of the testimony that God established in Jacob; that they might set their hope in God and not forget His works (Ps. 78.) ; it has been revealed to us in the testimony of the Lord in its greatness and detail. Man after the flesh who is not subject to the law of God must give way before Christ, who was ever obedient, and He shall be glorified as Redeemer, Judge, and King. **HE IS THE FAITHFUL WITNESS** (He has been here); **THE FIRST BEGOTTEN FROM THE DEAD** (He is not here), **AND THE PRINCE OF THE KINGS OF THE EARTH** (He is coming back again) (Revelation 1.).

*"We have not followed cunningly devised fables, (that exalt man in his pride, and dishonour Christ, and deny the revelation of God) when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory: This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with Him in the holy mount"* (2 Peter 1. 16-18).

The fables to which so many have turned make men comfortable without God, they give to them a false hope, and encourage them to trust in themselves and their own efforts. The testimony of the Lord exalts Christ

who is the theme of it, in it **GOD COMMANDS ALL MEN EVERYWHERE TO REPENT**: "*because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that HE HATH RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD*" (Acts 17. 30, 31). This testimony cannot fail, and the foundation of God standeth sure, but on our part we must keep it pure and not mix it with the fables of men. We must "hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus" (chap. 1. 13). Only thus can we be "faithful men." "*Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things. Remember Jesus Christ of the seed of David raised from the dead according to my gospel: wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound*" (2 Tim. 2. 7-9). "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of the Lord nor of me His prisoner, but be thou partaker of the

afflictions of the gospel **ACCORDING TO THE POWER OF GOD.**"

There is another thing of supreme importance, and that is, that while there can be no compromise with evil on the part of those who would be faithful to the Lord, you must watch against all harshness of spirit: "The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all, apt to teach, patient; in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth, and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will" (chap. 2. 24-26). And further, the one who has a true care for the interests of Christ will have a deep concern for His beloved flock, so many of which are involved in all the confusion that is shewing itself in the church. Many of these are sorely bewildered and distressed; those who care enough for them to be intercessors on their behalf will be blessed of the Lord.

## The Giving God.

"*Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water*"—John 4. 10.

**WE** are slow in learning the lesson that God is the giving God, and we quickly forget it often when learnt, but in knowing it and acting according to this knowledge lies the secret of joy, worship and fruitfulness.

When we came to God at first we had nothing to bring to Him, we had—

"To leave behind the words and works we call our own,  
And lift void hands alone  
For love to fill. Our poverty of soul  
To His gate could bring no toll,  
Giftless we came to Him who all things gives."

And how wonderfully He gave and enriched us by His giving. But we must still come, we have no springs or resources apart from Him. Happy are we when from the heart we can sing from day to day—

"Oh fill me, Jesus, Saviour, with Thy Love,  
Lead, lead me to the living Fount above;  
Thither may I, in simple faith draw nigh,  
And never to another fountain fly—  
But unto Thee.

## MONTHLY BIBLE READING. No. 5.

## The Gospel of John. Ch. 1. 35.

VERSE 35 introduces THE NEXT DAY AFTER. And what happened on that day sets before us most beautifully what should characterize this present period of God's work on earth.

First, JOHN STOOD. His testimony to Christ could continue no longer; a burning and shining light he had been, but he must pass out of sight in the presence of the Light of the World. He had faithfully led his disciples to this point, to Christ, and this was the winding up of his ministry. Jesus had come and John stood as JESUS WALKED. The God-appointed Leader of the flock of God had come, and John, faithful servant that he was, retires. But before doing so, he looks upon Jesus as He walked, and his whole soul becomes absorbed with Him. What could he say other than what He did say, "BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD!"? Was this word intended for the ears of his disciples, or was it simply the outburst of adoration from a heart wholly absorbed? I think it was both, and thus he introduced his followers to their Lord, and they left John and followed Jesus. Happy John! He came from God, to speak of Christ, and those that heard him speak followed Him of whom he spoke. Here we have the source, the object, and the result of his mission, and in these three things he was a faithful servant and a pattern for us. The two disciples followed Jesus without being told to, and it seemed the most natural thing for them to do. We see in them the way the constraining love of Christ works, the true motive in the Christian's life. There was no stern law laying on them a heavy obligation, they followed Jesus because they could not help it. They had, indeed, come under a law, but it

was the law of attraction; the Lord had taken possession of their hearts, and where the heart is, there the feet will be if by any means they can be.

It is instructive that these disciples followed Jesus immediately after the mention of the Holy Ghost. Let us keep the great things of this section of the chapter in their order before us. (1) The great sacrifice (verse 29); here is the foundation of Christianity. (2) The gift of the Holy Ghost (verse 33); here is the power in Christianity. (3) Two disciples follow Jesus (verse 35); here is the centre of Christianity, Christ the great object and attraction. Later, when Andrew sought for Simon and brought him to Jesus, we have (4) The activities of Christianity (verse 41); they have Christ as their start and Christ as their end. But the Holy Ghost has but one object and that is to make Christ glorious in our eyes, and to enable us to follow Him. This, I believe, is what the sequence of things here would teach us. Sincere souls are often troubled as to whether they are walking in the Spirit or not; here is a simple test: when the heart is set on Christ and the feet are following Him, we are walking in the Spirit.

The Lord knew that these two disciples were following Him, for He was drawing them after Himself. Nor is He ever indifferent to any movement of heart after Himself. So we read: "*Then Jesus turned and saw them following, and saith unto them, WHAT SEEK YE?*" What encouragement there must have been for them in this question, and the way it was put! These two men heard the Shepherd's voice for the first time, and would they ever forget it? Their response is immediate; they had seen Him and heard Him, and there is only one

answer they could give, "MASTER, WHERE DWELLEST THOU?"

"For oh, the Master is so fair,  
His voice so sweet to banished men  
That those who hear it unaware,  
Can never rest on earth again."

Only His dwelling place could satisfy them now, His company. Their answer meant, we want you, we cannot do without you. Faith, too, was at work, for they realized that He would be glad to have them in His dwelling, that a welcome awaited them there. This is one feature of faith, it is bold, indeed to those who have it not it seems presumptuous, but with the sense of need that always goes with true faith, there is the knowledge of Him who can meet the need; it lays hold of God and doubts Him not, it finds its refuge and satisfaction in Jesus.

How blessed is the answer that the Lord gives to the earnest enquiry, "COME AND SEE," and "they came and saw where He dwelt, and abode with Him that day, for it was about the tenth hour." Where He was became the home and rest of their hearts. We are reminded here of some lines written by the most famous singer of last century, Jenny Lind, known as the Swedish Nightingale:

"In vain I seek for rest  
In all created good.  
It leaves me still unblest  
And makes me cry to God.  
And sure of rest I cannot be  
Until my soul finds rest in Thee."

These disciples had found rest indeed, in the Lord's own dwelling.

In Matthew's and Mark's Gospels, the Lord speaks of Himself as the Son of Man without a place to lay His head, but it is not that side of things that is presented to us in this Gospel. Here He has a dwelling place; it is the Father's bosom, for He is the only begotten Son, in the bosom of the Father. And how often He speaks of His Father! It was the joy of His

heart to reveal Him to His disciples, and to speak of His Father's house, nor could He be satisfied until He could say to them, "*My Father, and your Father.*" He dwelt in the Father's love, it was His home and rest, and there He would have His disciples dwell. This wonderful sphere is open for us too. We are to have it as our home for ever, and what a welcome we shall get when we actually enter into it! But now He would have us to make it the home of our hearts. He says to us, "*Come and see.*"

How perfect Scripture is in its unfoldings of the truth! It was not one disciple that followed the Lord, but two; and herein we have a pattern of what Christian communion is. Two men are drawn together by one Object; their hearts go out after one Person, and what could they do but walk shoulder to shoulder after Him? There was no jarring, no discord between them. How could there be? It is when questions and not Christ occupy the mind of Christians that they leave following Christ to quarrel with each other. Here is a needed lesson for us, and how beautifully it is taught to us in this incident! What harmony we see between these two as they follow Jesus! and how blessed must have been their communion together as they abode with Him that day! All sense of each other's peculiarities lost sight of in the presence of His perfection. It will be so in heaven, for

"Every knee to Jesus bending,  
All the mind in heaven is one."

And it is God's will that His children should have a foretaste of this while still on earth and in the midst of earth's discords.

One of the two disciples was Andrew, and he FIRST FINDETH HIS OWN BROTHER SIMON AND HE BROUGHT HIM TO JESUS. He

bore an effective testimony to the Lord. "WE HAVE FOUND THE MESSIAS," said he, and he had no difficulty in persuading his brother to come to the One who had become everything to him. And Jesus knew him, and in the way He addressed him He shewed His own right to dispose of him as He would, "Thou art Simon, the son of Jona; thou shalt be called Cephas." Great monarchs such as Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar changed the names of those that served them according to their own will, but here the Messiah of Israel exercises His right in this matter and the name that He gives to Simon declares his destiny rather than his character. He was a stone. A stone for a great and imperishable building which is now in course of preparation, composed of living stones. Every believer is what the Lord declared Simon to be. Each has become this by coming to Christ, the Living Stone (see 1 Peter 2.). And the completion of this building is the consummation of God's work in this special period of time. It is in Christ, "in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord" (Eph. 2. 22).

Four things, then, resulted from John's testimony to Jesus which ought to be the outstanding features of our day, and which will be, when the heart is right.

1. The hearts of those who heard him became engrossed with Christ.
2. They were drawn in unity of purpose and fellowship with each other in following Jesus.
3. They were introduced in communion with Him in His own things.
4. They bore a fruitful testimony to others.

Verse 43 brings in another day, "the day following"; and Philip and Nathanael represent the remnant of Israel who will receive the Lord with gladness when He comes again. To Philip was given the command to follow the Lord, and he obeyed it. In Nathanael we see the chastened spirit that will characterize the remnant of Israel at the coming of the Lord to them. They will confess their sins in secret to Him who sees in secret. Every house will do so apart (Zech. 12. 10-14). And He who hears their confession will forgive, and the joy of Ps. 32 will be theirs. For then they will be without guile. The Lord will be able to say to each of them as He said to Nathanael, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile." And they will confess what Nathanael confessed: "THOU ART THE SON OF GOD, THOU ART THE KING OF ISRAEL." Then will they be blessed indeed, and shall see heaven and earth united in the Son of Man.

## The Christian's Portion.

THE true Christian is not gloomy and dull, he is the only person on earth who has a right to be happy, for the past is all settled for him by the blood of Jesus, and his future is all secured; he knows that heaven is his home, for the word of the living God leaves him in no doubt as to that, and though he no longer joins in the laughter of fools, which is as the crackling of thorns under the pot, yet his heart is filled with true merriment; he can make melody in his heart unto the Lord who has saved him.

"The heart that trusts for ever sings,  
And feels as light as it had wings,  
A well of peace within it springs,  
Come good or ill."

# THE SORROWS OF THE PLAIN.

(HAMILTON SMITH.)

## Luke 9. 28-62. (Continued).

**HOW** is it that in this day, with its great privileges, are we still so often marked by unbelief, pride, ignorance, and lack of confidence in the Lord? Is it not that we have *self* before us as an object rather than Christ. This is strikingly brought before us in the next portion of the chapter (verses 46-56). In these verses the Holy Spirit brings before us different forms in which selfishness may express itself.

The first form is *personal selfishness* (verses 46-48). The disciples reasoned amongst themselves which of them should be the greatest. They were measuring greatness after the manner of men; but how different is the greatness of man to the greatness of God. The greatness of man is expressed by seeking to exalt self, at the expense of others, to the highest place, in company with the greatest persons. The greatness of God is expressed by a Man who comes into the lowest place and associates with the insignificant and despised. This is the path to true greatness and was trodden in perfection by Christ, and hence God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name which is above every Name (Phil. 2. 5-9).

The second form of selfishness is *party-selfishness* (verses 49, 50). We read that John answered and said, "Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy Name; and we forbid him, because he followeth not *with us*." Here John is apparently not thinking of himself personally, but of the company, the "us." This is a more subtle form of selfishness than the last, because it has the appearance of ignoring self for the good of the company you are with. In reality it generally means the desire to exalt the company in

order to make something of self. This is indeed party-selfishness. John and those with him forbid the man to cast out demons, not because it was a wrong thing to do, but because he did not follow with them. What the man was doing might indeed have been for the glory of Christ and the blessing of man, but it was not done in connection with "us," and therefore added nothing to "us," and so in the eyes of John must be condemned. But in so thinking and speaking, John had before him the disciples and their importance, rather than Christ and His honour. In His reply the Lord in tender grace uses John's word, but rebukes John's thought. "Forbid him not; for he that is not against *us* is for *us*." The Lord does not say the man is "with us" but "for us." The disciples indeed were both "with Christ" and "for Christ." The man was "for" Christ, and in this sense was "for" the disciples, for they, too, were "for" Christ. Blessed to be, like the disciples, in any true sense with Christ in the place of reproach, but let such beware that they cast no slight upon those who are "for" Christ, even if by reason of their associations they cannot walk *with* them.

The last form of selfishness is *the exaltation of self under the cloak of zeal for the Lord* (verses 51-56). We have had selfishness seen in zeal for self; then selfishness hiding itself under zeal for party; now we have selfishness cloaking itself under zeal for the Lord. Of all forms of selfishness this is the most subtle and difficult to detect, for who can complain of zeal for the Lord, or say that is wrong? and yet under zeal for the Lord there may lurk zeal for self. It was so in this case. The earthly path of the Lord was drawing

to its close. He was about to be received up, and His face was set to go to Jerusalem. His path lay through the Samaritan villages, and they would not receive Him. Their fathers had rejected Elijah of old, the children now reject Elijah's Lord and Master. The disciples, resenting the insult put upon their Master, would fain invoke the judgment of heaven upon these Christ-rejectors, even as Elijah had called down the fire from heaven upon his enemies. Zeal for Christ would desire the judgment of His enemies, righteousness might seem to demand it, and a Scripture precedent would support such a course; nevertheless the Lord rebukes His disciples, saying, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." Underneath their zeal the Lord detects and exposes a spirit that is entirely alien to Himself. The Lord was exercising power in grace to meet man's need. The disciples would exercise power in judgment to gratify their own self-importance. He would shew grace for the blessing of others. They would exercise judgment for the exaltation of themselves.

The rejection of their Lord and Master, with all His grace and power, by these corrupt Samaritans, raised the anger and resentment of the disciples, because they had some self-importance to maintain, and this self-importance had been slighted by the insult shown to their Master. The disciples would take advantage of the wickedness of these people to exercise a judgment they deserved, but they would do so in the spirit of retaliation. Self was the secret of their proposal, but hidden under the cloak of zeal for the Lord.

How different the spirit of the Lord, the One whose grace had been so slighted. Though Lord of all He was here with a tender heart and a lowly mind, having no self-importance to

maintain. Hence the rejection that calls forth the disciples' indignation, only reveals His patient and silent submission, even as a little later, His rejection by Jerusalem calls forth His tears. James and John would consume the rejectors of their Master with fire, as later Peter would fight against them with a sword. But Christ, without resentment and without retaliation, will pass on to another village.

There is yet another great hindrance to our service and testimony for the Lord. Not only the flesh, in its different forms of selfishness, but *nature* with its claims may be a very real hindrance. This comes before us in the closing verses of the chapter (verses 57-62).

First we learn that *the energy of nature* cannot take the path of true discipleship. One comes to the Lord saying, "I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest." This may have been the outcome of a generous impulse that drew the man to the Lord. At the same time it betrays the levity of nature that apprehended not who the Lord was, where He was going, or the path He was treading. He was indeed the rejected Man; He was "in the way" to be received up into a world of glory, yet, on the way, in this present world, He had no home and only a cross and a grave before Him. It would be wiser to go to the foxes for a hole, and the birds for a nest, than to come to the Son of Man for a home on earth. The energy of nature, however genuine, was not prepared for such a path. Nature can do much but it cannot forgo itself, its ease, its comforts, to follow a rejected Lord. And thus the path having been put before this volunteer we hear no more of him.

Further, we learn that *the relationships of nature* may be a real hindrance in the service of the Lord (verses 59-60).

In this case the man is called to follow the Lord by the Lord Himself. The first man, acting in the lightness of nature, sees no difficulties: this man being called by the Lord is at once conscious of difficulties. As Moses in an earlier day, acting in the energy of nature, thought to find it a simple matter to put things right among the people of God; but when called of God he can see nothing but difficulties. So with this man in the gospel day; his difficulty appeared to be great—an aged father drawing nigh to the grave, and dependent upon the son. Faced with this difficulty the man says, as it were, "I am ready to answer to the call, but suffer me first to wait until my father has died and I have carried out my last duties in connection with this natural claim." This, indeed, sounds reasonable, for the father had the first claim in nature. Christ, however, must have the first claim in the new life; and it was a question of life and death. As one has said, the Lord was putting in His claim for the life He had given, a life that demanded that Christ and His claims should be first. The man puts the claims of the dead first, as he says, "Let me first bury my father." The Lord is not denying or setting aside the claims of nature, but He is asserting His own paramount claims. The man did not see that if the Lord calls, His claims must be first, and that the One who calls can at the same time care for the father that is left behind.

Finally, we learn that *natural affection* may become a real hindrance in the service of the Lord (verses 61-62). This man also volunteers to follow the Lord, but he first desires to go and bid them farewell at home. This, however natural, indicates to the Lord's all-searching gaze, that his heart lingered in the home. He would fain put his hand to the plough—engage in service—but his heart was "looking back" to the home, and we go the way that we look. How impossible for the labourer to plough his furrow while walking one way and looking another. The service of the Lord demands an undivided heart.

Thus we are warned that nature may become a real hindrance in the service of the Lord. It is not that the Lord sets aside the mercy of a dwelling place on earth, the claims and duties connected with natural relationships, or the affections that belong to these relationships, but He puts His claims first, and looks for a devotedness that surrenders all to Him. Thus only will the disciples be "fit for the Kingdom of God." This last word of the Lord brings us back to the Mount where the disciples had seen the Kingdom of God in its glory (verse 27). It is only in the light of the glory of Christ in the Kingdom of God, and in the power of the grace of Christ in the Plain, that we shall be able to refuse the flesh in its varied forms, the selfishness of our hearts, and the claims of nature.

"BEHOLD he prayeth" was the first sign of divine life in Saul of Tarsus. Those who know God will delight in prayer, and the more they know Him the more they will pray. And none can do without the prayers of others. Paul was a man of great spiritual courage, but he yearned for the prayers of his brethren. We need to pray for each other as well as for ourselves. We are not practical Christians if we neglect this.

"What are men better than sheep and goats  
That nourish a blind life within the brain,  
If knowing God they lift not hands in prayer  
Both for themselves and those that call them friend?"

## WATCHMAN, WHAT OF THE NIGHT?

Notes on the Prophetic Outlook. No. 10.

(JAMES GREEN.)

*The Time of the End.*

THERE is abundance of detail in Scripture, both Old and New Testaments, as to the actors and events of the last period of this world's eventful history which will usher in the world kingdom of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and demonstrate to an astonished universe what God hath wrought for the justification of His ways, the declaration of His character and the fulfilment of His purposes. Glorious will be that morning without clouds; dark, very dark with gloom and horror the closing hours of the night that shall precede it. Already the clouds are gathering, and we who are living nearer to that time than any, can discern the powers and nations that are to play their part in that period, already moving to their places.

As we have seen in considering the present uncounted interval, the exact date of its close is hidden from us, but remembering Our Lord's words, Luke 21. 28-31, it behoves us to fix our attention on the heavens, from which the first action will take place, and to lift up our heads in expectancy of our gathering together unto Him (2 Thess. 2. 1). This action will release the suspended course of the prophetic word, and be the announcement that the time of the end has come. The rapture will lift the church to realms above where Christ is, and from thence we shall witness the dealings of the throne as described in Rev. 4. to 11. and the judgment of God's temple as further set forth in chapters 12. to 18.

It does not follow that the beginning of the last seven years will coincide exactly with the hour of the rapture, for that period is introduced by a

covenant made between a Roman prince and the Jewish people (Dan. 9. 27). It is evident from this verse that two things will then have a definite existence: (1) A prince or dictator over a dominion corresponding to the Roman Empire of former days, and recent events that have taken place in Italy are strongly significant in respect of such a revival; (2) The Jews restored again to Palestine, a political entity in their national home, with whom it will be possible to make a covenant. The preparation of such a state of things has come very much into evidence by "The Balfour Declaration" and the number of Jews who have returned to their land during the last few years.

This covenant, although made for seven years, will, however, only last for three and a half, for it will be broken in the midst of the week, and the Jewish worship, sacrifice, and offering be made to cease. The Scriptures which especially refer to this space of three and a half years during which the covenant stands are Isa. 18.; Matt. 24. 3-14. Isaiah shows the political activity of the Western nations in furthering the prosperity of the Jew; our Lord describes the same time as the beginning of sorrows.

John reveals the action which will take place in heaven, the opening of the seven-sealed book of the inheritance of the earth, and the consequences which will follow. The first six seals cover a period which will be commenced by efforts to re-adjust the confusion of affairs which the rapture will necessarily cause. In order to secure peace and safety the nations will turn probably to a federation of powers, such as is foreshadowed by the League of Nations and symbolized by the rider on the

white horse (Rev. 6. 2). In this mutually agreed control men will trust that at last they have found the realization of their hopes of peace (1 Thess. 5. 2, 3). Alas! it will be the sign of the end, and will only involve the world in bloodshed and ruin. This is seen in the rider upon the red horse (Rev. 6. 4) followed by the sequel of famine shewn by the black horse (Rev. 6. 5, 6), with the result in disease and death which is portrayed by the pale horse (Rev. 6. 8). At the same time there will be aroused a fierce persecution against those who fear God and hold His word (Rev. 6. 9-11), to whom probably will be attributed the cause of all these calamities. The cry for vengeance indicates that these sufferers will be Jewish saints.

Then follows the overthrow of the ruling powers, the sixth seal (Rev. 6. 12-17). This coincides with an event of supreme importance, the casting of Satan and his angels from their place in heaven, and it is this which will resuscitate the Roman Empire under the direct control of Satan (Rev. 12.); the prince of which will make the covenant with the Jews and break it in the midst of the week. The time of the end is from this point limited to 1260 days =  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years (Rev. 12. 6, 14 and 13. 5). During this time a trinity of evil will be in ascendancy. The beast and the false prophet of Rev. 13., the first of whom will usurp the sovereignty of Christ, and the second His priesthood, will both be controlled by the dragon. Rev. 11. presents another view of the seven-year period shewing the double witness God will have for Himself during the first  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years = 42 months, at the end of which this testimony is silenced by the beast that rises from the bottomless pit. The time of rejoicing that follows is described in the reckoning of heaven as

three and a half days, although actually three and a half years, during which the beast rules. This culminating point in the middle of the last week of years is presented in various ways in the coinciding of the following passages. (1) The casting of Satan out of heaven (Rev. 12. 9). (2) The consequent change in the direction of the Roman Empire (Rev. 13. 2; cf. also Dan. 7. 19-26). (3) The breaking of the covenant (Dan. 9. 27). (4) The placing of the abomination of desolation in the temple (Matt. 24. 15; Dan. 12. 11); and (5) The breaking of the seventh seal (Rev. 8. 1). The result of this latter is that there is silence in heaven for the space of half an hour, the same closing period of three and a half years but described in so brief a manner in the judgment of heaven.

Dark with gloom and solemn portent is this silence, during which the governing hand of God will be withdrawn, and man and Satan left to their own devices, until the rightful possessor of heaven and earth shall swear by Himself that there shall be no longer delay, and that in the days when the seventh trump shall sound, the mystery of God's patience with evil shall be ended (Rev. 10.).

The seven trumpets reveal the condition of things during the 1260 days in the political world, then the seven vials of wrath proceed from the temple in heaven and are directed against the religious idolatry which will prevail. This brings into view the judgment of God upon the spiritual Babylon of Christendom which will be found in alliance with the world powers, who will finally be the agents of her destruction (Rev. 17. 16, 17).

Then shall come that stroke of divine judgment which will bring confusion upon the ruling Satanic

powers (Matt. 24. 29; Rev. 16. 10, 11). This will be the sign of the immediate coming of the Son of Man (Matt. 24. 30). Against Christ and the armies of heaven the beast and the kings of the earth and their hosts in one last supreme act of folly will set themselves in vain array. But the brightness of His coming shall stain the pride of all flesh, and bring into contempt all that man has counted worthy of honour; "The loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day" (Isa. 2. 17).

We may well ask for what purpose and for what moral consideration God has withdrawn the veil, so that we may see the end of the course of this world. The answer is found in Isa. 2. 5, 22, "Let us walk in the light of the Lord," and "Cease ye from man whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?" Thus shall a holy separation be produced from the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, which make up the all things of this world, and further that there may be wrought deliverance from the seductions of a false church, which is giving up every precious truth, even to the extent of denying the Lord that bought them (2 Pet. 2. 1). A Babylon surely, in presence of which there is only one way indicated for those who desire to be loyal to their absent Lord, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins" (Rev. 18. 4). The case calls not for reformation but separation, and a going forth to Him without the camp, bearing His reproach.

Beloved reader, we have sought to trace together the outline of the prophetic word. We have enquired, "Watchman, what of the night?" Let us listen to the divine answer, "The morning cometh." No cloud

shall dim its brightness, no mist obscure its radiance, for "The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it" (Isa. 40. 5). The day of vengeance of our God shall result in comfort for the ancient people of His purpose. The expectancy of Jacob, the blessing of Moses, the prayers of David, the rapt utterances of Isaiah and the prophets, the long waiting of Daniel, shall all find their answer in beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. Jehovah shall plant His people, Judah and Israel, as one nation in His land, trees of righteousness that He may be glorified (Isa. 61. 2, 3, etc.). It is still the night, but whilst we wait amidst the shadows, we may know the shining of the morning star, and look for that most blessed hope which the promise of our absent Lord has awakened in our hearts, "I will come again and receive you unto myself" (John 14. 3). Then in seeing Him as He is (1 John 3. 2; John 17. 24), His church shall realize in His presence that high and heavenly calling of God in Christ Jesus which has predestinated her to be conformed to the image of His Son. Then when He shall be manifested shall she also appear with Him in the scene of His glory and reign, the abiding witness of the grace of God, and the display of the excellencies of Christ her Head, who shall be glorified in His saints and admired in all those that believe.

"Seeing we look for such things, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness? Being diligent that we may be found of Him in peace, without spot and blameless; growing in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and for ever. Amen."

## DOES THE WORD JUSTIFY DIVISION ?

*From a Letter.*

. . . You are quite right, I believe, in saying that the New Testament gives no sanction to division in the church, or assembly, as the word should be ; indeed, nothing comes under severer condemnation than this, as we may see from the first Corinthian Epistle. Separation from evil is essential, and no one could *walk in the truth* apart from this, but part of that truth in which we desire to walk is that "there is one body." Knowing that all the members of Christ are united to Him, the living Head, by one Spirit, our responsibility is to use diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Here there has been great failure, for diligence has been used to keep the opinions and parties caused by the flesh instead of the unity produced by the Spirit.

We do not believe that anyone is warranted in going to the Old Testament in support of division and its maintenance. Israel was twelve tribes, not one body ; they would have remained one nation under one King but for the corrupt condition into which they fell, and here there may be an analogy between them and present-day conditions. If they had obeyed the word of the Lord, there would have been no division in Israel, and if the saints of God of this church period had been subject to His word, we should not have had to mourn the divided state of things which is now so prevalent.

But if that Old Testament story be carefully considered, it will be seen that God did not forbid His people to seek a righteous way of reconciliation, or to discover why the breach had occurred, or to confess together their failure, but He did forbid them to fight with their brethren. We read : " Thus saith the

Lord, GO NOT UP, NOR FIGHT WITH YOUR BRETHREN, THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL " (1 Kings 1. 12). I wish that we had all rightly learned the lesson that that bit of the story teaches so plainly. Where there has been general failure, it is as well that the sword be dropped and that all betake them to their knees. The division in Israel was God's condemnation on their evil state, and men of God who in later days were used to bring back the people in any measure to the truth confessed it to be so.

Jehoshaphat sought to obliterate the division without a change of condition, or a righteous basis upon which this could be effected, and the result was disaster. He joined with a man " who did very wickedly," and a prophet was sent to him to say, " Because thou hast joined thyself with Ahaziah, the Lord hath broken thy works " (2 Chron. 20. 35-37). But that was a very different thing from seeking to walk in the truth with all that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. When Hezekiah came to the throne and God brought him back to the truth of the passover from which the people had departed throughout the whole period of division, he made a proclamation as to it " *throughout all Israel, from Beer-sheba even to Dan, that they should come to keep the passover unto the Lord at Jerusalem, for they had not done it of a long time in such sort as it was written* " (2 Chron. 30. 5). How could they do it *in such sort as it was written*, if they left out of their desires and affection any of their brethren ? For the passover first recognized them as one congregation, they were one people as the redeemed of the Lord. 2 Chronicles 30. is a very encouraging chapter and shews us plainly what God can do in restoring a people to His truth and the

joy that results from subjection to His word.

Did you ever see the poem said to be by C. Wesley, written at the time of the reconciliation between John Wesley and George Whitfield? Here is part of it, and if you are like me, these lines will stir your heart, bring the tears to your eyes and make you pray.

“The Saviour saw our strife with pitying eye,  
And cast a look that made the shadows fly ;  
Soon as the day-spring of His presence  
shone,  
We found the two fierce armies were but one.  
Common our hope, and family and name,  
Our arms, our Captain, and our crown the  
same ;  
Enlisted all beneath Emmanuel’s sign,  
And purchased every soul with blood divine.

“Then let us cordially again embrace,  
Nor e’er infringe the league of gospel grace ;  
Let us in Jesus’ Name to battle go  
And turn our arms against the common foe ;  
Fight, side by side, beneath our Captain’s  
eye,  
Chase the Philistine ; on their shoulders fly ;  
And, more than conquerors, in harness die.

“Our only care, while sojourning below,  
Our real faith by real love to show,  
To blast the aliens’ hope, and let them see  
How friends of jarring sentiments agree ;  
Not in a party’s narrow banks confined,  
Not by the sameness of opinions joined,  
But cemented with the Redeemer’s blood  
And bound together in the heart of God.

“And, jointly labouring on with jealous  
strife,  
Strengthen each other’s hands to work for  
life ;  
To turn against the world our steady face,  
And, valiant for the truth, enjoy disgrace.”

We may be sure that the aliens and the devil himself rejoice when strife rages among the saints of God, and the heart of the Lord is grieved. Jesus died to gather together in one the children of God, and the Holy Ghost has come to give a present and eternal result to His death. “For also in [the power of] one Spirit we have been baptized into one body . . . and have all been given to drink of one Spirit”—1 Cor. 12. 13 (N. T.).

J. T. M.

## THE PIERCED ONE.

THOSE who know Jesus—Jehovah the Saviour—as their Lord and Redeemer, may with good reason rejoice in the atoning value of His precious blood, and let their hearts overflow in praise to Himself, as the writings of the Holy Spirit portray Him before their gladdened souls.

Zechariah pointed forward both to His sufferings and His appearing, when in chapter 12. 10 JEHOVAH speaks thus, “They shall look upon ME whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him.” How, it might be asked, could Israel’s Lord and God be pierced ?

Through John, the Spirit records in chapter 19. of JESUS, “One of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side. . . . These things were done that the Scripture might be fulfilled . . . They

(H. J. VINE.)

shall look on HIM whom they pierced” (verses 34–37). Here we have God’s own divinely given answer to our previous question ! And when Thomas (a type of the favoured remnant of Israel in a future day) saw the wounds—looking upon the Pierced One, risen from among the dead—he exclaimed, “My Lord and my God !”

Finally, in Revelation 1. 7, 8 (N. Tr.) we read, “Behold, He comes with the clouds, and every eye shall see HIM, and they which have pierced Him, and all the tribes of the land shall wail BECAUSE OF HIM. Yea, Amen.

“I am Alpha and Omega, saith (the) Lord God, He who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.”

Oh ! let our souls adore the Lord !  
And bless His Name with one accord !  
Our holy, gracious Saviour God !

# A POWERFUL PARADOX.

(SAMUEL LEVERMORE.)

**KING UZZIAH** (2 Chron. 26. 18).

"But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction."

**THE APOSTLE PAUL** (2 Cor. 12. 10).

"For when I am weak then am I strong."

Uzziah was weak when he was strong and Paul was strong when he was weak. Why? Firstly, because Paul was in the line of God's choice, who had chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty (1 Cor. 1. 27). God did not use Paul *in spite* of his weakness, but *because* of it.

Creature strength stands in God's way.

Conscious weakness gets out of it.

Trust in God and trust of self cannot co-exist.

Trust in God and distrust of self co-ordinate.

**UZZIAH HAD A TRAGIC HISTORY.** It began under the shadow of a double tragedy: the murder of his father and grandfather. His reign commenced when he was sixteen with revolution at home and hostility abroad. But he "sought the Lord," and the Spirit puts "right" against his debut (verses 4 and 5). God made him to prosper, fought his battles (verse 6). Ammonites, Philistines, Arabians and Mehunims went down before him. Everything came his way. The nations trembled at his name.

Read the story (2 Chron. 2. 26). It is full of thrills, and what is of infinitely more importance, it is true, for the Holy Ghost inspired it. Indeed **UZZIAH "WAS MARVELLOUSLY HELPED OF GOD"** (verse 15).

And here come the paradoxical words which startle us, "Till he was strong, but when he was strong, his

heart was lifted up to his destruction" (verses 15, 16). Self-trust came in and God went out. One hears the world say of Mr. Somebody, "A fine, self-reliant man that," whilst the Holy Spirit saith, "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool" (Prov. 38. 26).

Self-trust is the worm at the root of faith.

*Pride ruled Uzziah, and presumption slew him.* Leprosy smote his person, and the earthquake smote his kingdom. Away went health, wealth, fame—everything—but . . . irreparable disaster. And over his lonely tomb, what time the wild wind moans his mournful requiem, the Spirit writes his epitaph, **SLAIN BY SELF-TRUST.**

As to this amazing paradox (seemingly absurd, but really true), one may ask, was it wrong to be strong? No indeed, for the Spirit does not say *because* he was strong but *when* he was strong. A state of strength is a state of danger. Egypt is not far from Canaan, neither is "that great City, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified" (Rev. 11. 8). It does not take long to get there, just the space of a thought perhaps, for this moral transition beggars the aeroplane for speed.

*Abraham* found it far too handy for his good, and a certain *Jehoshaphat* went there to be married, and caught the Egyptian malaria which poisoned his very vitals.

Poor **Uzziah** forgot God. **HE BEGAN TO LEAVE GOD OUT.** He neglected prayer. He neglected the Book, or Deut. 8. might have saved him.

O Christian! when things look rosy—when men begin the devil's work of back-patting and fulsome flattery, drop on your knees and look up this prescrip-

tion from the Great Physician's Case-book—"Lest . . . thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord that brought thee out of Egypt . . . who led thee . . . who fed thee . . ." If you desire to remain holy, healthy, and happy, never forget Deut. 8. **NOT ONE OF US CAN AFFORD TO NEGLECT IT.** History, sacred and profane, has its epitaphs emblazoned on the tombs of the mighty, where amid heraldic glories we have many a sad reminder of those who went down to Egypt for help: and the cold blasts of despair and desertion sweeping over the heath in the desert of this life celebrate in moans of anguish the downfall of many who "put their trust in man, and made the arm of flesh their trust, and whose heart departed from the Lord" (Jer. 17. 5, 6).

**LOOK UP HEZEKIAH'S TWO LETTERS.** When he was weak in himself and strong in God (Isa. 37. 14) he received **A BLASPHEMOUS LETTER** from General Rabshakeh and went straight to God and spread it before Him, with the result that the Lord "sent a blast" (verse 7) upon the dread foe, for the Angel of the Lord went forth in the silence of the night and

"The Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast,  
And breathed in the face of the foe as he pass'd;  
And the eyes of the sleepers wax'd deadly and chill,  
And their hearts but once heaved, and for ever grew still.

And the widows of Ashur are loud in their wail;  
And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal;  
And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,  
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord!"

No less than 185,000 corpses put the Lord's yea to the Pauline paradox, "When I am weak then am I strong," for Hezekiah. A fine illustration of

Prov. 3. 5: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not unto thine own understanding."

Now comes **A LETTER OF CONGRATULATION.** Did he take that letter to God? Alas no. That is so like each one of us. Our troubles send us to God, but why not our joys? We let God into the heart of our sorrow and leave the devil in possession of our joys to manipulate them for his malicious purposes. Hezekiah was vastly flattered. Satan knows only too well our weak points. When he is hard put to it to destroy the useful testimony of a brother whose special weakness is notoriety, "Put his name in the Press" and the thing is done. Another popular type is the man whose chief object is "To stand well with the brethren." Satan will see to it that he receives special honour from them—which is *nothing*—and no longer stands well with God, which is *everything*. **FLATTERY FLOORED HEZEKIAH.** He let the enemy into the very heart of his kingdom to his undoing. Do not forget Hezekiah's two letters. |

**ASA FURNISHES A FURTHER EXAMPLE.** His mighty faith and burning zeal shed a brilliant lustre over the Book of Kings, but, alas (as is so often the case) he got *cold* as he got *old*. And the big majority of heart-backsliders is to be found among *old*, not *young*, men. He went to Assyria with a bribe in his hand for help and disaster follows. (For man's *help* often proves man's *hindrance*.) Then foot trouble supervened and off he goes to the physicians. Not to the only One who could have healed him. Things went well with the specialists but worse and worse with Asa.

How do we stand in this matter? James or Mary falls ill. "Oh!" sighs dear mother. "What shall I do?" Dear anxious mother: seek the Lord

first. Just kneel down with the little hand in yours and tell the One who is a "present," yea a "very present help," all about it. Is it wrong to call the doctor? By no means, but it is very, very wrong not to seek the Lord. Besides, who knows but our Jehovah-Ropheca may do His own doctoring.

**BEWARE OF THE GREAT EGYPTIAN HIGHWAY (Isa. 31. 1-3).**

With God's woe to begin with and inevitable ruin at the end. A Christian—walking in the flesh—is apathetic to God and sympathetic to the world.

**"I AM THE WAY."**

"IT is blessed and happy, as well as part of our worship, to mark the characteristics of the Lord's way and ministry here on the earth . . . for all that He did and said, all His service, whether in substance or style, is the witness of what He was, and He is the witness to us of what God is. And thus we reach God, the blessed One, through the paths of the Lord Jesus, in the pages of the evangelists. Every step of that way becomes important to us. All that He did and said was a real,

They go together. Jeremiah puts it very graphically. "My people have committed two evils, they have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn themselves out cisterns, broken cisterns, which can hold no water." What madness! Forsaking the perennial source for a broken cistern. Such is going to Egypt (the world) for help. Surely I cannot do better than close with those golden words in Prov. 3. 5:—

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding."

truthful expression of Himself, as He Himself was a real, truthful expression of God. And if we can understand the character of His ministry, or read the moral glory that attaches to each moment and each particular of His walk and service on earth, and so learn what He is, and thus learn what God is, we reach God, in certain and unclouded knowledge of Him, through the ordinary paths and activities of this divine Son of man" (J. G. Bellett).

**"WHOSE SON IS HE?"**

"They said, Is not this Jesus, the Son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How then doth He say, I am come down out of heaven?"—John 6. 41, 42.

THEY set the circumstances as they knew them (and they knew them ill) against the truth of Christ. It was judging according to appearances, and consequently unrighteous judgment. He was the Son of Mary—truly and properly man; else His work had not availed for man. He was not the Son of Joseph save legally; but this He was in order that He should be Messiah according to the law. Had He been really Son of Joseph, as of Mary, He had not been Son of God, or a divine Person; but this was the foundation of all, and without it the Incarnation

were a falsehood, and the Atonement a nullity. He was really Son, the only begotten Son of the Father, who deigned to become the Son of Mary, and by law consequently Son of Joseph, who had espoused her (a point of all moment for His Messianic title, for Messiah He could not properly have been unless He were heir to Joseph's rights). But as Son of God, the incarnate Word, He was the Bread which came down out of heaven; thus only could man feed on Him by faith and be blessed for ever.

W. K.

# ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

## Eternal Punishment.

“The doctrine of Eternal Punishment is one I don't understand. I cannot pin vast truths down to such harsh-sounding formulas, or reconcile this doctrine with the greatness, the universality and infiniteness of God. Some minds seem to be able to accept it without question, but my mind seems different, and I cannot say that I definitely believe it. Other doctrines present no difficulty, this one does. Can you help me?”—AUSTRALIA.

**NATURALLY** we shrink from the thought of eternal punishment as once we did from other solemn truths. The heinousness of sin, for instance, was not a pleasant contemplation until we discovered that the all-cleansing blood of the Son of God had made a full atonement for us before God; death, too, filled us with fear until we learnt that it had been robbed of its sting by the dying of Jesus. But eternal punishment is different; if it is the truth, there is no remedy, no release for those who come under it, and it is this that makes it terrible; yet if it is the truth, our doubting it, or having difficulty in believing it, will not alter it, and since questions as to it have been raised in your mind, you are right in facing it and seeking help.

We must admit that our thoughts and opinions are useless. We may rightly investigate the things that belong to this life and sphere and form opinions about them, for they lie more or less within the range of our understanding, but if we are to know anything about the unseen world and the life beyond this, we must get that knowledge from God; it must be by REVELATION from Him and not by INVESTIGATION by us. And in this lies the difference between faith and the greatly flattered “modern” mind, which is practically synonymous with unbelief: the first accepts the revelation that God has given to us; the second refuses it and relies upon its own investigations. May it not be that it is just here that your difficulty in understanding comes in? In the things of God faith must come first; it is “by faith we understand” (Hebrews 1.).

God's revelation is in the Bible. We got our knowledge of heaven from the Bible, we know nothing of heaven apart from it, but it speaks of hell as well as heaven. If we accept the one we cannot

consistently reject the other. Take the words of the Lord Jesus Christ. He said, “In my Father's house are many mansions: *if it were not so I would have told you*” (John 14. 2). If there had been no place and state of blessedness beyond this life for us, He would have told us plainly, and not have allowed us to be under any misconception in the matter, and if there had been no judgment to come, no retribution for sin, no hell, would He not also have told us? But the strongest language in the Bible as to these things came from His own lips. He spoke of some who would die in their sins, and the impossibility of such going where He would be (John 8. 21, 24). He said, “How shall ye escape the damnation of hell?” (Matt. 23. 14). He it is who will say, “Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matt. 25. 41), and spoke of these as going into “everlasting punishment” (Matt. 25. 46). He spoke of “outer darkness” and “weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matt. 25. 30), and “of their worm that never dies and the fire that is not quenched” (Mark 9. 46). We dare not say we will listen to Him and believe Him when He speaks of blessing, but refuse to hear and believe when He speaks of judgment. We must accept the revelation as it stands or reject it wholly.

The consciences of all men everywhere admit that there must be retribution for wrong-doing, and they act upon this in their dealings with each other; for laws are made by them and penalties inflicted upon the breach of them. And in this they bear witness to the fact that God also must judge, and yet some would deny this right to God that they feel they must exercise for themselves. But God is not less righteous than men? His claims and authority must be upheld, and His judgment where these are flouted is

righteous judgment ; we know that it is according to truth. Others admit that God must judge evil-doing who deny that His judgment is eternal. To such our answer is : The Bible says it is. But they argue that "everlasting" and "eternal," when used in the Bible, do not mean "never ending." But the same word is used to express the duration of the life of those who are blessed in Matt. 25. 46 and in such texts as John 3. 16. It is used in regard to God Himself (Rom. 16. 26), and for the Spirit of God (Heb. 9. 14) and for our redemption (Heb. 9. 14). If God *had* intended to convey to our minds the thought of judgment and punishment without end, what other language could He have used ? And if the punishment is for a time only and not everlasting, why should He not have said so in language about which there could have been no question ?

Another argument against the truth is that reason revolts against an eternity of punishment for a lifetime of sin ; but whose reason revolts against it ? Quite recently there was the case of a man who received a life sentence for the attempted murder of a policeman ; his reason revolted against it, he thought the sentence too heavy, too terrible ; he said so and appealed against it on that ground, but his reason was no match for the sentence of the law, his appeal was dismissed. It is not for the criminal to say what the sentence shall be ; the judge decides that, and when God judges He will do it according to absolute justice. He has told us what that judgment will be before any come into it, and He has done this in love that warns of it, that men may escape it.

But further, it is evident that the state of those who die in their sins and upon whom the judgment that comes after death will fall, remain unchanged. We do not read of any hope of repentance on their part in eternity. Three times over the Lord repeats the solemn words, "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9. 44, 46, 48). It is generally said that "their worm" symbolizes the gnawing and remorse of the

conscience, and it may indeed be this, but there is surely more in it ; their worm speaks of corruption, and in this corrupt condition they remain unchanged for ever. Consequently the fire, which speaks of God's judgment, abides on them, it never dies out. We do not mean that these unrepentant sinners will continue sinning in hell, for as men in prison are restrained from crime, and are kept out of the reach of it, so will the lost be under the restraint of God's judgment in the lake of fire ; but the sinful condition will remain, for we read, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still ; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still" (Rev. 22. 11).

Now if there is no judgment for sin, or if that judgment is of a limited or temporal sort ; if, for instance, sin can be expiated by a period in purgatorial fires, why did Christ die ? And here we come to the crux of the whole question. If the punishment of sin upon the sinner is not everlasting, it did not require an infinite sacrifice to atone for it ; hence the sacrifice of Christ was not infinite, and a lesser person than He could have made it. But the fact that God so loved the world *that He gave His only begotten Son*, that men might not perish, is proof enough that they would and will perish apart from Him ; and here we must clearly state that it is the "whosoever believeth in Him" that escape this awful doom and have everlasting life instead. To deny the eternal punishment is to belittle the work and death of Christ, and to think of sin as a matter of small account.

The cross of Christ, on which He gave Himself a ransom for all, is the great proof of God's love for men and the length He would go to save them ; He could not have done more, and less would not have availed. But that cross is also the great proof that God cannot pass by the sins of men as though they were nothing at all. He would not be a God of holiness and truth if He did ; hence the gospel that proclaims His love and grace also reveals His wrath against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of

men (Romans 1. 18). Eternal punishment will be the portion of those who have refused to repent of their sins to God, who have neglected His great salvation, upon whom His goodness and longsuffering have been expended in vain, and who have obeyed not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thess. 1. 8). Thus we believe and teach; to do other, we must abandon the plainest possible statements of the Bible and adopt instead the reasonings of the human mind.

You speak of the greatness, the universality and infiniteness of God. Well, the greatness of His love has been revealed in the gift of His Son for our salvation (see John 3. 16; Romans 5. 8; 1 John 4. 9, 10). The universality of His mercy is manifested in the offer of salvation to all without any exception, but the eternal punishment of impenitent

sinners will be an eternal witness to the infinite character of His wrath against sin, a wrath that will be as perfect and just as is His mercy.

But judgment is God's strange work. He will find no delight in it, though He does delight in mercy. We read that in heaven they say, when God judges, "True and righteous are His judgments" (Rev. 19. 2). That is not a joyous song, but there is joy in heaven, though it is not when judgment is executed, but when one sinner repenteth, and in that joy God's heart reveals itself, it is His own joy in which all heaven shares (Luke 15.).

We also object to pinning down great truths into harsh-sounding formulas, for formulas and creeds are but human conceptions of the truth, and so must be faulty even at their best. The Word of God is enough for us.

## Enemies of the Cross of Christ.

"Will you be good enough to explain through 'Scripture Truth': They are enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is their shame, who mind earthly things (Phil. 2. 18, 19)? Surely these cannot be true believers."—NORWICH.

NO, the many about whom the Apostle wept were proving by the whole bent of their lives that they were not true Christians, though they had evidently made a profession and were joined to the church on earth. This must have been so or the Apostle would not have sorrowed over them as he did, or warned the true Christians against their influence and example. If they had been pagans outside the church there would have been no need for the warning. He does not call them enemies of Christ exactly, for they had taken His Name upon them, but enemies of His cross, for they were holding fast to those things from which the cross would have severed them. Self was their centre and the earth their circumference. The true Christian has

another centre—Christ—and he belongs to another sphere, heaven, and his hopes are in Christ and His coming again (verse 21). The end of the one sort of life is destruction and the end of the other glory.

The state that the Apostle described in this passage is prevalent to-day, more so probably than ever before, and thank God the hope of being like Christ at His coming again is brighter to many and nearer to realization than ever it was; but still the warning is needed, lest in any way our feet stray into the path of self-indulgence and earthly-mindedness, the end of which is destruction. Our joy and fruitfulness lies in obedience, in being followers of Paul, who had no object but Christ, as the chapter teaches.

HOME, sweet home—the many mansions of my Father's house above—

Built by Almighty wisdom, stored with every gift of love,  
Where the children all are gathered, not a wanderer left to roam,  
All dear names in one enwoven; Home, my everlasting home!

## Hebrews 10. 12.

“In your ‘Monthly Bible Reading, No. 3,’ September issue, page 209, you have placed the comma after ‘one sacrifice for sins,’ instead of after ‘for ever,’ as in the Authorized Version. Will you explain why?”

IN this we followed J. N. Darby’s New Translation and other versions. The “for ever” has to do with the *sitting down*, rather than with the sacrifice. This is in contrast to the priests of the Mosaic order, who *stood daily*, offering oftentimes the same sacrifices. Their work was never done, for they had no sacrifice that could put away sin. But the Lord Jesus having completed His work by offering Himself, a perfect sacrifice, has

not to rise up again to offer another. It is well known that there was no seat for the priests in the Tabernacle in the wilderness. “But He, having offered one sacrifice for sins, sat down in perpetuity at the right hand of God, waiting from henceforth until His enemies be set for the footstool of His feet. For by one offering He has perfected in perpetuity the sanctified” (J. N. D.’s N.T.).

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## “The Hidden Things of Darkness.”

“1 Cor. 4. 5, when the ‘Lord comes and will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and will make manifest the counsels of the heart—then shall each have praise of God.’

“Does this verse refer exclusively to the judgment seat of Christ? or does it refer to a period of time that the Lord’s coming will usher in and therefore include other judgments? If it refers only to the Judgment Seat, please say in what way ‘the hidden things of darkness’ will come to light.”

WE should say that in this passage the Apostle is looking onward and directing the thoughts of the Corinthian believers to the judgment seat of Christ, where he and they and we also will be fully manifested. “We must all be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ” (2 Cor. 5. 10; N. Tr.). The contrast is between man’s day and judgment and the Lord’s coming and His judgment. It did not move or distress the Apostle that some at Corinth were setting themselves up to be his judges, that was nothing to him; he was, indeed, ready to let them judge him to be a fool, *for Christ’s sake*, and such he seemed to be in *man’s day*. But he knew that men could not judge him justly, for his work was not then finished, and they were not

able to discern the counsels of the heart. But when the Lord comes He will bring to light the hidden things of darkness; this may not necessarily mean evil things, though it will include them, but things that are out of sight and unknown now, the motives and ambitions that move in the souls of men. There will be *nothing* hidden when the Lord comes. As we have said, our manifestation will be at the judgment seat of Christ; there, if any praise is due to us, it will not come from man but from God, for everything will be tested according to His standard. Afterwards, the Christians will be manifested with Christ to the world, and man’s judgment of them will be reversed and swept aside for ever.

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“Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work”—John 4. 34.

“Leaving us an example that we should follow His steps”—1 Peter 2. 21.

“Yes, I will wait, and labour still in Thy blest service here :

What Thou hast given me to fulfil—Thy will—to me is dear !

Yet, Lord ! were once Thy will fulfilled, how better far, TO BE

WITH THEE, my joy, my strength, my shield : in cloudless light to be.”